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Feedback practices in foreign language emergency remote teaching in Finland

Toni Mäkipää, University of Helsinki

This case study investigated students' perceptions of teacher feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching in Finnish general upper secondary education. A total of 251 students from seven schools answered an online questionnaire. The results showed that students found teacher feedback to be encouraging, clear, instructive and general. Compared to students with higher course grades, students with lower course grades found teacher feedback to be discouraging, vague, unclear, and demotivating. Students perceived the quantity of oral feedback to be scarce. The results imply that feedback was not personalised to match students' individual needs, and that teachers mostly relied on written feedback. Teachers can use these findings to reflect on their approach to feedback in emergency remote teaching and redesign strategies to diversify their feedback practices.

Keywords: emergency remote teaching, feedback, foreign language teaching

1 Introduction

This study sought to investigate how Finnish general upper secondary students had perceived teacher feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching between March 2020 and May 2021. The world experienced an unprecedented change because of the COVID-19 pandemic from the beginning of 2020. In Finland, changes were swiftly introduced at all levels of education: practically all schools moved to remote teaching in March 2020, following an order from the government. However, students with special needs and students in the first, second, and third grade could still access contact teaching. During the 2020–2021 academic year, emergency remote teaching was used extensively in regions in which the virus had spread the most, particularly southern Finland. Given these restrictions imposed on education, the changes were drastic and disruptive as remote teaching was not common in Finland before the pandemic. To recapitulate, the pandemic has had wide-ranging consequences for Finnish education.

In terms of learning, teacher feedback is a crucial component in supporting students' learning (Ruiz-Primo & Brookhart, 2018). When teachers provide timely feedback, the assessment process can become a learning experience (Rogier, 2014). Particularly in distance education, feedback is of the utmost importance as it might be the only contact students have with the teacher (Simpson, 2012). This is

Corresponding author's email: toni.makipaa@helsinki.fi
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in line with Chetwynd and Dobbyn (2011), who underline that students need the capacity for self-regulated learning and independent work in distance education, and therefore, providing students with effective feedback is pivotal. For a teacher, it is a valuable skill to be able to provide students with efficient online feedback (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015). However, providing meaningful feedback in distance education is challenging (Uribe & Vaughan, 2017), and teachers have expressed concerns about their inability to provide immediate feedback in emergency remote teaching (Trudel et al., 2021).

Teachers in Finland follow national core curricula, and the core curriculum for general upper secondary education includes a description of the guidelines for assessment (FNBE, 2016). In this description, the core curriculum clearly outlines providing feedback as a requirement. In a nutshell, every teacher is required to give feedback, thereby enhancing the students' learning and supporting their growth. It is vital to study remote teaching, as Tsagari (2013) has pointed out that students in remote teaching face challenges that are different from those in classroom teaching, such as limited contact with others. Previous research has also shown that teachers' and students' perceptions of the quality of feedback are disparate, as educators tend to the rate the quality as being higher than students (Molloy & Boud, 2014). Moreover, a recent doctoral dissertation set in Finland suggests that feedback practices in foreign language teaching could be improved (Mäkipää, 2021).

As the Corona pandemic has affected millions of learners (UNESCO, 2022), it is important to explore its effects on education through the students' eyes to enhance current and future distance education practices. Finnish research has not investigated emergency remote teaching in foreign language learning from the students' perspective. Due to the paucity of research, the aim of this paper was to investigate students' perceptions of teacher feedback in emergency remote teaching, to suggest solutions for possible deficiencies experienced by the students.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Feedback

Feedback is a common notion in language teaching, but it is a concept that is difficult to define precisely (Tsagari, 2019). Sadler (1989) defines feedback as "information about how successfully something has been or is being done" (p. 120). Feedback is used to underscore discrepancies between a student's current performance and the intended performance (Molloy & Boud, 2014). Feedback can be a mirror, reflecting a student's performance back to the student (Molloy & Boud, 2014). Feedback is beneficial to students for several reasons: it fosters student reflection (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010), motivation (Leenknecht et al., 2021), and self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Providing prompt feedback to students is one of the key aspects of successful distance education (Bigatel et al., 2012).

The question of what kind of feedback should be used to consolidate the learning process has intrigued scholars for decades. Consequently, an accruing body of research has found several characteristics of efficient feedback. For Gibbs and Simpson (2005), efficient feedback means that the feedback is detailed and it

is provided often enough, the feedback concerns students' learning and performance rather than students' personal characteristics, the feedback is given to students while the content and the task are still relevant, the feedback is appropriate in relation to the purpose of the task, the feedback takes the students' understanding into consideration, students receive and attend to the feedback, and students act on the feedback. Brookhart (2017) has also underscored similar issues in effective feedback. Likewise, when it comes to efficient online feedback, feedback should be frequent, immediate, specific, and promote thinking (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015).

According to the latest research, feedback is no longer perceived as being a gift from the teacher; instead, students are expected to be active participants in feedback processes (Molloy et al., 2020). This is also apparent in newer definitions of feedback, as they emphasise the central role of the student in using the feedback to improve strategies and work (Carless & Boud, 2018). The central role of the student relates to feedback literacy: the essential dispositions, capabilities and understandings needed to use feedback information for fostering learning strategies and improving work (Carless & Boud, 2018). Feedback-literate students commit to feedback processes, acknowledge how feedback can improve their learning, recognise the reciprocal process of using feedback, process information elicited in the feedback, and seek feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018; Molloy et al., 2020). Put differently, feedback is recognised as a process, not as a product (Winstone et al., 2022).

2.2 Distance education and emergency remote teaching

Scholars use several terms when discussing remote teaching, such as online education and distance education (Simpson, 2012), as well as E-learning, virtual education, and online learning (Simonson & Seepersaud, 2019). However, the terms are often used interchangeably even though their definitions might differ slightly (Simonson & Seepersaud, 2019). According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), distance education can be defined as "teaching and planned learning in which teaching normally occurs in a different place from learning, requiring communication through technologies as well as special institutional organization" (p. 2). In distance education, students, teachers, and resources become interconnected (Simonson & Seepersaud, 2019).

Distance education can take place in several formats. Usually it is planned well beforehand, but due to a crisis or a disaster, distance education might be forced. This type of teaching is called emergency remote teaching, which refers to teaching that is executed as an alternative due to unprecedented circumstances and is usually temporary (Hodges et al., 2020).

In emergency remote teaching, prompt feedback is key as interaction between students and teachers is more limited compared to contact teaching (Hodges et al., 2020). Timely, personalised feedback amplifies learning in online settings (Castro & Tumibay, 2021; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2005). Using videos to provide feedback is recommended as it increases non-verbal communication compared to written online feedback in online courses (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015). Moreover, teachers' online feedback can stimulate language development (Ene & Upton, 2014). Previous research on teachers suggests that feedback practices in foreign language emergency remote teaching have changed (Mäkipää et al., 2021a; Panadero et al., 2022). Hence, it is crucial to examine feedback in emergency

remote teaching from students' perspectives, to revise feedback practices and to promote educational equity. Several researchers (e.g., Ezra et al., 2021; Trinidad, 2021; Zancajo et al., 2022) have expressed concerns in terms of equity factors in emergency remote teaching. Therefore, research on emergency remote teaching is of paramount importance to enhance current teaching practices.

3 Research question

The main aim of this study was to investigate Finnish general upper secondary students' perceptions of teacher feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching. More specifically, the focus was on quality and quantity. The research question was:

1) What are students' perceptions of oral and written teacher feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching?

4 Methodology

4.1 Context of the study

The students examined in this paper were enrolled in general upper secondary education, which follows the 9-year basic education programme. Students usually start upper secondary education at the age of 16, and it lasts approximately three years. Students must take 75 mandatory courses, but in addition, they can choose optional and school-specific courses. As Finland is a bilingual country, every student must study either Finnish or Swedish as a second language. Students are also required to study at least one advanced syllabus in a foreign language, which is usually English. In addition to these languages, students can study optional languages, and the most common languages studied in general upper secondary education in 2020 were German, Spanish, French, and Russian (Vipunen, 2021). Schools can offer one or several optional languages, but providing a minimum number of optional language courses is not demanded by the municipalities that oversee the provision of school education.

Summative and formative assessment are prevalent in general upper secondary education, as teachers are expected to use both types to assess students in every course (FNBE, 2016). Teachers are expected to offer diverse options for students to show their skills and what they have learnt (FNBE, 2016). In Finland, the matriculation examination at the end of general upper secondary education is the only high-stakes exam.

4.2 Participants

Using convenience sampling, 282 students, from seven schools located in two regions within the metropolitan area of Helsinki and in Western Finland, answered an online questionnaire. However, the responses from 31 students were excluded as they did not respond to questions in the sections that collected core data aimed at finding answers to the research question. Therefore, responses from only 251 students were included in the dataset for analysis. Of the students, 72 were boys and 173 were girls. Four students chose the non-binary option, and two

students did not disclose their gender. Girls outnumbered boys as the number of girls in general upper secondary education is higher compared to that of boys (Vipunen, 2021). Thus, the dataset matches the student population.

A total of 130 students were in the 10th grade, 95 students in the 11th grade, and 25 students in the 12th grade. One student did not specify their grade. The data were collected after most 12th graders had completed their courses, which explains the low number of 12th graders. After the 9th grade in basic education, students can opt for vocational education or general upper secondary education. In other words, general upper secondary education is not mandatory.

Nearly every student studied at least two languages in remote teaching as only six students studied one language. Most students completed several language courses and studied several languages in emergency remote teaching. These are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of courses and languages studied in emergency remote teaching.

courses completed in emergency remote teaching	**number of students**
1–2	48
3–4	100
5–6	71
7 or more	32
languages students studied in emergency remote teaching	**number of students**
English	246
Swedish	228
German	44
French	42
Spanish	37
Russian	20

As illustrated in Table 1, the majority of students had completed at least three courses in emergency remote teaching. Regarding the languages, most studied English, Swedish, and German.

Given that the students were chosen by convenience sampling from seven schools, the present study is a collective case study (Stake, 2005). The case study approach was chosen because the use of emergency remote teaching varied across Finland's regions. From March 2020 to May 2020, practically all teaching was conducted remotely. However, between August 2020 and May 2021 the use of emergency remote teaching varied significantly. It was used mainly in areas in which abrupt changes in the coronavirus situation occurred. As the data were collected in May 2021, it was not of interest to study students whose latest experience with emergency remote teaching dated back to May 2020. Therefore, emergency remote teaching was used extensively in the seven schools participating in the study.

Ethical guidelines concerning studying students were adhered to conscientiously in this study. Approval from parents or carers was unnecessary because all the participants were at least 16 years old. According to Finnish regulations, students who are at least 16 years old can decide themselves whether to participate in a study or not. All the students provided written consent to participate in the study, and participation was voluntary. In addition, anonymity was treated meticulously,

and students were not asked to provide any sensitive personal data in the online questionnaire. Prior to undertaking the investigation, research permission was sought from the schools.

4.3 Data analysis

The student questionnaire focuses on students' general perceptions of foreign language emergency remote teaching, teachers' feedback practices, and teachers' assessment practices. The dataset used in this paper consists of 15 statements about teacher feedback (see Appendix A), one statement with 12 adjectives about the quality of teacher feedback, and one open-ended question about oral feedback. These questions are related to the students' perceptions of their own teachers' feedback practices in emergency remote teaching. Prior to collecting the data, feedback on the questionnaire was collected from ten researchers, and the questionnaire was revised based on their comments.

Fifteen statements about students' perceptions of teacher feedback were analysed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The statements chosen were based on scholars' recommendations for effective feedback practice (Brookhart, 2017; Ruiz-Primo & Brookhart, 2018; Shute, 2008) and on the requirements of the national core curriculum (FNBE, 2016). Spearman's correlation and exploratory factor analysis were also used to examine the data. To investigate the quality of teacher feedback, one-way ANOVA was used to analyse the 12 adjectives describing the quality of the feedback. The adjectives were: encouraging, unclear, diverse, personalised, detailed, discouraging, instructive, motivating, vague, one-sided, clear, and general. The adjectives were based on research on effective feedback (Brookhart, 2017; Ruiz-Primo & Brookhart, 2018; Shute, 2008). Contrary adjectives were also chosen for the questionnaire (e.g., clear – unclear) to make it more valid (Vanhatalo & Vehkalahti, 2020).

A Likert scale from one to five (I completely disagree – I completely agree) was used in the closed-ended questions. In the quantitative analyses, gender and previous course grades were used as independent variables because research has found differences between boys and girls in grades (Kupiainen et al., 2018), metacognitive awareness (Mäkipää et al., 2021b), and perceptions of feedback in terms of proficiency (Guo & Barrot, 2019; Mäkipää, 2021; Tarnanen & Huhta, 2011; Zhang et al., 2021).

The grade scale in Finnish education ranges from four to ten, with four meaning that the student has failed and ten meaning that the student exhibits excellent knowledge of the subject. Eight means that the student has shown good knowledge. In other words, grades below eight reflect satisfactory or lower knowledge and grades above eight reflect very good and excellent knowledge. This is the reason for choosing eight as the grade the cut-off value of the groups.

Grades in previous Swedish and English courses were used to form the groups. These languages were chosen because they are the languages that Finnish students typically study in general upper secondary education. In terms of students' previous course grades, the students were divided into two groups: (1) students with both grades below eight, and students with one grade below eight and the second grade of at least eight (N=100), and (2) students with both grades of at least eight (N=145). The remaining six students did not remember their previous course grades and were consequently excluded from the analyses when the effects of course grades were examined.

For the open-ended question about oral feedback, inductive content analysis was used to analyse students' responses for the question: How did you experience the oral feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching? Out of the 251 responses, 53 were blanks, and two did not address the question. Consequently, 196 responses were analysed. This means that over 20% of the responses were excluded. Neither the schools nor the students reported any problems with data collection, and no problems were detected in the online software. The open-ended questions were not mandatory, while the closed-ended were. It is safe to assume that some students might have been unable to express themselves or they simply did not want to comment on the question.

As a result of inductive content analysis, 249 codes were created. To determine the reliability of the content analysis, an outside rater was used. The rater analysed 15% of the responses (29 responses). Cohen's k was used to determine if there was agreement between the raters. The test showed almost perfect agreement, k =. 940 (95% CI, .860 to 1.000), p<.001 (Landis & Koch, 1977).

4.4 Factor analysis

The factorability of the 15 items was explored by using several criteria. First, using the Maximum Likelihood method of extraction, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity were explored. The recommended value for KMO is .60 or above, and Bartlett's test should be significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). The value for KMO in this data set was .80, and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2(105) = 1319.412$, $p<.001$). Second, all but one of the communalities were above .3 (see Appendix A). All but one of the items correlated at least 0.4 with at least one other item, and 12 items correlated at least 0.5 with at least one other item. Hence, factor analysis was considered to be suitable.

As a result of the factor analysis, three items (*The feedback that I have received has guided me forward*; *The feedback that I have received has supported my learning*; and *Teachers' written feedback has been precise*) were excluded as they had simultaneous loadings with two factors. Consequently, factor analysis of the remaining 12 items was conducted, with four factors explaining 66% of the variance. In the factor analysis, four sums of items were calculated and transformed back to the original 5-point Likert scale. More information on the factors is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Background information on the factors.

factor	**Eigenvalue**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**α**	**skewness**	**kurtosis**	**Shapiro-Wilk**
personalised feedback	3.296	27.468	27.468	.73	-.060	.335	<.001
inadequate amount of feedback	1.976	16.463	43.931	.75	-.077	-.049	<.001
no interest in feedback	1.502	12.516	56.447	.68	.258	-.335	<.001
clear feedback	1.147	9.562	66.009	.67	-.304	.016	<.001

As shown in Table 2, the scores of skewness and kurtosis were within the recommended range of -1–1 (Hair et al., 2017). The alpha values were above the recommended value of .60.

Considering that the Shapiro-Wilk test was significant, the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, the analyses were also run with the non-parametric equivalent Mann-Whitney U test. Should there be a difference between the results of the one-way ANOVA and Mann-Whitney U tests, it was decided that the values of the non-parametric test would also be reported.

5 Results

First, results about students' perceptions of teacher feedback in emergency remote teaching are described. Second, results about students' perceptions of the quantity of oral feedback are presented.

5.1 Students' perceptions of teacher feedback

Using gender as the independent variable, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine students' perceptions of whether feedback had been personalised, frequent, and clear, as well as whether students had found feedback to be important in remote teaching. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' perceptions of teacher feedback gender wise.

	Boys		**Girls**		**All**					
item	**M**	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**df**	**F**	**p**	**η^2**
personalised feedback	2.99	0.71	2.87	0.79	2.92	0.78	1	1.110	.293	0.01
inadequate amount of feedback	2.92	0.85	3.21	0.87	3.13	0.87	1	5.794	.017*	0.02
no interest in feedback	2.53	0.86	2.42	0.87	2.46	0.88	1	.813	.368	0.00
clear feedback	3.31	0.80	3.46	0.78	3.42	0.79	1	1.955	.163	0.01

Note: M = mean, S.D. = standard deviation, * = $p < .05$, η^2 = partial eta squared

As displayed in Table 3, girls felt that they had not received enough feedback, while boys were more pleased with the quantity of teacher feedback. The effect size was small (Ellis, 2010).

To ascertain whether students' perceptions of teacher feedback differed across previous course grades, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Students' perceptions of teacher feedback across previous course grades.

	Below 8		**8 and above**					
	M	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**df**	**F**	**p**	**η^2**
personalised feedback	2.83	0.71	2.98	0.82	1	2.226	.137	0.01
inadequate amount of feedback.	3.11	0.86	3.14	0.88	1	.051	.822	0.00
no interest in feedback	2.74	0.80	2.25	0.86	1	20.267	<.001*	0.08
clear feedback.	3.19	0.79	3.57	0.75	1	14.859	<.001*	0.06

Note1: Below 8 means students whose previous Swedish and English course grades were below 8, or one of the grades was below 8 and the other grade was at least 8.
Note2: 8 and above 8 means students whose previous Swedish and English course grades were at least 8.

As Table 4 depicts, students with higher previous course grades were more interested in teacher feedback, and they also found teacher feedback to be clearer compared to students with lower course grades. These differences were statistically significant, and the effect sizes were medium (Ellis, 2010).

5.2 The quality of teacher feedback

Using gender as the independent variable, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine students' perceptions of the quality of teacher feedback. Students' responses are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Students' perceptions of the quality of teacher feedback gender wise.

	Boys		**Girls**		**All**	
item	**M**	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**
encouraging	3.33	1.02	3.67	0.90	3.59	0.95
unclear	2.72	1.00	2.67	1.02	2.71	1.02
diverse	3.00	0.87	2.98	0.92	3.00	0.91
personalised	3.18	0.95	3.17	1.07	3.19	1.04
detailed	2.88	0.88	2.95	1.06	2.94	1.01
discouraging	2.10	1.03	2.23	1.01	2.19	1.03
instructive	3.42	0.86	3.51	0.90	3.49	0.88
motivating	3.21	0.93	3.32	0.89	3.30	0.90
vague	2.48	0.89	2.69	1.02	2.64	1.00
one-sided	2.81	0.94	2.96	0.97	2.91	0.98
clear	3.37	0.83	3.58	0.90	3.54	0.88
general	3.36	0.88	3.52	0.83	3.48	0.85

Table 5 shows that students found teacher feedback to be encouraging, clear, instructive, general, and motivating. In terms of differences gender wise, one statistically significant difference was detected: feedback had been more encouraging for girls than for boys ($F(1, 243) = 6.274$, $p=.013$). However, the effect size ($\eta^2=0.03$) was small (Ellis, 2010).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to ascertain whether students' perceptions of the quality of feedback differed across previous course grades. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Students' perceptions of the quality of teacher feedback across previous course grades.

	below 8		**8 and above**					
item	**M**	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**df**	**F**	**p**	**η^2**
encouraging	3.24	1.02	3.84	0.82	1	24.511	<.001*	0.10
unclear	2.85	0.97	2.59	1.04	1	3.897	.050	0.02
diverse	2.81	0.84	3.13	0.93	1	7.142	.008*	0.03
personalised	3.03	0.96	3.29	1.09	1	3.478	.063	0.02
detailed	2.83	0.93	3.00	1.07	1	1.554	.214	0.01
discouraging	2.38	0.98	2.04	1.02	1	6.547	.011*	0.03
instructive	3.19	0.84	3.68	0.85	1	18.865	<.001*	0.08
motivating	2.96	0.89	3.51	0.85	1	23.370	<.001*	0.09
vague	2.76	0.99	2.54	1.00	1	2.625	.107	0.01
one-sided	2.87	0.94	2.91	1.01	1	.091	.763	0.00
clear	3.26	0.91	3.72	0.81	1	16.480	<.001*	0.07
general	3.35	0.77	3.57	0.90	1	3.684	.056	0.02

Note: M = mean, S.D. = standard deviation, * = $p < .05$, η^2 = partial eta squared

Table 6 reveals that compared to students with lower grades, students with higher course grades found the quality of teacher feedback to be encouraging, instructive, and motivating. Statistically significant differences were found in six adjectives. The effect sizes for *encouraging, instructive, motivating,* and *clear* were medium, whilst the effect sizes for *diverse* and *discouraging* were small (Ellis, 2010).

5.3 The quantity of oral feedback

Inductive content analysis was conducted to investigate how students perceived the quantity of oral feedback in emergency remote teaching. Table 7 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 7. Students' perceptions of the quantity of oral feedback in emergency remote teaching.

Negative perceptions				**Positive perceptions**			
	category	**n**	**%**	**category**	**n**	**%**
	scarce	85	34	enough	45	18
	has not received oral fb	29	12	good	29	12
	there could be more oral fb	10	4	moderate	3	1
	less oral fb compared to contact teaching	3	1			
		127	**51**		**77**	**31**

Neutral perceptions				Other issues		
	category	**n**	%	**category**	**n**	%
	depends on the teacher/course	9	4	issues not related to the quantity of oral fb	23	9
	no difference between remote and contact teaching	4	1	I do not know	7	3
	one gets fb if one asks for it	2	1			
		15	**6**		**30**	**12**

Note: n = number of students mentioning the issue, fb = feedback

As Table 7 clearly shows, most of the students' perceptions about the quantity of oral feedback were negative: the quantity was scarce or non-existent. However, some students pointed out that they had received enough feedback. In short, it seems that teachers' oral feedback practices were inadequate according to most students.

In addition to the quantity of oral feedback, 23 students noted other issues about oral feedback in emergency remote teaching. In terms of quality, teachers' oral feedback had been encouraging, clear, detailed and too general. Moreover, teachers had relied heavily on written feedback. Some students had no need for oral feedback and had not paid attention to teacher feedback. Other problematic issues in oral feedback included: quiet students do not dare to ask for oral feedback, teachers do not have enough time to give oral feedback, and that it is demanding to give oral feedback in emergency remote teaching.

6 Discussion

6.1 Implications of the results

In the present study, the issue under scrutiny was students' perceptions of teachers' oral and written feedback in foreign language emergency remote teaching. The data yielded by this study provide convincing evidence that teacher feedback in emergency remote teaching was perceived as being clear, encouraging, and instructive. These aspects of efficient teacher feedback are also highlighted in the literature (e.g., Brookhart, 2017; Ruiz-Primo & Brookhart, 2018; Shute, 2008) and in the national core curriculum (FNBE, 2016). Yet, students also found teacher feedback to be general. Receiving personalised feedback from teachers is key in all education and particularly in emergency remote teaching in which interaction with teachers is limited. In contact teaching, teachers can observe students during the lesson and notice gestures and other types of non-verbal interaction that might reveal that a student needs help or other kinds of guidance. In emergency remote teaching, it is not feasible for the teacher to notice and react to non-verbal gestures. This accentuates the instrumental role of personalised feedback in emergency remote teaching.

Students are expected to be active participants in feedback processes (Carless & Boud, 2018; Molloy et al., 2020; Winstone, 2022). This means that the single

characteristics of feedback are not as important as what students do with the feedback: how they process it, engage with it, and use it. Even if feedback is clear, instructive and encouraging, it does not automatically result in active engagement with the feedback. In essence, teachers should focus on how to engage students in the feedback processes instead of merely focusing on single characteristics of feedback in isolation.

In line with my previous study (Mäkipää, 2021), students' perceptions of teacher feedback differ concerning proficiency. In short, students with lower course grades have exhibited more negative perceptions than students with higher grades. Research suggests that higher-level students are capable of using diverse types of feedback, whilst lower-level students need more explicit feedback that guides them to correct the mistakes and what to do next (e.g., Guo & Barrot, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021). One could therefore speculate that the students of this study who had lower course grades had not received the right type of feedback in emergency remote teaching. Teachers might have provided implicit feedback with more freedom to correct and revise their course work, but students with lower grades failed to understand the feedback and process it. To enhance educational equity, teachers should consider the type of feedback they give to students and whether they take a student's proficiency into consideration.

Gender wise, two interesting differences were found: boys felt that they had received more feedback from teachers than girls, and concurrently, they perceived teacher feedback to be more discouraging than girls did in emergency remote teaching. Gender studies indicate that many teachers consider boys to be less attentive and less well-behaved than girls (Riley, 2014). Teachers also have low expectations of boys and regard them to be unmotivated and idle (Åhslund & Boström, 2018). Given these prejudices, it is not surprising that boys characterised teacher feedback as being more discouraging; it is possible that due to the negative attention and expectations boys seem to receive from teachers, they might associate teachers' attention with feedback. It is also probable that due to the prejudices, some teachers give feedback differently to boys. I recommend that language teachers ponder both the feedback and the attention they give to boys and consider whether they have any possible prejudices about them. This is crucial from the point of view of promoting educational equity.

As to the amount of feedback, teachers might feel that boys need more feedback than girls because teachers find boys to be unmotivated and less attentive (Riley, 2014; Åhslund & Boström, 2018). Another explanation is that boys need more feedback as they generally receive lower grades compared to girls (Kupiainen et al., 2018; Tarnanen & Huhta, 2011), and boys' levels of metacognitive awareness are also lower compared to girls (Mäkipää et al., 2021b), which might suggest that boys are unable to use teacher feedback efficiently. Due to their lesser results and levels of metacognitive awareness, it is probable that boys' learning to learn skills are inferior to those of girls, which is why teachers provide boys with more feedback.

In terms of the quantity of oral teacher feedback, students expressed critical viewpoints. As the data showed, oral feedback had been scarce or even non-existent even though approximately one-third of the students had had positive experiences with the quantity of oral feedback in emergency remote teaching. One student even highlighted that it is challenging for the teacher to give oral feedback via an online platform. This is undoubtedly an accurate description; some students might not be willing to use microphones or cameras in online teaching, and interaction between participants can be arduous. A practical solution could

be to use various breakout rooms in which students work in smaller groups. Teachers can visit these groups and give personalised feedback to students. This is in line with Guillén and colleagues (2020) who argued that small-group chats are a fruitful way for teachers to provide feedback in emergency remote teaching. Oral feedback can also be given with videos, which increases non-verbal communication (Leibold & Schwarz, 2015).

As the matriculation examination is the only high-stakes exam in Finnish education, it is worthwhile to discuss its effects on teaching. Assessment impacts learning and teaching, which can be referred to as washback or backwash (Alderson & Wall, 1993). The matriculation examination rests only on summative assessment. Therefore, teachers might devote more time in courses to practise prior tests and providing tips on how to succeed in the tests instead of using formative assessment practices, such as self-assessment and feedback. As feedback comes second after assessment, providing feedback on students' assignments and tests in courses is indispensable, even though students do not receive any feedback on their tests in the matriculation examination. From the point of view of emergency remote teaching, providing feedback is key (Castro & Tumibay, 2021; Hodges et al., 2020). Thus, I recommend that language teachers minimise the washback effect with feedback.

6.2 Practical contributions

The education crisis caused by the pandemic emphasised the need for extensive research with a focus on distance education and emergency remote teaching to inform teacher education programmes so that teachers can be thoroughly prepared for online teaching.

The aim of the current study was to explore feedback practices in foreign language emergency remote teaching in Finland. Therefore, the contributions of this study to the literature are twofold; first, to provide insights of how students have perceived teacher feedback in emergency remote teaching, and second, to provide information about how those feedback practices could be improved.

Teachers need to consider differentiation when providing feedback in emergency remote teaching. Feedback is crucial for every student regardless of their proficiency, and feedback needs to be personalised to diversify and stimulate learning (Brookhart, 2017; Leibold & Schwarz, 2015; Ruiz-Primo & Brookhart, 2018; Shute, 2008). As some students found teacher feedback to be discouraging or unclear, that might exacerbate learning difficulties and inequities. Hence, teachers need to focus on students' individual learning needs, and as weaker students are often more vulnerable and less capable of self-regulated learning compared to stronger students, a particular emphasis should be put into feedback for weaker students.

The quantity of oral and written feedback seems to be unbalanced; the experience of half of the students was that the quantity of oral feedback had been scarce or non-existent. Some students also stated explicitly that teachers had given more written feedback. Oral feedback is a focal tool for increasing interaction between students and teachers. As interaction is often lacking in emergency remote teaching, particular emphasis should be applied to the enhancement of oral feedback practices in emergency remote teaching.

The evidence from this study also suggests that teachers need to focus on gender differences in feedback practices. More specifically, teachers need to explore particularly how boys react to and engage with feedback and whether they can revise their work with it. Providing training for using feedback to enhance

learning might benefit all students. Moreover, emergency remote teaching is strenuous for students, and it requires high-level cognitive skills (Chetwynd & Dobbyn, 2011). As not all students exhibit these skills, it is probable that their capacities for using teacher feedback are less efficacious than they could be. Hence, teachers could endeavour to make their feedback even more explicit.

Language teachers and educators need training for online teaching. This rapid growth of emergency remote teaching and the lessons learnt from it might increase the need for distance education in the future. A benefit of distance education will be access to more options in terms of languages students can choose from. If a particular school is not able to provide teaching in a given language, it can be arranged as distance education from another school. Training would therefore enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge of distance education. Therefore, the results of this study will assist teachers in planning feedback practices that enhance learning in distance education and also in emergency remote teaching if the world faces new pandemics in the future.

6.3 Limitations and future research

The scope of this study was limited in terms of the participants, as the case study approach was used, thereby reducing the likelihood of generalisations. Thus, one should view the results of this paper guardedly. When it comes to gender, most of the students were female, and the number of 12th graders was sparse. Additionally, an issue that was not addressed in this study was teachers' non-verbal feedback. The data also consisted of self-reported data, in other words students' perceptions of the issues, and students were asked to consider their experiences in language teaching as a whole, thereby rendering it impossible to make any findings on individual languages. Lastly, how students engage with teacher feedback was not included in this study.

It is recommended that future research be undertaken in the following areas: first, observation could be used to investigate the role of oral feedback as well as peer feedback in emergency remote teaching. Observation might also reveal how students react to oral feedback and whether they acknowledge it in lessons.

Second, students' proficiency could be assessed using exams and essays, thus allowing a more precise and detailed profile for the students. With more advanced methods of analysis, future research could unravel various learner profiles which could be used to ascertain how certain types of learners have experienced teacher feedback and what kind of differentiation would benefit them the most.

Third, as other types of feedback were not included in this study, subsequent studies could explore peer feedback. It would be of interest to investigate how emergency remote teaching has affected peer feedback, and how students have perceived peer feedback. Other fruitful topics would be to explore teachers' non-verbal feedback and students' engagement with feedback processes.

Research on remote teaching is worthwhile as the quantity of it might increase in the future. Although emergency remote teaching is only temporary and that teaching will be moved back to classrooms when the imminent danger is over is emphasised in the literature (Hodges et al., 2020), it is probable that remote teaching will be used even after the pandemic for geographical or other reasons. Because of research, scholars have put forward suggestions for fostering learning in remote teaching. With the enhanced quality of online instruction, it will be possible to offer more comprehensive and engaging online teaching in the future. Therefore, research on remote teaching is crucial.

Disclosure statement

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Table A.1. Factor loadings and communalities.

1. personalised feedback	**loadings**	**communalities**
Teachers have taken into consideration my individual learning needs in their oral feedback.	.852	.735
Teachers have taken into consideration my individual learning needs in their written feedback.	.707	.538
Teacher feedback has helped me achieve my goals, such as course goals.	.502	.319
2. inadequate amount of feedback		
I have not received enough oral feedback from teachers.	.607	.395
The quantity of feedback I have received has been too low.	.905	.792
Teachers have not given me enough written feedback.	.634	.433
3. no interest in feedback		
I am not interested in receiving feedback from teachers.	.724	.536
Exam grades interest me more than teacher feedback.	.520	.331
Teacher feedback is meaningless for me.	.751	.580
4. clear feedback		
When I am reading or listening to teacher feedback, I often notice that teachers have done the feedback especially for me.	.368	.261
Teacher feedback has been understandable.	.847	.735
I am satisfied with the clarity of teacher feedback.	.546	.475

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