

## Effects of Instruction on the Use of Discourse Markers in Japanese EFL Learners' Speech\*

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This study investigated the effects of explicit and implicit discourse marker (DM) instruction on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' speech. Two different teaching methods were used over seven weeks of online English classes at a university in Japan. Participants were split into two groups, and in the first week, a pre-test comprising two speech tasks was administered to both groups. The groups were then given explicit or implicit feedback about the usage of target DMs using video clips and emails. The results of the post-test in Week 5 revealed that, although the frequency of the marker *for example* was significantly higher after explicit instruction, there was no significant difference in the frequency of the other target markers in both groups. However, some students' repertoires of DMs increased after explicit feedback. In Week 7, a speaking test including tasks similar to those in the pre- and post-tests was administered as a substitute for the delayed test. Although some easily accessible markers such as *and* and *because* were used in speech, both groups' repertoire was limited. Hence, explicit instruction on DMs may have a limited effect on EFL learners' speech.

**Keywords:** discourse markers, explicit instruction, implicit instruction, frequency, speech tasks

### 1 Background to the Study

Discourse markers (DMs) are lexical items that have pragmatic and syntactic functions and are essential components of communication. Especially in everyday speech, DMs are often used when speakers organise their utterances and convey their message to listeners. Some common DMs in speech are

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*anyway, like, okay, right, so, and well* (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). For example, the marker *so* is often used to indicate a topic shift in conversation.

- (1) A: And how's Ricky, your boyfriend?  
B: He's fine. Yeah.  
A: That's good. *So* what are you doing at the weekend? Anything?  
B: Er Ricky's, he's working.  
(Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 218)

In example (1), the marker *so* enables the speaker to introduce a new topic *weekend* and build a cooperative interaction with the listener. As Schiffrin (1987) suggests, the indexical expression helps “contribute to the integration of discourse—to discourse coherence” (p. 315). Thus, DMs have a pragmatic function in establishing or maintaining the interaction.

Additionally, DMs establish a semantic connection between two segments in discourse (e.g., Blakemore, 2002; Fraser, 2009). They are often used as a conjunction, shown in (2), or an adverb, shown in (3). They syntactically link the first clause with the second one.

- (2) We were late, *but* no one seemed to mind.  
(Fraser, 2009, p. 298)  
(3) He didn't brush his teeth. *As a result*, he got cavities.  
(Fraser, 2009, p. 302)

DMs are indispensable for non-native speakers to complement their limited English proficiency and help others understand their message (e.g., Flowerdew & Tauroza, 1995; House, 2013). The following examples are taken from Japanese EFL learners' speech.

- (4) She ... *and* she is thinking up umm ...  
(Shimada & Miura, 2019, p. 201)  
(5) I don't listen so much, *so* I don't know kind of music.  
(Shimada & Miura, 2019, p. 202)

In example (4), the marker *and* gives the learner more time to think about what to say to deliver her message to the listener. Thus, the marker *and* serves a pragmatic function, as in example (1). Further, in example (5), another learner is asked to explain what kind of music he likes, and the marker *so* semantically and syntactically connects the first segment with the second one in discourse. In other words, even if speakers use grammatically correct sentences or phrases, a lack of DMs can make conversations awkward and cause unsuccessful communication (Svartvik, 1980).

While speech data analyses in the literature have identified these DM functions, many previous corpus-based studies have revealed significant

differences in the use of DMs between native and non-native English speakers. Fung and Carter (2007) found that learners in Hong Kong underused DMs such as *right*, *well*, and *you know* compared to the frequency found in data from British native speakers. Likewise, Shimada (2014) conducted a corpus-driven comparison of DM use by Japanese learners and native speakers of English and found that Japanese learners more frequently used DMs such as *yes*, *so*, and *I think*, while they used DMs such as *I mean*, *well*, and *you know* less frequently than native speakers of English. These learner corpus studies revealed that EFL learners used a limited variety of DMs in speech and illustrated the features of their use of DMs compared to that of native English speakers. However, few studies have examined how lexical items that can help learners communicate effectively should be taught in classroom settings, and how instruction can facilitate DM use in second language (L2) learners' speech.

## **2 Literature Review and Research Questions**

### **2.1 Basic concepts of explicit and implicit instruction**

Some researchers have investigated the effects of instruction on the use of L2 DMs in speech. Concerning the inclusion of lexical items such as DMs in the classroom, the previous studies (e.g., Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009; Shintani, 2012) have mainly examined how explicit and implicit instruction affects learners' acquisition of lexical items. Among the techniques of explicit and implicit instruction, metalinguistic explanation, corrective feedback, input flood, and input enhancement are common. Metalinguistic explanation, one of the most explicit options, is defined as a formal instruction to provide awareness about linguistic rules and knowledge (e.g., Fotos & Ellis, 1991). In the literature (e.g., Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), there are two main classifications of corrective feedback: explicit feedback to provide learners with information about incorrect and correct forms, and implicit feedback that helps learners notice errors by repeating or reformulating learners' utterances. Input flood, or giving many examples including target items, and input enhancement (Smith, 1993), or boldfacing or underlining the target items, are more implicit teaching techniques.

### **2.2 Classroom research in teaching L2 DMs**

Yoshimi (2001) focused on L2 learners' use of three Japanese DMs, *n desu*, *n desu kedo*, and *n desu ne*, as devices of extending utterance and conducted an experiment to teach them to students, most of whom were native speakers of English, at the University of Hawai'i. The students were given an explanatory handout about the function and use of the three items and were exposed to a model interaction between native speakers of Japanese with explicit instruction.

Furthermore, the students had opportunities to practice communication using the target items and explicit corrective feedback. The quantitative analysis revealed that the students in the explicit instruction group used the target items more frequently than those in the control group without explicit instruction.

Katayama's (2012) study suggested that implicit instruction could also be beneficial for the acquisition of Japanese DMs. In a classroom study at a Canadian university, L2 Japanese students were either provided with a handout that contained example situations and explained the functions of the target items, *n desu* and *n desu ka* (i.e., explicit instruction), or a handout that was designed to help the students discover the pragmatic usage by examining various examples without metalinguistic explanation (i.e., implicit instruction). The results of discourse completion tests showed that although there were no significant differential effects between explicit and implicit instruction, both groups improved their knowledge of the target DMs.

Additionally, Hernandez (2008) investigated the combined effect of explicit instruction and input flood of Spanish DMs on students who were all native speakers of English at a university in the United States. They were asked to use Spanish DMs such as *al principio* 'at first', *al final* 'finally', and *entonces* 'then' in a narration task. The results suggested that explicit instruction, including metalinguistic explanation through handouts and corrective feedback, and input flood had a more positive effect on the use of DMs than input flood alone.

Concerning English DMs, Jones and Carter (2014) found that explicit instruction through the presentation–practice–production (PPP) method helped Chinese learners of English studying in the United Kingdom increase their DM use in the short term. The PPP group were given drills and practice on target items such as *anyway*, *I mean*, *right*, *so*, and *well*, and showed better performance in an interactive speaking test after the instruction. However, their DM use decreased in the delayed test conducted eight weeks after the completion of the classes.

Miura and Shimada (2014) conducted an experiment to encourage Japanese university students to use the target items *because*, *how about*, *I see*, *like*, and *well* in question-and-answer (Q-and-A) tasks. In the experiment, the students were provided with a model speech and explicit or implicit corrective feedback. The results showed that the students who were given metalinguistic explanations used *because* more frequently than those who experienced textual input enhancement in the form of boldfacing and underlining the target items but received no explicit instruction.

Although the target items in instruction were limited, these previous studies indicate that explicit instruction could be effective for L2 learners to increase and improve their DM use in communication. However, few detailed studies have investigated the effects of instruction on the use of DMs in Japanese EFL learners' speech.

### 2.3 Research questions

Based on the findings on explicit instruction by Jones and Carter (2014) and other previous studies and those on implicit instruction by Katayama (2012), the present study addresses the following research questions (RQs).

RQ1: To what extent does explicit instruction in target DMs affect Japanese EFL learners' speech?

RQ2: To what extent does implicit instruction in target DMs affect Japanese EFL learners' speech?

RQ3: Does the effect of instruction in target DMs persist on Japanese EFL learners' speech?

These three questions were designed to investigate the effects of the two different teaching methods.

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Participants

The participants were 61 second-year undergraduates enrolled in a general English course from May to August 2020 at a private university in Gunma, Japan. They were divided into two classes, Class 1 ( $n = 34$ ) and Class 2 ( $n = 27$ ) and were taught one lesson per week online by an instructor. A placement test<sup>1</sup> ensured that they possessed lower-intermediate English proficiency, which was equivalent to a TOEIC score of 365 to 500. They majored in agriculture or nutrition. Three participants of Class 1 were eliminated from the data analysis due to technical problems or absence. Thus, data from 58 participants were analysed in the pre- and post-tests with their consent in the present study.

### 3.2 Target DMs

Fifteen target DMs (see Table 1) were selected, mainly based on Shimada's (2014) findings. He analysed the Japanese subcorpus of the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI; Gilquin et al., 2010) and found that Japanese learners used some markers, such as *and*,

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<sup>1</sup> There was no significant difference in the placement test scores between the two classes ( $t(56) = -.482, p = .632, d = .13$ ). However, the test did not ensure homogeneity in terms of speaking skills because it was a written test that included reading and grammar sections.

*because*, and *so*, more frequently than native speakers of English, while they used other markers, such as *then*, *well*, and *you know*, less frequently. The target DMs included these items. Since the overused markers, such as *and*, *because*, and *so*, were often used incorrectly in discourse, they were selected as items which should be taught in the classes. Although some markers such as *and* and *so* have multiple functions (e.g., Fung & Carter, 2007; Schiffirin, 1987), the present study focused on discourse functions shown in Table 1. These functions are important for L2 learners to improve their speaking skills.

Table 1. Fifteen Target DMs in the Present Study

Discourse functions	DMs
Thinking about what to say next	<i>well, you know</i>
Adding information or indicating a relationship between utterances	<i>and, anyway, because, but, then, so</i>
Organising the direction of conversations	<i>finally, first, how about, next, second, what about</i>
Giving examples	<i>for example</i>

*Note.* Concerning discourse functions, the author referred to Carter and McCarthy (2006) and Fung and Carter (2007).

### 3.3 Experimental design and materials

This study, which was partially based on Miura and Shimada's (2014) experimental design, analysed Japanese undergraduate students' speech data collected with two different teaching methods (i.e., explicit and implicit instruction) during seven weeks of online English classes (see Figure 1). The students were required to watch lecture videos, read supplemental handouts, and practice speech to improve their speaking skills every week during the seven-week online session. The videos were 15 to 20 minutes long and were recorded and uploaded on the YouTube platform by the instructor, and the students were allowed to watch the videos on their own time because some students did not have a stable Internet connection at home.

Additionally, the students were required to record their speech assignments and submit them using the online recording tool Vocaroo (2020). The assignments involved performing Q-and-A and short speech tasks (see Appendix 1), and they were used as the pre- and post-tests in the present study. The instructor allowed the students one minute of planning time for each task but asked them to perform the tasks without written notes. Due to the size of the sound files, it was difficult for the students to send them as email attachments, so Vocaroo was used in the classes. Moreover, the students took CASEC SPEAKING, an online speaking test designed for Japanese EFL learners, as a substitute for the delayed test in the study. The test consisted of

six parts with warm-up practice and included speaking tasks similar to the pre- and post-tests.

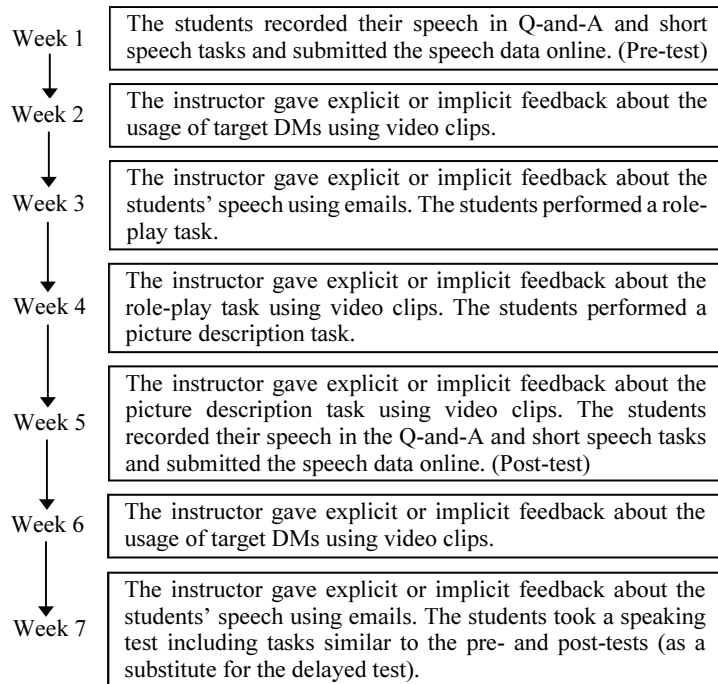


Figure 1. Procedure of the experiment in the present study

In addition to Q-and-A and short speech tasks, role-play and picture description tasks were performed in the classes. The task practice was used to help the students prepare for CASEC SPEAKING, which includes similar task formats. Visual feedback on the video lecture was given to both explicit and implicit groups a week after each task practice. The videos for the explicit group included the instructor's demonstration with an explanation of how learners can use the target DMs, while the videos for the implicit group included the instructor's demonstration of the use of the target items without metalinguistic explanations.

In addition to feedback on the videos, the students were given handouts with model answers (see Appendix 2). Metalinguistic explanations of DM functions were provided in the handouts for the explicit group, while only model answers and other examples including the target DMs with boldface cues were written in those for the implicit group. The boldface cues were expected to serve as visual input enhancement to encourage the students to

notice how the target items could be used in the model answers and other examples.

The students' speech was transcribed by two professional transcribers. The instructor made corrections including the target DMs on the Word file and sent the files as an email attachment to the students of both groups (see Appendix 3). For the explicit group, the instructor also added comments about the usage of the target DMs to the corrections.

### 3.4 Counting the frequency of each DM

The author counted the raw frequency for each target item using AntConc (Anthony, 2020). Additionally, the author examined the concordance lines to confirm whether each item had been used as DMs, and the following italicised words in (6), (7) and (8) were excluded from this analysis because they played other grammatical roles.

(6) Turkey is between Western Asia *and* Europe.

(7) It's *so* beautiful and mysterious.

(8) My dream is speaking English *well* and travelling America alone.

To test the reliability of manual checking, a post-hoc intra-coder reliability check was conducted as per Müller (2004) at an interval of about four months. The simple agreement rate of the coding of *and*, *so*, and *well* was 93%, 98%, and 100%, respectively. Thus, the reliability of counting the raw frequency was reasonably high.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Statistical features of lexical items

The types and tokens of the speech data in the present study were computed by AntConc. Additionally, the Guiraud index, which is calculated from the number of types and square root of the number of tokens, was calculated to assess the richness of vocabulary in Japanese EFL learners' speech: The higher the index, the richer the vocabulary. The Guiraud index is a measurement to overcome the disadvantage that Type-Token Ratio "is sensitive to text length" (Daller & Xue, 2007, p. 151). Table 2 presents the lexical statistical features of Japanese EFL learners' speech in the pre- and post-tests. In total, while the participants in the explicit instruction group produced 2,435 words ( $M = 78.55$ ) for the pre-test and 2,410 words ( $M = 77.74$ ) for the post-test, those in the implicit instruction group produced 2,103 words ( $M = 77.89$ ) for the pre-test and 2,069 words ( $M = 76.63$ ) for the post-test. In both explicit and implicit



instruction groups, there were less significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in tokens per participant and Guiraud index.

Table 2. Lexical Statistical Features in the Pre- and Post-Tests

	Explicit instruction				Implicit instruction			
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test	
	Q-and-A	Short speech	Q-and-A	Short speech	Q-and-A	Short speech	Q-and-A	Short speech
Partici- pants	31	31	31	31	27	27	27	27
Tokens	1,151	1,284	1,133	1,277	966	1,137	990	1,079
Types	283	270	291	261	248	211	245	213
Tokens/ participant	37.13	41.42	36.55	41.19	35.78	42.11	36.67	39.96
Guiraud index	8.34	7.53	8.65	7.30	7.98	6.26	7.79	6.48

As a substitute for a delayed test, the CASEC SPEAKING test was administered in Week 7. The test included two Q-and-A tasks and three short speech tasks. The lexical statistical features of Japanese EFL learners' speech on the test are shown in Table 3. In the study, speech data from 37 students were analysed with their consent<sup>2</sup>.

Table 3. Lexical Statistical Features in CASEC SPEAKING

	Explicit instruction		Implicit instruction	
	Q&A	Short speech	Q&A	Short speech
Participants	17	17	20	20
Tokens	626	1,235	744	1,408
Types	175	288	194	310
Tokens/ participant	36.82	72.65	37.20	70.40
Guiraud index	6.99	8.20	7.11	8.26

There was little significant difference between the two instruction groups in tokens per participant and the Guiraud index. Regarding the test scores, an unpaired *t*-test showed no significant difference between the two groups ( $t(35) = 1.175, p = .248, d = .39$ ). Although a test to assess the students' speaking skills was not administered at the beginning of the online course to reduce their

<sup>2</sup> In the present study, students' test scores and the frequency of DMs in their speech were analysed upon the agreement with the Japan Institute for Educational Measurement, Inc. Although all students in the two classes took the speaking test, 37 of them completed the online consent form by the end of the semester.

anxiety in speaking English, the results indicated the homogeneity of both groups in terms of speaking skills after instruction.

#### 4.2 RQ1: The effects of explicit instruction in the target DMs

Table 4 shows the results of the frequency analysis of target DMs used by the students who underwent explicit instruction. The frequency of each DM was standardised as frequency per 1,000 words. The log-likelihood ratio (LLR) tests<sup>3</sup> were performed to determine the significance of differences between the two datasets in the frequencies of DMs.

Table 4. Frequency of the Target DMs in Explicit Instruction Group

DMs	Q-and-A task			Short speech task		
	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios
	Pre-test (Week 1)	Post-test (Week 5)		Pre-test (Week 1)	Post-test (Week 5)	
<i>and</i>	16.51	9.71	-2.0351	18.69	19.58	0.0262
<i>anyway</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>because</i>	13.90	10.59	-0.5121	13.24	14.88	0.1224
<i>but</i>	1.74	1.77	0.0002	3.89	7.05	1.1809
<i>finally</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>first</i>	0.87	0.88	0.0001	0.78	1.57	0.3453
<i>for example</i>	0	8.83		7.79	10.96	0.6918
<i>how about</i>	0	1.77		0	0	
<i>next</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>second</i>	0.87	1.77	0.3557	0.78	1.57	0.3453
<i>so</i>	11.29	15.00	0.5998	10.90	12.53	0.1446
<i>then</i>	0.87	0		0	0	
<i>well</i>	0	0.88		0	1.57	
<i>what about</i>	0	0		0	1.57	
<i>you know</i>	0	0		0	0	

The results of the LLR tests showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two datasets in the frequencies of DMs in either the Q-and-A task or the short speech task.

On the two tasks, while the students used seven markers for the pre-test, they used nine markers for the post-test. Some students used markers such as

<sup>3</sup> If the LLR for comparing two datasets on 1 degree of freedom is  $\pm 3.84$  or more, a significant difference exists between them at a five percent significant level (Rayson et al., 2004).

*how about, well, and what about* after explicit instruction. In example (9), a student did not use *well*, but, after instruction, she strategically used the marker to think about what to say next when completing the same short speech task, as shown in example (10). In other words, some students increased their repertoire of DMs after instruction.

- (9) I think so too ... because we can share our emotions with friends ....  
 (10) I think so too. *Well*, ... because, if I am having trouble, friend help me and give some advice.

Additionally, the frequency of the marker *for example* was significantly higher after instruction in both tasks (see Figure 2). The finding was supported by the LLR of the total frequency of *for example* in both tasks<sup>4</sup> (LLR = 6.0852,  $p < .05$ ).

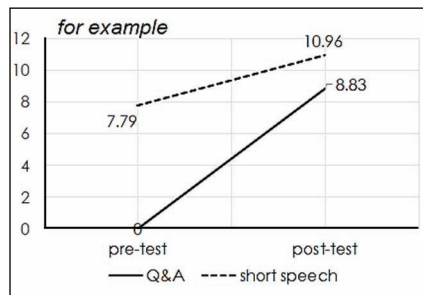


Figure 2. The frequency of *for example*

Although they preferred markers such as *and, because, and so*, the frequency of the marker *and* was lower after explicit instruction in the Q-and-A task. The results suggest that some students may use another marker instead of *and*. An example is shown below.

- (11) I want to go to Korea. There is very ... there is many delicious food and beautiful cosmetic. *And* I like ... I love K-pop. Do you know TWICE?  
 (12) France has many beautiful building and many beautiful town. *So*, I want to walk to there and French is very delicious, *so* I want to eat.

Both were uttered by one student. While the marker *and* in (11) was used by her to perform the Q-and-A task, in (12) *so* was used twice for the same task after instruction. The example indicates that the use of *so* may help the student explain the reason why she was interested in the country.

<sup>4</sup> To calculate the LLR of the marker *for example*, the author also used the total frequency of the marker in both tasks because the frequency in the Q-and-A task of the pre-test was zero.

#### 4.3 RQ2: The effects of implicit instruction in the target DMs

The results of the frequency analysis of the target DMs used by the students who underwent implicit instruction are summarised in Table 5. As in the explicit group, the frequencies of some markers such as *and*, *because*, and *so* were considerably high in the two tasks. Additionally, the frequency of the marker *for example* was considerably higher after implicit instruction, although the LLR tests did not support a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-tests. An example of the short speech task is shown below.

Table 5. Frequency of the Target DMs in Implicit Instruction Group

DMs	Q-and-A task			Short speech task		
	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios
	Pre-test (Week 1)	Post-test (Week 5)		Pre-test (Week 1)	Post-test (Week 5)	
<i>and</i>	19.67	17.17	-0.1657	16.71	20.39	0.4049
<i>anyway</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>because</i>	14.49	12.12	-0.2070	10.55	10.19	-0.0069
<i>but</i>	3.11	2.02	-0.2266	2.64	4.63	0.6155
<i>finally</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>first</i>	1.04	2.02	0.3157	0.88	1.85	0.3942
<i>for example</i>	6.21	12.12	1.8943	5.28	12.97	3.7239
<i>how about</i>	2.07	2.02	-0.0003	0	0	
<i>next</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>second</i>	0	2.02		0.88	1.85	0.3942
<i>so</i>	9.32	10.10	0.0310	7.92	11.12	0.6015
<i>then</i>	0	0		0.88	0	
<i>well</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>what about</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>you know</i>	0	0		0	0	

- (13) I think too because friend makes me happy every day. I can spend good time with friend. They have same hobbies. *And* when I study difficult topic, my friend is . . . my friend give me advices so I can learn many things.
- (14) I think so too. I have two reasons. *First*, I can spend good time with my friends. They makes me happy every day. *Second*, they support me sometimes, *for example*, they give some advices when I have trouble about studying.

Both were uttered by one student. While the marker *and* in (13) was used by her to explain why friends are important, in (14) the use of the target DMs *first*, *second*, and *for example* makes her short speech more logical. The example indicates that implicit instruction can give L2 learners awareness of the benefit of using DMs in speech.

However, the results of the frequency analysis indicate that implicit instruction may not encourage the students to use a variety of DMs. In the Q-and-A task, while students used seven markers in the pre-test, they used eight markers in the post-test. In the short speech task, while the students used eight markers for the pre-test, they used seven markers for the post-test.

#### 4.4 RQ3: The durability of instructional effects in the target DMs

Table 6 shows the results of the frequency analysis of target DMs used by 17 students who underwent explicit instruction. They took the CASEC SPEAKING test as a substitute for a delayed test two weeks after the post-test. The frequency of each DM was standardised as frequency per 1,000 words.

Table 6. Frequency of the Target DMs in Explicit Instruction Group in the Post-test and CASEC SPEAKING

DMs	Q-and-A task			Short speech task		
	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios
	Post-test (Week 5)	CASEC (Week 7)		Post-test (Week 5)	CASEC (Week 7)	
<i>and</i>	14.38	31.95	4.2787*	13.32	19.43	1.0577
<i>anyway</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>because</i>	7.99	15.97	1.6990	14.65	29.15	4.4513*
<i>but</i>	1.60	0		5.33	2.43	-1.0694
<i>finally</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>first</i>	1.60	0		2.66	3.24	0.0521
<i>for example</i>	12.78	0		13.32	6.48	-2.3197
<i>how about</i>	3.19	0		0	0	
<i>next</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>second</i>	3.19	0		2.66	2.43	-0.0101
<i>so</i>	14.38	7.99	-1.1589	11.98	8.10	-0.7186
<i>then</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>well</i>	1.60	1.60	0.0000	2.66	0.81	-1.0209
<i>what about</i>	0	0		2.66	0	
<i>you know</i>	0	0		0	0	

Note. \* $p < .05$

In the explicit group, while the students used nine items to complete the Q-and-A task in the post-test, they used only four items to perform the task in the CASEC SPEAKING test. Although statistical comparisons may not be appropriate due to the similar but different tasks, in Week 7, the students used a limited variety of DMs compared to the post-test in Week 5. Instead of using various DMs, they preferred the marker *and*, which was easier for them to use. The finding was supported by the LLR test (LLR = 4.2787,  $p < .05$ ).

In the short speech task, while the students used nine DM items for the post-test, they used eight items for the CASEC SPEAKING test. Although they preferred the marker *because* in the CASEC SPEAKING test, the results of the LLR tests showed there were no statistically significant differences between the two datasets in the frequencies of the seven DM items. The use of *because* may be affected by the different topics of the tasks.

Table 7 shows the results of the frequency analysis of target DMs used by 20 students who underwent implicit instruction. They also took the CASEC SPEAKING test two weeks after the post-test.

Table 7. Frequency of the Target DMs in Implicit Instruction Group in the Post-test and CASEC SPEAKING

DMs	Q-and-A task			Short speech task		
	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios	Frequency per 1,000 words		Log-likelihood ratios
	Post-test (Week 5)	CASEC (Week 7)		Post-test (Week 5)	CASEC (Week 7)	
<i>and</i>	22.97	21.51	-0.0359	21.92	23.44	0.0522
<i>anyway</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>because</i>	12.16	13.44	0.0474	10.96	19.89	2.6491
<i>but</i>	2.70	1.34	-0.3452	4.87	4.26	-0.0426
<i>finally</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>first</i>	2.70	0		2.44	2.13	-0.0213
<i>for example</i>	10.81	0		14.62	4.26	-6.5689*
<i>how about</i>	2.70	0		0	0	
<i>next</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>second</i>	2.70	0		2.44	0.71	-1.0948
<i>so</i>	12.16	5.38	-2.0006	14.62	12.07	-0.2537
<i>then</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>well</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>what about</i>	0	0		0	0	
<i>you know</i>	0	0		0	0	

Note. \* $p < .05$

While the students used eight items for the Q-and-A task in the post-test, they used only four items for the task in the CASEC SPEAKING test. As in the explicit group, by Week 7, their repertoire of DMs had decreased in the implicit group. In the short speech task, the frequency of the marker *for example* significantly decreased, although the results of the LLR tests showed there were no statistically significant differences between the two datasets in the frequencies of the six DM items. Therefore, these results suggest that while the difference in tasks may have an impact, the effect of explicit instruction may not persist over time.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

This study investigated the effects of explicit and implicit instruction of 15 target DMs on Japanese EFL learners' speech. Regarding the answer to RQ1, the frequency analysis of DMs revealed that although some easily accessible items such as *and*, *because*, and *so* were often used in Japanese learners' speech, explicit instruction helped them increase the frequency of their use of some DMs such as *for example*, *how about*, and *well*. These results support Miura and Shimada's (2014) findings that explicit corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanations influence the frequency of certain DMs.

Regarding the answer to RQ2, as in the explicit instruction group, the frequency of use of the marker *for example* was considerably higher after implicit instruction. However, implicit instruction did not help the students increase the number of items they used.

The answer to RQ3 was negative. The variety of DMs was limited in the Q-and-A task in the delayed test. Additionally, the frequency of the marker *for example* had significantly decreased in the short speech task from Week 5 to Week 7. Similar to the results of Jones and Carter (2014), the results of the present study suggest that the effect of explicit instruction may not persist over time.

The study has four major limitations. First, the experimental design of this study was constrained due to online courses. Some of the students might have recorded their speech with advanced preparation, despite the instructor's request that they perform the speaking tasks without written notes. However, in online courses conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the students' ease of access to speaking practice was more important than the quality of the experimental design. Additionally, the study did not include a control group without instruction of DMs because more opportunities in the online courses should be given to learners to acquire DMs to improve their performance in speech. The second limitation relates to the effects of tasks on learners' DM use. The effects may contribute to the learners' use of some DMs such as *because* and *for example* to perform the tasks. As the main purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of instruction on their DM use, a

detailed analysis of the effects of task difference was not conducted. Third, the study did not examine inaccurate DMs. To verify the effectiveness of instruction, it is necessary to investigate learners' misuse of DMs in the future research. The last limitation involves the amount of speech data. The data in a small-scale experiment may not be sufficient to investigate the effects of instruction on learners' DM use. The amount of data obtained should be increased to produce more reliable and valid findings.

Despite these limitations, the present study indicates that explicit instruction in DMs may have a limited effect on learners' speech and that this effect may vary depending on the kind of DMs. The quality and quantity of instruction, especially that based on explicit feedback, should be improved to facilitate DM use in learners' speech.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### PowerPoint Slides for the Q-and-A and Short Speech Tasks

Let's Talk

① 以下の質問に対して、できるだけたくさん答えましょう。  
相手に質問を投げかけても構いません。  
30秒間会話を続けてみてください。



I would like to go to France in the future.  
What country are you interested in?

Let's Talk

② 以下の質問に対して、あなたの意見を述べましょう。  
理由や具体例も入れてみてください。  
回答時間は45秒間です。



I think having friends is very important.  
What do you think?

(1. Answer as many of the following question as you can. It's okay to ask questions to the person you're talking to. Try to keep the conversation going for 30 seconds.)

(2. Give your opinion to the following question. Try to include the reasons and examples. The time required is 45 seconds.)

## Appendix 2

### Model Answers for the Explicit and Implicit Instruction Groups

2. I think having friends is very important. What do you think?

*(Model Answer)*

I think so, too. **Well** ..., I have two reasons for that. **First**, my friends always help me when I'm in trouble. **For example**, my friends gave me some advice about my school life or my future. They were very helpful for me. **Second**, I can have a good time with my friends. I can enjoy eating lunch, shopping, and talking with my friends.

**So**, friends are very important for me. **Anyway**, I want to tell you that ... you are my best friend!

注：このスクリプトは、音声を録音した後で書き起こしたものですので、言い淀みなどもすべて文字にしています。

(Note. This script was transcribed after recording the audio. All utterances including fillers are transcribed.)

## Appendix 3

### An Explicit Feedback about a Student's Speech

#### Let's Talk 1

I am interested in America. When I was in the first grade of high school, I went to the United States. **Then**, I ate a hamburger. **So**, I want to eat that burger again. Thank you.

コメントの追加 [KS1]: Very good!

削除: Because

#### Let's Talk 2

I think so too **because** my friends can help me when I am in trouble. **Also**, having - having friends makes for fulfilling life. I think it's very important to make friends from this point. Thank you.

コメントの追加 [KS2]: Very good!

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