

# The Socratic method in developing spoken English discussion discourse markers: A case study

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## ABSTRACT

Socratic pedagogy is a systematized method that encourages learners to question themselves and each other - without being judgmental. It aims at boosting empathy and developing an ability to reach informed conclusions. It supports the acquisition of social skills and fosters collaboration while helping them to think critically, deepen their understanding, and find reality in equilibrium. In reaching for insights, students acquire vital skills, knowledge, and practices. Socratic learning depends on how participants can use systematic dialogue. This study monitored the effects of students' use of specific discourse markers (DMs) over a series of speaking tasks undertaken in Socratic seminars. Each task was devised to support the learning objectives of a standardized English language course given to pre-service English teachers in Turkey. Recordings were used to provide feedback to ten participants and then analyzed for appropriate use of spoken DMs. The findings of the study revealed solid evidence of accurate and contextually appropriate DM usage as the number of appropriate DM use increased significantly in the seminars conducted at the end of the intervention period.

**Keywords:** Discourse markers, Socratic seminars, spontaneous speaking.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on one of the challenges in developing speaking skills, the use of discourse markers that make spoken language more coherent, fluent, and authentic. Speaking is one of the most challenging skills when learning a second language. Although non-native speakers can perform prepared speeches or presentations at a higher proficiency in the target language, spontaneous speaking remains an anxiety-creating task for students (Djahimo et al., 2018; Humphries et al., 2015; Hanifa, 2018; Vural, 2019; Tercan and Dikilitas, 2015, Mukminin et al., 2015). Discussions are a common technique to help enhance spontaneous language production. Yet, they are laden with even more stress-causing principles in their essence since discussions require skills to be able to produce topically relevant language used properly within the context of the interaction on the spot.

Instead, structured discussions, such as debates, are common in language classrooms to improve speaking skills. However, depending on how they are designed,

they might even contribute to speaking anxiety. To start with the challenges argumentative discussions present, the language teacher should consider the fact that an argumentative tone can be misperceived to hold strong support for the opinion under discussion while it might, on the other hand, discourage reticent students who find it challenging to address the solid argumentative and sided presentation of opinions. Especially in debates, the style and the language are argumentative, and the goal is to refute the opposing idea by appealing to its weak points. The peaceful discussion method, which avoids the participants' strong confrontation of an opinion and encourages them to meet at common grounds in their argumentation, is called Socratic Seminars. The Socratic Seminar Method, which is used to develop speaking skills in this study and will be detailed later in this paper, is a discussion design with principles that alleviates speaking anxiety. Henceforth, it contributed to the more authentic use of discourse markers which brought about the research questions of this study.

## Discourse markers in ELT

In spontaneous speaking, DMs are cohesive cue phrases that function in connecting the content of the utterance to the conversation context. While they can be used to attach units with a sentence, they can act as connectors between sentences that may or may not belong to the speaker in dialogue. Thus, discourse markers in spoken language hold both intra-sentential and inter-sentential connective roles (Fung and Carter, 2007). A DM's function holds more importance than the literal meaning of the words, phrases, or sentences used as DMs. Yu and Wu (2003) also define DMs and state that they are the language that does not change the truth value of utterances. Nevertheless, they are the language that displays attitude-related stances or organization relationships within a context-related stance. Therefore, they should not be regarded as merely an integral part of conversational grammar, which hinders fluency but taken as speech management devices used for several purposes in interaction (Aijmer, 2011). Halliday and Hasan (1976) introduced systemic functional grammar to analyze DMs. Building upon their work, Schiffrin (1987) developed his model entitled 'Schiffrin's coherence model'. According to this model, markers build meaningful relationships between utterances and create a "smooth and spontaneous interaction" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31). In Fraser's (1999) grammatical-pragmatic perspective, DMs are used for contextual coherence, mainly referring to the speaker's intention. Some linguists add that DMs are context-specific and have functions on a textual and interpersonal level (Aijmer, 2011; Müller, 2005; Trillo, 2002). The appropriateness of the DMs depends on the intimacy and hierarchical relationship between the interlocutors (Quirk et al., 1985).

Although various researchers have different categorizations of spoken DMs in the literature, the function of the DM plays a differentiating role in all of them. Schiffrin coined the phrase Discourse Markers in her book *Discourse Markers*, published in 1988. In her categorization which is the one that dates to the 1987s, there are five different types of DMs; the ones used for organizational reasons, turn-taking and giving, marking moves to act, and the ones to enable the flow of the conversation (Schiffrin, 1987). Green (2006), on the other hand, divides them into attitudinal and structural categories. The categorization of Fung and Carter encompasses "topic initiation, topic closure, and attention-seeking" under boundaries of talk, prosodic clues, multiple grammaticality (belonging to different parts of speech), and indexicality which indicates the relation of the utterance to the context in which it takes place. Finally, optionality focuses on the criterion, where the speaker decides whether to use a DM (2007, p. 412-414).

Research has focused both on the frequency of DM use and usage in a particular corpus (Alami, 2015). Some of the most common DMs in English are, *well*, *right*, *you know*, and *I mean* (Bu, 2013; Chapeton Castro,

2009). Haselow's study (2011) revealed the pragmatic functions of 'then' depending on the International Corpus of English. Lewis (2011) analyzed '*instead* and *rather*' from different linguistic perspectives. Buysse (2012) investigated 'so' in native and learner speech, and Bolden (2006) investigated 'so and *oh*' for other attentiveness in social interaction. Wang (2011) explored 'that' in Japanese and Chinese learners and concluded that 'that' was used both as a politeness and modality marker. Lee-Goldman (2011) studied the use of '*no*' as a DM and proposed its senses topic shift, managing misunderstanding, and turn-taking conflict resolution. Grant (2010) studied the use of *I don't know* among native speakers and its conjunction with discourse markers.

The use of DMs in non-native speech enhances authenticity (Asik and Cephe, 2013) since they are the most common words used in the native speaker language (Allwood, 1996). A surplus of research reveals significant differences between the frequency and type of native-speaker and non-native-speaker discourse markers (Basol and Kartal, 2019; Liao, 2009; Aysu 2017; House 2009; Lam 2009; Sankoff et al., 1997). Non-native speakers of a language use fewer DMs in the target language, and spontaneous speaking practice plays a major role in acquiring DMs (Vickov and Jakupcevic, 2017; Sankoff et al., 1997). However, while it is apparent that there are significant differences in the frequency and type of the discourse markers between native and nonnative speakers, it is still not common to pay particular attention to discourse markers per se in foreign language classes (Büyükkarcı and Genç, 2009; Fung and Carter, 2007; Hasselgren, 2002; Gilquin, 2008; Liao 2009; Müller, 2005; Zorluer-Ozer and Okan, 2018). Bearing in mind that DMs are the most frequent words used by native speakers, it would be beneficial if language teaching caters to authenticity and utilizes lifelike tasks to foster students' acquisition of native forms (Allwood, 1996; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Flowerdew and Tauroza, 1995; Helleman and Vergun, 2007; Müller, 2005; Rahimi and Riasati, 2012). Hence, the present study set out to explore the effect of an experimental longitudinal intervention to investigate the impact of the intervention on the participants' appropriate use of discussion DMs. Brinton's (1996) pragmatic functions of DMs were adapted for the categorization of the DMs that were used by the participants in the present study. They were 'opening and closing frame markers, turn-taking and giving markers, fillers, topic switchers' and 'repair markers' (1996, pp. 35-40). *Opening and closing frame remarks* include claims concerning the attention of the hearer to initiate and close discourse, such as 'so, I think, yes'. *Turn-taking and giving remarks* stand for DMs to help the speaker to acquire and leave the floor, such as 'and, that is right'. The next function type for DMs is *fillers* which refers to words or phrases that fill the gaps in speech or delay tactics used to hold the floor, such as 'I can't agree with you at all, yeah but'. Topic switchers indicate a new topic or partial shift in topic, and repair markers function as indicators of

repairing one's own or others' discourse, such as 'you know', because. Another DM category, *information indicators* denote either new or old information. *Information indicators* are concerned with the speakers' way of structuring meaning and navigating between discourses in the discussion context (Brinton, 1996).

With the rise of the Communicative Language Teaching method, conveying meaning rather than form has become significant, and authentic materials gained priority in language classrooms; hence, the acquisition of native-like forms in spoken language is introduced through written texts, videos, films, and audio-recorded materials from everyday life. These authentic materials provide excellent sources to expose learners to using DMs in native settings. However, familiarizing students with written, audio, and video-recorded authentic materials does not provide the students with opportunities to practice using appropriate DMs in spoken language. Although DMs have a major role in spoken discourse, minor importance is given in classroom instruction compared to their function during interaction (Thornbury and Slade, 2006). It is acknowledged that language skills cannot be taken as a set of discrete skills and be improved separately; however, it is still required to focus on acquiring sub-skills to foster students' spoken competence through authentic language tasks in the classroom. Socratic seminars provide teachers with a rich repertoire of sources to achieve this aim.

### Socratic seminars

Socratic seminar is defined as "The art of teaching is making philosophers" out of students (Nelson, 2004, p. 126). As the name suggests, is named after a leading, ancient Greek philosopher who taught through systematic questioning. The practice of discussing our reality through collaboration is in the essence of being human on which the Socratic pedagogy explained in the Platonic dialogue rests (Boghossian, 2006). The Socratic approach promotes denying assumptions with a skeptical attitude and questions assumptions to reach the root that they burgeon. The underlying idea is that one perspective is no more valid than another (Boghossian, 2006). In the pedagogy, therefore, the teacher is responsible for setting the circumstances for the students to adopt a questioning approach and discuss the subject without changing it. The key in such a task design, though, lies in the types of questions the students should be encouraged to ask. In this sustained and dynamic inquiry, the teacher plays the facilitator's role in guiding the students to ask the right questions.

In this study, the literature review features a discussion on Socratic pedagogy, known to be a rigorous and systematized teaching method through questioning without being judgmental, with the aim to understand, and empathize with others and reach more objective conclusions about reality. It aims to equip individuals with higher-order thinking skills by gaining insightfulness

by utilizing questions. Socratic pedagogy is primarily used to teach students to make a thorough examination of their ideas and issues in any discipline as it allows for clear articulation of thoughts. Likewise, the Socratic approach to questioning provides the skeleton of insightful and systematic dialogue. Descending from Socrates, the early Greek philosopher, to today's practice, it is believed that thoughtful inquiry enables students to examine ideas rationally, and with the help of engagement in dialogues they develop the maximum possible insight about the topic. Teachers can promote independent thinking and autonomous learning. For the present study, the peaceful discussion principle of the Socratic seminars that aim at empathy rather than strong justification of opposing arguments bears importance.

The Socratic seminar is a scholarly discussion in which students approach each other's ideas with a non-judgemental but questioning approach, not refuting the opposing arguments but trying to understand them. The discussion format is designed to help reduce anxiety for several reasons. To start with, the seminar differs largely from a debate speaking task in the target language classroom. The aim is not to start a verbal brawl but for everyone to leave on good terms, with deeper insights.

In the article "The six types of Socratic questions" (n.d.), the types of questions one can ask during a Socratic seminar are exemplified. Clarification questions include questions such as "What makes you say that?", "Could you relate what you said to ....?" Questions that examine assumptions include questions such as "What can be assumed instead of what you have said by ...?", or "Can we verify this assumption?" Similarly, reasons and evidence are focused on by questions such as "Can we exemplify what you have said?" or "What are some other similar cases?" or "What do you think are some of the reasons for this? In a Socratic seminar, it is also expected to ask questions about others' viewpoints, such as "Is there an alternative to what you have said?", "Why is it necessary?", "Who benefits from this?", "Is there a counterargument for what you have said?" Another type of question asked in Socratic seminars is about implications or consequences. These questions can be "What are the consequences of these assumptions?" or "Can we make generalizations on what you have said?" or "How does it affect ....?" or "How can we link it to ....?" Through Socratic questioning, the goal is not to reach a consensus but to reach an understanding of others' truth through dialogue. Therefore, Altorf (2019, p.5) states that the participants in a Socratic dialogue are called "midwives".

Socratic Seminars may be likened to round-table discussions. A round table discussion suggests seeing each other with equal standing. Thus, a moderator is unnecessary, as is any division for or against. The seating format in the seminar puts less pressure on students when speaking in the target language spontaneously. Students sit in two circles, one surrounding the other in the seminar. Each student in the outside circle supports the inside circle friend they are matched with by sending content and language-related

notes to them to use in the discussion if they prefer. The seminar is not a speaking task where the speaker is under the spotlight, feeling isolated and being scrutinized. A third student can be matched with the inner circle counterpart to observe the peer and fill out a feedback rubric in a different version. The student in the inner circle participating in the seminar can benefit from the peer feedback; the remedial support without the negative feeling of being evaluated by the teacher even when not assessed and graded (Filkins, n.d.). The inner circle can circulate and shift roles with the outer circle and the observers, if there are any, at set times during the same seminar, or the participants are assigned

different roles in different seminars. The seating arrangement of a seminar drawn by the researchers of the present study with both supporters and observers in face-to-face education can be seen in Figure 1. The formats for organizing the discussion can vary. The Socratic seminars lend themselves to be conducted in online classes as well, both for practice reasons in the breakout rooms of videoconferencing programs where the synchronous sessions are held, preferably in small groups of 4 to 6 students. When breakout rooms are not used students can be arranged to be in small seminar sessions of 4 to 6 participants at different time intervals in online video conferencing programs in distance education.

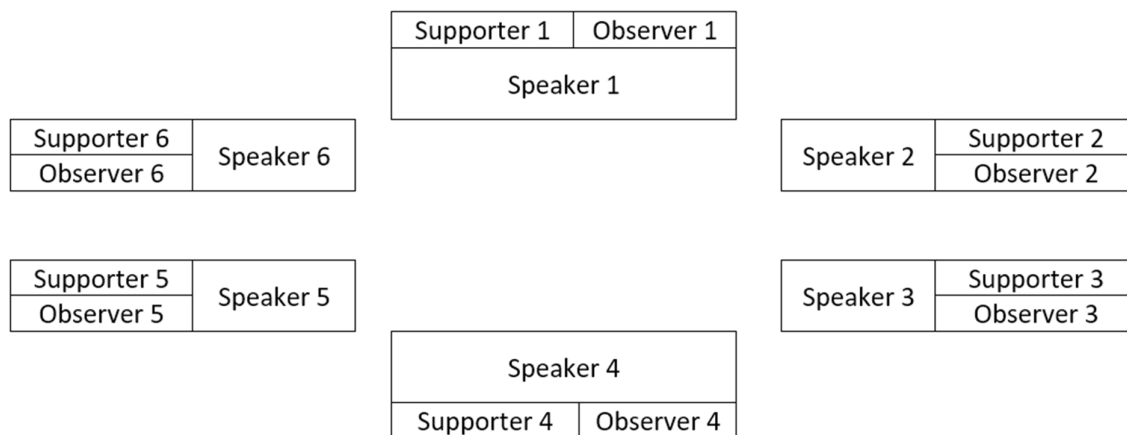


Figure 1. Socratic seating.

No matter how tiresome the arranging of the groups, roles, questions, and input is, the Socratic seminar is distinct in that it sets an atmosphere where creative thought is valued and where the teacher is actively speaking while students are pacified (Bhaerman, 1970). Frequent seminars involving the same participants with more interpersonal bonding are more likely to lend themselves to the production of spontaneous spoken language, hence to the development of spoken language discourse, especially in a context where argumentative debate is eschewed in favor of building consensus. Students listen and respond by exploring how their ideas intersect. They look for common ground and witness connections being realized and expressed by their peers in real time. Listening and referencing previous speakers helps them check their understanding of others. In this setting, language constraints evaporate as students mutually strive how to assemble their ideas before anchoring conclusions.

The principles that make a successful Socratic seminar need to be introduced to participants in detail before the seminars. The teacher is a passive observer but is present. In general, teachers avoid disrupting the flow of discussion and do so to remind of the principles in practice: that all are expected to listen to each other attentively; make their comments coherent and

concordant with the dialogue. To facilitate the meaningful use of DMs. In this way, a seminar differs from a set of disconnected mini-presentations, where students recite already prepared content. A seminar is a dialogue where one participant's content is linked to the other participants' content. When taking a turn, the participants are expected to acknowledge that they have heard and understood the previous participant. They link their comments using signposts, keywords, or discourse markers to the previous participants' content.

The next principle of the seminars is about the attitudes of the participants. In Socratic seminars, a feeling of belonging to the same community develops. The discussions enable a sincere sharing atmosphere where the participants do not feel threatened because civility is always maintained. The participants make sure that they are respectful towards all the other participants. The rationale behind the seminar format is that human beings are vicarious inherently, and they can understand others if the communication style aims at it. This creates a comfort zone that helps relieve the speaking anxiety of more reticent non-native speakers.

Another essential principle of a Socratic seminar is that students are likely to encounter less verbal participation. Domination of the discussion by one or two assertive participants is highly discouraged. When there are

imbalances in the debate, the participants are responsible for helping the passive members join the discussion by asking them non-threatening questions they can easily answer. A reticent participant might find it easier to take a turn and speak when given the turn by a peer rather than jumping in the flow of a discussion with their initiative. While taking the turn is a big step in the participation, the other participants' interest in their response to the reticent peer encourages the hesitant students. Balbay (2019) states that a quiet student might bring up a novice, thought-provoking perspective to the discussion, which might change the course altogether.

Topics that lend themselves to be discussed with multiple perspectives are ideal for Socratic seminars. Critical questions prepared ahead of time or asked spontaneously during the discussion in the Socratic seminars enhance the discussions and help students refer to a discussion-triggering point to revolve around during the seminar. Controversial topics lend themselves to be discussed from multiple perspectives, yet it is the two researchers' observation that topics that are not controversial but help analyze the present situation in a particular area also lend themselves to discussion by bringing up the participants' experiences, reactions, and feelings. Still, in the Socratic seminars, Balbay (2019) claims that it is ideal to provide students with thought-provoking articles, videos, films, listening excerpts, and news before the seminars so that their schemata are activated, they have the required topical vocabulary and are introduced to some perspectives on the issue under discussion.

The six-month longitudinal study involved an intervention in which the ten participants engaged in Socratic Seminars for two academic semesters, and they received individual and group feedback after each seminar in oral and written format. This intervention, whose details will be given in the method section, will be referred to as the Socratic Seminar Loop from here on for ease of reference. Hence, the study aims to explore the effect of the Socratic Seminar Loop on the use of DMs. It bears significance because it traces and analyzes the pragmatic development of non-native speakers' DM use in spontaneous spoken English. The present study aims to occupy the niche in the literature by comparing spoken discourse production over a period of six months, referring to two academic semesters in the context of the study. While language development is a lifelong process and even a six-month period can be considered a short term to test the development of spoken language skills, because of feasibility and practicality during data collection the researchers analyzed data available from one academic year which equals to a 6-month period. Thus, the researchers set out to explore the answers to the following research question:

What is the effect of the Socratic Seminar Loop on the participants' use of appropriate discussion DMs in terms of frequency?

## METHOD

The research was designed as a quantitative study in which the three videotaped seminars were transcribed and analyzed to identify the discourse markers the participants used in the Socratic seminars. The DMs were categorized using the following functions (adapted from the framework of Brington, 1996) considering the most common discourse markers used in discussions:

- Opening and closing frame markers
- Turn-taking and giving remarks
- Fillers
- Topic switchers
- Repair markers
- Information indicators

While the frequency-oriented questions were answered with numerical data keeping a tally when analyzing the three selected seminars from the beginning, middle, and end of the intervention, they still required content analysis since most DMs could be categorized under more than one function depending on the context they occur. For instance, while a participant uses "I can continue with..." to start talking about a new topic, the same phrase was also used not to introduce a new topic but to take a turn. When in doubt, the researchers, one of whom is the teacher of the participants during the data collection period, referred to a third party experienced in analyzing spoken discourse. The analysis was done separately by the two researchers at first to maintain interrater reliability. While the fact that the other researcher was an outsider helped obtain a more impartial evaluation of what should be considered an appropriate use when in need, the disagreements on DMs were discussed in relation to the context they appeared.

To answer the research question DMs were noted down for each participant to see the differences between the seminars in the middle of the intervention period and at the end. The researchers focused on the frequency of DMs, yet they also discussed the appropriateness in terms of the position and function of the DMs to answer the research question.

## Participants

The participants were ten pre-service language teachers who were selected through convenience sampling in the English Language Teaching program at a state university. The program that the participants were involved in was not particularly chosen by the researchers but because one of the researchers was teaching at this program the sampling was convenient. However, this fact is not to state that the background of the participants does not bear any significance. It is highly likely that the language teacher training program was attended by students who have an aptitude for language learning. Yet, the present study will not claim



that they do since it cannot be proven with empirical data, but it is only based on common sense. Secondly, the program the participants were studying bears importance in the selection of the topics for the seminars. The seminars were on topics that the participants could relate to and probably have thought about because they were about education, and language education, which will be detailed below.

The ages of the participants ranged between 17 and 21. The convenient sampling method was employed to select the participants (five females and five males) so that there was not an imbalance between the genders in discussions since the research does not focus on gender differences in DM use. Their English level was B2 according to their university Proficiency Exam scores. They were all eager to participate in the discussions, but not all participants were equally active in the Socratic seminars. Because the Socratic seminar task description urged them to encourage all the participants, while some participants were reticent about taking the floor and participating in the discussion actively, the others reached out to those participants extending a helping hand by asking them questions about their stance, experience or knowledge about the topic under discussion. All the participants volunteered to take part and gave their written consent. All were informed by the notice on the consent form and by way of introduction that they could withdraw at any point and doing it would neither incur a penalty nor affect their grade, and no information about them would be shared with third parties.

### **Intervention**

The current study required careful analysis of the correct use of DMs in conversations among students attending the Spoken English course at the university level in Turkey. Data were obtained from video recordings of a series of seminars; each meant to be conducted in a Socratic fashion by the students in a concise 20 to 30-minute session. These were undertaken on nine occasions over a six-month period.

### **The roles of the researchers**

Each seminar was attended by the course teacher, who gave feedback to students on their participation and performance in the session. The feedback provided by the teacher, which is one of the researchers, bears significance in that it is the frequent conduct of the seminars and the constant detailed feedback whose effect was analyzed in this study. The usually written and on rare occasions also spoken individual feedback comprised of use-related issues by presenting the context and discussing the inappropriateness of certain DM. The seminars were not graded as part of the course grade.

Two of the participants did not need feedback through

an in-depth analysis of their Socratic seminar strategies because they seemed to have grasped the seminar's underlying principles, probably because the Socratic seminar principles already agreed with their personality traits. Few participants were required to be guided on not using strongly argumentative language and insisting on proving their point. Still, there were a few such rare occasions where the course teacher had to interfere and interrupt the discussion to remind the students of the seminar principles. The seminar topics varied but remained relevant to the students' contextual vocabulary and conceptual needs, although developing vocabulary was not among the objectives of the task.

Thereafter, the records pertaining to the three seminars were transcribed for detailed analysis by the researchers. One sample seminar transcription is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Socratic seminars**

When designing the seminars, there were slight differences each time they were held in the preparation period. While some featured predetermined questions posed by the course teacher, one of the researchers, others had questions formulated by the participants themselves. Some focused on the meanings associated with images or cartoons that evoke thoughts on issues such as equality and equity, role models, and disadvantages. In two of the seminars, participants prepared triggering questions ahead of time. All seminars featured topics associated with language and education. Some of the sub-topics that were brought up by the reading or the video material the students were exposed to before the seminars were, as mentioned above, equality and equity in education, private versus public schools, ideal teachers and their characteristics, and the like. These exemplary transformative teachers created change in their limited means of teaching settings and education. Some other subtopics brought up in the discussions were school regulations in Turkey, administrative issues in a school hierarchical job division, anecdotal stories about memorable teachers in the participants' school life experience, and the like.

During the seminars, if the course teacher or the students prepared discussion-triggering questions the questions were shown to the students on the projector screen; in some discussions, there was only one question that started the seminar, which was discussed throughout the whole time allocated, while in some other seminars, the questions were projected on the screen to the students to discuss were changed by the teacher. The students asked their spontaneous questions depending on how the seminar proceeded. The teacher hardly ever interfered, but she did when it was simply to warn the students who did not abide by the non-argumentative and politically correct mannerism principle of the seminars. The teacher also interrupted if the students were too engaged to notice that one of participants had difficulty joining the discussion. Much

less guidance was necessary as the students were familiarized with the expectations of the task.

**RESULTS**

To answer the research question on the frequency and appropriateness of the DMs, the two researchers analyzed the transcribed seminars keeping tallies on the use of DMs for each participant separately. For the appropriate use of DM, the two researchers discussed when they disagreed on certain uses of DM considering the context they were uttered. Most cases of inappropriate DM use were because the speaker did not agree in any way with the previous speaker and still used an expression such as "I agree with you".

Another common DM misuse was when a speaker took their turn with an expression such as "no" even

when there was no disagreement as if one would use "yes" as a filler. Also, there were instances when Participant 3 used "Nowadays," meaning "today," used as an opening remark. There was also one instance in which "briefly" was used as an opening remark at the beginning of the seminar, which did not fit the context it was used.

One other example of a DM that the researchers needed to discuss to decide whether it should be considered appropriate use or not is when Participant 4 says "You are totally right" as an opening to what he disagrees with rather than as a DM to show agreement. The researchers then consulted a third party, who is also an experienced language teacher, and decided that the use was acceptable since in authentic English there are disagreements introduced by DMs showing agreements, if they are followed by a gesture, exclamation, or a word that shows disagreement such as, 'but', or 'however.'

**Table 1.** Frequency and appropriacy rates of DMs.

Seminar		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	ave
1	Frequency	3	3	5	2	5	5	6	5	4	9	4.7
	Appropriate use	3	3	5	2	4	5	6	5	3	9	4.5
	% of A	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	75	100	96
5	Frequency	5	6	5	4	7	12	7	10	7	8	7.1
	Appropriate use	4	6	4	4	7	12	6	10	7	8	6.8
	% of A	80	100	80	100	100	100	86	100	100	100	95
9	Frequency	7	6	7	8	6	10	8	12	12	13	8.9
	Appropriate use	7	6	6	8	6	10	8	12	11	13	8.7
	% of A	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	92	100	99.2

F-Female, M-Male, F- Frequency, A-Appropriate

As can be observed in Table 1 within the data collection period the frequency rates of DM use and appropriate DM use increased significantly in the 5<sup>th</sup> seminar, from 4.5 to 8.7. As can be seen in Table 1, by the end of the intervention period there was no inappropriate DM use observed. The written and oral individual feedback that specifically referred to each participant's DM use after the seminars have not only drawn the attention of the participants on correct DM use but also made it easier for the participants to recall the DMs they needed during the spontaneous flow of the seminars.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study explored the impact of an intervention the researchers called the *Socratic Loop* because the intervention was based on a series of seminars each time providing the students with feedback that concentrated on specifically the authentic and accurate use of DM. The structure of the seminars was based on

a pedagogical approach that is rooted in Socratic pedagogy which the seminars are named after. The Socratic Seminars emphasize finding common ground in discussions by questioning one's views and the seminar principles discourage fighting verbally to defend a pre-held idea which the researchers considered to be more eligible to develop speaking skills. Hence, they formulated the research question on testing the effectiveness of the seminars on DM use.

The seminars were devised to support the development of participants' spontaneous spoken language and to facilitate a way of recording DM use in terms of frequency and appropriateness. Transcriptions of the first, fifth, and final seminars in the series were analyzed by the researchers who found solid evidence for DM acquisition and use. Some challenges during the Socratic seminars were rooted in the education system students came from. According to the participants' observations shared in the first meeting with their course teacher, Turkish students are used to studying in populated classes (30 to 40 students in one class),

seated on desks facing the lecturer and the board. The active person in courses is the teacher who usually lectures a predetermined course content. When students speak, it is because they would like to ask clarification questions or often, they would like to answer the teacher's question. This answer is usually evaluated by immediate grading or by affecting the teacher's discretion in which case the manner and the content of the answer is a potential investment for collecting grades. These observations comprise a summary of the participants' first meeting with the course teacher before the teacher presented the many ways in which Socratic seminars oppose the already established interaction patterns or a classroom. Hence, the course teacher expended considerable effort building and maintaining students' motivation throughout the six months, the researchers found the seminars to be most effective with 7 to 8 participants. The quantitative study in which the frequency of accurate DM use was kept indicated a significant increase when the initial seminars are compared with the later ones throughout the 6 months that the intervention lasted which indicated that the seminars helped enhance the frequency of the use of connecting devices that make the expression of an opinion more coherent.

The present study differs from previous research mentioned in the review of literature part of the article distinctively since it focused on evaluating a development throughout a process rather than comparing two different groups. Previous research on DM in spoken language mostly focused on native and non-native speaker differences (Basol and Kartal, 2019; Liao, 2009; Aysu, 2017; House, 2009; Lam, 2009; Sankoff et al., 1997).

Some other research studied the adaptation of particular DMs (Bu, 2012; Chapeton Castro, 2009; Haselow, 2011; Lewis, 2011; Bolden, 2006; Buysse, 2012; Lee-Goldman, 2011, Grant; 2010) unlike this study which did not focus on the use of certain DMs but whether DM correct use increased in number or not with the contribution of the detailed feedback provided by one of the researchers who was also the teacher of the participants.

Also, some studies focused on the correlation of correct DM use with language proficiency (Martinez, 2009; Hellerman and Vergun, 2007). However, the present study was unique in that it explored the effects of a classroom intervention on the use of DMs. The participants were from a relatively homogenous level of English background. The longitudinal nature could have affected the participative qualities observed. It is unquestionable that throughout the six years that the intervention took place their English proficiency level has also developed not only due to the practicing opportunities in the seminars but also because they were exposed to English in the other courses they were taking as well. This exposure cannot be denied in their use of accurate DMs by the end of the six months, which can be considered a limitation of the present study. As with any other test that evaluates language performance it

is impossible to conduct a study in a controlled research setting where the researchers can control the variables.

Yet the findings of the research are still significant because the contribution of the format of the seminars, the frequency of practice, and providing individual feedback on a particular language focus have proven to contribute to accurate DM use which may shed light on practicing English language teachers when designing tasks and activities to develop authentic and coherent spontaneous spoken English.

It is also important to point out that as in studies with a limited number of participants, the results likely reflect the cultural and personal characteristics of the students involved, and if replicated, a small sample size may not yield generalizations. Socratic seminars can be a core part of interventions that aim at testing spontaneous target language production, such as the use of repair phrases or recasts. Further research can focus on the implications of the seminars on a particular, singled-out DM rather than groups of DMs categorized by function.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

S1: **Today** we have our interesting topic to discuss. It is role models, and how is the influence on us and like how we can benefit from it and how we can make ourselves better using very good role models. **So, in your opinion**, what is a role model and how do I understand it?

S2: **Okay...**

S3: **It's... okay, so-**

S4: **So, if uuummmmm- what do you think?**

S3: I'm ... and

S2: **Oh, ok.**

S3: A role model is someone who inspires others, and whom people like. Someone one can influence the others; **I think** he's a role model. **What do you think, ...?**

S2: **Hi**, I'm ... and **I agree with** Ayşenur. **I think** that a role model is someone whose behaviors are seen as a good example, and you know, imitated... people try to act this- in the same way because they think that that person is maybe successful or a good person.

S4: **Yeah.**

S3: **Yeah, I agree with you, and** sometimes a role model is supposed to be like some positive image but very often it has some very bad... bad sides. Like it even though it is still a role model but somehow it influences really in a very negative way.

S4: **Yes-**

S3: **Yeah.**

S2: Because everyone's lives are different, **so maybe** that person's behavior might be appropriate for their life, but you may implement it in your life in a wrong way, **or** it might not suit your life. **So, I think** it is very tricky... **like you said.**

S1: **Yeah.**

S2: **Yeah.**

S3: **I agree with you guys, yes.** Because sometimes some people affect us in a different way and when we see the others the comments on the photos or the videos, we see that lots of people... understood it differently.

S1: **Yeah. Another question is** "What's the importance of having role models in developmental psychology?" **As far as I know** in psychology, we've learned that people use reference groups to compare themselves with others. It doesn't have to be a group - can be an individual and they influence our behaviors, attitudes, thoughts and beliefs, and so they can be used as benchmarks to evaluate our own characteristics. So, these groups or individuals can be good or bad, but when they're good they usually become role models. **But** the problem is we may not always - **like we talked about earlier** - we may not know about their... how they're going to affect us. So, they may not always be good role models. **What do you guys think?**

S2: **Yeah.**

S1: **Yeah yeah, you're also totally right, and like you know** all life is so diverse, especially nowadays, **and it is so difficult and, and we have, like,** so many different ways to choose what to do with all the life. **And...** we need, **like,** some kind of guidance to help us to cope with all this diversity. **And** which way to choose like what to do in our **life, like** to give, **like** to follow some example to follow. **Because like** when you are a teenager, it's so difficult to find yourself some ways how to cope with something, like you need some help, to have **like** some help from... from outer world - it's **like** somehow to... to make a so - **like** to make life full, and **like** to leave your life to the fullest. **So,** it is usually important to develop ourselves using some good images.

S3: **Yeah, I agree.**

S5: **Yeah. I agree but** sometimes bad images **also** help us. **I mean** when you see Hitler, and his behavior say that bad- he's a bad role model **and then** we see him we can learn that killing people is not good, **and-**

S4: **Um-**

S3: **I think it also helps us, what do you think?**

S4: **Yeah, I think you just....**

S3: **I think this ... sorry, sorry.**

S4: **So sorry. Sorry.**

S1: **I'm just gonna say something short. I think that** when we know the good from the bad then we can, you know, evaluate "Yes this person is bad" - **I completely agree with you**, they can help us make a better person.

S2: **Yes. Yeah, I think so. So...**

S4: **Can I- can I add something?**

S1: **I guess, sure.**

S2: **Yeah.**

S4: **I, like, want to summarize, like, what you guys said. Like** a role model is not only about being a good example to follow, **but it also- it also** could be an example not- not to imitate. **Like something which is-**

S2: **Yes**