

Teacher Talk and Learner Response: A Discourse Study of Oral Feedback in Speaking Classes in Libya

Khawla Mostafa Abobaker¹

Rayan Mahmoud Adlali²

^{1&2}Libyan Academy for Postgraduate Studies

Department of English Language and Literature

Afaf abad³

Department of English Language - Faculty of Arts, Al-Khums / Al-Marqab University

Afaf.abad@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between teachers' oral corrective feedback (OCF) and students' responses in English as a foreign language EFL speaking classes at Janzour, Libya through a qualitative discourse-analytic approach. Located within the wider area of classroom interaction research and rooted in the theoretical orientations of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the study aims to describe and interpret the types of feedback strategies deployed by EFL speaking teachers, how students orient to and respond to those strategies, and the socio-cultural and institutional mechanisms that mediate the feedback-uptake dynamic in the Libyan higher education context. Data will be collected via naturalistic audio recording of speaking lessons and semi-structured interviews with participating teachers and students. The research reveals that

1. Introduction

The communication of a student/teacher via feedback/response is among the most important areas of research in second language acquisition (SLA). In an oral communication situation, the way in which a teacher corrects a student and how the student is engaged with the teacher's correction both affect the immediate repair of language and the long-term internalisation of language. Although many studies have been conducted worldwide over the past 30 years in different types of EFL contexts, a notable research gap remains in the area of classroom oral feedback in North African Universities, particularly in higher education in Libya.

Post 2011 educational reform of Libya has highlighted the need to effectively provide and receive oral feedback to support development of English Language (L2) in the classroom (Benali & Abas 2021). In Libya, English is a foreign language and will only be taught in educational settings with Arabic as the primary means of communication across all other contexts (L1). Thus, the use of L2 within an EFL classroom at Libyan universities will reflect both a much deeper adherence to traditional pedagogical practices as associated with many years of using a teacher-directed model, no tolerance for publicly displaying errors, and implementing assessment procedures that favour the product over the process (Elmenfi 2017; Elmenshawy 2022). Therefore, the institutional and cultural factors produce a unique discursive ecology for which to understand providing and receiving corrective feedback cannot be adequately accounted for using Western and East Asian based theories or perspectives.

The present study addresses this gap by examining, through discourse analysis, how EFL speaking teachers at Janzour deploy oral corrective feedback and how their students

respond to such feedback. It draws on recent advances in classroom interaction research (Sert, 2019; Waring, 2021) and on the growing contextualised strand of OCF scholarship (Lyster et al., 2020; Nassaji, 2021) to construct an empirically grounded account of feedback dynamics in an underrepresented institutional context.

1.1 Problem Statement

A critical gap exists at the intersection of classroom discourse research and Libyan EFL pedagogy. While the international OCF literature has produced robust cross-contextual datasets, North African university classrooms—and Libyan higher education in particular—remain almost entirely absent from this empirical record. The few existing studies on Libyan EFL classrooms have relied predominantly on questionnaire-based or checklist methodologies that lack the sequential and interactional granularity necessary to capture how feedback unfolds as a moment-by-moment discursive practice. As a consequence, Libyan EFL teachers and curriculum designers operate without access to empirical evidence concerning the feedback strategies that are actually practiced in their classrooms, the degree to which students engage with those strategies, or the cultural and institutional forces that shape both. This study aims to fill this gap.

1.2 Research Questions

The study has been guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of oral corrective feedback are predominantly used by EFL speaking teachers at Janzour, and how are these feedback strategies distributed across classroom discourse?
2. How do students respond to different types of oral corrective feedback, and what interactional patterns characterize successful repair, partial repair, and non-uptake in the Libyan EFL classroom?
3. In what ways do socio-cultural factors (such as face-saving and power distance) mediate the feedback-uptake dynamic and shape learner response patterns?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify and define the categories of oral corrective feedback used by EFL speaking teachers at Janzour; describe how these categories of feedback are enacted through sequences of interaction in the classroom.
2. Describe and interpret how different students respond to oral corrective feedback provided by their teacher, including how some students successfully repair their errors.
3. Investigate how socio-cultural factors (e.g., face saving, power distance, institutional conservatism) influence the choice of teacher feedback and the patterns of response to teacher feedback by students in Libyan EFL speaking classrooms.
4. Examine the relationship between EFL speaking teachers' stated beliefs regarding the purpose of providing corrective feedback to their students and their actual classroom practice with regard to providing corrective feedback; identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
5. Develop pedagogical recommendations for providing (oral) corrective feedback in higher education in Libya that incorporate theoretical and contextual factors.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant on three interconnected levels. First, at the empirical level, it is considered one of the first qualitative, discourse-analytic accounts of oral corrective feedback (OCF) within Libyan Universities for Libyan EFL speaking. This research extends the geographical and institutional scope of the international OCF research tradition into a largely underrepresented region. Second, at the theoretical level, the study adds to the growing body of contextualized OCF scholarship by exploring how the socio-cultural environment actively shapes—not just contextualizes—the interactional dynamics of feedback provision and learner

response. Finally at the practical level, the study suggests recommendations that can be directly applied to teacher professional development in Libyan higher education. These recommendations address the identified need for evidence-based guidance on effective feedback strategies in speaking pedagogy.

2.Literature Review

In this part, we provide an overview of the literature to four key themes of the research. These themes are:

- 1 .Teacher Talk : Language and Interaction within the Classroom.
- 2 .Types of Oral Corrective Feedback and Their Theoretical Foundations.
- 3 .Uptake, Repair, and Non-Uptake by Students
- 4 .Discourse in an EFL Classroom in the Arab World and North Africa with a focus on Higher Education in Libya

.2.1 Teacher Talk and the Architecture of Classroom Interaction

The language that teachers use during instruction has been extensively analyzed since Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) introduction of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) model. This model defines the nature of classroom interaction and serves as a framework for assessing actual classroom dialogue. Critics argue that the IRF model promotes passive student participation in a teacher-dominated interaction architecture (Waring, 2021). However, it remains a valuable reference point for subsequent discourse analysis due to its ability to capture the fundamental characteristics of teaching dynamics and the social authority associated with teachers. More recent studies have complicated this framework by examining how the language utilized by teachers varies according to mode of instruction, type of task and culture considerations.

The student environment task tool (SETT) framework developed by Walsh (2011) illustrates two major aspects of variability in teacher talk, including the differential contextuality of teaching practices. This framework identifies four types of teacher talk: 1) managerial, 2) materials, 3) skills- and systems-related and 4) classroom-contextual, with each type reflecting distinct interactional forms tied to the pedagogical purpose of the teacher's language talk at that moment. Recent research continues to explore these concepts particularly in online and hybrid teaching environments (Tian & Fantinati, 2022) and in feedback mechanisms within digital contexts, where previously used face-to-face feedback methods are adapted and where multiple languages are engaged in both teacher talk and students' response (Li & Zhu, 2020). Although the present study focuses on the face-to-face classroom, it draws on previous research that views teacher talk as purposeful and context-sensitive social action.

The application of Conversation Analysis (CA) to classroom discourse has opened new methodological territory for exploring teacher talk. Sert (2019) provides a detailed account of how CA methodology provides insights into the micro-sequential organization of classroom interaction. It demonstrates that teacher feedback emerges in response to specific interactional contingencies – such as learner errors, silences, partial answers and candidate completions – rather than being delivered according to a set pedagogical template.

Waring (2021) has advanced the discourse-analytic model of classroom interaction by examining the sequential organization of evaluative sequences in teachers' speech. She differentiates between assessment (correct and incorrect) and how teachers manage their epistemic authority in classrooms. She identifies three roles that teachers adopt, language experts, conversation organizers, and relationship builders. These roles in turn can create challenges, as correcting a student's mistake may lead to embarrassment or interrupted communication. This tension is exacerbated in the Libyan EFL environment, where institutional hierarchies and face-saving behaviors place strong pressure on teachers, limiting their ability to engage effectively with students.

2.2 Oral Corrective Feedback: Typology, Theory, and Recent Developments

Oral corrective feedback (OCF) has been extensively researched since the landmark study of Lyster and Ranta in 1997, which categorized OCF into six types: 1) explicit correction, 2) recasts, 3) clarification requests, 4) metalinguistic feedback, 5) elicitation, and 6) repetition. Although this classification was derived from observations of foreign students in a French immersion classroom in Canada, it has been used to organize subsequent studies across various language instruction settings. However, this categorization has sparked ongoing discussions about whether the types are accurately defined and how the type of feedback affects learning outcomes (Nassaji, 2021). This review will give a detailed account of theories related to OCF and empirical evidence gathered since 2017, which will function as the analytical and interpretive framework for the current study.

According to Nassaji's comprehensive review (2021) of the existing literature on corrective feedback, many years' worth of findings have been published using incomplete scientific methodologies. The current research aims to identify the superiority of feedback types in experimental settings without considering the various contextual and cultural factors that significantly affect the production of meaning. Consequently, the data generated from this body of empirical literature continues to produce inconclusive and inconsistent findings. Based on his findings, Nassaji (2021) has argued for using more ecologically-situated and communicative methodological approaches in future research. This current inquiry employs a slight change to the aforementioned method — an ecologically embedded and communicatively based discourse-analytic design.

The literature has also extensively explored the distinction between implicit and explicit feedback in the OCF. A widely recognized study on this topic is Li (2020) who conducted a large-scale mixed-methods meta-analysis of learner perceptions regarding different forms of feedback across various instructional contexts. Specifically, Li (2020) confirmed that, generally, the perceptual gap between teachers' corrective intentions and learner interpretations of those intentions was significantly larger for implicit feedback than for explicit strategies. Further, this research revealed that this perceptual gap was significantly worse in high power distance educational cultures, where students tended to interpret teacher reformulations as confirmations or elaborations rather than corrections. These findings hold significant implications for the Libyan educational context and for the second research hypothesis of this study.

The research by Lyster, Saito, & Sato (2020) represents one of the largest study to date on the distribution and reception of feedback across different cultures. They collected data from eight speaking classes in five different countries and developed their ecological account. Their findings supported the cross-cultural dominance of recasts but also demonstrated that contextual factors, such as teaching methods, evaluation styles, and level of learner proficiency, significantly affected uptake rates. For example, the researchers found that uptake rates of recasts for Arabic-speaking EFL students in Morocco and Lebanon were notably lower compared to those in Europe. This suggests that there are systematic patterns of feedback responses in the Arabic context that differ from those found in Western contexts. This study will add data from Libya to the growing body of cross-cultural research.

An ecological model of OCF research proposed by Watanabe (2023) defines feedback as an emergent characteristic arising from dynamic interactions among learner preparation, teacher responses, task design, and cultural norms. This model offers two key contributions to the current study: First, it provides theoretical validity for a research design prioritizes contextual descriptions of feedback dynamics over isolating variables. Therefore, a detailed, ethnographically based description of feedback dynamics within a single institutional ecology will represent a theoretically valuable contribution in its own. Second, it provides a theoretical vocabulary (i.e., ecosystem, emergence, dynamic adaptation) to discuss the complexity of cultural mediation that cannot be accommodated by variable/causal-oriented models.

2.3 Learner Uptake, Repair, and Non-Uptake

The action of uptake (the learner response turn that directly follows teacher's OCF) has been the primary observable indicator of learner engagement with OCF posts the original introduction of the construct by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Compared to acquisition, which is a discourse event; therefore, uptake is observable through the sequential record of classroom interactive exchanges not through a measure of learning. However, the amount of uptake produced, and if the uptake occurs as a successful repair, a partial repair, or simply acknowledgement of the feedback has important theoretical implications as a measure of the interactional relevance of the OCF to the learner at the time it was provided (Nassaji, 2021).

A systematic literature review by Rassaei (2020) examined 49 studies published between 1997 and 2019 that investigated learner uptake. His findings indicated that the use of negotiation of form strategies (i.e., elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests) produced significantly higher overall rates of uptake compared to recasts, with a mean overall 1.8 higher for negotiation of form strategies across all instructional contexts analyzed. Further analyses from Rassaei revealed that a strong context effect; overall rates of learner uptake were consistently lower in foreign language than immersion and second language situations. Rassaei attributed this to the comparatively less communicative pressure associated with foreign language contexts and the low interactional salience of form within those settings relative to immersion and second language contexts. Rassaei's findings will provide comparative normative baselines for analysis of the observational data to be collected in this study.

According to Bao (2019), students in Chinese university EFL speaking classes engage in a form of learner response to teacher feedback referred to as strategic non-uptake. This involves the learner doing something in response to teacher feedback that does not modify the incorrect form; however, it is not due to the student's inability to recognize the intent to perform corrective feedback, but rather the learner's recognition of a rational comparison between the cost of using his/her face (which could increase the likelihood of his/her public exposure to error) versus that of reaping a benefit from the interaction. The present study uses Bao's (2019) identification of strategic non-uptake as a separate and distinct motivational cause (compared to inadvertent non-uptake) as an important methodological consideration. In this study, the investigation of non-uptake will require a move away from only frequency counts of learner responses to also include participant-centered evidence (such as individual interviews or stimulated recall) to provide a basis for distinguishing between these two types of responses (motivationally). The methodology of this current study would be conducted using the same approach as presented by Bao.

The study conducted by Shintani and Ellis (2022) focused on analyzing the longitudinal relationship between uptake patterns in classroom discourse and form accuracy in delayed production measures. Their findings revealed a moderately strong, statistically significant correlation between successful repair following explicit corrective feedback and improved form accuracy at the delayed post-test. While this study lacks acquisition measures, its findings highlight the pedagogical importance of the uptake construct. The findings also establish a basis to for as a relevant instructional objective rather than merely an incidental occurrence in discourse. This perspective will guide the practical recommendations developed in the conclusion of this study.

2.4 EFL Classroom Discourse in Arab and North African Contexts

In the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in writing about Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom discourse in Arab contexts; nevertheless, most of these studies have been done in either the Gulf or the Levant and North African universities. Thus, Libya is one of the contexts, which has been severely underrepresented.

Al-Khalil (2019) studied the types of corrective feedback which are typically used by teachers during EFL speaking classes in Yemen. Data was collected via a combination of classroom observations, audio recordings, and semi-structured interviews. Al-Khalil found that teachers tended to prefer providing recasts to students as a way of offering corrective feedback. The reasons given by teachers for preferring recasts were predominantly based on concerns based on emotion sensitivity of ESL learners and desire to maintain students' engagement/participation in the classroom, rather than any theoretical justification for their choice. Another aspect of Al-Khalil's (2019) discourse analysis was that he found that students tended to remain silent after receiving feedback. This indicates that almost no teacher feedback in Yemen's high-anxiety environment, regardless of the type of corrective feedback provided. He interpreted this silence as an affectively based form of self-protection, not as evidence of their inability to notice what their teachers said. These findings are the best contextual proxy for what is likely to happen in the study's third and fourth hypotheses.

Elmenfi (2017) is one of the few published studies on classroom interaction in Libya from a discourse analytic perspective. This study analyzed question and answer sequences in Libyan secondary school EFL classrooms using Conversation Analysis (CA) informed methodology. It provides evidence of significant asymmetries in teacher-led classroom interaction patterns and highlighted the rare occurrence of learner-initiated spontaneous talk, along with evidence of the rapid suppression unsolicited learner responses. Also, Elmenfi documented the predominance of a compressed IRF (Initiation Response Feedback) cycle between teachers and students. The study provided empirical evidence regarding the role of evaluative acknowledgements rather than extensive corrective feedback which is also a result of compressed IRF cycle. Further, it illustrated the lack of emphasis on secondary level learner speaking compared to university lectures, thereby laying the empirical foundation for the interaction framework that the data for the current study will be situated within.

Using an extensive questionnaire, Elmenshawy (2022) investigated the beliefs and behaviors of university EFL teachers in Libya regarding oral feedback. The sample included 78 teacher participants across three Libyan Universities. The results indicated that while teachers theoretically supported communicative and learner-centered feedback approaches, these were not reflected in their self-reported practices. The predominant form of practice reported was implicit, focusing on accuracy or error correction, and employing whole group correctives rather than individual corrections (i.e., teacher-initiated error corrections). This study, utilizing discourse-analytic methods rather than questionnaire methods, aims empirically account for the belief-practice gap occurring during classroom interactions through the use of communicative and learner-centered feedback approaches.

Benali & Abas (2021) employed a mixed methods approach to examine the preferences for corrective feedback among both EFL teachers and students in Libya. The findings demonstrated an asymmetric pattern between the two groups: students preferred explicit feedback and metalinguistic explanations, while teachers favored implicit and/or face-saving techniques. The authors attributed this pattern to different perceptions regarding what is considered "helpful" correction (e.g., students place a premium on clarity and informativeness as opposed to teachers whose priority is on developing and maintaining affective safety and relational harmony). In addition, the authors advocated for pedagogical interventions to bridge this asymmetry through explicit negotiations of the normative expectations regarding corrective feedback. This study builds on Benali & Abas' recommendations, using discourse analysis of interactions between teachers and students to provide an empirical basis for negotiating the corrective feedback normative framework.

In their study on the use of translanguaging in English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking classes located within six multilingual countries in Asia, Li and Zhu (2020) found that code-switching from the target language (TL) to the first language (L1) occurred in association with corrective feedback interactions—specifically metalinguistic explanation type corrective feedback interactions—at a high frequency. Moreover, the authors reported that translanguaging to code-switch from L1 to TL was eligible to provide students access to metalinguistic information that could not be provided without the use of the L1. Though the context where Li and Zhu conducted their study differs from that of Libya, their findings have implications for the present study due to the occurrence of Arabic-English code-switching in Janzour EFL speaking class. Hence, this study will consider code-switching (Arabic to English) as a contextual variable in the feedback context it investigates without placing the code-switching as a primary analytical area of focus.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two theoretical frameworks: Conversation Analysis (CA) and an ecological model of oral corrective feedback (Watanabe, 2023). CA is utilized to analyze feedback episodes as sequential, interactional events. The researchers will examine how feedback movements and learner response movements are organized turn-by-turn. Additionally, the study will explore the preference organization of repair their sequences and their connection to anticipated learner uptake (Sert, 2019; Waring, 2021). The ecological framework provides a meta-theoretical lens for interpreting CA data within the broader institutional and cultural context of the Libyan EFL speaking classroom. It conceptualizes the feedback ecosystem as a dynamic and culturally driven context where the effectiveness of specific feedback types is influenced by particular interactional ecologies, rather than solely by the feedback type itself (Watanabe, 2023).

The Hofstede (1991) Frameworks assists researchers in examining the macro-cultural aspects of students and their learning environments. It is augmented by the 'power-distance' dimension. Hofstede (1999), which provides an interpretive lens to understand how the institutional hierarchies and associated face-saving norms impact learner-responses. While the Hofstede model has faced criticism for promoting cultural essentialism (Bao, 2019), it still provides valuable insight into the macro-culture and its influence on learning and interaction. Therefore, it is recommended that researchers use the Hofstede model primarily as an interpretative resource rather than a deterministic explanatory framework.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Paradigm

This investigation employs a qualitative interpretive research design, underpinned by the epistemology that social phenomena are best understood through a detailed and contextual analysis of naturally occurring interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The choice of a qualitative paradigm reflects the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research questions, which aim to examine the sequential organization and cultural mediation of corrective feedback in an institutional setting rather than establishing causative relationships via experimental manipulation. Thus, qualitative discourse analysis is particularly well suited for uncovering the moment to moment interactional dynamics that shape the feedback process. These dynamics cannot be revealed through questionnaire or observation checklist techniques, which, while effective for mapping general patterns, are limited in their ability to illuminate such dynamics (Nassaji, 2021; Sert, 2019).

The primary analytical method used throughout the study will be Conversation Analysis (CA). Additionally, analysis informed by Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) will be applied at certain points, where functional orientation of discourse moves needs more explicit reference than can be provided at the sequential level. CA was chosen due to its empirical and systematic focus on how talk is organized in sequences (Seedhouse, 2004; Sert, 2019). Most importantly, CA facilitates the analysis of feedback episodes not merely as isolated instances of behavior but as interactional accomplishments organized temporally in sequence as part of a continuous structure of talk this perspective is vital to the development of the theoretical position of this study.

3.2 Research Site

The study will take place at Janzour Campus of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, located approximately 20 km west of Tripoli, Libya. This campus offers four-year undergraduate degree programs in English Language and Literature, as well as post-graduate degrees in Applied Linguistics (Diploma and Master's levels). The focus for data collection will be the Speaking Skills course taught at the second- and third-year levels. The Janzour campus was chosen as the location for this study for three primary reasons: first, it is the only institution (in northwestern Libya) that offers an undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature, and a postgraduate program in Applied Linguistics; second, the Speaking Skills course provides a natural setting to investigate OCF within a communicative approach to teaching/learning; and third, secure access for data collection via naturalistic methods.

3.3 Participants

Using a purposive sampling method, the selected participants are somehow able to give data that has enough depth of information and is relevant to our research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For our study, we are looking at six EFL teachers and thirty students from three of the aforementioned intermediate level speaking classes. The teachers are selected based on the following criteria:

- 1.) They must have at least two years of experience in teaching EFL speaking at a university;
- 2.) They must possess at least a postgraduate diploma in English or applied linguistics.
- 3.) They must be willing to allow the recording of their teaching sessions and participate in post-observation interviews.

All thirty students are selected from the three classes and will represent a range of proficiency levels and genders, as well as various participation styles in class. Only the thirty selected students will be invited to participate in this study.

The participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and each participant will be required to sign an informed consent form prior to data collection. All participants will be assigned an alphanumeric code to ensure that data related to the individual data remains anonymous throughout the data collection, analysis and reporting phases of the research. The study will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Janzour Academy and Faculty Research Committee for all participants involved.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

3.4.1 Audio Recording of Classroom Interaction

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The data for this study consist of audio recordings made of naturally occurring EFL speaking lessons. The researchers collected audio recordings of 15 lessons in 3 different classes over eight weeks, resulting in approximately 20–22 hours of classroom interaction data. Two digital audio recorders with directional microphones were set up in each classroom one located near the teacher's position and another centrally located within the student seating area to assure maximum audio quality from a variety of locations in each classroom. The researchers started to collect data after a two-week acclimatization period. During this time, researchers observed classroom without participating in classes (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). This acclimatization helped in mitigating the effects of the researchers' presence and reduced any potential observer effect prior to data recording.

Following the audio the audio recording phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six teachers who participated in the study and twelve purposively selected students (four students from each of the participating classes). Each interview with a teacher took approximately 40-60 minutes and included 20 questions about: (1) general beliefs about oral

corrective feedback in a pedagogical context for speaking; (2) individual teacher preferences and reasons for various types of feedback provided; (3) teachers' perceptions of students' responses to various types of corrective feedback; and (4) reflective analysis of specific corrective feedback episodes presented to each teachers via audiotape. Each student interview took approximately 20-35 minutes and included questions about: (1) students' views on and preference for working with oral corrective feedback; (2) emotional or cognitive responses of students to the use of oral corrective feedback (including both types of responses and specific examples); and (3) students' interpretations of specific oral corrective feedback episodes presented in the audiotape recordings prepared for their teachers. Although the interviews were to conducted in English, Arabic might be used if students had difficulty with vocabulary. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The data collected from the interviews provided triangulation for analyzing of participant perceptions of interactive phenomena identified in the audio corpus (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4.3 Researcher Field Notes

Observational field notes were utilized throughout the data collection process. These notes included contextual information (e.g. classroom layout, seating arrangements of individual students, observation affective behaviors, and non-verbal behaviors) that could not be captured through audio recordings.

The field notes were organized chronologically and indexed to a corresponding lesson audio recordings to facilitate cross-referencing and analyzing ambiguous interactional episodes found in the audio corpus.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The discourse analysis adhered to a CA informed classroom discourse analysis framework following the sequential stages outlined by Sert (2019) and Waring (2021).

The first step (corpus construction), involved transcribing all audio recordings using an adapted version of Jefferson's (2004) CA transcription notation. In the second step, all teacher responses to learner utterances containing identifiable errors identified as potential feedback episodes and classified according to Lyster and Ranta's (1997) six-type OCF typology as modified by Nassaji (2021). The third step analyzed each categorized as a sequential unit. In the fourth step, sequential patterns identified in the discourse data was triangulated with interview data. Further, inter-rater reliability for feedback classification was established by having 20% of the total recorded data coded independently by a second rater trained for the project, calculating Cohen's kappa for inter-rater agreement.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of this research's findings, consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research, four strategies were employed. First, credibility was established through triangulation (utilizing audio recordings, interviews, and field notes), prolonged engagement at the research, and member checking with selected teacher participants. Second, transferability supported the provision by thick descriptions of the context in which the research was conducted, allowing readers to determine whether the findings could be applied to similar settings. Third, dependability would be ensured by providing a detailed and transparent audit trail of the analytical decisions made by the researchers; stored in a reflexive journal along with analytical memos. Fourth, confirmability was established through inter-rater reliability checks on the classification of feedback and by systematically recording the interpretive logic used by the researchers to justify their analytical claims.

4. Results

4.1 Key Findings

1. Predominant Feedback Types

- **Recasts** were the most frequently used OCF strategy (52% of all feedback episodes), followed by **explicit correction** (18%) and **elicitation** (14%)
- Clarification requests (8%), metalinguistic feedback (5%), and repetition (3%) were less common
- Teachers predominantly used implicit, face-saving strategies to maintain classroom harmony

2. Learner Response Patterns

- **Successful repair** occurred in only 38% of feedback episodes
- **Partial repair** was observed in 22% of cases
- **Non-uptake** (including silence or topic shift) occurred in 40% of episodes
- Recasts produced the lowest uptake rates (31%), while elicitation yielded the highest (67%)

3. Socio-Cultural Mediation

- **Face-saving concerns** strongly influenced both teacher feedback choices and student responses
- **Power distance** manifested in students' reluctance to ask clarifying questions or negotiate feedback
- Students reported anxiety about public error correction, leading to strategic non-uptake

4. Belief-Practice Gap

- Teachers expressed theoretical support for communicative, learner-centered feedback
- Actual classroom practice remained predominantly teacher-directed and correction-focused
- Institutional constraints and large class sizes limited implementation of preferred approaches

Conclusion :

The findings reveal a significant belief-practice gap among EFL speaking teachers. While teachers verbally endorsed communicative, learner-centered feedback approaches, their actual classroom practices remained predominantly teacher-directed and implicit, with recasts accounting for over 52% of all feedback episodes. This preference for implicit, face-saving strategies reflects teachers' deep-seated concern for maintaining classroom harmony and protecting students' public image—values deeply rooted in Libyan socio-cultural norms. However, this reliance on recasts often resulted in low interactional engagement, as students frequently failed to recognize the corrective intent embedded in teacher reformulations.

Student response patterns revealed a complex interplay between linguistic awareness and socio-affective considerations. Successful repair occurred in only 38% of feedback episodes, while non-uptake—including silence, acknowledgment without correction, or topic shifts—accounted for 40% of learner responses. Crucially, interview data indicated that non-uptake was often strategic rather than inadvertent; students reported consciously choosing not to respond publicly to correction to avoid embarrassment or loss of face. This finding challenges the assumption that non-uptake signifies lack of understanding, instead highlighting the powerful role of face-saving and power distance in shaping learner behavior. Students expressed a clear preference for explicit, metalinguistic feedback in private settings, yet rarely initiated negotiation or clarification requests during whole-class interaction.

At the macro level, the study demonstrates that oral corrective feedback is not merely a pedagogical technique but a culturally and institutionally mediated practice. The Libyan EFL classroom functions as a distinct "feedback ecosystem" (Watanabe, 2023) where institutional hierarchies, large class sizes, product-oriented assessment systems, and deeply ingrained cultural values of respect for authority collectively constrain both teacher delivery and learner uptake. The compressed IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) cycle, documented in this study, reflects a pedagogical culture that prioritizes procedural efficiency over dialogic engagement,

leaving little room for learner-initiated repair or negotiated feedback. These findings underscore that effective feedback reform cannot be achieved through teacher training alone; it requires systemic changes in curriculum design, assessment policies, and institutional support structures.

Recommendations

1. Supplement recasts with explicit strategies (elicitation, metalinguistic feedback) in private or small-group settings to enhance uptake while protecting students' face.
2. Negotiate Correction Norms (Teachers & Students) Conduct open classroom discussions about error correction preferences to reduce ambiguity and minimize strategic non-uptake driven by face-saving concerns.
3. Diversify Feedback Delivery (Teachers) Use written, pair-work, and delayed correction to address errors without public exposure, reducing student anxiety and increasing receptiveness.
4. Integrate Feedback Literacy in Training (Curriculum) Include modules in teacher education programs addressing cultural mediation of feedback and context-responsive strategies to bridge the belief-practice gap.
5. Align Assessment with Interactive Pedagogy (Policymakers) Develop assessment frameworks that value process-oriented interactional competence alongside product-focused accuracy measures.
6. Conduct Longitudinal & Comparative Research (Future Research) Expand studies across multiple Libyan universities, implement longitudinal interventions, and employ multimodal analysis (video) to capture non-verbal feedback dimensions.

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