Oral Corrective Feedback in the EFL Classroom - An Empirical Investigation of Forms- and Message-Focused Phases of EFL Lessons

Research Question:
In how far is oral corrective feedback given in phases of a lesson that focus on forms in contrast to phases of a lesson that focus on message regarding different types of errors?
1. To what extent does oral corrective feedback take place?
2. What types of oral corrective feedback are used?

Error Types
(1) grammatical errors (2) lexical errors (3) errors in pronunciation

Types of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF):
(1) explicit (2) implicit reformulation (3) echoing (4) elicitation
(5) metalinguistic feedback (6) clarification request (7) peer feedback
(9) sound (10) delayed correction (11) no feedback
(12) self-correction

Phases of a Lesson
(1) focus on forms (2) focus on message
errors should always and immediately be corrected → explicit feedback types preferred
OCF is reduced to a minimum (only if the error would lead to a communicative breakdown) → researchers’ opinions on how to give feedback are divided

Informsants & Data Collection Procedure
- 3 classes of year seven & their teachers of a German secondary school in Bonn
→ each class: observed over ten school lessons
- standardised, open, not-participating observation

Extent of OCF
- OCF is generally more often given in forms-focused phases than in message-focused phases
→ f-f p: not to miss the teachable moment of new grammatical structures & new vocabulary
→ m-f p: whether a correction takes place or not is depending on the extent in which an error interferes with the comprehension of an utterance (independent of the error type)
- explicit OCF has many advantages; explicit feedback types are generally alleged to be more effective than implicit ones in forms-focused phases; apart from explicit OCF, delayed feedback, recasts and no feedback show significant theoretical advantages in message-focused phases
- a variety of feedback types is profitable to address different learner types

Discussion & Conclusion
- OCF is generally more often given in forms-focused phases than in message-focused phases
→ f-f p: not to miss the teachable moment of new grammatical structures & new vocabulary
→ m-f p: whether a correction takes place or not is depending on the extent in which an error interferes with the comprehension of an utterance (independent of the error type)
- explicit OCF is used in both phases to a great extent – but twice as much in forms-focused phases → OCF has many advantages; explicit feedback types are generally alleged to be more effective than implicit ones in forms-focused phases; apart from explicit OCF, delayed feedback, recasts and no feedback show significant theoretical advantages in message-focused phases
- a variety of feedback types is profitable to address different learner types