

From Foundations to Future Directions: The Evolution of Oral Corrective Feedback in Irish Immersion Education

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Abstract

Irish immersion primary schools have experienced significant increases in popularity since the early 1970s. Notwithstanding the myriad of celebrated benefits associated with immersion education in Ireland, it must be acknowledged that while immersion students can achieve near-native-like proficiency in relation to their L2 receptive language skills, a similar standard in L2 productive skills is regarded as less likely (Baker & Wright, 2021). With this, immersion students' L2 has long been described as "linguistically truncated, albeit functionally effective" (Genesee, 1994, p. 5) implying that immersion students appear to communicate effectively but oftentimes through inaccurate language use. Researchers speculate strong correlations between shortcomings in immersion students' L2 acquisition process and the underestimated importance of the need for students to attend to and engage with the minority language during subject-matter and theme-based instruction (Tedick & Zilmer, 2020). Optimal language learning in immersion education is claimed to require careful attention to form within a meaning-driven context of specific content instruction (Tedick & Lyster, 2020). Research maintains, however, the nature of immersion teachers' experience with attempting to intertwine form-orientated¹ and meaning-orientated² pedagogy in immersion is complex, important to study, but yet to be understood (Ó Duibhir, 2018).

Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) may be described as an approach which supports students to notice and attend to their oral linguistic inaccuracies. Research suggests that OCF has the potential to support the integration of both language and content instruction which is regarded as a key component of effective instruction in immersion education (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019). While research in the field of OCF has gained much momentum among researchers and educators in the Irish immersion context over the past two decades, a comprehensive literature review of all such studies and their findings is yet to be conducted. One could argue that such

1 Instruction that focuses on grammar and language structures

2 Instruction that focuses on the meaning / content of the lesson

a review is crucial to the future development and direction of OCF practices in Irish immersion contexts, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. The current paper aims to provide a literature review of studies that focus on OCF within the Irish immersion context. In doing so, the paper will define OCF, discuss the rationale for its inclusion in immersion pedagogy and provide a brief overview of the current international literature regarding OCF. Following this, studies investigating OCF within the Irish immersion context over the past two decades will be systematically reviewed and analysed. Findings from each study will be synthesised in an attempt to ascertain exactly what is known from extant studies in the Irish minoritised language context. The findings from the literature review will then be compared with those of international studies in an attempt to unveil future directions of OCF policy, practice and research in Ireland.

Keywords: Immersion education; oral corrective feedback; second language acquisition; second language pedagogy

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Established in earnest as a Canadian educational experiment in Quebec (Lambert & Tucker, 1972), immersion education is now considered a strong form of bilingual education (Ní Dhuinnín et al., 2025). Following the success of the Canadian experiment, immersion education quickly spread across Europe and since then, the demand has surpassed capacity in many jurisdictions (Barrett DeWiele & Edgerton, 2021; Dunne, 2025). In Ireland, the majority of Irish-medium immersion (IMI) primary schools adopt an early-total immersion approach whereby the child is immersed in the Irish language (second language [L2] for the majority of children) from their first day of school. The instruction of the first language (L1) (English) is delayed until the latter end of the students' second year of schooling, at the earliest (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA], 2019).

IMI schools have grown exponentially in popularity over the past five decades and now account for over 8% of all primary schools in Ireland (Gaeloideachas, 2025). Such growth may be credited to the myriad of benefits associated with immersion education (Dunne, 2025), the most significant being its aim to achieve additive bilingualism (Lyster, 2007) and/or plurilingualism (Ní Dhiorbháin et al., 2023). Research repeatedly indicates that immersion students' L2 development generally surpasses that of their mainstream peers (Lyster, 2007) and that such development materialises without interrupting their L1 development (Baker & Wright, 2021; Tedick & Lyster, 2020). Notwithstanding such positive benefits, it must be noted, however, that while immersion students can achieve near-native-like proficiency in their L2 receptive language skills, their L2 productive skills often lag behind (Baker & Wright, 2021; Ó Duibhir, 2018; Tedick & Lyster, 2020). Immersion students' L2 has long been described as "linguistically truncated, albeit functionally effective" (Genesee, 1994, p. 5), thus implying that immersion students appear to communicate effectively but oftentimes through inaccurate language use. Researchers speculate strong correlations between shortcomings in immersion students' L2 development and the underestimated importance of the need for students to attend to and engage with the minority language during subject-matter and theme-based instruction (Tedick & Zilmer, 2020). While a counterbalanced approach between content and language instruction is proposed to lie at the heart of effective immersion education (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019), implementation of such an approach remains a constant challenge for immersion teachers (Cammarta & Ó Ceallaigh, 2020) due to the complexities (such as time, pedagogical knowledge, support, resources) involved in ensuring that the teaching and learning of content material is carefully balanced with that of authentic language teaching and learning. The current paper aims to address such challenges in IMI by unpacking the potential of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) to address shortcomings in students' L2 development while further supporting immersion teachers to embed a counterbalanced approach in their pedagogical practice. The paper endeavours to build upon previous lines of inquiries by systematically examining studies which explore OCF in IMI primary settings in an attempt to forecast the future trajectory of OCF in IMI.

Oral Corrective Feedback

OCF may be defined as a response of a teacher, or a class peer, that scaffolds the student in attending to the gap between their inaccurate utterance and target-like language (Ha, 2022; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022). From this viewpoint, OCF could be considered a catalyst for drawing students' attention to linguistic form during content-based instruction, thus creating optimal opportunities to organically shift between language and content instruction (Tedick & Lyster, 2020). The recent burgeoning of international research underscores the influential role of OCF on L2 development, and most researchers concur that OCF is not only beneficial but necessary for successful

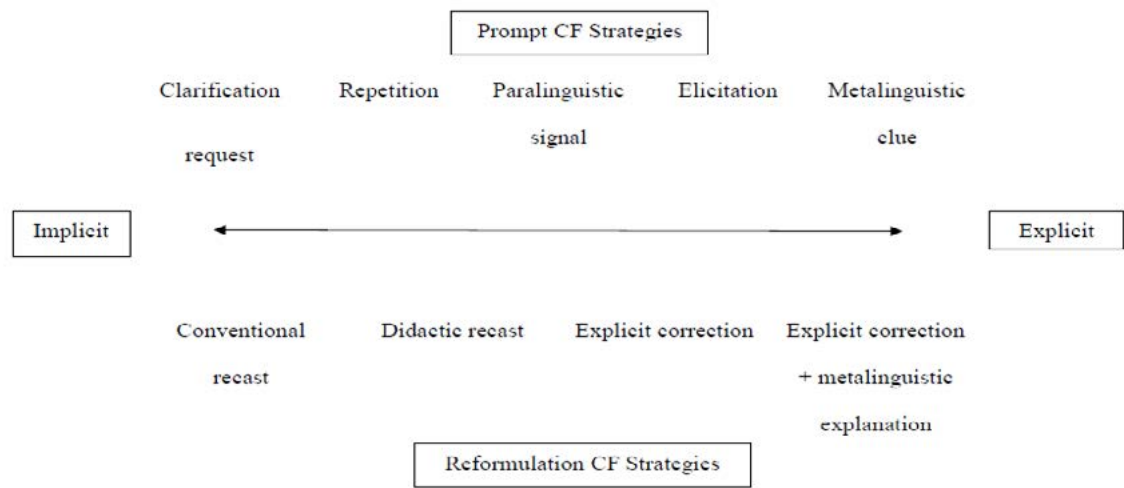
L2 acquisition (i.e. Brown, 2016; Li, 2010). Research indicates, however, that oftentimes OCF is availed of in an unsystematic manner which could, in turn, unfavourably impact a student’s L2 development (Ó Duibhir, 2018). Thus, one may deduce from such literature that proactive planning and systematic implementation are both key contributors to effective OCF.

Oral Corrective Feedback Strategies

Lyster and Ranta (1997) define six OCF strategies in their seminal study. These strategies include recasts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitations, repetitions, explicit corrections and clarification requests. Each of the OCF strategies have since been separated into two distinct categories referred to as reformulations and prompts (Lyster et al., 2013). Reformulation OCF strategies are considered those that provide the correct language form to the student, while prompt OCF strategies withhold correct language forms from the student (Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2020). In more recent times, researchers (Lyster et al., 2013; Sheen & Ellis, 2011) have differentiated OCF strategies between those that are explicit and those that are implicit in nature, locating each along a continuum as illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Range of CF Strategies along a Continuum



(Lyster et al., 2013, p. 5)

One active stream of research since the taxonomy of OCF strategies includes searching for the most effective strategy to correct students’ linguistic errors. While many different measures have been adopted in research studies in an attempt to establish the most beneficial OCF strategy for L2 development, consensus has yet to be determined. Research studies often celebrate recasts (within the reformulation category) as the most frequent strategy implemented by teachers to correct inaccurate utterances

(Brown, 2016; Li & Vuono, 2019). The popularity of recasts as an OCF strategy may be due to the fact that they support the correction of L2 inaccuracies swiftly by providing the accurate linguistic form to the student, without interrupting the rhythm of the lesson (Lyster, 2007; Yoshida, 2008), or without eroding students' linguistic confidence (Li & Vuono, 2019). On the contrary, prompt OCF strategies 'push' (Swain, 2005) students to attend to their linguistic inaccuracy and encourage self-correction. Such an approach requires the student to reflect on his/her utterance and then, to actively engage in error correction by drawing on their previously acquired knowledge. Such practice could potentially disturb lesson or language flow, which thus could lead to teachers' reluctance in availing of prompt OCF strategies. Interestingly, many classroom-based studies that compare both prompt and recast OCF strategies often report prompt strategies as more beneficial in supporting accurate L2 development (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004) given that prompts require students to reflect on their inaccurate utterance, further encouraging students to draw on their declarative knowledge to correct the language form. However, given that prompt OCF strategies require students to draw on their linguistic repertoire, or declarative knowledge, to engage in self-correction, literature suggests that recasts may be useful to support the acquisition of new linguistic forms while prompt OCF strategies may be better served in developing students' declarative knowledge, supporting the progression towards more procedural knowledge (Ellis, 2015). Literature reminds us, however, that many mediating factors contribute to students' 'uptake' and the overall effectiveness of OCF strategies (Ha et al., 2021) and different OCF strategies may be sensitive to the type of inaccuracy they address (Nassaj & Kartchava, 2020). Furthermore, the critical role of Professional Development (PD) in successfully implementing OCF practices in immersion classrooms should not be overlooked as it has been reported to successfully impact teachers' confidence in using varying OCF strategies, specifically prompt OCF strategies (Brown, 2016), while also positively evolving teachers' classroom practice and encouraging effective implementation of OCF in language classrooms (Ha, 2022).

Theoretical Perspectives of Oral Corrective Feedback

Much of the research previously discussed, which investigates the effectiveness of OCF strategies, appears to be conducted within an cognitive-interactionist framework. From this perspective, L2 learning and development is considered a product or a result of interactional processes and focuses predominantly on cognitive mechanisms (Nassaji, 2021) such as language input (Krashen, 1985), negotiation of language (Long, 1996) and language output (Swain, 2005). Researchers, however, caution considering OCF strategies from this perspective as it may view "... learners' abilities and needs as equal and unchanging" (Rassaei, 2019, p. 593), which is far removed from the reality of any immersion classroom given that no two L2 learners are the same (Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022). With this, rather than searching for the most effective OCF strategy, literature maintains that varying OCF types serve varying functions and different

strategies should be utilised depending on a host of varying factors (Ha, 2022; Ranta & Lyster, 2018). In line with such beliefs, recent research in the field of OCF has begun to view effective implementation of OCF strategies through the lens of a sociocultural theory (SCT).

From a SCT perspective, development occurs across two planes, initially through social interactions within the inter-psychological plane and then later, such interactions merge into the student's cognitive or intra-psychological plane. Thus, SCT considers L2 development as more than linguistic performance or product but rather focuses on the developmental process of gaining increased levels of onus and control of their linguistic repertoire progressing towards self-regulation (Nassaji, 2021). With this, it could be argued that SCT provides an alternative perspective of studying OCF. From the SCT viewpoint, OCF should be contingent, dynamic and tailored to the student's needs (Rassaei, 2019). In other words, OCF should therefore be provided within each student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), the zone that lies between the student's actual development and potential development that could be reached with support (Pathan et al., 2018). Literature within the SCT realm reminds us that the effectiveness of OCF strategies may not lie with one specific OCF type but rather the effectiveness of strategies may be contingent on how they are constructed to meet the unique needs of students.

In sum, though the literature on OCF briefly reviewed in this section is instructive, it provides little guidance for understanding OCF in IMI primary education. Most existing research focuses on international immersion and EFL contexts, which differ significantly from the sociolinguistic and pedagogical realities of IMI settings. In IMI classrooms, Irish is often a minority language outside of school, and teacher language proficiency, dialectology and goals for language maintenance vary. These factors influence how OCF is considered, delivered and received. Moreover, there is limited research on the experiences and perspectives of students and teachers in IMI environments, despite their importance in shaping effective OCF practices. A systematic review focused on this context, would fill a critical gap, offering insights for teacher education, classroom practice, and policy development. It would also support broader efforts to enhance Irish language acquisition and revitalisation through evidence-informed pedagogy. The next section outlines the methodological design adopted to examine the research on OCF in IMI over the past twenty years, focusing on a systematic review of empirical evidence.

Methodology

The study, which emerged from the rationale outlined above, aimed to investigate existing research on student perceptions and experiences of OCF in addition to teachers' understandings, implementation practices and experiences of OCF in IMI primary settings, both within and outside the Gaeltacht. The decision to focus exclusively

on the primary level (approximately 5-12 years) was intentional, given the foundational role of primary education in shaping learners' early language development and attitudes towards Irish. At this stage, students are typically immersed in the language for the first time and are highly responsive to teacher input. Moreover, OCF practices at the primary level often differ from those at post-primary due to developmental, pedagogical, and curricular factors. A focused review at this level allows for a deeper understanding of how OCF supports language acquisition in the formative years of immersion education.

The inquiry was structured around the following specific research questions:

- What are primary students' experiences and perceptions of oral corrective feedback in Irish-medium immersion settings, both within and outside the Gaeltacht?
- How do teachers in Irish-medium primary immersion contexts understand, experience, and implement oral corrective feedback in their classroom practice?

To address the above research questions, a systematic and structured approach, aligned with PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021), was employed to identify and select relevant research literature. Newman and Gough (2020) define systematic reviews as a "family of research approaches that are a form of secondary level analysis (secondary research) that brings together the findings of primary research to answer a research question" (p. 4). Prior to the search, pre-agreed terms were developed. To identify relevant terms, and following the approach of recent systematic reviews in the field of education (e.g., Leavy et al., 2022), a modified version of the PICO framework (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) was applied. Given that control or comparison groups are less commonly used in educational research (Gopalan et al., 2020), including them as a required search criterion would have considerably narrowed the pool of studies eligible for review. It would have also restricted the diversity of methodological and epistemological perspectives informing the analysis. Therefore, a simplified PIO framework was adopted, combining the 'Intervention' and 'Comparison' elements into a single category (See Table 1 below).

TABLE 1

The PIO framework of this study

Component	Description
Population	In-service/Pre-service teachers in IMI primary education; students in IMI primary education;
Intervention	Any study that involved teachers and students in IMI primary education
Outcome	Student experiences Classroom interactions Teacher perspectives, experiences and practices

As outlined in Table 1, the population of interest comprised teachers and students in IMI primary education. This focus was guided by the rationale that exploring the perspectives and experiences of both students and teachers would provide valuable insights into current OCF practices, thereby helping to inform the development of more effective and context-sensitive approaches for the future. The final search was conducted in July 2025. Two databases (ERIC and EBSCO) were searched systematically at that time.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Procedure

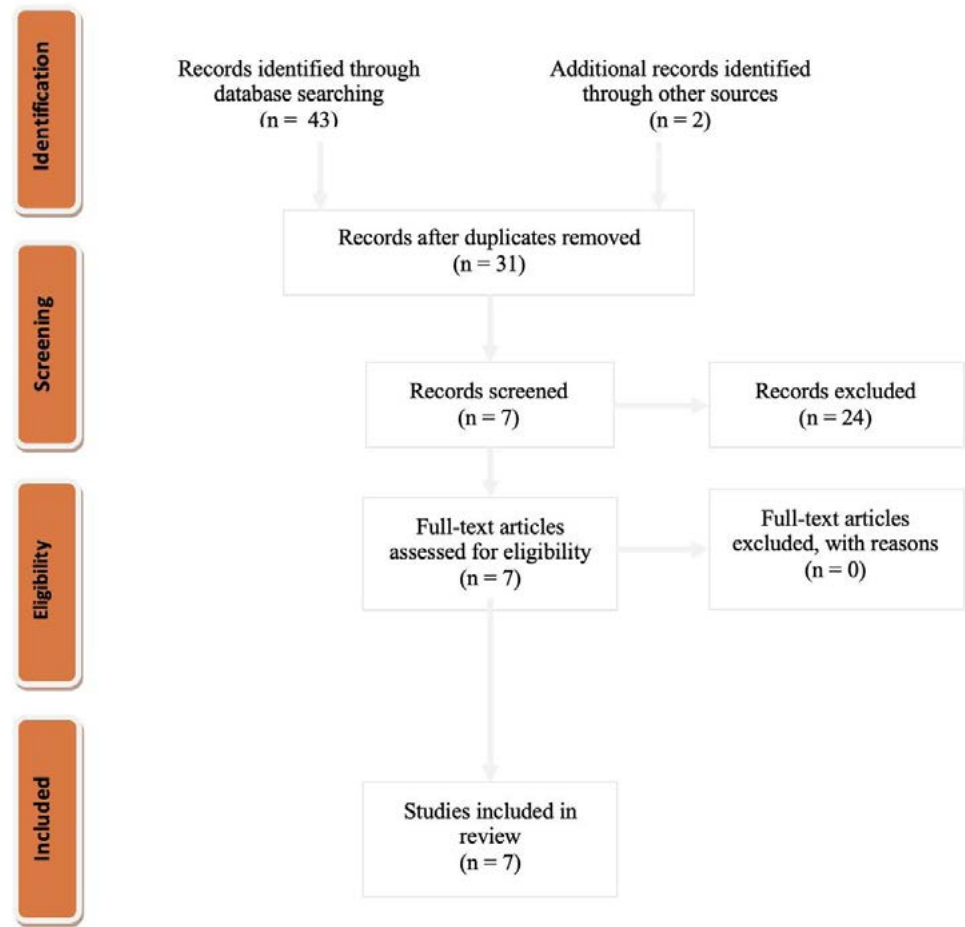
The screening process and corresponding eligibility criteria are summarised in Table 2. The following exclusion criteria were applied during the review process. Studies were excluded if (1) the full text was not available; (2) if the sample involved teachers and students from pre-school educational settings or post-primary Irish-medium educational contexts in Ireland; (3) if the study's aims did not include references to OCF; (4) if the study did not gather empirical data; (5) if the study was not peer reviewed and/or if the study was not a PhD dissertation; (6) if the study was not written in English or in Irish. Studies that fulfilled the inclusion criteria were identified through a careful screening process. The search results were identified and imported into Endnote Reference Manager, where duplicate entries were subsequently removed. The title/abstracts of all studies were screened by the three members of the research team. The full texts of the articles were then screened against the inclusion criteria. Any disagreements between the researchers were addressed and resolved through collaborative discussion until consensus was reached. This resulted in the identification of seven full-text studies (see Appendix A). The complete inclusion/exclusion criteria can be seen in Table 2. The PRISMA flow is presented in Figure 2.

TABLE 2*Inclusion / Exclusion Criteria*

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Availability	Full text was available from databases, authors etc	Full text not available
Sample	Teachers and students of IMI primary education	Teachers and students of IMI post-primary education
Discipline	Study involved OCF in either pre-service, in-service teacher education and / or classroom interaction	Study did not involve OCF in pre-service and in-service teacher education or classroom interaction
Research aims	Teachers' and students' OCF perspectives and experiences in research aims	Study did not include references to teachers' and students' OCF perspectives and experiences in research aims
Design	Quantitative and/or qualitative data	Study did not gather empirical data
Reporting	Peer-reviewed papers with a clear methodology as well as PhD dissertations	Inadequate reporting of: context, sample characteristics, research quality (e.g. trustworthiness), analytic techniques.
Thesis	Peer-reviewed articles and PhD dissertations	Master theses, conference proceedings, reports, reviews and book chapters
Type of feedback	Oral CF	Written CF
Practice strategies	Teacher practices, strategies, implementation; student understandings and strategies	Policy

FIGURE 2

PRISMA Flow Diagram



Data Extraction

Data extraction was collaboratively undertaken by the three members of the research team to support the narrative synthesis. The extracted data included: general information (such as title, author, year, and publication type); study characteristics and limitations (including research design, sample details, and noted limitations); and insights into OCF in IMI primary educational contexts. The data were organised into tables, followed by a narrative synthesis to interpret and contextualise the findings. In analysing the data, the study was informed by the research questions' key concepts which provided a lens through which to interpret findings and identify patterns, gaps, and implications relevant to the IMI context.

Limitations

The primary limitation of the current study is the small number of studies included in this review. The scarcity of research highlights the emerging nature of inquiry into OCF

in IMI contexts, especially at primary level. This gap suggests that our understanding of how OCF is experienced and enacted in IMI classrooms remains underdeveloped. Unlike more extensively studied immersion settings, such as French immersion in Canada, IMI education has not yet been the focus of sustained empirical investigation into feedback practices. Conducting a systematic review in this under-researched area is, therefore, essential for mapping the current state of knowledge, identifying foundational studies, and guiding future research priorities. By synthesising what is currently known, even if limited, this review lays the groundwork for a more robust evidence base to support pedagogical practice and policy development in IMI education. The low sample size can also be attributed to the strict application of PRISMA guidelines and inclusion criteria, which were necessary to ensure methodological rigour and relevance to the review's objectives. Despite rigorous search efforts, some relevant studies may have been missed due to the omission of certain synonyms during the search process. There is also a risk of publication bias, as studies reporting positive outcomes are more likely to be published than those with negative or null findings. A lack of heterogeneity among the included articles may limit the generalisability of the results, and time lag bias between the database search and the publication of newer studies could have led to the exclusion of recent research.

Findings and Discussion

Data extracted from the seven studies were analysed by the research team using the six stages of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Stemming from this in-depth analysis and guided by both research questions, the following two themes emerged (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

Themes from Database

Theme	Sub-Theme
Student Perceptions, Engagement and Readiness in relation to OCF	Perceptions
	Engagement
	Readiness
Teachers' Perceptions, Practice and Proficiency in relation to OCF	Perceptions
	Classroom Practice
	Teacher Proficiency

Student Perceptions, Engagement and Readiness in relation to OCF

Within the first theme, Student Perceptions, Engagement and Readiness in relation to OCF, three subthemes emerged which will each be discussed below.

Student Perceptions

Findings illustrate that students were frequently exposed to recasts, a form of OCF in which teachers reformulated incorrect utterances (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). However, it appears that these were not always recognised as corrections, particularly when used subconsciously or to maintain conversational flow. The lack of explicit signalling could result in ambiguity, leaving it unclear whether students noticed or understood the intended correction (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). In contrast, teachers tended to avoid overt, explicit corrections due to concerns that they could discourage participation, lower confidence, and cause learners to “crawl back into their shells” (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013, p. 266). This aligns with student preferences for less confrontational forms of feedback, suggesting that a supportive and “error-correction-friendly” (Ní Aogáin, 2019, p. 200) environment is essential for encouraging oral participation in fostering a “collaborative corrective culture” (Ní Aogáin, 2019, p. 192).

Student Engagement

Following the introduction of systematic OCF, data reveal that students became more attentive to language errors and increasingly engaged in self-correction and/or peer-correction (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Such behaviour suggests a rise in metalinguistic awareness, as students demonstrated greater ability to reflect on their own and others’ language use (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). From a SCT stance, self and peer-correction practices indicate language development among students as some progressed to a stage of self-regulation whereby they could engage in correction independently (Nassaji, 2021; Ní Aogáin, 2019). In a similar vein, studies illustrate that prompt-based feedback was received positively, particularly when it encouraged students to rephrase or seek a better expression (Ní Aogáin, 2019).

Students also reported valuing collaborative feedback processes that combined teacher guidance with peer involvement. Teachers facilitated meta-talk and structured discussions about language, helping students correct errors through guided questioning and reflection rather than direct interruption. These interactions supported oral accuracy, encouraged self-monitoring, and promoted confidence in using Irish (Ní Dhíorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). Similarly, findings highlight that students valued the explicit-inductive approach to grammar learning, particularly in understanding complex forms such as the genitive case in Irish (Ní Dhíorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). They appreciated opportunities to identify patterns and rules themselves, as well as receiving feedback, both from teachers and peers, that explained why a form was

correct or incorrect. This method further fostered metalinguistic awareness, promoting both self-correction and peer-correction, and thus, language development, particularly regarding grammatical gender and genitive errors (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). Interestingly, while students' perspectives in relation to peer-correction appears divisive across studies, in general, most students enjoyed engaging in peer-correction practices and found that it enhanced their self-confidence when speaking Irish (Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017).

It is relevant to note that some teachers further enhanced students' motivation to engage in accurate language use and self-/peer-correction practices by implementing reward systems, creating print-rich environments, using other-mediational sources such as dictionaries and encouraging students to keep language diaries. These strategies promoted students' development of accurate language use and supported student engagement, reinforcing the idea that encouragement and scaffolding can be more effective than correction alone (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ó Ceallaigh, 2013).

Student Readiness

Teacher observations indicate that younger learners (junior classes) benefited from more explicit guidance, as they were still developing their Irish register. Constructively delivered explicit OCF appeared to be well received by this group (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). It was interesting to note that while most teachers highlighted prompt OCF as most beneficial in scaffolding students' language development in the senior classes (fifth class), they further explained that oftentimes, more explicit OCF strategies, such as recasts, were required to support students, who did not attain rule-based knowledge of the grammatical error, to engage in error-correction (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022).

Teachers' Perceptions, Practice and Proficiency in relation to OCF

Three subthemes emerged within the second theme, Teachers' Perceptions, Practice and Proficiency in relation to OCF, which will each be explored below.

Teacher Perceptions

Findings demonstrate that teachers in IMI settings recognised the role of OCF in helping students notice and attend to linguistic errors, ultimately supporting the development of their L2 accuracy (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). They understood that a focus on language form, alongside content, was essential for effective teaching in immersion contexts (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019). While the implementation of OCF was an onerous task at first, in terms of time constraints and constant monitoring of students' language development, all teachers agreed that it is a worthwhile endeavour in order to support successful language development in IMI settings (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022).

Teachers participating in Ó Ceallaigh's (2013) study highlighted their familiarity with a range of OCF strategies and explained that they often combined different strategies depending on the classroom situation (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). However, teachers acknowledged that some practices, particularly recasts, were sometimes used unconsciously or habitually, which reduced their pedagogical effectiveness if not applied intentionally (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). It is important to note, however, that other studies indicate that teachers' awareness of OCF strategies evolved and developed significantly over the course of targeted PD which in turn, supported the effective implementation of a variety of strategies in accordance with students' strengths, abilities and needs (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022).

Through professional reflection, teachers recognised the need to plan target language structures and vocabulary in advance, moving beyond simply listing content-related terms (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019). Over the course of the research interventions, teachers in the studies appeared to begin to appreciate the value of modelling language (Ní Aogáin, 2019), correcting errors subtly, and embedding language instruction within subject teaching (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019).

Classroom Practice

Before PD sessions, teachers' corrective practices appeared to be inconsistent (Ní Aogáin, 2019) and context-dependent, often determined by the lesson's content focus rather than a strategic approach (Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Following participation in a PD programme and as teachers implemented an OCF intervention, both the frequency and consistency of feedback seemed to increase in their practice (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Teachers began to employ a broader range of OCF strategies which were unique to the students' abilities, while further encouraging student self-correction and peer-correction (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023).

Prior to targeted PD, recasts remained the most common form of correction, serving purposes such as clarification, amplification, and maintaining communication flow; however, they were not always delivered as deliberate grammar correction (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). Prompts, including metalinguistic feedback, were used selectively to promote language awareness and push students to self-correct (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). Teachers sometimes prioritised content delivery over error correction due to time pressure, curriculum demands, and classroom management constraints (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). Feedback was carefully balanced to maintain a respectful, supportive atmosphere and avoid discouraging participation (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). Time constraints and constant monitoring of students' language development were noted by teachers as initial hurdles in successfully implementing a range of OCF in IMI classrooms (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022). Notwithstanding such challenges, all teachers reiterated the importance and need for systematic use of OCF in IMI classrooms (Ní Aogáin, 2019).

Teachers blended implicit feedback with structured reflection, gradually shifting from immediate correction to student-guided discovery and discussion, an approach aligned with effective OCF practices in immersion contexts (Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). Meta-linguistic knowledge development, as a result of the explicit-inductive approach to grammar instruction, supported students to engage in self and/or peer-correction and further facilitated student understanding of teachers' OCF of their errors (Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). Lesson Study cycles revealed gaps in teachers' own Irish proficiency, prompting greater awareness, self-correction, and refinement of language modelling techniques (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2019).

Teacher Proficiency

Teachers acknowledged that their own linguistic awareness influenced which errors they corrected (Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Certain structures, such as the copula and relative clauses, were sometimes overlooked due to gaps in teacher knowledge or confidence (Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Similarly, reflection on early lessons often revealed insufficient attention to language form, leading to revised strategies for addressing student language deficits (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2021). It is important to highlight, however, that as teachers' rule-based knowledge developed, as a result of sustained dual-focused PD, their ability to clarify correct linguistic forms systematically increased (Ní Dhiorbháin et al., 2024).

Additionally, teachers appeared to value collaborative peer observation, whole-school planning, and shared professional dialogue as ways to strengthen OCF practice (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). The exchange of collective expertise was seen as key to addressing practical and pedagogical challenges in implementing feedback (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013).

Ó Ceallaigh (2013), Ní Aogáin (2019) and Ní Mhurchú et al. (2023) highlight that sustained PD, that is specific and unique to the school and/or teachers' needs, is critical for embedding effective OCF strategies in IMI classrooms. Teachers in Ní Mhurchú et al.'s (2023) study reported that the systematic approach to feedback would not have been feasible without ongoing guidance and support. PD was particularly important for strengthening teachers' linguistic proficiency, developing targeted feedback strategies, and ensuring the consistent identification and correction of a wide range of learner errors (Ó Ceallaigh et al., 2021).

Discussion

Despite some initial implementation hurdles, such as time constraints and consistent monitoring of students' linguistic developments, consensus exists among teachers and students that OCF is worthwhile and necessary for language development in IMI classrooms (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023; Ó Ceallaigh, 2013), which mirrors the majority of international literature in the field (Brown, 2016; Li, 2010; Nassaji, 2017). Teachers and students maintain that consistent

and systematic use of OCF, which is tailored to the students' ability, has the potential to enhance students' overall metalinguistic awareness and L2 development. Such findings hold significant implications for policy and practice in Ireland. Pedagogical practices, specific to the IMI context, such as OCF, should be embedded across the continuum of teacher education as a suggested approach to support IMI students' linguistic shortcomings in their productive skills (Ó Ceallaigh & Ní Shéaghdha, 2017).

In search of the most effective OCF strategy, findings gleaned from this investigation indicate that a variety of OCF strategies are required to support the development of all students' language in any given IMI classroom (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023), which supports the sociocultural stance on OCF (Rassaei, 2019). The continuous shift in focus between both content and language in immersion settings appears to affect the salience and effectiveness of some OCF strategies (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). Recasts provided during content-focused conversations or lessons, for example, may cause ambiguity in relation to the intention of the correction oftentimes, leading to the error to go unnoticed which aligns with international findings (Ballinger, 2021). Additionally, implicit OCF strategies, such as prompts, appear appropriate for students who attain some level of declarative knowledge in relation to the linguistic error but explicit OCF strategies, such as explicit recasts, are still necessary to scaffold students' error correction when rule-based knowledge has yet to be acquired (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022) and in the case of younger learners' developing register (Ó Ceallaigh, 2013). This finding re-emphasises the importance of ensuring the provision of OCF within students' ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), further reaffirming the value of a sociocultural perspective of OCF. Furthermore, findings illustrate that rule-based knowledge is crucial to ensure students' capacity to engage in self and/or peer-correction practices (Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017). Thus, the effectiveness of OCF strategies appears to rely on a host of factors, which echoes the perspective of Ellis (2012, p. 263) that, "... it may be fundamentally mistaken to look for the most effective type of strategy... the single 'best' strategy might be a chimera", and reiterates the notion proposed by Ammar and Spada (2006) that "... one size does not fit all" (p. 566). Thus, findings collated in the current exploration appear to concur with Nassaji (2021) that when OCF is tailored to the students' linguistic abilities and needs, it then becomes appropriate and relevant to the student's development. Such an understanding holds critical value for future research, policy and practice in IMI classrooms and in turn, these findings further support the stance of Rassaei (2019, p. 592) that "...literature on corrective feedback conceptualised within the sociocultural framework ... is limited and this approach merits further attention".

Most students in the reviewed studies portray a sense of enjoyment in engaging in OCF practices (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Aogáin & Ó Duibhir, 2022; Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017) which aligns with other international research (e.g. Li, 2017). Students in the discussed studies appear to value the reciprocal nature of peer-correction (Ballinger,

2021) given that they enjoy providing OCF to their peers but also appreciate accurate language use to improve their own grammatical knowledge (Ní Aogáin, 2019). Contrary to some teachers' initial thoughts, students believe that consistent OCF is fruitful and enhances their overall linguistic confidence. International research cautions, however, that students' desire and willingness to engage in error correction hinges on the teaching and learning context (Ha et al., 2021). In a similar vein, teachers in the current review emphasise the importance of creating an 'error-correction-friendly' environment in order to establish a 'collaborative corrective culture' (Ní Aogáin, 2019) in IMI classrooms, which is significant. Students further address the value of metalinguistic feedback and metalinguistic pedagogical approaches to support them in facilitating their rule-based knowledge, ultimately supporting their understanding of linguistic errors (Ní Dhiorbháin & Ó Duibhir, 2017) which aligns with other research in the area (Ha et al., 2021). Emerging from this finding, one may deduce that a combination of IMI-specific approaches such as OCF and the use of an explicit-inductive approach to grammar instruction would be complementary in nature, to enable students to reach their optimum L2 development, which is crucial for future practice.

Evidence from multiple reviewed studies maintain that teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge, in addition to their linguistic awareness, understanding and knowledge is crucial to the successful implementation of OCF strategies in IMI settings (Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023). Research cautions that insufficient capacity in one of these competencies will erode teachers' ability in another competency (Ní Dhuinnín et al., 2025), ultimately, impacting their overall practice. Therefore, teachers need to be competent and confident in their own rule-based knowledge and linguistic awareness of grammatical features to ensure pedagogical practices, such as OCF, are implemented in a successful manner in IMI settings. Findings in the current paper indicate that targeted PD for teachers has the potential to enhance teachers' OCF practices (Ní Aogáin, 2019; Ní Dhiorbháin et al., 2024; Ní Mhurchú et al., 2023) which aligns with international literature (Kartchava, 2021). Therefore, the researchers assert that sustained PD, which is dual-focused on teachers' linguistic knowledge in addition to their pedagogical knowledge, is essential to strengthen teachers' linguistic awareness and ensure feedback consistently addresses the full range of student errors, ultimately boosting both language accuracy and student confidence. This finding holds critical insight for policy makers in Ireland and should be considered in the creation and development of any form of future PD for IMI teachers.

Conclusion

In IMI classrooms, OCF is most effective when it is systematic, scaffolded, and tailored to students' developmental needs. Teachers should balance implicit prompts with explicit recasts, create a supportive error-correction culture, and integrate OCF with explicit-inductive grammar instruction to enhance both metalinguistic awareness and

learner confidence. OCF must be recognised as a cornerstone of effective pedagogy in immersion education. Teacher education in Ireland should embed IMI-specific practices, such as OCF, across the continuum. International evidence confirms that long-term, dual-focused PD strengthens both linguistic proficiency and pedagogical skill; policy should therefore prioritise this approach and support whole-school initiatives such as collaborative planning, lesson study, and peer observation to ensure coherence and consistency.

The Irish evidence base on OCF is still emerging. While the current study sheds some light on what we know in relation to OCF practices in IMI primary settings, the researchers assert that further research is required in the field. Data in the current paper suggests that further exploration on how improving teachers' linguistic awareness and proficiency through targeted PD could potentially influence the accuracy, range and frequency of OCF provided in IMI settings. Furthermore, future research should consider how students in IMI settings notice, interpret, and respond to different feedback types in real time, as well as the longitudinal impact of explicit versus implicit strategies on self-repair, language accuracy and confidence. Whole-school OCF implementation remains unexplored and offers a critical direction for inquiry. Drawing on international findings, Irish research should also consider sociocultural perspectives, highlighting that no single feedback type is universally effective; strategies must be adapted to context, student readiness, and error type. These suggested areas for future research would greatly benefit policy and practice in relation to OCF and students' accurate L2 development in IMI settings.

Ireland is at a pivotal moment in consolidating the success of IMI education. International research shows that sustained professional learning, classroom cultures that normalise correction, and a balanced repertoire of OCF strategies all contribute to stronger L2 development. Taking these lessons forward, Ireland should invest in long-term, context-specific PD, promote whole-school OCF frameworks, and expand empirical research in IMI classrooms. Doing so would align Irish practice with international best evidence while also advancing the unique goals of Irish language maintenance and revitalisation.

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Appendix A

Reviewed Articles

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