Interlanguage Spoken Discourse
----Exploratory Study in Discourse Markers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine EFL college students' spoken discourse in a pedagogical context, with a focus on how discourse markers are used. Previous studies in Taiwan on L2 language learner's discourse have focused primarily on analyzing candidates' performance in written discourse. Few attempts have been made to provide a detailed account of L2 learners' oral discourse, with respect to their use of discourse markers. The subjects are 24 freshman students at a college in northern Taiwan. Eight of the subjects are male and sixteen of them are female. A total of 120 – minute audiotape recording of EFL students' oral discussion is transcribed and analyzed by a discourse analysis approach. The L2 learners' interlanguage spoken corpus is compared and contrasted with previous findings in L1. Conclusions and future directions are then drawn from the findings.

Key words: interlanguage, discourse markers, EFL, spoken discourse

I. Introduction

There has been negligence in the study of spoken language in L1 as well as in L2. For instance, probably owing to the ease of collection of written data, the current majority of English corpus is based on written discourse.   Take the British National Corpus (BNC) for example, 90% of the corpus is based on written discourse; only 10% is based on speech (Shirato & Stapleton, 2007).

Such negligence in the teaching and research of spoken discourse in English as a foreign language is even worse in Taiwan.   Due to the difficulty to administer speaking test, there has been a lack of interest and attention in EFL students' speaking proficiency in Taiwan.   The former JCEE (Joint College Entrance Examination) English test only included test on reading and writing.   At present, the English test of Subject Achievement Test, administered by the ROC Center of College Entrance Examination, is still limited to measuring students' reading and writing ability. Yet parents and students often complain that college students do not have the basic command of oral skills to communicate in English after at least six-year's learning in high schools.   In a survey conducted in Taiwan, Wang (2003) reports that 83.7 % of the college students enrolling in freshman English classes consider speaking ability, among the four language skills, as the skill they should improve the most.   In other words, a majority of the college students regard their oral skill as deficient.   In a similar vein, there are calls for the inclusion of oral tests to exert a positive washback on English learning and teaching (Chuang, 2009; Liu, 2006; Heaton, 1989; Hughes, 2002). Only through testing students' oral performance, can we expect the improvement in EFL students' oral proficiency in English.   This current study is urged by such a demand in language testing – before we launch such an oral test, we need to understand some distinctive features of L2 learners' spoken discourse.

Discourse markers are one of the significant features which can distinguish spoken discourse from written one (Fung & Carter, 2007; Luoma, 2004; McCarthy, 1998; Schiffrin, 1987).   Discourse markers may perform significant interpretational and text-building functions (Schiffrin, 1987).   They are widely used to indicate various functions in conversation.   The most important, "hardly any stretch of informal conversation is without markers" (McCarthy, 1998: 59). Native speakers

may use discourse markers to achieve various functions yet they themselves may never become aware of doing so (McCarthy, 1994: Watts, 1989).

Previous studies adopting qualitative approaches on L2 discourse markers have provided insightful findings.   Nonetheless, several of the findings are based on one single subject's spoken discourse, or a rather small speech sample.   Tyler (1992) compares the spoken discourse structure of an international teaching assistant with that of a native speaker's and concludes that discourse markers are significant structuring devices, despite the fact that the study is based on one subject's spoken discourse.   Still, Riggenbach's (1998) analysis of learner interactional skills is based on a 10-minute recording between a non-native speaker and a native speaker of English.   The application of their findings, though perceptive, may be rather limited.

Studies in Taiwanese EFL learners' interlanguage have been focused primarily on L2 written discourse.   The purpose of this current study is, therefore, to provide a qualitative analysis of college students' spoken discourse, collected from 24 college students, with a focus on how discourse markers are used in a pedagogical setting.

This study investigates the following research questions: (1) Do L2 learners use any discourse markers in the spoken discourse?   How do they employ such discourse markers in their spoken discourse?   (2) Do L2 learners use these discourse markers in a similar way that L1 speakers do?

II. Literature Review

Qualitative Approaches to the Studies in Speaking

Speaking is an interactive and interpersonal process.   To reliably assess learners' oral performance , there are calls for using data-based or data-driven rating scales (Chalhoub-Deville, 1995; Fulcher, 1996b; Riggenbach, 1998; Upshur and Turner, 1995) or spoken grammar (Hughes, 2002; Luoma, 2004; McCarthy, 1998) to measure L2 learners' oral production.   Rating scales based on data analyses of examinee's performance are believed to be more context-specific and appropriate than a generic rating scale.   Riggenbach (1998:63-64) urges the need to re-think the present rating scales of oral tests, in which traditional sub-components of oral

proficiency: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency are included. She comments:
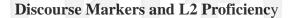
> For novice conversation analyses, the amount of repair, hesitation, and lack of smoothness in normal native speaker conversation comes as something of a shock. Traditional definitions of fluency – reflected in rating scales designed to assess non-native speaker speech such as the Test of Spoken English – include phrases such as 'smoothness of speech,' 'effortlessness,' and 'speech exhibiting automaticity'… Typical native speaker speech in conversation is often lacking in these qualities.

Even L1 speakers' conversation is filled with "language not considered grammatical in the prescriptive sense," Riggenbach (1998) therefore suggests the need to set up realistic rating scales in assessing L2 spoken discourse. Luoma (2002), Hughes (2001), and McCarthy (20002) also call the need of a corpus-based rating scale. Lazaraton (1992) urges researchers to adopt conversation analytic perspective to evaluate an L2 speaker's spoken discourse. Luoma (2004) calls for the need to adopt a discourse approach to analyze test-takers' discourse skill to supplement some very vague scale scriptors: "… only concrete analyses of test performance combined with ratings of discourse competence can provide accurate detailed descriptions of this [discourse skill]." (p.191)

Discourse Markers and Coherence

In her pioneering study, Schiffrin (1987: 31) defined discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements, which bracket units of talks." She identified eleven expressions (*oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, y'know,* and *I mean*) as discourse markers in an L1 context.

Watts (1989) has shown that most native speakers are unconscious about their own use of discourse markers. Since discourse markers usually occur in the more routine aspects of speech, discourse markers are often absent from concocted dialogs in language textbooks or from many dictionaries. Research findings also indicate that while L2 spoken discourse usually lacks a normal distributional of discourse markers, not only can such a spoken discourse create problems in comprehension, but it also will sound unnatural (McCarthy & Carter, 2002; Lindemann & Mauranen, 2001; Shirato & Stapleton, 2007).

Discourse Markers and L2 Proficiency

Previous studies in second language acquisition have reported the correlation between the use of discourse markers and L2 learners' proficiency level. In earlier stage of second language development, L2 learners show a marked tendency to rely on chunks of formulae and repetition (Kanagy, 1999; Yu, 2009). Nikula (1996) finds that EFL learners produced a much narrower range of fixed phrases or fillers. In her study, even advanced L2 learners produce a much narrower range of "spoken-like expressions" than native speakers. Henceforth, Hasselgren (1998), Fukuya & Martinez-Flor (2008), Wood (2009), and Yu (2009) all call for explicit instructions or focused instruction of such markers or formulaic expressions to improve L2 learner's fluency.

Comparative studies in the spoken discourse collected from non-native speakers and native speakers also reveal that L2 discourse deviate from L1 discourse in several ways. Fung & Carter (2007) compare a L1 spoken corpus, CANCODE, with a corpus of classroom L2 discourse in Hong Kong. Although both groups use discourse markers foe various interactional functions, native speakers are found to employ "discourse markers for a wider variety of pragmatic functions." (p.410). Shirato and Stapleton (2007), in a corpus-based study, also reports that Japanese non-native speakers deviate from native speakers in the underuse of certain lexical items such as discourse markers and hedges and, furthermore, in the overuse of certain high frequency auxiliary verbs and adjectives. These findings have revealed that researching into learner corpora may have significant pedagogical implications.

Discourse Markers in pedagogical settings/EFL textbooks

The significance of discourse markers have been revealed in previous researches, yet teaching such markers in an L2 classroom can be easier said than done. The first problem comes with the translatability of discourse markers across languages. Fraser and Malamud-Murkowski (1996) warn the difficulty in translating such discourse markers from English to learners' L1. For instance, the differences between English *well* and Spanish *bueno* and *pues* make an accurate translation from English to Spanish difficult. It may be difficult to find lexical equivalents of discourse markers such as *well, y'know*, and *now then*. Such cross-linguistic

information is usually not available in EFL textbooks or bilingual dictionaries.

Another difficulty in teaching such markers in an L2 classroom is "One of the difficulties that language teachers face with features such as discourse markers is how does one 'teach' such features in a natural way, not only given that they are almost subconscious items for speakers, but also given that they seem to be so central to natural discourse?" (1994:68) They propose that discourse markers should be included as language awareness components in a syllabus and can be handled appropriately by language-observation activities or problem-solving activities. Before the inclusion of discourse markers in our teaching syllabus, "proper analysis of a variety of discourse-types and their characteristic features is the precursor to such decisions."(McCarthy & Carter, 1994:68).
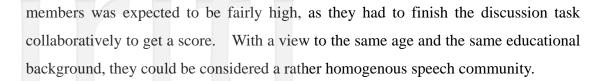
III. Method

This study investigates the following research questions: (1) Do L2 learners use any discourse markers in the spoken discourse? How do they employ discourse markers in their spoken discourse? (2) Do L2 learners employ these discourse markers in a similar way that L1 speakers do?

Subjects

The subjects are 24 freshman students, consisting of 8 groups, at the age of 19-20, enrolled in a freshman English class at a university in northern Taiwan. Coming from 6 departments in the College of Social Sciences, eight of the subjects are male and sixteen of them female. The subjects are chosen because freshman students, after at least six-year's studying in English, are assumed to have a fair command of oral proficiency and a functional, though limited, repertoire of conversational skills. They could fairly express themselves and are able to communicate with each other in English.

With a casual setting and familiar topics and interlocutors, the speech sample collected is believed to be able to represent student's proficiency in a semi-natural situation. The relationship among participants was intimate and friendly since students chose their group members on their own. The solidarity among group

members was expected to be fairly high, as they had to finish the discussion task collaboratively to get a score.　With a view to the same age and the same educational background, they could be considered a rather homogenous speech community.

Data collection

The data is collected from eight audio-recordings of students' spoken discourse in a group discussion task.　The subjects are asked to discuss topics related to their daily life.　Discussion topics include learning and gender difference, for example. Subjects are asked to record the process of their discussion without interruption.　The total length of all the recordings is approximately 150 minutes, generating a speech sample of 11420 words.　In order to motivate subjects to actively participate in the discussion, they are told that their performance in the group discussion would be graded as part of their total semester score.　After their discussion, the audio-recording of each group is then transcribed, coded, classified according to the taxonomy proposed in the next section.　Data is then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Taxonomy of discourse markers

This study analyzes how discourse markers are used in the spoken discourse. This present study adopts the taxonomy based on Schiffrin (1987).

1. information and participation: *y'know* and *I mean*
2. marker of response: *well*
3. marker of result: *so*
4. marker of hesitation: *I think*

IV. Results & Discussion

This study analyzes how discourse markers are used in the spoken discourse in an L2 pedagogical context.　Table 1 shows the discourse markers identified in L2 spoken discourse.

Table 1. Discourse Markers in L2 Spoken Discourse

discourse markers	frequency	percentage
you know	2	0.6%
I mean	0	0%
well	3	0.9%
so	106	31.5%
I think	226	67.0%
Total	**337**	**100%**

From Table 1, we can see that the subjects in this study use a rather limited repertoire of L2 discourse markers. No instance of "I mean" – a marker suggesting interactional relevance within participation frameworks (Schiffrin, 1987) -- is identified in this study.
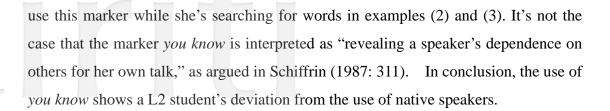
The use of *well* and *you know*:

Similarly, the use of *well* and *you know* is also very limited: only 2 instances of the marker *you know* and 3 instances of *well* are used by L2 college students in this current study.   The use of *you know* is rather intriguing; actually, they are employed by one female subject.   Moreover, 2 instances of *well* is contributed by the same female subject.   The following examples illustrate how these markers are used:

(1)   Sandra: And *I think* …*well*…um…she cares about the safety thing, and …um. *I think* that's because girls are always the victims […]

(2)   Sandra: *Well*, but *you know,* but we can not decide which we're going to have anyway.

(3)   Sandra: That' why *I think* women are being…ya…*you know*…and how about you?   (Tape 1)

Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the use of *well* by the female subject.   Schiffrin (1987: 102-127) reveals that *well,* a response marker, "can be used for so general a discourse function because it has no inherent semantic meaning." (p. 127). Similarly, in examples (1) and (2) the marker *well* doesn't carry any semantic meanings. Therefore, the use of *well* does not show deviation from a native speaker's use.

With respect to the use of *you know* – a marker of information, indicating "interactive transitions in shared knowledge" (Schiffrin, 1987: 309), Sandra seems to

use this marker while she's searching for words in examples (2) and (3). It's not the case that the marker *you know* is interpreted as "revealing a speaker's dependence on others for her own talk," as argued in Schiffrin (1987: 311).　In conclusion, the use of *you know* shows a L2 student's deviation from the use of native speakers.

The marker of cause and result: so

According to Schiffrin (1987), so is a grammatical signal of result.　It can be used to conclude a statement that has not been stated previously, or to restate something that has been explicitly stated before.　Or, it can be used as a turn-transition device, which marks turn transitions of adjacency pairs, such as question/answer pairs.　The following examples demonstrate the use of L2 learners.

(4)　Erica: Because in any class, if teacher ask some question, I'll think…how…can
　　　　　I…answer and what answer is good or right.
　　　　　So, I didn't raise may hand at the first.
　　Lily: *So*?

(5)　Kenny: And then I will answer the question, *so*…I think I am a reflective learner.
　　Sheana: […] *so* I'm a very very passive learner.

(6)　Jill: […] *So* do you sill have any opinions?
　　Zore: Hm I think this is naturally to be unfair. […]

(7)　Wendy: Hm…*so*…next…we want to discussion…discuss question three. Hm..
　　Julia: First?

Examples (4) and (5) reveal a typical use of the marker *so*.　It is used by L2 learners to conclude their statement.　Yet Lily in example (4) and Jill in example (6) seem to use the marker *so* as a turn-transition device – to give the turn to their interlocutor or to elicit more information.　However, the use of so in example (7) serves more like a pause filler while the speaker is searching for words.

In terms of the similarity or difference of native speakers' use, L2 learners show a rather similar pattern in the use of the marker *so,* which is mainly used either as a turn-transition device or to conclude a statement.　However, some instances of *so* are employed as pause fillers by L2 learners in this study.

"*I think*": a sentence-initial marker or a pause-filler

Since the expression *I think* constitutes a majority of the discourse markers identified in this current study, detailed discussions are provided to reveal how such an expression is used by L2 learners.   The following examples illustrate the typical use of "*I think*":

(8) --> Bob: Hm (.) **I think** I can practice my English with my brother.

My brother now is studying in senior high school.

But his English is poor,

So **I think** I can practice English with him every day.

--> And (.) **I think** our English will be better and better.

And another way, **I think** hm (.) I can watch film,

And (.) not only (.) hm (.) watch the word

But (.) er (.) listen to their voice.

And (.) **I think** (.) this is another way to study English,

And (.) this is easy to do."

(Tape 3, line 39-45)

Bob in example (8) appears to use the expression "I think" as a sentence-initial marker, a turn-transition device.   Two of the expressions are preceded by a pause (as indicated by the arrows).   Not knowing how to continue his statement, Bob spends more time on searching for the words.   He then uses "I think" to fill the pause while he is searching for words and to hold the floor.

(9) Lisa: So **I think** (.) so **I think** the most freedom is my life style.

And **I think** (.) hm (.2) least freedom is clothes because (.) hm(.)

I am a student, I don't have a job, and I don't make any money.

So I (.) I (.) I don't have a lot of money to buy clothes,

And **I think** my leg is too fat, so I don't wear skirt any, hm (.)

So **I think** (.) h. (.) the least freedom (.) my least freedom is clothes.

(Tape 1, Line 68-74)

(10) Angel: Hm (.) **I think** if I have opportunity to go abroad,

That will encourage me to study very hard.

The way I improve my English, **I think** is to watch (.)

I think is go to see movies.

I think (.) have a boyfriend who is a foreigner is also a very good way,

[…]

So **I think** (.) h. (.) I only have one way to improve my English is to

go to see foreign films.

Because I don't like to listen to Studio Classroom,

I think it's very boring.

(Tape 5, Line75-84)

Lisa and Angel, coming from two all-female groups, exhibit the similar strategy adopted in examples (8). The expression "I think" is used as a sentence- or clause-initial marker and is usually preceded or followed by pauses. There seems no gender difference in terms of how male and female subjects use "I think." In short, L2 college students tend to use "I think" to fill the pause or to hold the floor. *I think* is used as a pause filler or sentence-initial marker by subjects in this study. Such a use accounts for the high frequency of the marker *I think* in this current study.

"I think": a marker of expressing sensitivity to other's feelings

While examples (8), (9), and (10) illustrate how participants employ "I think" in their speech to search for words or to hold the floor, the following example demonstrates how speakers employ the marker in a more subtle way to show sensitivity to other's feelings or to reduce the threat to an interlocutor's "face."

(11) Jane: And **I think** you **can** go to the department store

and you **can** just look the window

and see what is more modern way.

Evon: But **I think** (.) but **I think** the clothes in the department store are not my

style.

Jane: But you **can** see them in department store

and you **can** go to the street on the …

you **can** (.) yes (.) **I think** it's the way.

(Tape 4, line 14-19)

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Similar to the usage in the above-mentioned examples, the hedge "I think" in Example (11) functions as a sentence-initial marker.   In addition to functioning as a discourse marker, however, the hedge seems to serve as an expression of doubt or sensitivity to other's feelings.   In Example (11), Evon is complaining not knowing what to wear.   Jane suggests that Evon can go to the department store.   By using the marker "I think," Jane seems to be more polite and sensitive to Evon's feelings.   In turn, by hedging the utterance "The clothes in the department store are not my style" with "I think," Evon saves Jane's face, and at the same time, minimizes the possible hostility which may be caused by her rejection to Jane's suggestion.   Therefore, the marker "I think" is employed in a more subtle way in this all-female group.

"I think": a floor-boundary marker

By examining more instances of speakers' oral discourse, an inference can be made concerning the usage of the expressions of personal involvement "I think" and "I feel."   That is, there is a tendency that these expressions are used in the beginning of a speaker's discussion as well as the conclusion part.   The expression "I think" is used as a marker to keep the floor in the group discussion.   Consider the usage of "I think" in example (12):

(12) Justine (1): And **I think** (.) hmm (.) the most freedom areas is clothes […]

I feel I was besieged in a small place.

I can't change very much.

Christine (1) : **I think** I'm free to do anything. […]

Debbie (1) : O.K. **I think** that I have freedom in the most area of my daily life.
[…]

Justine (2) : **I think** watching a movie is a good way to learn many oral uses in English.   […]

I think I can try it some day.

Christine (2): Hmm (.) **I think** listen the Studio Classroom or read the China Post is (.) are good ways. […]

And **I also think** do a part-time job where you can meet many foreigners, like Fridays, is also a good chance to use English.

Debbie (2):　I think that go to pubs frequently is a special way, […]

(Tape 7)

Example (12) illustrates an interesting finding that each speaker in this all-female group begins their statement with the hedge "I think."　Some of them (for instance, Justine (1) & (2) and Christine (2)) even both begin and end their discussion by hedging their utterances with "I think/feel."　This may imply that speakers tend to use the expression "I think" to signal the boundary of their floor.

More instances suggest that this may be the case.　The following examples only cite the first few sentences of the speaker in each turn:

(13)Linda:　I have the same opinion as the author of "Why we like hard positive

Choice."　Because **I think** when we have a lot of choice, […]

Gigi:　　**I think** hmm (.) "Why we like hard positive choice" […]

Una:　　In fact, **I feel** I have freedom in all area in my daily life. […]

Lisa:　　Hmm (.) **I think** the life style maybe is the answer.

(Tape 1)

(14)Allen (1): The area **I feel** I have the most choice is idol. […]

Dick (1) : **I think** I have the most choice in many respects. […]

Bob (1):　**I think** in life style I have most choices. […]

Allen (2): First **I think** I can listen to the program in the Studio Classroom. […]

Dick (2) : Hmm (.) **I think** I can practice English with my brother. […]

Bob (2) : **I think** (.) the best way of learning and using English　［…]

(Tape 3)

Examples (13) and (14) illustrate a distinct pattern of the occurrence of "I think/feel."　The expression of "I think/feel" – an expression of personal involvement -- is employed by speakers in groups to signal who has the turn to speak. The expression "I think" is, therefore, adopted to indicate the boundary of a speaker's floor.

The high frequency of this expression "I think/feel" (38.5%) may be attributed to the fact that quite a large number of students use this expression as a sentence introductory phrase.　They would begin most of their sentences with "I think."　In fact, students employed "I think" so frequently that it seems that this expression has

become a sentence-initial marker or pause-filler or a hesitation marker. To serve as a sentence-initial marker or pause-filler, it is not surprising that "I think" is usually followed or preceded by a period of silence or hesitation. However, further studies need to investigate the correlation between the length of silence and the occurrence of "I think" in order to examine whether "I think" is used as a pause-filler.

The result of this current study supports previous studies on L2 spoken discourse in that "EFL learners habitually fall back on *I think* and a few top hedges (e.g., *maybe*), regardless of their proficiencies." (Yu, 2009:01). According to Yu, as L2 learners' English proficiency increases, their dependency on the marker *I think* decreases as well.

In conclusion, the expression " I think" seems to serve the following functions: first, the speaker may use "I think" to hold the floor or to fill the pause, especially when the speaker is searching for words to continue the discussion. Second, it is used to signal the boundary of a speaker's floor – a sentence-initial marker, or a marker to keep the floor.

V. Conclusion

This study examines how college EFL students use discourse markers in a group discussion task. With respect to the function of discourse markers, there are some discrepancies between L1 and L2 speakers. The discrepancies may be accounted for by the fact that an EFL learner's interlanguage is a new language which is mediated between the target language and the native language. It is expected that foreign language learners, with a limited command of the target language, would be less sensitive to such discourse markers. Consequently, EFL learners who have not fully acquired the appropriate usage of L2 linguistic devices and who are not sensitive to the subtle interactional meanings that these linguistic forms – discourse markers -- may carry with, are liable to employ their interlanguage in a totally different way from a native speaker.

Limitations

This study has the following limitations. First, the formal nature of the task

may influence the conversational style.　Therefore, the speech sample collected in this study may not reflect the "real" conversation in naturally occurring contexts. This may be attributed to the fact that students were asked to record the whole process of their discussion and that their performance would be graded as part of their total semester score.　Also, the formal nature of the task (performance and participation will be graded) requires each participant to have to make their contribution in the group discussion task.　Unlike naturally occurring conversation in which a speaker may feel free to decide whether s/he is going to join the conversation, every subject has to talk in the group discussion even though they are not interested in the topic.

Another limitation is the rather small sample of data and the unbalanced number of male and female students.　A corpus based on a 1420-minute audio recording is rather limited to draw any generalizations about EFL college students' oral discourse.

To solve the problems, future studies need to try to design more controversial or inspiring topics to encourage more interactions among group members. Also, further studies based on a larger corpus need to be conducted to find general patterns about how EFL learners use these linguistic devices.

Directions for future study

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, this case study intends to explore how EFL learners employ discourse markers in a pedagogical setting.　Future studies, based on a larger corpus collected in more natural contexts, are called for to provide a more generalizable account of the differences between a learner's interlanguage and the target language.　Since interlanguage is usually situation- and context-dependent, future research needs to address systematic variation between differing tasks.　For instance, studies involving a different task (e.g., with different topics for discussion) should be undertaken to compare and contrast how L2 learners interact differently in different tasks.

The findings of this case study seem to be unable to provide a general pattern of the use of discourse markers in L2 learners' spoken discourse. Nonetheless, this study attempts to shed some light on the research of second language acquisition with respect to discourse markers.
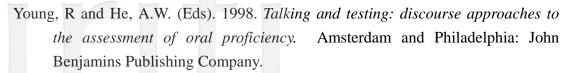
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Appendix I　　Transcription Conventions (based on Coates 1996)

1. (.): A full stop in a parenthesis indicates a pause less than one second.

2. <>: Angled brackets give additional information, e.g.

     A: this is on tape you know

     B: <laugh>

3. […]: The symbol indicates that material has been omitted, e.g.

     I think I'm free to do anything […]

4. ? : A question mark indicates the end of a chunk of talk which is analyzed as a question, e.g.

    Like what? Get up early?

5. = :　An equal sign at the end of one speaker's utterance and at the start of the next utterance indicates the absence of a discernible gap, e.g.

    Nicole: I always get up very =

    Miranda:　　　　　　　　= late!

6. The number in the parenthesis following a name indicates the turn of the speaker. For instance, Debbie (1) indicates the first turn of Debbie and Christine (2) indicates the second turn of Christine, and etc.

中介語中之言談標記初探

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摘　　要

　　中介語之研究，向來偏重於探討以英語為外語者在寫作中之使用。少有研究討論其在外語（尤其是口語）中的使用情形。本研究之目的，經由檢視大學生之英語口語語料，探討其中介語之運用。受測者為北部某大學二十四位大一學生，其中男性八位，女性十六位，蒐集到約 120 分鐘的口語語料，經由語料謄寫與分析，比對出以英語為母語者及以英語為外語者的使用異同。最後，本文根據研究結果，提出關於教學及未來研究之建議。

關鍵詞：中介語、言談標記、英文為外語、口語語料

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