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A Corpus-Based Analysis of Discourse Markers in Curriculum-Based English Textbooks and the English Entrance Exam in Taiwan

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The focus on EFL listening has increased in Taiwan. Although previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of language learners' knowledge of discourse markers (DMs) in facilitating their listening comprehension, the time spent on DM instruction is relatively short. Hence, the researcher conducted a corpus-based analysis of the DMs used in junior high school English textbooks, listening workbooks, and the English test in the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students (CAP). The study explored the types of exposure to DMs learners received and sought to determine whether textbook and test writers placed adequate emphasis on DMs. The results revealed that the English textbook and CAP English test corpora had higher frequencies of DMs than the listening workbook corpus. The DMs identified in the three corpora were multi-functional and involved using the senses most common to native speakers' speech. They demonstrated a clear distinction between spoken and written English. However, the DM distributions were mainly limited to the sentence-initial position. Therefore, textbook writers were suggested to focus more on DM distribution and context. Teachers and learners should be aware of the role of DMs in EFL listening comprehension, familiarize themselves with DMs displayed in textbooks, and use authentic listening materials to compensate for textbook deficiencies.

Keywords: corpus analysis, discourse marker, curriculum-based textbook, entrance exam

Introduction

There has been an increased focus on listening comprehension in EFL instruction and assessment in Taiwan. An English listening comprehension test was included in the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students (CAP) in 2015. Listening comprehension is often perceived to be difficult and a cause of frustration and anxiety among EFL learners (Renandya & Farrell, 2011; Teng & Chen, 2013). A large body of prior research indicates that L2 listeners' difficulties lie at the sentence and discourse levels (Jung, 2003; Olsen & Huckin, 1990). L2 listeners fail to identify the main ideas and synthesize the information due to their inability to utilize discourse markers (DMs), which show the relative importance and relationship among ideas (Flowerdew & Miller, 2012). DMs are valuable clues indicating the change of direction in a conversation as well as the speakers' perspectives, intentions, and emotional reactions (Blakemore, 2002; Fraser, 2009). Thus, language learners' knowledge of DMs plays a crucial role in facilitating their listening comprehension. Nonetheless, DMs are traditionally treated as fillers and considered devoid of meaning and

function in the language classroom (Fung & Carter, 2007). The time spent on teaching DMs is relatively rare (Cullen & Kuo, 2007). As a result, most L2 learners are unable to utilize DMs to identify the whole structure of a conversation and distinguish main ideas from minor ones (Olsen & Huckin, 1990).

In the test-oriented educational context of Taiwan, teachers closely follow the curriculum-based English textbooks, which comprise a large part of EFL learners' input (Chang, 2011; Chien, 2014). Furthermore, regarding learners' listening proficiency, some teachers presume that it would be developed after reading textbooks or listening to CDs designed to be used with textbooks (Li & Penandya, 2012; Teng, 2002; Teng & Chen, 2013). Thus, in addition to the listening workbooks, learners' encounters with DMs may depend substantially on textbooks. It becomes important to analyze textbook coverage of DMs to know what kind of exposure to DMs learners are receiving. In addition, the CAP, a high school entrance examination, markedly influences both the educational system and teaching content (Pan, 2013). Under the guidelines of basic language competences mandated by the Taiwan Ministry of Education (MOE), the English test of the CAP puts special emphasis on testing students' real life communicative competence. For example, discourse comprehension and the proper use of DMs in a variety of contexts and text types are essential abilities required of EFL learners (Research Center for Psychological and Educational Testing, 2016). Hence, it would appear meaning and beneficial to conduct a corpus analysis of the role of DMs in the curriculum-based English textbooks and the English test of the CAP, regarding their frequency, functions, and distributions. Such information might help us understand the types of exposure to DMs that learners receive, determine whether textbook designers and test writers place adequate emphasis on DMs, and discover what exactly needs to be changed if we want to develop more authentic teaching materials, which will ideally help learners achieve a greater degree of confidence in comprehension and naturalness in communication (Römer, 2004).

Literature Review

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is a precursor for language learners acquiring other skills (Kim & Phillips, 2014). It is also an essential part of communicative competence (Wagner & Toth, 2014). There are two cognitive processes in listening comprehension: top-down and bottom-up (Flowerdew & Miller, 2012). Bottom-up processing refers to the piecing together of acoustic cues. Listeners start with phonemes, which are then combined into words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Finally, sentences are combined to create meaning. In top-down processing, listeners use context and prior knowledge to construct and reconstruct incoming data to comprehend it (Flowerdew & Miller, 2012). When listeners receive acoustic signals, related schemata are activated to help them create a mental representation of what they hear. Knowledge of the cohesion, rhetorical organization, and meaning of the text at the macro-level compensate for problems in comprehending micro-level elements (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). As Rumelhart (1975) indicated, language is processed at different levels simultaneously. Top-down and bottom-up processes interact during listening comprehension, which involves active encoding and decoding of language inputs with prior knowledge (Zarei & Mahmudi, 2012). Effective listeners utilize bottom-up and top-down processing interactively but ineffective listeners are restricted to bottom-up processing (Ghoneim, 2013).

Discourse Markers in Listening Comprehension

DMs refer to metalinguistic devices that act as connectives, signal the structure of a piece of discourse, and highlight the relative importance of ideas (McCarthy, 2011). DMs guide listeners in interpreting the incoming information (Tyler, 1994). They express the speaker's attitudes (certainty or reservations), feelings, and intentions (Fraser, 2009; Sinclair & Mauranen, 2006). In the current study, DMs were classified and analyzed based on their functions, including two main types—textual and interpersonal (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2007; Hyland, 2000), as depicted in Table 1.

Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh's (2007) classification of DMs was based on Hyland's (2000) proposition for

DM functions of written texts and their analysis of academic lectures for EFL learners. Lectures are spoken texts but they have features normally associated with written text (Flowerdew & Tauroza, 1995). The form and function of DMs in lectures corresponds more closely to those found in conversation than to those found in written text. Therefore, Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh's DM categorization was adopted for the current study because the curriculum-based English textbooks and CAP English test consist of scripted spoken and written texts designed for EFL learners. However, some adjustments should be made, depending on students' English proficiency and input resources. Only those DMs that fit students' proficiency level and were included in the 1200 word list mandated by the Taiwan MOE for junior high school students were adopted for the current study. Therefore, some DM categories were excluded from the study such as endophoric (e.g., noted above) and illocutionary markers (e.g., X states).

TABLE 1
Classifications and Functions of Discourse Markers

Categories	Functions	Examples
Textual Markers		
Logical connectives	Show relationship between clauses/sentences	<i>and, so, but because</i>
Frame markers	Topic shift	<i>let's, well</i>
Code glosses	Help comprehend a particular text element	<i>for example</i>
Interpersonal markers		
Boosters	Show the speaker's certainty or communicative force	<i>of course</i>
Hedges	Modify the speaker's commitment to the proposition	<i>perhaps, maybe</i>
Relational markers	Establish rapport with the listener	<i>...right?</i>
Emphatics	Show the speaker's stance towards the proposition	<i>in fact</i>

Note. Adapted from Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh (2007, pp. 29-30).

DMs facilitate learners' listening comprehension (Flowerdew & Miller, 2012). With an awareness of DM functions, listeners can determine the global structure, infer meaning, and interpret the text (Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Zhang, 2012). DMs also help listeners recall more information and essential ideas in texts (Chen, 2014; Chung, 2002; Jung, 2003; Haig, 2008; Richards, 2006). Some researchers have confirmed the positive effects of DM instruction in promoting greater listening comprehension (Dastjerdi & Rezvani's, 2010; Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2007; Sadeghi & Heidaryan, 2012). However, DM instruction has been neglected by teachers and textbook writers (Huang, 2011). DMs are treated as fillers and considered devoid of meaning and function. The use of some DMs (e.g. *well* and *you know*) is criticized as indicating poor fluency or speech. Consequently, the time spent on DM instruction is relatively rare. Without being taught DMs intentionally, most L2 learners cannot utilize DMs to identify overall structure and distinguish main ideas from minor ones (Olsen & Huckin, 1990).

In Taiwan, EFL learners' encounters with DMs may depend substantially on textbook content which teachers closely follow (Chien, 2014; Pan, 2013). In addition, the English test of the CAP has exerted a strong influence on the teaching in schools in Taiwan (Pan, 2013). Based on the objectives of the curriculum, the CAP attempts to test learners' communicative competence in real life and put special emphasis on discourse comprehension (Research Center for Psychological and Educational Testing, 2016). Therefore, to understand the DM instruction and the types of exposure to DMs that Taiwanese EFL learners receive, it might be helpful to conduct a corpus analysis of the role of DMs in the curriculum-based English textbooks and the CAP English test.

Corpus Linguistics and EFL Teaching Materials

The contribution of corpus linguistics to L2 instruction is related to the importance that it places on the empirical study of large databases of language. Accurate descriptions of how language features are used and their occurrence in naturally occurring language are especially important in language teaching. Results from corpus research have made important contributions to three areas of English language teaching: syllabus

design, materials, and teaching methodology (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2006; Sinclair, 2004b). Corpus-based analysis helps teachers re-evaluate the order of linguistic features presented in textbooks, decide what to prioritize in the textbook, and tailor courses to meet learners' needs (Barbieri & Eckhardt, 2007; Tanko, 2004).

Researchers have identified discrepancies between the language used in textbooks and that found in corpora (Gilmore, 2004; Keck & Kim, 2014; Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). Prior research reveals that L2 textbooks do not always reflect native-like use of certain discourse functions (Barbieri & Eckhardt, 2007; Harwood, 2005). Some developers of teaching materials select content based on intuition, ignoring the frequent features used by language users in real-world situations (Thompson & Hunston, 2006).

Lam (2010) compared the coverage of one of the most frequently used DMs, *well*, in 15 Hong Kong English language textbooks with its usage in real language use—Hong Kong spoken English (HKCSE). The findings showed that *well* was rare in the textbook database and occurred mainly in the initial position. Cheng and Warren (2007) also found mismatches between English textbooks in Hong Kong and the real-world examples in the HKCSE. According to their findings, the eight most frequently used DMs in HKCSE were *I mean, right, okay, you know, alright, yeah, you see, and yes*. Nevertheless, none of these DMs was presented in the textbooks with the exception of *okay*.

Having reviewed the recent literature published in Taiwan on corpus-based studies of textbooks, the researcher found that these studies have been interested only in analyzing specific vocabulary (Huang, 2011; Liu, 2009), lexical phrases (Lai & Zhao, 2006), and grammatical features (Wang, 2012) in English textbooks at mostly the senior high school and college levels. Studies conducted to examine DMs in the curriculum-based junior high school English textbooks have received little attention. Hence, it was useful to determine whether the textbooks, workbooks, and CAP English test reflect English speakers' use of DMs in real-world communication.

To understand the DMs that junior high school students receive in their English lessons and to determine whether textbook designers and test writers place adequate emphasis on DMs, the researcher took a corpus-based approach into analyzing the role of DMs in the curriculum-based English textbooks, workbooks, and the CAP English test, which comprise a large part of EFL learners' input in Taiwan (Chang, 2011; Chien, 2014). The study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of DMs in the junior high school English textbook (ET) corpus, English listening workbook (ELW) corpus, and the English test of the CAP (CAP) corpus, regarding their frequency and functions?
2. What is the distribution of the DM position in a sentence in the ET, ELW, and CAP corpora?

Method

Corpora

Three corpora were compiled for the study: an English textbook (ET) corpus, an English listening workbook (ELW) corpus, and the English test of the CAP (CAP) corpus. A total of 12 junior high school English textbooks for the 2014 academic year were collected from the Kan-shian and Han-lin publishers, serving as the textbook corpus. Texts from the readings and dialogues in each lesson in the two series of textbooks were used for the current analysis. DMs might occur in written English although their frequency is much lower than that in spoken English (Biber, 2006; Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Moreover, the readings included a variety of genres such as articles, monologues, interviews, and notes. Therefore, the readings in each lesson were also used for analysis. The Han-lin version had an additional "listening practice" section, which was also included. Another corpus comprised 12 English listening workbooks, six from the Kan-shian publisher and six from the Han-lin publisher. The third corpus, the CAP corpus, consisted of all test items on the English tests in the CAP from 2005 to 2015. Before 2013, the CAP was named the Basic Competence Test for Junior High School Students. For the three corpora, all the tables, footnotes, figures, references, and

appendices were excluded. Regarding the size of the corpora, the ET corpus was composed of 4,462 sentences and 41,832 running words; the ELW corpus included 3,701 sentences and 26,967 running words; the CAP corpus had 4,230 sentences and 36,698 running words. The composition of each corpus is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Frequency of Sentences and Words in the ET, ELW, and CAP Corpora

	ET Corpus		ELW Corpus		CAP Corpus	
	Sentences	Words	Sentences	Words	Sentences	Words
Reading section	1724	16383	n/a	n/a	4102	35731
Dialogue section	1861	19265	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Listening section	877	6184	3701	26967	128	967
Total	4462	41832	3701	26967	4230	36698

Text Analysis Tools

The AntConc 3.4.3 computer program (Anthony, 2014) was used to investigate the frequency of DMs in the three corpora. AntConc is a corpus analysis toolkit for text analysis, concordance, and word lists. AntConc also shows the frequency of word tokens and the number of sentences which contain the searched term. The current study employed two functions in AntConc: the concordance tool and file view tool. The concordance tool was used to analyze the frequencies of occurrence of each type of DM which was manually identified from the textbooks. The results were shown in keyword-in-context (KWIC) format. The searched DM was displayed in the center of each concordance line and the co-texts on either side of the DM. The multi-functionality of some DMs such as *well* or *oh* caused more difficulty in categorization. The instances of these DMs were analyzed in context by referring back to the original file via the File View Tool. Referring back to source texts made it easier to identify co-occurring linguistic items.

The Readability Test Tool (Simpson, 2014) was employed to count the total number of sentences and words of each text in the three corpora. Because this tool also analyzed the reading level and grade level of the text, the contents in each corpus were examined to determine whether they were written consistently for the junior high school level.

Data Analysis

The present study was conducted in three stages using quantitative corpus methodologies combined with qualitative text-based analysis to identify the use of DMs in the ET corpus, the ELW corpus, and the CAP corpus. At first, the English textbooks were examined manually to identify all the possible types of DMs. Then, the frequencies of occurrence of the DMs in the three corpora were calculated using AntConc 3.4.3. The instances retrieved by AntConc then required manual, functional analysis. They were manually classified as discourse or non-discourse use, depending on their word classes and syntactical structures. Only the discourse use of the identified words/phrases was used in the study. Take the word *well* for example. *Well* in Example 1 is an adverb, and in Example 2, it is an adjective. By contrast, *well* in Example 3 does not belong to any word class or fit into any syntactical structure. Thus, it was classified as a DM.

1. She plays the piano **well**.
2. I hope you are **well**.
3. **Well**, I want to go hiking.

More examples are the words *and*, *but*, and *or*, which were included only when they functioned as DMs. In other words, if they functioned as coordinating conjunctions between clauses or sentences, they would be excluded from the analysis. For example, *and* in Example 4 is a DM. *And* in Example 5 is a conjunction.

4. A boy is running over to us. **And**, he is crying.

5. ...we play it every Saturday **and** Sunday.

Finally, these identified DMs were categorized according to their types, functions, and distributions based on the taxonomies of Eslami and Eslami-Rasekh's (2007) and Hyland's (2000) in that there are two main DM types: textual (e.g., frame, code glosses, and logical connectives) and interpersonal markers (e.g., hedges, attitude, relation, and booster). Subjectivity was inevitable in classifying DM functions which might result in a slightly different frequency. Since such examples accounted for a very small proportion, the overall DM frequency and distribution were expected to be reliable. To compare DMs among the three corpora, the actual frequency of DMs was normed on a basis of 10,000 words and 10,000 sentences for clarity and ease of access. Chi-Square tests were used to determine whether the differences of DM frequencies were statistically significant per 10,000 words and 10,000 sentences among the three corpora.

Results

Frequency of DMs in the Three Corpora

Table 3 shows the results of the Chi-Square test for the normalized frequencies of DMs among the three corpora. The total numbers of DMs in the CAP, ET, and ELW corpora were 407, 581, and 310, respectively. The frequencies of DM occurrence per 10,000 sentences were 962, 1302, and 838 respectively. There were significant differences of DM frequency per 10,000 sentences among the three corpora ($X^2 = 1.10$, $p = .00$). The ET corpus contained the most DMs. The frequencies of DM occurrence per 10,000 words were 115, 139, and 115, respectively. Although there was no significant difference of DM frequency per 10,000 words among the three corpora ($X^2 = 3.12$, $p = .21$), the ET corpus contained a larger proportion of DMs.

TABLE 3

Results of Chi-Square Test for the Normalized Frequencies of DMs in the CAP, ET, and ELW corpora

Corpora	Raw freq.	Normalized freq. per 10,000 sentences	df	x^2	p	Normalized freq. per 10,000 words	df	x^2	p
CAP	407	962	2	1.10	.00	115	2	3.12	.21
ET	581	1302				139			
ELW	310	838				115			
Total	1298	3102				369			

As shown in Table 4, the dialogue section in the ET corpus contained a considerably larger proportion of DMs (990 times per 10,000 sentences; 106 times per 10,000 words) than that of the reading section (173 times per 10,000 sentences; 18 times per 10,000 words) or listening section (139 times per 10,000 sentences; 15 times per 10,000 words). There were more instances of DMs in the dialogic genres than in the reading genres, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

TABLE 4

Frequency and Distribution of DMs in the ET Corpus

	Raw frequency	Normalized freq. per 10,000 sentences	Normalized freq. per 10,000 words
Reading section	77	173	18
Dialogue section	442	990	106
Listening section	62	139	15
Total	581	1302	139

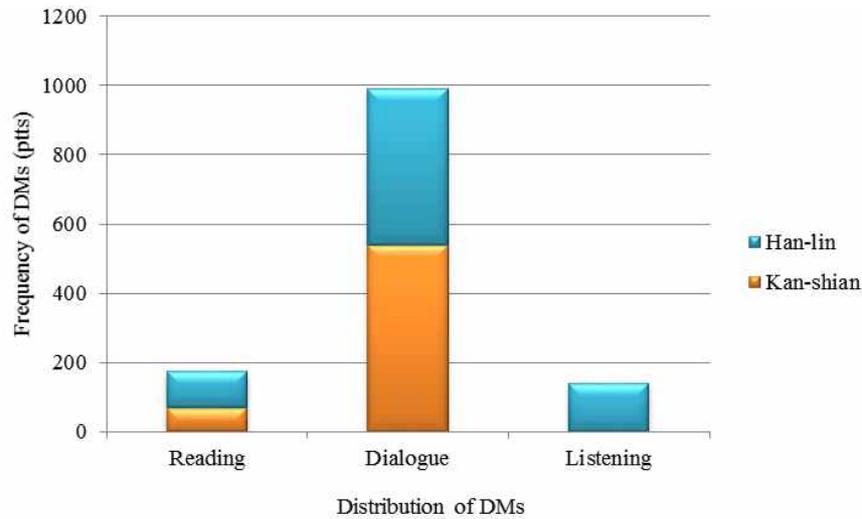


Figure 1. Distributions and frequency of DMs in the ET corpus.

Functions of DMs in the Three Corpora

Seven DM functions were identified in the three corpora. Those seven functions could be divided into two broad categories: textual markers and interpersonal markers. As shown in Figure 2, the first three DM functions: logical connectives, frame, and code gloss, were primarily for textual organizations, which helped the process of comprehension. The most frequent type of textual DMs among the three corpora functioned as logical connectives (488 times per 10,000 sentences; 58 times per 10,000 words). Frame markers (334 times per 10,000 sentences; 39 times per 10,000 words) were the second most common. Code glosses (14 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words) were the least frequent function.

The last four were interpersonal markers, which might be used as mitigators to avoid sounding too assertive, as depicted in Figure 2. The functions included boosters (123 times per 10,000 sentences; 16 times per 10,000 words), hedges (36 times per 10,000 sentences; 4 times per 10,000 words), relational markers (20 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words), and emphatics (12 times per 10,000 sentences; 4 times per 10,000 words).

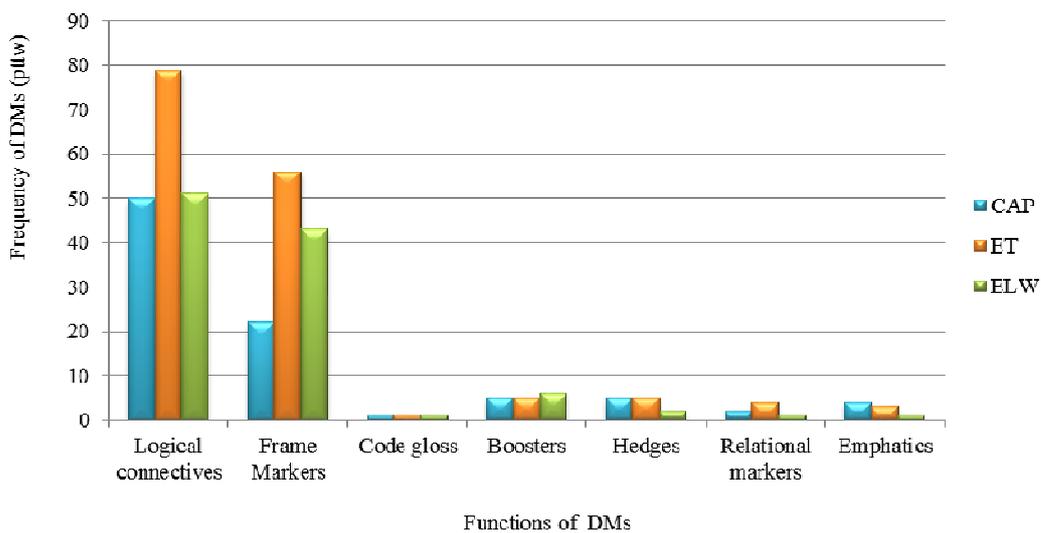


Figure 2. Functions and frequency of DMs in the CAP, ET, and ELW corpora.

Table 5 presents more detailed information about the DM categories (Excerpts, Appendix A). As for the textual markers, logical connectives can be further divided into several subcategories. Some of them indicated shifts of viewpoint or topic, giving listeners a hint about the upcoming change, such as *but* (188 times per 10,000 sentences; 22 times per 10,000 words), *however* (20 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words), and *now* (58 times per 10,000 sentences; 7 times per 10,000 words). Other connectives, such as *so* (44 times per 10,000 sentences; 5 times per 10,000 words) and *because* (15 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words), were used to express relationships between clauses and sentences (McCarthy, 2011). The ordinal numbers *first* (14 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words), *second* (7 times per 10,000 sentences; 1 times per 10,000 words), and *third* (2 times per 10,000 sentences; 1 times per 10,000 words), and the word *finally* (13 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words) provided an overall structure to the text.

TABLE 5
Categorization of DM Frequency, Types, and Functions in the Three Corpora

	CAP			ET			ELW		
	raw	ptts	pttw	raw	ptts	pttw	raw	ptts	pttw
Textual markers									
1. Logical connectives									
but	88	208	24	95	213	23	53	143	20
then	14	33	4	50	112	12	26	70	10
now	29	69	8	34	76	8	11	30	4
and	25	59	7	34	76	8	10	27	4
so	26	61	7	22	49	5	8	22	3
however	9	21	2	14	31	3	3	8	1
because	3	7	1	12	27	3	4	11	1
first	5	12	1	7	16	2	9	24	3
finally	5	12	1	6	13	2	5	14	2
second	2	5	1	2	4	1	2	5	1
third	0	0	0	2	4	1	1	1	1
2. Frame markers									
let's	0	0	0	53	119	13	17	46	6
well	25	59	7	51	114	12	33	89	12
oh	30	71	8	43	96	10	31	84	11
ok	24	57	7	43	96	10	33	89	12
(all) right	7	17	2	18	40	4	9	24	3
3. Code glosses									
for example	8	19	2	10	22	2	1	1	1
Interpersonal markers									
4. Boosters									
see/look/listen	50	118	17	31	70	7	30	81	10
hey	9	21	2	3	7	1	8	22	3
of course	7	17	2	7	16	2	7	18	3
5. Hedges									
perhaps/maybe	22	52	6	19	43	4	5	14	2
6. Relational markers									
...right?/Right	6	14	2	15	35	4	3	10	1
7. Emphatics									
in fact	13	30	4	10	23	2	2	5	1
Total	407	962	115	581	1302	139	310	838	115

Note. ptts: per 10,000 sentences; pttw: per 10,000 words. Excerpts see Appendix A.

The frame markers also had varied functions, as shown in Table 5. The high frequency and multi-functionality of *well* among the three corpora corresponded to Biber (2006) in that *well* was a primary DM in English native speakers' conversations. The mean occurrences of *well* were 87 per 10,000 sentences and 11 per 10,000 words among the three corpora. Table 6 showed a more detailed analysis of the types, functions, and frequency of *well* in the three corpora (Excerpts, Appendix B). *Well* often functioned as a face-threat mitigator (44.04%). These usages of *well* indicated a shift in context and oriented the interlocutors to process the following utterance in a new or adjusted environment (Huang, 2011). In addition, *well* was used as a pause filler (18.35%). It also showed agreement (15.60%), a cause-effect relationship (12.84%), clarification (4.59%), and acted as a qualifier (4.59%).

TABLE 6
Types, Functions, and Frequency of Well in the CAP, ET, and ELW Corpora

Types	Functions of <i>well</i>	Frequency	%
Mitigator	Express disapproval/anger	15	13.78
	Make a suggestion, criticism, or correction	15	13.78
	Doubt	10	9.17
	Reject an offer	8	7.33
Pause filler	Pause for planning	20	18.35
Agreement	Express agreement	7	6.42
	Signal confirmation	6	5.50
	Apologies + Self repair	4	3.67
Cause-effect	Because	14	12.84
Qualifier	Require more details	5	4.59
Clarification	Emphasize something you are saying	5	4.59
Total		109	100.02

Another highly frequent frame marker is *oh*. The mean occurrences of *oh* were 84 per 10,000 sentences and 10 per 10,000 words among the three corpora. *Oh* functioned as an interjection or exclamation used to express emotions (Carter & McCarthy, 2006) such as disappointment (31.73%) or surprise (25.00%). It was also used as a change-of-state marker, indicating a problem about a question's relevance (17.31%), appropriateness (16.35%), or presuppositions (9.62%), as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7
Types, Functions, and Frequency of oh in the CAP, ET, and ELW Corpora

Types	Functions of <i>oh</i>	Frequency	%
Interjection	Disappointment	33	31.73
	Surprise	26	25.00
Change-of-state markers	A problem	18	17.31
	Appropriateness	17	16.35
	Presupposition	10	9.62
Total		104	100

Let's and *right* revealed the speaker's intention: to engage the listeners. The mean occurrences of *let's* were 55 times per 10,000 sentences and 7 times per 10,000 words among the three corpora. The code gloss *for example* helped clarify the speaker's intention, occurring 14 times per 10,000 sentences and 2 times per 10,000 words.

In terms of the interpersonal markers, the boosters *see*, *look*, *listen*, and *hey* were employed to summon the interlocutor's attention. The mean occurrences of *see*, *look*, and *listen* were 37 times per 10,000 sentences and 11 times per 10,000 words. *Hey* occurred nearly 17 times per 10,000 sentences and 2 times per 10,000 words in each corpus. The other booster *of course* (17 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words) and the emphatic *in fact* (20 times per 10,000 sentences; 2 times per 10,000 words) were used to mark an expression

of certainty and emphasize the force of a proposition (Candlin & Hyland, 2014).

Perhaps and *maybe* were categorized as hedges, used to withhold strong commitment from the exactness of the utterance (Hyland, 2009). The information was presented as an opinion rather than a fact. They were used nearly 36 times per 10,000 sentences and 4 times per 10,000 words in each corpus.

The relational marker *right* was used to invoke the interlocutor's participation and elicit his or her confirmation (Candlin & Hyland, 2014; Crismore et al, 1993). The mean occurrences of *right* were 20 times per 10,000 sentences and 3 times per 10,000 words among the three corpora.

The Distributions of DMs in the Three Corpora

As shown in Table 8, over 87% of the occurrences of the DMs were restricted to sentence-initial position or the extra-clausal position. Only 10.32% of the DMs occurred in the sentence-medial position and 1.93% occurred in the sentence-final position. It should be noted that only six DMs, *look*, *perhaps*, *then*, *right*, *for example*, and *however*, had varied distributions in the sentence-initial, -medial, and -final positions.

TABLE 8
Frequency of DMs in the Sentence-Initial, Medial, and Final Positions

Corpora	Sentence-Initial		Sentence-Medial		Sentence-Final	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
CAP	363	89.19	37	9.10	7	1.72
ET	504	86.75	66	11.36	11	1.89
ELW	272	87.74	31	10.00	7	2.26
Total	1139	87.75	134	10.32	25	1.93

Discussion

This section will discuss the findings of the study vis-à-vis the two research questions.

The first research question concerns the frequencies and functions of DMs across the three corpora. Compared with the ELW and CAP corpora, the ET corpus contained the most DMs. Many of the senses of DMs in the three corpora were the most common ones that native speakers used in real-world communication, such as *well*, *oh*, *right*, *so*, *now*, and *(you) see* (Fung & Carter, 2007; Huang, 2011).

Furthermore, DMs occurred more frequently in the dialogues than in the readings across the three corpora. The results were in line with Carter and McCarthy's (2006) claim that DMs occur more often in spoken than in written language. The findings also agreed with Furko and Abuczki (2014) that DMs are genre-dependent. DMs occur more frequently in spoken than in written language; that is, the more interactive the genre is, the more frequently DMs occur (Huang, 2011).

It should be noted that *now* was a rather different DM, which occurred more often in readings and monologues than in dialogues in the three corpora. Similar conclusions were drawn in Aijmer (2004). *Now* occurs more often in monologic genres, such as public lectures, than in dialogic genres such as everyday conversations. Textbook writers might recognize and intend to clarify the different usages of DMs in written and spoken English. This implied the choices of DMs by the textbook designers might not be based on their own intuition or ideas about usefulness.

In terms of the DM functions, all the identified DMs in the three corpora were multi-functional. These DMs could be divided into two broad categories: textual and interpersonal markers. Textual markers functioned as logical connectives, frame markers, and code gloss. Interpersonal markers were used as boosters, hedges, relations, and emphatics. Logical connectives and frame markers were the two most frequent functions. Logical connectives were used to indicate shifts of viewpoint or topic (e.g., *but* and *however*), express relationships between clauses or sentences (e.g., *so* and *because*), and provide an overall structure (e.g., *first*, *second*, and *finally*).

The frame makers such as *well* and *oh* also had varied functions in the three corpora. For example, *well*

functioned as mitigator, pause filler, agreement marker, cause-effect relationship marker, qualifier, and clarification marker. *Oh* functioned as an interjection or exclamation used to express emotions. It was also used as a change-of-state marker. The results were in line with Jucker's (1997) proposition that DMs do not serve only as time fillers devoid of meaning and function. The varied DM functions in the three corpora played an effective role in arousing EFL learners' awareness of DMs. The findings were, in part, contradictory to those of Gilmore (2004), Keck and Kim (2014), and Lam (2010), who indicated a substantial discrepancy between ESL/EFL textbooks and real-world language use.

However, there was a relatively low rate of occurrence of DMs in the listening workbooks. According to the guidelines of the 12-year compulsory education (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2014), the curriculum goals of English courses are to develop students' communication competence in the target language community. The curriculum-based English listening workbooks for junior high school students should provide students practice in comprehending English speakers' daily conversation, short stories, and easy speech in a variety of contexts. As a result, the ELW corpus was expected to be composed of primarily spoken English and have a larger proportion of DMs than that of the ET and CAP corpora. Nevertheless, the results revealed that the ELW corpus had the smallest proportion of DMs. The findings were in converse to the spoken nature of listening. This discrepancy was probably due to the listening content in the listening workbooks which were composed largely of planned written English with longer idea units and even complex syntax, as illustrated in the following listening excerpt:

Jill got a new cellphone from her parents for her birthday last month. She can use the cellphone not only to make phone calls but also to surf the Net. Jill used it both at home and at school. She used it to watch videos and to chat with her friends online. Last Friday, Jill's teacher found her watching a video on her cellphone in class. The teacher was angry and told her parents about it. Her parents were angry, too. They wanted her to spend less time on her phone. Jill promised them she would never use it in class again. (*Han-lin Listening Work Book VI*, Lesson 9)

All the DMs, pauses, fillers, false starts, and hesitation phenomena that were characteristic of spoken discourse were excluded. The results were consistent with Gilmore's (2004) and Wagner and Toth's (2014) findings in the spoken input for the L2 listening instruction. Although there have been "appeals for greater authenticity in language learning" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 97) there seems to be "little progress in actually making this happen" (Wagner & Toth, 2014, p. 408).

The second research question explores the distribution of the DM positions in a sentence in the ET, ELW, and CAP corpora. The occurrences of the DMs were mainly restricted to the sentence-initial position or the extra-clausal position. The findings were contrary to the flexible position of DMs in English native speakers' utterances (Fung & Carter, 2007). Only six DMs, *then*, *look*, *perhaps*, *right*, *for example*, and *however*, occurred in the sentence-initial, -medial, or -final positions, as shown in Excerpts 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

1. a. I only see a notebook here. **Then**, I will pack them for you. (CAP 102)
b. And it **then** became a popular drink cola. (ELW: HL/B5/L4)¹
2. a. **Right**, that's why we had this plan to get our clean beach back (CAP 95)
b. Those are your winter months, **right**? (ET: KS/B3/L8)²
3. a. **Look**, our seats are over there. (ET: KS/B1/L5)
b. Mom, **look!** (ELW: HL/B5/L4)

Some DMs appearing in different positions seem to perform different functions. In Excerpt 1a, *then* appearing in the sentence-initial position functioned as a logical connective which expressed the semantic

¹ ELW: HL/B5/L4 refers to the ELW Corpus: Han-lin/Book V/Lesson 4

² ET: KS/B3/L8 refers to the ET Corpus: Kan-shian/Book III/Lesson 8

relations between the two sentences (Hyland, 2000). In Excerpt 1b, *then* was a temporal adverb. *Right* was a relational marker. In Excerpt 2a, the sentence-initial *right* showed agreement. In Excerpt 2b, the sentence-final *right* revealed the speaker's intention to establish rapport with the listener and elicit a response. *Look* in Excerpt 3 functioned as a booster which was used to focus the listener's attention on something of high importance. *Look* occurring in sentence-final position might also indicate "being careful", as shown in Excerpt 3b. The findings suggested that textbook and test writers should focus more on the DM distributions and contexts in actual language use because DMs in different positions might function differently.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implication

This study explored what the types of DM exposure junior high school students received and determined whether textbooks designers and test writers place adequate emphasis on DMs. A comparative corpus-based analysis was conducted to investigate the DMs presented in curriculum-based English textbooks, listening workbooks, and the English test of the CAP from 2005 to 2015, regarding their frequency, functions, and distributions. The results showed that the curriculum-based English textbooks had the highest frequencies of DMs while the listening workbooks had the lowest. In addition, the English textbooks and English test of the CAP demonstrated a clear distinction of the role of DMs in spoken and written discourse. Furthermore, most of the DMs identified in the three corpora were multi-functional and involved the senses which were most common to native speakers' speech. However, the distributions of most DMs were limited to the sentence-initial position. To provide favorable and reliable resources for instructors, text designers and test writers should focus more attention on DM distributions and contexts in real language use.

Based on the findings of the present study, EFL instructors should notice the role of DMs in language comprehension, familiarize themselves and learners with DM occurrence in textbooks and the CAP English test, and use supplementary materials to compensate for textbook deficiencies. For DM instruction, using the corpus-analysis approach, teachers can show EFL learners the nature of DM collocation and the patterns of DM usage, and most importantly, elaborate real-life use in context rather than in isolated sentences. Regarding the selection of texts, teachers might align with the content of the curriculum-based English textbooks and CAP English test, which demonstrate the highly frequent DMs with multi-functionality in real-world communication. In addition, EFL curriculum should be supplemented with authentic learning materials, showing DMs in varied distribution.

There were some limitations to this study. The dialogues in the English textbooks do not resemble authentic speech. It is a type of spoken language presented in written form and redrafted by the editors or publishers to fulfill specific teaching purposes. These factors might affect the generalizability of this study and limit the researcher's interpretations. Moreover, there was some overlap between the functions of DMs. The imposition of discrete categories inevitably conceals that DMs often perform more than one function. Forthcoming studies are recommended to investigate the effect of DM instruction on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

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Appendix A

DM Functions and Excerpts in the ET, ELW, and CAP Corpora

DM Functions	Excerpts
A. Textual Markers	
1. Logical connectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I won't do it again. But who is he? (CAP 97) • Those are great posters. But something is wrong. (ET) • Yes, I heard it. But I couldn't answer it because I was cooking. (ELW)
<i>then</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I only see a notebook here. Then, I will pack them for you. (CAP 102) • Then, all my wishes would come true. (ET) • They first saw the tigers. Then, they visited the rabbits. (ELW)
<i>now</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...he gets sick easily. Now, we have to take a taxi home because there are no buses after eleven. (CAP 97) • Thanks, Anderson. Now, let us hear from Helen in Kaohsiung. (ET) • You really did a great job. Now, it is really different (ELW)

	<i>and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We play basketball in PE class today. And guess what? (CAP 97) • A boy is running over to us. And, he is crying. (ET) • Yes. And we play it every Saturday and Sunday. (ELW) 	
	<i>so</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was. So... why don't you try some? (CAP 102) • Too bad. So, what do you like? (ET) • So... today is Rover's birthday. (ELW) 	
	<i>however</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, using his only foot, he still able to write and draw wonderfully. (CAP 102) • The kids, however, reacted differently. (ET) • Not a bad idea. However, I heard that the weather won't be very good. (ELW) 	
	<i>because</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a police officer. Because what you have done, you must come with me to the police station. (CAP 102). • I didn't come because I was sick. (ET) • Why are you asking this? Because you are usually serious before deciding to do everything. (ELW) 	
	<i>first</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First tell ES-ME you r birthday. Then, ask your question. Finally, then you will get an answer from ES-ME. (CAP 99-2) 	
	<i>finally</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, he should drink enough water and eat some meat every day. ... Finally, he cannot eat too much candy or junk food. (ET) 	
	<i>second</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, they have to cross the street. Next, they should turn right... Finally, the train station is on her left. (ELW) 	
	<i>third</i>		
2.	Frame markers	<i>let's</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's have lunch together. (ET) • Let's go. (ELW)
		<i>well</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your room always this tidy? Well, I like to put everything in the right place. (CAP101) • Is he smart? Yes, he is. Well, show me. (ET6) • It is very expensive. Well, I think you should tell him what happened. (ELW)
		<i>oh</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was hit by a motorcycle today. Oh, that's too bad. (CAP100) • It starts at 4:30. Oh, you have to go now. (ET) • Please mix them together in the bowl. Oh, that's easy. (ELW)
		<i>ok</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OK, don't worry about that. (CAP 98) • It is on the chair. OK, where is my watch? (ET) • Just like the ones that I used to know... • OK, that's is enough. (ELW)
		<i>(all) right</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can get a lot of information from it. All right? (ET)
3.	Code glosses	<i>for example</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an expensive hobby. For example you have to buy the clothes, the balls, the masks, and many other things. (CAP 102) • What do you do there? For example, we play with six balls at the same time (ET)
B. Interpersonal markers			
4.	Boosters	<i>see</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the ruler on your right? (CAP 98)
		<i>look</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look! This is a cute picture. (ET)
		<i>listen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oh, sorry. Listen. This is my new work. (ELW)
		<i>hey</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hey, try this. (CAP 102) • Hey! Stop it! (ET) • They are special. Hey. Is this your ball? (ELW)
		<i>of course</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love animals a lot. Of course, I enjoy being with people, too. (CAP 97) • Yes. Of course, you do. (ET) • Can Jason swim? Of course, he can't only swim but also play tennis. (ELW)
5.	Hedges	<i>perhaps</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps it is a new song... (CAP 98)
		<i>maybe</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is wrong with them? Perhaps, being late is in their blood. (ET) • Maybe you should go ask your teacher. (ELW)

6. Relation	<i>...right?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Taitung, right? (CAP 99) • Those are your winter months, right? (ET) • They are twins, right? (ELW)
7. Emphatics	<i>in fact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why don't you try some? Well, in fact, I am a little sick of it. (CAP 102) • In fact, Julie is too thin. (ET) • No. In fact, it is easy. (ELW)

Appendix B

Functions and Excerpts of the DM *Well* in the ET, ELW, and CAP Corpora

Functions of <i>Well</i>	Excerpts	
Mitigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express disapproval 	1. A: Looking almost the same. Or having the same hobbies? B: Well , I have a twin brother who was born on a different day from me. We do not look very much alike. (CAP 96)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suggestion, correction 	2. A: It's the song. It's not so good. B: Well , I'm the song writer. (ET)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubt 	3. A: Don't most people want to go to high school? B: Well ...Everybody except me. I want to be an art worker... (ET)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reject an offer 	4. A: Isn't that an old movie? I am not interested in old movies. B: Well , the paper says the Snakes on a Plane are very popular. (ELW)
		5. A: Is he smart? B: Yes, he is. A: Well , show me. (ET)
		6. A: Get some drinks and desserts. B: Well ... I don't eat a lot... (ET)
Pause filler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause for planning 	7. A: How much pork do you need? B: Well , two kilos. We also need a kilogram of chicken. (ET)
		8. A: Well , then, I have to ask my parents first. B: You can have soft food after 30 minutes (CAP 102)
		9. A: How about you? B: Well , I want to go hiking. (ELW)
Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express agreement 	10. I just talked to him, well , maybe a little loudly. (CAP 102)
		11. A: Sounds like a long walk. B: Well , let's take a taxi, then. (ET)
		12. A: Were you and Cindy classmates before, Emma? B: Well , we were in the same school. (ELW)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal confirmation 	13. A: Kevin, please pick the garbage up from the floor. B: Why me? I didn't throw it there. Allen did. A: Well , Allen, pick it up and throw it into the trash can, please. (ET)
Cause-effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because 	14. A: So why don't you try some? B: Well, in fact, I am a little sick of it. (CAP 102)
		15. A: Singing again? You just sand on the balcony for five straight hours. B: Well , I'm going to join in a singing contest on TV. (ET)
		16. A: When my friend and I arrived at Happy Movie Theater, we found all the tickets had been sold out. B: Then? A: Well , my girlfriend got mad at me. (ELW)

Qualifier	• Require more details	17.	A: It's dark in the spooky house. You can't see them there. B: Well , any good ideas? A: What about a vampire without teeth? (ET)
Clarification	• emphasize something	18.	A: And put the eraser in the refrigerator? B: Well, I don't remember that part. A: Well , take it, and be more careful next time. (CAP 96)
		19.	A: The soup still tasted great. B: Well , I put five different kinds of vegetables in the soup. (ELW)
