

The Effects of Explicit Form-Focused Instruction on English Speaking Self-Efficacy

Shzh-chen Nancy Lee

Osaka University

While the effects of form-focused instruction on speaking proficiency development have been researched widely, the primary focus has centered on cognitive development, but it has overlooked how it influences learner affect. In order to fill the gap, this study investigated the effects of explicit form-focused instruction on speaking self-efficacy by examining the effects of grammar instruction on learners' perception of their ability to perform different English speaking tasks. A total of 104 first-year Japanese university students participated in this study where they were divided into two intervention groups and one control group. The two intervention groups received 10 minutes and 20 minutes of form-focused instruction, respectively, each week. Surveys were administered before and after a seven-week intervention period. Responses were collected and validated using Rasch analysis modeling. One item was deleted from the preliminary analysis because it did not meet the minimum infit MNSQ statistics criterion. Results suggest that explicit form-focused instruction did not positively or negatively impact learners' speaking self-efficacy because there was no significant difference between the control and intervention groups. Meanwhile, all three groups increased in speaking self-efficacy after seven weeks. This paper ends with some pedagogical implications for including form-focused instruction into task-based language teaching.

Form-focused instructionが、スピーキング力の発達に及ぼす影響は広く研究されてきた。しかし、今までの先行文献が認知発達に焦点を当て、学習者スピーキング自己効力感の影響に焦点を当てなかった。この研究では、7週間の文法指導を受けることにより、form-focused instructionが学習者のスピーキング自己効力感にどのような影響を及ぼすのかを調べた。日本人大学一年生104人が本研究に参加し、二つの実験群と一つの対照群に分けられた。二つの実験群は、それぞれ毎週10分と20分の文法指導を受けた。7週間の研究期間の前後にアンケート調査を配

布した。ラッシュ測定理論 で一つの調査質問を削除した。結果として、三つのグループの間に有意差がなかったため、form-focused instructionが学習者のスピーキング自己効力感を向上することができなかったが、有害な影響をもたらすこともしなかった。また、時間の経過に伴い、全員のスピーキング自己効力感が向上した。本研究は、タスク中心型指導方法(task-based language teaching)に文法指導の導入を示唆した。

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has flourished in the past several decades as a prominent approach for developing learners' speaking proficiency. It started to gain wide recognition from teachers by offering learners the opportunity to develop speaking proficiency through engagement in activities that resemble real-life situations. Recent TBLT research has since progressed from its original emphasis on incidental and meaning-centered learning to recognizing the importance of form-focused instruction (FFI) (Ellis, 2009; Long, 2015), the impacts of which have been extensively researched in the context of TBLT classrooms. Most studies concerning the effects of FFI have demonstrated significant gains in fluency (e.g., Ahmadian 2011; Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011; Bygate, 2001; Ellis, 2005). Some studies have produced gains in syntactic complexity (e.g., Ahmadian, 2011; Bygate, 2001; Skehan, 2009), and a few studies have produced gains in syntactic accuracy (e.g., Gass et al., 1999; Mochizuki & Ortega, 2008).

Form-focused instruction refers to both incidental and planned instruction that directs learner attention to target linguistic forms (Ellis, 2001). It can be both implicit and explicit, ranging from pedagogical activities such as planning and repetition, teacher modelling, teacher explicit explanations of target forms, and teacher feedback (Norris & Ortega, 2000). Form-focused instruction can also assist interlanguage development by encouraging learners to attend to target forms that they have not yet acquired (Williams, 2005) and to compare their current interlanguage rules with the target language rules (Doughty, 2001). Direct comparisons between input and output are unlikely to happen unless input has been noticed and processed (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Therefore, explicitness in FFI is needed as it directs learners' attention to notice the target forms and then process and compare them.

While many studies have been conducted on the effects of different types of FFI on speaking proficiency, research has tended to take a cognitive perspective looking at linguistic developments (Costa, 2015), leaving gaps in learner affect research such as anxiety, confidence, and desire to speak in the target language (see Van Batenburg et al., 2019, and Graus & Coppens, 2016 for exceptions). Despite the scarce research concerning the effects of FFI on learner affect, Van Batenburg et al. (2019) found FFI increases learner self-confidence in speaking the target language by giving learners a combination of information gap tasks with instruction for interactional strategies. Although how learners feel toward speaking the target language does not always reflect in their performance (Incebay & Dollar, 2011), self-confidence can influence their behaviors and experiences (Dörnyei, 2005; Loewen et al., 2009; Yashima, 2002) and increase classroom participation (Borg, 2003).

Researchers in second language acquisition have described learners' perceptions of their own language performances using terms such as *self-confidence* (Gardner et al., 1997), *linguistic self-confidence* (Clément et al., 1994), *self-perceptions*, and *self-ratings* (MacIntyre et al., 1997). Bandura (1977) introduced the term *self-efficacy* to describe learners' personal judgments of their own capabilities to attain specific goals. Unlike the aforementioned terms, self-efficacy is more task specific (e.g., able to give directions about the campus in English to international students) and specific to the context of the situation (Taipjutorus et al., 2012). Self-efficacy beliefs are important because self-efficacious learners feel competent in their ability to accomplish challenging tasks, and become more willing to engage in more difficult tasks in the future from the positive experiences of successful task completion (Mills, 2014). In addition, self-efficacy has direct and indirect positive and negative effects on different aspects of language learning (Piniel & Csizér, 2013), such as directly determining language learning success (Mills et al., 2006) and indirectly increasing learner motivation, engagement, persistence, and effort (Bandura, 1988). Therefore, learners' speaking self-efficacy deserves attention in research, as it can facilitate teachers in understanding their learners and could also be important for understanding learners' cognitive processes (Swain, 2013).

While a number of self-efficacy studies have already been conducted in the field of second language learning and teaching, very few studies have concerned speaking with the exception of Apple (2011) and Leeming (2017). Leeming (2017) conducted a longitudinal study measuring changes in English speaking self-efficacy with Japanese university students over one academic year using a speaking self-efficacy questionnaire and student interviews. Leeming constructed nine questionnaire items to measure his participants' perceptions of their own capabilities toward specific speaking-related tasks. He found significant growth in speaking self-efficacy over the academic year, although there were different rates of growth for different individuals. Apple (2011), on the other hand, investigated perceived foreign language speaking self-competence to examine learners' perceptions of their abilities to perform specific classroom-related speaking tasks. Learners' self-perceived English speaking competence was found to be influenced by personality characteristics such as extraversion/introversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and intellect/imagination as well as by social situations such as past English classroom experiences and current English classroom perception.

Among the small number of studies conducted on speaking self-efficacy, very few focused on Japanese learners (Kobayashi, 2019). To my knowledge, these studies examined the changes in Japanese university students' speaking self-efficacy from the effects of studying abroad (e.g., Klassen & Marx, 2020; Miyauchi, 2019). Both studies found that Japanese learners' speaking self-efficacy changed to some extent after studying abroad.

This study aimed to explore the effects of the provision of explicit FFI on learners' English speaking self-efficacy over time. In the context of this present study, explicit FFI refers to grammar instruction through the delivery of metalinguistic explanations by the teacher. Specifically, this study examines whether learners who receive more explicit FFI exhibit increases in speaking self-efficacy more than learners who receive less FFI and learners who do not receive such instruction.

Methods

A classroom-based study was conducted where learners were given weekly grammar instruction for seven weeks. A total of 104 first-year non-English major Japanese university students participated in this study. The average TOEFL iBT score of students at this university is 60, suggesting that students can be placed in the range of intermediate to high intermediate in terms of English writing and reading proficiency; nonetheless, speaking proficiency varied considerably. Participants came from five intact classes taught by the researcher. The classes were 90-minute-long discussion-based classes that met weekly. The same syllabus was standardized for these five classes to eliminate the potential effects of students engaging in different tasks. The syllabus focused on the theme of global studies, so topics such as international terrorism, racism, and poverty were introduced and discussed by participants in class each week. The participants engaged in meaning-based task-based activities, including watching videos, doing pair work, and conducting small group discussion tasks. Teacher-centered FFI was minimized so that the role of the teacher was primarily that of a facilitator.

Participants were divided into one control and two intervention groups: control ($n = 25$), FFI ($n = 41$), and FFI plus peer feedback (FFI + PF) ($n = 38$). Table 1 lists a description of the intervention given to the three groups. The FFI group participants received 10 minutes of grammar instruction every week where they were given explicit metalinguistic explanations on the usage of three past tense forms. This grammar instruction intervention included three components. First, participants received a short consciousness-raising activity where the target forms were written on the blackboard by the researcher, and their attention was directed to the target forms by reading aloud sentences on the board. Second, participants completed an individual grammar worksheet on the target forms. Third, they completed a pair speaking practice task where they orally produced sentences using verbs in three past tense forms given by their partner. The FFI + PF group participants received the same 10 minutes of grammar instruction plus 10 minutes of peer feedback. For the peer feedback activity, participants listened to another participant's narration and produced feedback for improving syntactic complexity, syntactic accuracy, and oral fluency. Participants in the

FFI + PF group received training on how to conduct peer feedback prior to the study. Students in the control group did not receive grammar instruction, but they engaged in small group discussion tasks mentioned above. Pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were administered one week before and one week after the seven-week intervention.

A total of 11 questionnaire items were developed by referring to survey items in the studies by Apple (2011) and Leeming (2017) (Appendix). The items were reviewed by three English teachers for content clarification before they were translated into Japanese and then back-translated into English to check translation clarification. A six-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Slightly disagree*, 4 = *Slightly agree*, 5 = *Agree*, 6 = *Strongly agree*) was selected to increase measurement precision (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). The survey was delivered in Japanese using Survey Monkey and was completed by participants during class time.

Data collected from the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were stacked and analyzed using WINSTEPS version 3.64.2 (Linacre & Wright, 2007). Rasch analysis was conducted to validate English speaking self-efficacy as one latent construct. Item difficulty estimates, person ability estimates, and the fit of items and persons to the Rasch model were investigated following Linacre's (2002) criteria. Item 1, *I can order food in English in a restaurant*,

Table 1
Intervention for Interventional and Control Groups

Group	Intervention	Approx. Time (min)
FFI (<i>n</i> = 41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard grammar explanation • Individual grammar worksheet • Pair speaking practice of target forms 	10
FFI + PF (<i>n</i> = 38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard grammar explanation • Individual grammar worksheet • Pair speaking practice of target forms 	20
Control (<i>n</i> = 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer feedback on each other's narration • No intervention 	0

Note. FFI = Form-focused instruction, FFI + PF = Form-focused instruction plus peer feedback.

was removed from further analysis because it did not meet the 0.50-1.50 infit MNSQ statistics criterion (Linacre, 2002), possibly because it might have been difficult for participants who have never travelled outside of Japan to respond to this item. Furthermore, item 1 differs from the other items because it is not directly related to English classroom tasks; rather, it is related to general English skills needed outside the classroom. Finally, Rasch principal component analysis of item residuals was conducted, and the dimensionality of speaking self-efficacy as one latent construct was confirmed.

Results

After conducting the Rasch analysis of the English speaking self-efficacy construct, the person ability estimates were exported into SPSS to confirm assumption of normality. Normality of the distribution was checked by converting Rasch person ability estimates into z-scores and values above ± 3.29 were deleted. A normal distribution was assumed as the skewness and kurtosis statistics of all three groups were under ± 2.0 (George & Mallery, 2016). The homogeneity of variance assumption was met using Levene's test. Lastly, the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption was checked and met for one-way ANCOVA analyses.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on the pre-intervention survey to ensure that there were no significant differences in English speaking self-efficacy between the three groups before the research began. The independent variable was group (three levels: control, FFI, and FFI + PF), and the dependent variable was the pre-intervention speaking self-efficacy survey response (represented by Rasch person ability estimates). The one-way ANOVA was not significant, $F(2, 96) = .96, p = .39$, which confirmed that the three groups were not significantly different in their English speaking self-efficacy prior to the research.

A one-way ANCOVA was conducted to investigate the effects of FFI by setting the group as the independent variable (three levels: control, FFI, and FFI + PF) and post-intervention English speaking self-efficacy survey response (represented by Rasch person ability estimates) as the dependent variable. The covariate was pre-intervention English speaking self-efficacy survey response. The ANCOVA analysis was not significant, $F(2, 95) = 1.92, p = .15, \hat{I}^2 = .04$.

Nevertheless, all three groups demonstrated increases in English speaking self-efficacy; the control group had the largest increase, followed by FFI, and FFI + PF. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the gains (post-intervention survey response minus pre-intervention survey response) in English speaking self-efficacy of the three groups.

Table 3 presents the gain (post-intervention survey response minus pre-intervention survey response) in the 10 English speaking self-efficacy items of the three groups. It indicates that all groups increased in all items (post-intervention survey response minus pre-intervention survey response). The FFI + PF group outperformed the other two groups in four items: I can introduce myself in in English ($M = .47$), I can talk about my hobbies ($M = .68$), I can give directions about the campus to international students ($M = .63$), and I can give a presentation in English in groups ($M = .45$). The control group outperformed the other two groups in six items: I can give an individual English presentation in front of the class ($M = 1.04$), I can give a group English presentation in front

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of English Speaking Self-Efficacy Gain of Three Groups

	Control	FFI	FFI + PF
M	1.23	0.44	0.93
SE	0.36	0.21	0.29
95%CI	[0.53, 1.94]	[0.01, 0.89]	[0.44, 1.43]
SD	2.16	1.33	1.51
Skewness	1.23	0.26	0.25
SES	0.46	0.37	0.38
Kurtosis	1.88	0.81	0.68
SEK	0.90	0.73	0.75

Note. FFI = Form-focused instruction; FFI + PF = Form-focused instruction plus peer feedback; All statistics are based on Rasch logits; CI = 95% confidence interval; SK = skewness; KT = kurtosis; SES = Standard error skewness; SEK = Standard error kurtosis.

of class ($M = .84$), I can talk with classmates in English casually ($M = .80$), I can talk with the teacher in English casually ($M = .68$), I can talk with international students in English casually ($M = .64$), and I can give street directions in English to foreigners ($M = .44$). The FFI group did not outperform any group in any item.

Discussion

Because there was no significant difference found in the change of speaking self-efficacy between the three groups after seven weeks of intervention period, explicit FFI in the present study seemed to have no impact on English speaking self-efficacy. This result differs from the previous study by Van Batenburg et al. (2019), who found FFI to be effective at improving learner speaking self-efficacy. There are fundamental differences in the learners of these two studies: the former previous study looked at Dutch high school students attending vocational

Table 3
Gain in Individual Speaking Self-Efficacy Items of Three Groups

	Control	FFI	FFI+PF
2. I can introduce myself in English.	0.44	0.15	0.47
3. I can talk about my hobbies in English.	0.28	0.17	0.68
4. I can give a presentation in English in groups.	0.28	0.15	0.45
5. can give a group English presentation in front of the class.	0.84	0.68	0.55
6. I can give an individual English presentation in front of the class.	1.04	0.68	0.71
7. I can give street directions in English to foreigners.	0.44	0.05	0.34
8. I can give campus directions to international students.	0.56	0.17	0.63
9. I can talk with international students in English casually.	0.64	0.20	0.26
10. I can talk with the teacher in English casually.	0.68	0.56	0.21
11. I can talk with classmates in English casually.	0.80	0.10	0.21

Note. FFI = Form-focused instruction; FFI + PF = Form-focused instruction plus peer feedback.

schools, while the present study looked at Japanese university non-English major students attending the researcher's mandatory English classes, and many of whom had gone through a grammar-focused high school curriculum.

Nevertheless, some reasons can still be considered for this discrepancy in results. First, the former study used a combination of information gap tasks with interactional strategies as instruction, and learners enjoyed those strategies including compensation, meaning negotiation, and audience awareness strategies (Van Batenburg et al., 2019). Research shows that high levels of foreign language enjoyment correlate positively with learner self-confidence (MacIntyre & Vincez, 2017). The present study used only teacher explanations of past tense grammar as the intervention and therefore probably gave participants a lower level of enjoyment. Second, some participants may have held negative impressions of the usage of FFI, as learners in general find receiving metalinguistic knowledge from teachers to be ineffective for communicative development (Paulus, 1999). Some of the participants of the present study commented that they found grammar explanation to be tedious. One participant commented, "I know past tense grammar! I have studied it already in high school." Because some participants did not perceive grammar instruction to be effective, their feelings might have pre-determined its ineffectiveness on speaking self-efficacy. Third, it might not be possible to examine the impacts of FFI on speaking self-efficacy in a short amount of time because participants only received 10 minutes or 20 minutes of interventions. If longer intervention time had been in place, then FFI might have had different impacts on speaking self-efficacy.

On the other hand, while grammar instruction did not positively increase learners' speaking self-efficacy, it also did not impose negative impacts as participants who received more intervention also did not exhibit more losses in speaking self-efficacy than participants who received less intervention and participants who received no intervention. This result is different from previous studies that found the inclusion of grammar instruction during meaning-focused tasks to have negative impacts on learner affect (e.g., Loewen et al., 2009). Participants who received more grammar instruction in this study did not exhibit lower speaking self-efficacy because different learners also have different

learning preferences, so some participants might naturally preferred explicit FFI (Graus & Coppen, 2016).

Finally, while the present study did not confirm the effects of FFI, all participants increased in speaking self-efficacy over time. All three groups showed increases in all speaking self-efficacy items after the seven-week study from doing weekly narration tasks. This results supports Leeming's study (2017) that learners improve speaking self-efficacy over time. The more time learners spend on speaking tasks, the better they would become and the more self-efficacious they would become.

Some implications for the classroom can be derived from the results of this study. First, future language teachers could integrate more explicit FFI into TBLT classrooms without being concerned of its possible negative impacts on speaking self-efficacy. Results of this study found that while grammar instruction did not increase learner speaking self-efficacy, it also did not negatively impact speaking self-efficacy. This was an encouraging result as it counters the criticism in the earlier literature (e.g., Krashen, 1981) of including grammar instruction in meaning-focused classrooms. Second, learners need to engage in more speaking tasks over longer period of time because the more they speak, the more likely they would become more self-efficacious of their own speaking ability.

However, this study is not without limitations. First, it did not examine other perspectives why FFI had no impact on speaking self-efficacy. There might be reasons beyond the scope of this study such as whether or not the selection of grammar for instruction was at the appropriate level of the participants or if there might be had been other flaws in the design of the research. Second, the lack of multiple data collection methods limited variation of research perspectives. The study only used pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, so it lacked a qualitative description of learner voices. Future research should include a qualitative description of how learners perceive their speaking ability to change over time, such as over the course of one academic semester. Third, the questionnaire instrument consisted of a limited number of items developed from two existing surveys on speaking self-efficacy of which both included fewer than 10 items. Therefore, more questionnaire items need to be developed and

validated in future research to try to capture multiple dimensions of English speaking self-efficacy.

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Author Bio

Shzh-chen Nancy Lee, PhD in applied linguistics, has been teaching English and Japanese in Japan and Australia. She is currently teaching at Osaka University. Nancy is currently interested in L2 speaking proficiency development from the effects of form-focused instruction as well as L2 teacher self-efficacy. leenancy@lang.osaka-u.ac.jp

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Appendix

English Speaking Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (Japanese Version and English Version)

Directions: あてはまる数字を選んでください。

1 2 3 4 5 6

全くそう思わない そう思わない あまりそう思わない 少しそう思う そう思う 強くそう思う

1. レストランでの料理の注文を英語ですることができる。
2. 英語で自己紹介することができる。
3. 自分の趣味について英語で話すことができる。
4. グループの中で、英語で発表することができる。
5. クラス全体の前で、グループ発表を英語ですることができる。
6. クラス全体の前で、一人で発表を英語ですることができる。
7. 外国の人に英語で道案内を示すことができる。
8. 留学生に英語でキャンパス案内を示すことができる。
9. 英語で留学生と気軽に会話をするすることができる。
10. 英語で先生と気軽に会話をするすることができる。
11. 英語でクラスメートと気軽に会話をするすることができる。

1. I can order food in English in a restaurant.
2. I can introduce myself in English.
3. I can talk about my hobbies in English.
4. I can give a presentation in English in groups.
5. I can give a group English presentation in front of the class.
6. I can give an individual English presentation in front of the class.
7. I can give street directions in English to foreigners.
8. I can give campus directions to international students.
9. I can talk with international students in English casually.
10. I can talk with the teacher in English casually.
11. I can talk with classmates in English casually.