

Structured Oral Corrective Feedback in Business English Job Interview Simulations

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ABSTRACT

Job interview speaking requires grammatical control, appropriate professional register, organized self-presentation, and confidence under time pressure. This study investigated the implementation and classroom outcomes of structured oral corrective feedback (OCF) in a Business English course. The study conducted from April to June 2026 at Universitas An Nuur, Indonesia, the study involved 61 second semester Management students from two intact classes. A classroom-based explanatory mixed methods design combined a one-group pretest posttest procedure with observation of feedback episodes, an eight-item confidence questionnaire, written reflections, and semi-structured interviews. During six 90-minute meetings, students completed progressively less scripted job interview simulations and received explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic prompts, and delayed group feedback. The overall speaking mean rose from 63.12 to 78.46, with the largest gain in professional expression. The improvement was statistically significant, $t(60) = 12.97$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d_z = 1.66$. Of 194 observed feedback episodes, 69.6% produced successful uptake. Explicit correction generated the largest number of successful repairs, whereas delayed feedback was preferred during complete responses because it protected fluency and concentration. Qualitative evidence indicated greater awareness of recurring errors, more appropriate workplace wording, and stronger readiness to speak without full scripts. The findings suggest that structured OCF in Business English should integrate linguistic accuracy with register, relevance, answer organization, and strategic self-presentation.

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Introduction

English communication plays an important role in improving graduates' employment opportunities, particularly in professional setting where students are expected to interact with clients, colleagues, and employers across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In higher education, the value of English is therefore not limited to passing a

language course. Students also need to use the language appropriately in situations that resemble professional practice. This expectation is especially relevant to Management students, whose future work may involve presentations, meetings, customer communication, and recruitment processes.

For students in non-English major programs, however, professional speaking can be difficult. Many students understand basic grammar and common vocabulary but struggle to use that knowledge when they must respond spontaneously. In a job interview, they need to listen carefully, organize an answer, choose suitable words, and maintain confidence at the same time. As a result, an answer may be understandable but still sound incomplete, too informal, or poorly organized. Statements such as “I want this job because I need money” or “My weakness is I am lazy” illustrate this problem: the intended meaning is clear, yet the expressions do not present the applicant in a professionally appropriate way.

Job interview simulations offer a practical way to address this gap. They enable learners to rehearse common questions, connect language learning with workplace expectations, and evaluate the professional impression created by their answers. Workplace-oriented tasks make Business English learning more relevant because learners use language for recognizable occupational purposes (Le Vo, 2022). Task-based and roleplay activities are particularly useful when students progress from modelled responses to less scripted performance (Lertcharoenwanich et al., 2024a; Xie, 2022). Nevertheless, practice alone does not always help students identify why an answer is inaccurate, vague, or professionally unsuitable; focused guidance is also required during and after performance.

Oral corrective feedback (OCF) can help learners notice a mismatch between their production and a more accurate or contextually appropriate form. Research syntheses generally associate corrective feedback with positive second language development, although outcomes vary according to feedback explicitness, linguistic target, task, and classroom context (Li, 2010; Li & Vuono, 2019; Nassaji, 2016). Classroom meta-analytic evidence further suggests that OCF is especially valuable when learners are prompted to modify their own output rather than only hear a reformulation (Lyster & Saito, 2010).

OCF can be delivered in several ways. Explicit correction identifies the problem and supplies an acceptable form. A recast reformulates an inaccurate utterance without directly labelling it as erroneous. A clarification request indicates that an answer needs to be repeated or reformulated, whereas a metalinguistic prompt provides a clue that encourages self-repair. These categories build on the feedback-and-uptake framework of Lyster & Ranta (1997). Recasts are frequent in language classrooms, but learners may not always interpret them as correction (Brown, 2016). Studies of beliefs and preferences likewise show that students often value clear and noticeable feedback, while teachers may prefer less intrusive options that preserve interactional flow; preferences also vary across contexts and error types (Bao & Wang, 2023; Ha & Nguyen, 2021a; Nhac, 2022; Zhu & Wang, 2019). The timing of corrective feedback is a significant factor in oral language learning. Immediate feedback may improve learners awareness of errors because the initial utterance remains available in working memory. The timing of feedback is important in speaking activities. Immediate feedback can help students notice their mistakes because they still remember what they have just said. However, correcting students too often may interrupt their speaking and make them feel nervous. Delayed feedback allows students to finish the activity without interruption, and the teacher can discuss common mistakes afterward. Both types of feedback can be useful. Their effectiveness depends on the language being learned, the speaking activity, and the students’ feelings (M. Fu & Li, 2022, 2024; Xu & Zeng, 2023). In job interview simulations, the need to maintain composure makes a planned balance between the two timings especially important.

Despite extensive research on OCF in general EFL settings, three gaps remain relevant to Business English. First, many studies prioritize morphosyntactic accuracy or pronunciation and give less attention to the professional appropriateness of an answer. Second, learner uptake is often examined separately from confidence and task continuity. Third, limited classroom evidence explains how immediate and delayed feedback can be sequenced within job interview simulations. A grammatically acceptable response may still be unsuitable if it emphasizes personal need, presents an unnecessarily negative self-description, or fails to connect experience with the position. This study therefore operationalized professional expression as a separate analytic dimension and documented the relationships among feedback type, target, timing, uptake, speaking performance, and learner confidence.

The present study was conducted in the Business English course of the Undergraduate Management Study Program at Universitas An Nuur. It investigated a structured procedure in which the lecturer selected feedback according to communicative seriousness, recurrence, instructional stage, and the need to protect students' confidence. The study focused on speaking accuracy, professional expression, and confidence while also documenting the feedback types used and the extent of successful learner repair. Its contribution lies in connecting established OCF categories with the distinctive demands of professional self-presentation in a non-English major context.

The study addressed four questions: (1) How was structured oral corrective feedback implemented in Business English job interview simulations? (2) What types and targets of oral corrective feedback occurred during the intervention? (3) To what extent did students' speaking accuracy, professional expression, and confidence change after the intervention? and (4) How did students perceive the feedback they received?.

Method

This study employed a classroom-based explanatory mixed-methods design to examine changes in students' speaking performance and confidence through the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence (Creswell, 2022). The study was conducted from April to June 2026 at Universitas An Nuur, Indonesia, involving 61 second-semester students enrolled in the Business English course of the Undergraduate Management Study Program. Total sampling was applied as all students from two intact classes participated (Class A = 30 students; Class B = 31 students). Both classes followed the same syllabus, learning materials, intervention procedures, and assessment criteria; therefore, they were considered as one instructional cohort. The intervention was implemented through six 90-minute meetings consisting of a job-interview pretest, analysis of professional interview responses, guided speaking practice, role-play activities, interview simulation, and posttest followed by reflection and interviews. Oral corrective feedback was provided selectively, focusing on errors that affected meaning, frequently occurred, or reduced professional appropriateness. Students' speaking performance was assessed using an analytic rubric covering accuracy, professional expression, fluency, pronunciation, and confidence, with a total score of 100. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-tests with Cohen's d_z as the effect size measure. Qualitative data from observations, written reflections, and interviews were analyzed thematically following (Braun & Clarke's (2022) framework. Data integration was conducted during interpretation to explain how students perceived feedback practices and how these experiences related to changes in speaking performance and confidence. All participants' identities were protected using anonymous codes. As the study did not involve a control group, the findings are interpreted as instructional improvement associated with the implemented feedback sequence rather than causal effects of OCF alone.

Results and Discussion

1. Implementation

Classroom observation showed that the feedback procedure operated through three recurring phases: preparation, performance, and reflection. During preparation, students analyzed model answers, identified the purpose of common interview questions, and examined differences between everyday wording and professionally appropriate expression. During performance, they answered questions individually or in pairs with progressively less dependence on written scripts. During reflection, students reviewed feedback, reformulated problematic responses, and attempted the answer again. This sequence made correction predictable and task-focused: feedback was presented as support for improving an interview response rather than as a public judgment of the learner. The progression also reflected task-based principles by moving from supported language use toward increasingly independent performance (Penning De Vries et al., 2010)

Table 1. Sequence of the Classroom Intervention

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Main activity</i>	<i>Feedback emphasis</i>
1	Individual job-interview pretest	Baseline observation; no instructional feedback during the test
2	Analysis of model interview answers	Professional register, answer structure, and recurring language problems
3	Guided response practice	Explicit correction, recasts, and metalinguistic prompts
4	Interviewer-applicant role-play	Clarification requests, self-repair, and peer-supported revision
5	Full job-interview simulation	Selective immediate feedback and delayed group feedback
6	Individual posttest and reflection	Post-performance reflection and follow-up interviews

Feedback decisions were guided by four considerations: whether the utterance affected meaning, whether the problem recurred, whether it weakened professional appropriateness, and whether correction at that moment would disrupt the learner's performance. Immediate explicit correction was used when an error made the intended meaning unclear or represented a high-priority form repeatedly produced by several students. Recasts were used for minor problems when interaction could continue without requiring explanation. Clarification requests and metalinguistic prompts were selected when the learner appeared capable of self-repair. Delayed feedback was most common after a complete answer or full simulation, particularly for register, answer organization, and strategic self-presentation. This differentiated procedure operationalized OCF as a task-contingent pedagogical decision rather than a fixed preference for one feedback type.

One student, for example, answered, "I want this job because I need money and experience." The lecturer did not treat the response only as a grammar issue. Instead, the feedback explained that the answer emphasized personal need and did not demonstrate potential contribution. After discussion, the student revised the response to: "I am interested in this position because it matches my communication skills and gives me an opportunity to contribute while developing my professional experience." The revision illustrates the central principle of the intervention: an effective job-interview response must be both linguistically acceptable and professionally appropriate.

2. Distribution and Focus of Oral Corrective Feedback

A total of 194 feedback episodes were recorded during the instructional meetings. As shown in Table 2, explicit correction was the most frequent type, accounting for 36.1% of all episodes, followed by recasts at 25.3%. Clarification requests and metalinguistic prompts together represented 28.9%, while delayed group feedback accounted for 9.8%. The prominence of explicit correction differs from settings in which recasts dominate teacher feedback (Brown, 2016), but the pattern is understandable in the present context. Students were simultaneously managing language, content, interview conventions, and anxiety; subtle reformulations were therefore not always recognized as correction. Cross-context research similarly indicates that feedback becomes more likely to generate uptake when its corrective function is noticeable (Ha & Murray, 2021; T. Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Sheen, 2004)

Table 2. Distribution of Oral Corrective Feedback Types

<i>Feedback type</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Explicit correction	70	36.1%
Recast	49	25.3%
Clarification request	32	16.5%
Metalinguistic prompt	24	12.4%
Delayed group feedback	19	9.8%
Total	194	100%

The focus of feedback was divided almost evenly between grammatical accuracy and professional expression. Table 3 shows that grammar accounted for 30.9% of episodes and professional expression for 29.4%. The remaining feedback addressed vocabulary choice, pronunciation, and answer organization. Grammar feedback included verb forms, articles, prepositions, modal constructions, and word forms. Professional-expression feedback addressed formality, relevance, positive self-presentation, workplace vocabulary, and the use of specific evidence. The near-equal emphasis is pedagogically significant because Business English cannot be reduced to general conversation supplemented by occupational terminology. Students must also understand how wording shapes the professional identity projected through an answer.

Table 3. Focus of Feedback Episodes

<i>Feedback focus</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Grammar accuracy	60	30.9%
Professional expression	57	29.4%
Vocabulary choice	36	18.6%
Pronunciation	23	11.9%
Answer organization	18	9.3%
Total	194	100%

The distribution suggests that the lecturer adapted feedback to the communicative stakes of the task. Explicit correction was particularly useful for high-value language and professionally risky expressions, while recasts preserved interaction when the problem was

minor. This supports the view that recasts should not be treated as inherently weak or strong; their value depends on whether learners perceive them as corrective and can process the reformulation while continuing the task (Goo & MacKey, 2013). Learner and teacher preferences reported in other contexts likewise favor flexibility rather than a universal technique (Bao & Wang, 2023; Ha & Nguyen, 2021a; Nhac, 2022; Zhu & Wang, 2019).

3. Learner Uptake Following Feedback

Overall, 135 of the 194 feedback episodes resulted in successful uptake, representing 69.6% of the observed episodes. A further 35 episodes produced partial repair and 24 produced no uptake. Explicit correction generated the largest number of successful repairs, whereas recasts produced a comparatively larger number of partial or absent responses. Clarification requests also resulted in substantial successful uptake because they pushed students to reconsider their wording rather than simply repeat the same form.

Table 4. Learner Uptake by Feedback Type

<i>Feedback type</i>	<i>Successful</i>	<i>Partial</i>	<i>No uptake</i>	<i>Total</i>
Explicit correction	55	10	5	70
Recast	27	11	11	49
Clarification request	23	6	3	32
Metalinguistic prompt	16	5	3	24
Delayed group feedback	14	3	2	19
Total	135	35	24	194

The uptake pattern supports the importance of noticeability but should not be interpreted as direct evidence of durable acquisition. Uptake is an immediate interactional response showing that the learner recognized and acted on feedback; long-term learning requires retention and transfer beyond the original episode (Fu & Li, 2022b; Lyster & Saito, 2010). During a job-interview simulation, learners already devote substantial cognitive resources to selecting content and managing nervousness. Under these conditions, a clear correction may be more useful than an unobtrusive reformulation. The findings do not imply that recasts should be avoided. Instead, recasts were most suitable when a minor error could be reformulated without interrupting the response, while explicit feedback was more effective for consequential or recurrent targets. This task-contingent interpretation is consistent with broader research showing that OCF outcomes vary according to feedback explicitness, target, and instructional context (Fu & Li, 2022; Nassaji, 2016).

Table 5. Pretest and Posttest Speaking Performance

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Pretest mean</i>	<i>Posttest mean</i>	<i>Mean gain</i>	<i>t(60)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's dz</i>
Speaking accuracy	12.48	15.61	3.13	9.45	< .001	1.21
Professional expression	11.74	16.12	4.38	11.56	< .001	1.48
Fluency	13.02	15.41	2.39	-	-	-
Pronunciation	13.10	15.18	2.08	-	-	-
Confidence	12.78	16.14	3.36	9.92	< .001	1.27

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Pretest mean</i>	<i>Posttest mean</i>	<i>Mean gain</i>	<i>t(60)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's dz</i>
Overall score	63.12	78.46	15.34	12.97	< .001	1.66

The strongest gain in professional expression reflects the alignment between the intervention and the target task. Students repeatedly practiced several high-value interview functions: explaining motivation, describing strengths, discussing an area for improvement, presenting relevant experience, and stating a potential contribution. Feedback helped them replace vague or professionally risky responses with answers that connected personal qualities to workplace expectations. This pattern is consistent with evidence that role-play and simulated workplace tasks strengthen oral performance when language support is tightly connected to the professional purpose of the activity (Le Vo, 2022; Lertcharoenwanich et al., 2024). The gains in accuracy and overall speaking performance are also compatible with meta-analytic evidence that classroom OCF can facilitate second-language development (Li, 2010).

The statistical improvement must nevertheless be interpreted cautiously. The study did not include a control group, and students also benefited from repeated practice, familiarity with interview questions, model answers, peer observation, and increasing knowledge of interview conventions. Structured feedback was a central component of the instructional sequence, but it was not the only plausible source of change. The large effect sizes therefore indicate substantial within-group improvement rather than an isolated causal effect attributable solely to OCF.

5. Development of Accuracy and Professional Expression

Accuracy improved as learners encountered recurring high-frequency problems across repeated rounds of practice. Explicit correction was particularly efficient for errors that could be addressed through a short, stable explanation. For example, “I am interest in this position” was revised after attention was directed to the adjective form interested, while “I can working under pressure” was repaired after a prompt reminded the learner that a modal verb is followed by a base form. However, the intervention extended beyond formal accuracy by helping students reformulate answers that were grammatically understandable but professionally ineffective.

Table 6. Examples of Linguistic and Professional Reformulation

<i>Initial response</i>	<i>Feedback focus</i>	<i>Improved response</i>
I am interest in this position.	Adjective form	I am interested in this position.
I want get experience.	Infinitive structure and word choice	I want to gain professional experience.
I can working under pressure.	Base verb after a modal	I can work under pressure.
I want this job because I need money.	Professional motivation	I am interested in this position because it matches my skills and career goals.
My weakness is I am lazy.	Strategic self-presentation	One area I am currently improving is time management.
I can do many things.	Specific contribution	I can support administrative tasks, communicate with customers, and work collaboratively with the team.

The examples demonstrate why professional expression should be assessed separately from grammar. The improved answers do not merely contain more accurate forms; they also present clearer motivation, reduce unnecessary negative self-description, and specify

how the applicant could contribute. This competence can be described as professional communicative accuracy: the ability to express an intended meaning in a linguistically acceptable form that is also relevant, appropriately framed, and suitable for the workplace context. Business English instruction therefore needs criteria that capture register, answer relevance, strategic organization, and professional identity, rather than relying only on general measures of correctness and fluency (Le Vo, 2022; Xie, 2022).

6. Confidence and Students' Perceptions

The confidence questionnaire increased from an overall mean of 2.88 to 3.84 on a five-point scale. The largest improvement concerned confidence when answering interview questions and using professional expressions. Students also reported greater readiness to speak without reading a complete script and a stronger ability to continue after receiving feedback. Familiarity with the task likely contributed to these changes, but reflections consistently connected growing confidence with the opportunity to revise and repeat an answer after correction.

Table 7. Confidence Questionnaire Results

<i>Confidence aspect</i>	<i>Pretest mean</i>	<i>Posttest mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Answering interview questions	2.73	3.92	Improved
Using professional expressions	2.65	3.89	Improved
Speaking without reading a full text	2.87	3.71	Improved
Continuing after receiving feedback	3.04	3.83	Improved
Overall confidence	2.88	3.84	Improved

Four themes emerged from the reflections and interviews. First, students valued feedback that made the problem easy to recognize. Second, they preferred delayed feedback during a complete interview answer because it allowed them to maintain concentration. Third, feedback on professional wording was considered especially valuable because many students had not previously realized that an understandable answer could still sound unsuitable. Fourth, repeated cycles of performance, feedback, revision, and re-performance reduced anxiety and made the task feel more manageable.

Student 07: "At first, I was nervous when the lecturer corrected me. After several practices, I understood that the correction helped me answer more clearly."

Student 18: "I could finish my answer first. After that, I could see my mistakes and improve the sentence without losing the idea."

Student 42: "The feedback about professional expressions was useful because I did not know that some answers sounded too informal for an interview."

These responses show that direct feedback did not automatically reduce confidence. Its effect depended on how, when, and why it was delivered. Feedback was more readily accepted when it was selective, supportive, clearly connected to the task, and followed by an opportunity to try again. This interpretation aligns with evidence that learners often value clear correction even when teachers remain concerned about interruption and emotional response (Bao & Wang, 2023; Ha & Murray, 2021b). It also supports research showing that anxiety interacts with feedback timing: immediate correction may be useful

when a target requires rapid clarification, while delayed correction may better protect performance continuity during an extended response (M. Fu & Li, 2024).

7. Integrated Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

The findings support a task-contingent view of OCF. Feedback was most useful when it was selected according to the communicative demands of the interview rather than applied uniformly to every deviation from standard English. The lecturer prioritized errors and expressions that affected meaning, recurred across performances, or weakened the professional quality of the answer. This selectivity protected fluency while still providing clear guidance. It also reconciled the apparent tension between explicit feedback and interactional continuity: direct correction was valuable during guided practice, whereas less intrusive or delayed feedback was often preferable during a complete simulation. Such flexibility is consistent with interaction-oriented accounts in which the contribution of feedback depends on learners' noticing, processing capacity, and opportunity to modify output (T. Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Kartchava et al., 2020; Mackey, 2020).

The findings further indicate that feedback type should be coordinated with instructional stage. During model analysis and guided response practice, explicit correction and metalinguistic prompts can provide the clarity required to establish accurate forms and professional alternatives. During pair role-play, clarification requests can encourage self-repair without immediately supplying the answer. During a full simulation, recasts and delayed feedback can preserve fluency and composure when interruption would weaken the authenticity of the task. After performance, whole-class feedback can address common problems without publicly identifying individual students. Evidence comparing immediate and delayed feedback similarly suggests that timing should be matched to learning goals rather than treated as a single fixed rule (M. Fu & Li, 2024a; Xu & Zeng, 2023).

For lecturers, the practical implication is that job-interview activities should include an explicit feedback plan. The plan should identify target language, professional functions, high-priority problems, and the stages at which immediate or delayed feedback will be provided. Students also need time to reformulate and repeat an answer; without re-performance, correction may remain teacher-supplied information rather than usable speaking knowledge. Assessment rubrics should distinguish professional expression from general accuracy by including register, relevance, organization, workplace vocabulary, and strategic self-presentation. At the program level, lecturers may benefit from collaborative calibration of rubrics and feedback practices because structured professional development can reshape teachers' beliefs and strengthen consistency across classes (Ha & Nguyen, 2021b).

The study also has implications for research. Future investigations should compare structured OCF with alternative feedback sequences, include delayed posttests, and examine transfer to other professional speaking tasks such as presentations, meetings, negotiations, and customer-service interactions. Stronger designs should report inter-rater reliability for speaking scores, internal consistency for confidence measures, and fidelity checks for feedback implementation. Such work would help determine whether the professional-expression gains observed here are retained and generalized beyond familiar interview questions.

Conclusion

This study examines structured oral corrective feedback in Business English job interview simulations involving 61 second-semester Management students at An Nuur University. The intervention was carried out through a planned sequence of preparation, implementation, feedback, reformulation, and re-implementation. In the 194 observed feedback episodes, explicit correction was the most frequently used technique and resulted in the highest number of improvements, while recast, clarification requests, metalinguistic prompts, and delayed group feedback had different objectives according to the instructional stage. Delayed feedback is highly valued during complete responses because it allows students to maintain fluency and concentration. The overall speaking performance of the students improved from 63.12 to 78.46, with the greatest increase in professional expression. Speaking accuracy and confidence also increased significantly. Qualitative evidence shows that students become more aware of recurring mistakes, use more workplace-appropriate vocabulary, and are increasingly willing to speak without a complete script. The findings support the task-based view of OCF: the effectiveness of feedback depends not only on linguistic form but also on communicative purpose, timing, visibility, learner readiness, and the opportunity to revise answers. Professional expression should be treated as a distinct dimension from Business English performance, which includes register, relevance, answer organization, workplace vocabulary, and strategic self-presentation.

The results should be interpreted within the constraints of a first-class group design. Repeated practice, model answers, peer observation, and familiarity with interview conventions may also have contributed to the improvement. Future research should use comparison groups, delayed posttests, reliability evidence, and transfer tasks. In practice, instructors should prioritise recurring or consequential problems, combine immediate feedback during guided practice with delayed feedback during full simulation, and provide structured opportunities for reformulation and repeated performance.

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