วารสารอิเล็กทรอนิกส์
ทางการศึกษา

การอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเพื่อพัฒนาความรู้ด้านการใช้ดัชนีปริเฉทของนักเรียนไทยผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 4

A WORKSHOP ON DISCOURSE MARKERS TO ENHANCE THE ABILITY TO USE DISCOURSE MARKERS OF GRADE 10 THAI EFL LEARNERS

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยสารนิพนธ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) ศึกษาผลของการอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเพื่อพัฒนาความสามารถในการใช้ดัชนีปริเฉทของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 4 และ 2) ประเมินความพึงพอใจในการอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการการสำหรับการใช้ดัชนีปริเฉทของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 4 กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาที่ปี 4 จำนวน 42 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ได้แก่แบบทดสอบก่อนและหลังการอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการ และแบบสอบถามประเมินความพึงพอใจของรักเรียนที่ผ่านการอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเรื่องดัชนีปริเฉท สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลคือ Paired Sample T-Test, ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) คะแนนเฉลี่ยจากบททดสอบความสามารถในการใช้ดัชนีปริเฉทของนักเรียนหลังการอบรมของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาที่ปี 4 สูงกว่าคะแนนเฉลี่ยก่อนการอบรมอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และ 2) ผลจากแบบประเมินความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่ผ่านการอบรมเรื่องดัชนีปริเฉทได้ค่าเฉลี่ย 4.52 จากคะแนนเต็ม 5 ซึ่งหมายความว่านักเรียนมีความพึงพอใจอย่างมากหลังจากเข้าร่วมอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเรื่องดัชนีปริเฉท

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to: 1) investigate the extent a discourse marker workshop enhancing the use of discourse markers of Grade 10 Thai EFL learners, and 2) investigate students' opinions towards the workshop. The sample consisted of 42 grade 10 students, who attended the workshop. The instruments in this research were the discourse markers ability pretest and posttest, and a survey of the students' opinions. The statistics used for analysis were the paired sample t-test, mean and standard deviation.

The results of the analysis revealed that: 1) in terms of the discourse marker ability test, the posttest mean score of the students after attending the workshop was higher than the pre-test at a 0.05 level of significance, and 2) in terms of the questionnaire, the mean score of the students' opinions towards the workshop was 4.52 out of 5.0, which indicated that the students are strongly satisfied with the discourse markers workshop.

คำสำคัญ: การอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเรื่องดัชนีปริเฉท/ความสามารถในการใช้ดัชนีปริเฉท/การสอนแบบอุปนัย
KEYWORDS: DISCOURSE MARKERS WORKSHOP/DISCOURSE MARKERS ABILITY /INDUCTIVE TEACHING

Introduction

Discourse Markers (DMs) are words or expressions which are used to demonstrate the structure of a piece of language use (ICOSA Project, 2013). DMs play a crucial role in written language, since DMs are the connective elements which are used to relate sentences, clauses, and paragraphs to one another (Halliday & Hassan, 1979). DMs are the words like 'moreover', 'however', 'and', etc. which are used to signal the readers about the relationship between the previous sentence and the next one A number of studies have shown that the appropriate use of DMs can have a positive effect toward the written text and influence the quality of writing (Patriana, Rachmajanti & Mukmintien, 2016; Gurkosh & Badie, 2016; Sharndama & Yakuba, 2013). To produce the good quality of writing, the text needs to have both coherence and cohesion.. DMs are claimed to be a main device used to improve the cohesion and coherence of writing since DMs are used to connect texts, sentences, and different thoughts together (Feng, 2010; Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2001).

DMs can thus function as an indicator which anticipates the quality of the writing. Several studies reported that students who had the best results in their writing task are likely to exhibit the most frequent uses of DMs (Martinez, 2004; Jalilifar, 2008). Without appropriate use of DMs, the paper will be considered poor writing. A text that is not coherently written will make readers put a greater effort to read, making it not friendly to the readers. 'Reader-friendly' texts are texts that are easy to understand and make readers put less effort to figure out what the writer tries to say. To produce the effective reader-friendly writing, DMs are one of the elements required to be present in the writing.

Readers' less effort to understand a text, which is caused by the appropriate use of DMs, is one of the criteria used to judge the quality of writing by Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2014). Good quality writing needs to be clear for the readers to comprehend and encompasses both cohesive and coherent devices (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2014).

Although use of DMs helps with the quality of paper, many EFL learners, reported by a number of studies, have encountered problems of using them. For example, Taiwanese students faced problems of use of DMs in the following aspects: overuse, non-equivalent exchange, surface, logicality, wrong relation, semantic incompletion, and distraction (Kao and Chen, 2011). Indonesian students were reported to have the same problems, plus with misinterpreted relation and mistranslation (Patriana, Rachmajanti & Mukminatien, 2016).

For research about learners' problems in using DMs in Thailand, a research study by Sitthirak (2013) investigated Thai university students' use of contrastive DMs comparing with English native speakers. The results revealed that both Thai students and English native speakers commit the same mistakes by using contrastive DMs with non-contrastive ideas. Problems of use of DMs among university students were also reported by Iamsiu (2014) who found 30 errors in connecting word.

From the problems above among Thai students, the previous studied are shown that Thai university students still have some problems of using appropriate DMs. The cause of using inappropriate DMs in Thai university students may deliver from the background knowledge of a high school level. Students may not get a lot of knowledge about how to function and use for DMs. Even though Thai curriculum required that Thai students need to conduct a lot of English writing especially students in grade 10-12, but they still have problems how to use the connecting words or DMs between the sentences.

Ability to write well is required for the students in grade 10, the beginning year of the upper secondary education level. The Basic Education Core curriculum B.E.2551 of Thailand specifies that grade 10 students should be able to write to present different types of data, for example, data about themselves, various matters around them, experiences, situations, news/incidents, issues of interest, etc. (Ministry of Education, 2008). To compose different types of writing with cohesiveness, ability to use DMs therefore required.

Several studies reported positive effects of teaching and training DMs use to improve the quality of the writing in students. Aidinlou (2012) concluded in his study that whenever students have more awareness and sensitivity of use of DMs, their writing quality appeared to be rising. In addition, direct teaching DMs also had a positive effect to reader-friendly writing, Hasanien (2016) found that the students in his experimental group could produce better–reader-friendly writing than the control group of students who had no experience of DMs instruction. Moreover, he suggested to add the course to the school curricular claiming that students who received the direct program of DMs–could do well with: being able to

identify and use different kinds of markers and cues, being able to interpret the written text, and being able to predict the subsequence written message from the previous sentences.

As seen from many studies, the instruction of discourse markers is crucial for students in order that they can communicate with the clear message without much effort. The reader-friendly attributes caused by the use of discourse markers also increase the quality of the students' writing, allowing them to score more in the proficient tests as prescribed in the CEFR framework and IELTS scoring criteria. Therefore, the discourse markers workshop is proposed for the grade 10 Thai EFL learners in order to enhance their ability that will lead to the improvement in their writing in preparation of their future English language learning.

Objectives

In this study, there were 2 objectives:

1. To investigate what extend that Discourse Marker Workshop enhance the ability to use DMs of Grade 10 Thai EFL learners.

2. To investigate the students' opinion towards Discourse Marker Workshop.

Methodology

Participants

The participants for the current study included forty-two Thai students who study in grade 10 at Chinat Pittayakom School. The school is a public government school located in Chinat province, Thailand.

Research Design

This research used experimental single group pre-test post-test design.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study included: 1) Training DMs Workshop 2) Pre-test/ Post-test, and 3) Students' opinion questionnaire as follow:

1) *Training DMs Workshop*

The learning activities in DMs workshop were designed according to McCarthy & Carter instructional model (1995), '3 I's' (See Figure 1 in page 6), which comprised of three steps for teaching which are Illustration, Interaction, and Induction.

- 'Illustration stage': Students looked at the real use of DMs through authentic materials such as passages from the movie synopses, video clips through English movie using authentic materials, the students would have a chance to explore the target language which used by native speakers. As claimed by Yu (2006), he found that using authentic materials could improve her students in vocabulary and verbal expression, and increased the motivation in the student's learning as well.

- 'Interaction stage': students discussed with one another about their noticing from the process of illustration. Students were assigned some discourse awareness activities for this stage. The activities focused on the DMs words. Collaborative working as a team would be assigned to students, they needed to interact with friends in order to complete their task. Moreover, students had a chance to practice how to use appropriate DMs and experience the DMs words under each category of DMs words. As number of studies supported that using social interaction skills in students can enhance in term of having more intrinsically motivated and increase the high level of self-autonomy, which referred to self-regulation and psychological well-being (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001 ; Leroy, Bressoux, Sarrazin & Trouilloud, 2007). Moreover, the students needed to generate the rules of use of the DMs with friends and the teacher, which the students seemed to be active and conclude the rules by themselves. (Fraser's 2004) taxonomy was the model which the instructor used to apply in this study. There were four semantic classes of DMs, as followed.

  A- Contrastive Discourse Markers (but, alternatively, even so, however, still, yet …)
  B- Elaborative Discourse Markers (and, besides, for example, in addition, moreover, otherwise …)
  C- Implicative Discourse Markers (as a conclusion, as a result, therefore …)
  D- Temporal Discourse Markers (then, after, eventually, finally, immediately….)

- 'Induction stage': Students discussed among themselves and concluded the generalization about the rules and functions of how to apply the appropriate DMs in the texts. Guided questions and feedback would be given to students about the rules and functions of use of appropriate DMs words. To generate the rules of use of the DMs, the students were promoted to use critical thinking skills to gather information and conclude pieces of given information that they had been learnt in the workshop. Therefore, as mentioned by Kelly (2011), critical thinking skill was required in daily life such as in a school where students can use it to solve problems, do their projects, or achieve objectives.
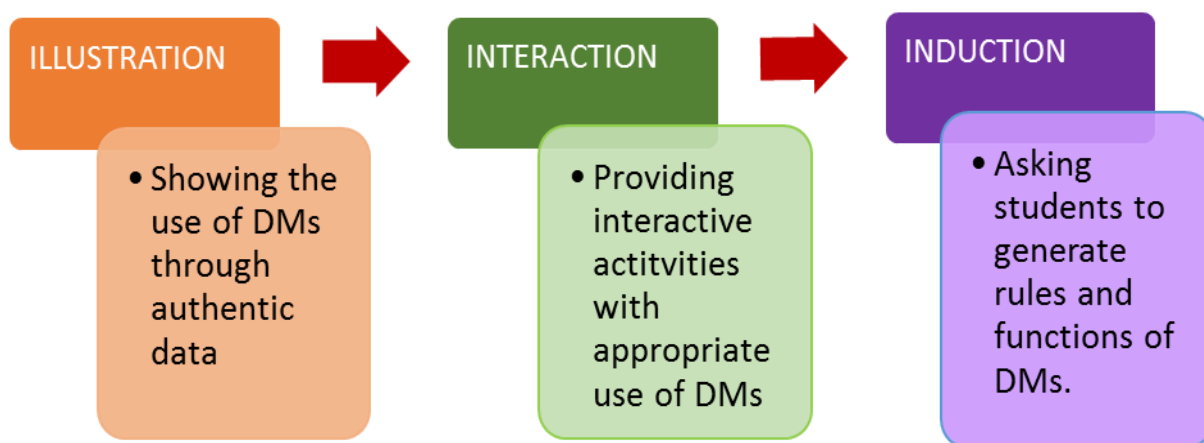
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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│  ILLUSTRATION   │ ───► │   INTERACTION   │ ───► │    INDUCTION    │
├─────────────────┤      ├─────────────────┤      ├─────────────────┤
│ • Showing the   │      │ • Providing     │      │ • Asking        │
│   use of DMs    │      │   interactive   │      │   students to   │
│   through       │      │   actitvities   │      │   generate      │
│   authentic     │      │   with          │      │   rules and     │
│   data          │      │   appropriate   │      │   functions of  │
│                 │      │   use of DMs    │      │   DMs.          │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
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Figure 1: 3 I's method model by McCarthy and Carter, (1995)

2) Pre-test/Post-test

Pre-test/Post-test was constructed to access appropriateness of the use of DMs in the written texts. The Pre-test/Post-test was aimed to measure DMs knowledge before and after the workshop which comprised of 2 parts: 1) discourse markers multiple choice test and 2) rational-deletion discourse cloze test. The discourse multiple choice test was composed of 5 items. The rational-deletion part was the part in which students were asked to read the story and filled appropriate DMs words in the gaps where DMs were deleted from the texts with the total of 5 items. Pre-test/Post-test was exactly the same test and the students had about 20 minutes to complete the test.

3) Students' opinion questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to investigate students' opinions toward the Discourse Markers Workshop. Students' opinion questionnaire was from Enhancing Education (2002). The questionnaire was consisted of 16 items in 3 parts including: 1) Rating scale questions, 2) Checklist for the DMs Workshop Improvements, and 3) Open-ended questions.

The rating scale asking about students'opinions towards the workshop consisted of 5 aspects including: 1) Workshop Content, 2) Workshop Design, 3) Workshop Instruction, 4) Workshop Results, and 5) Self-Paced Delivery. Regarding the checklist for the DMs Workshop Improvements items, there were six items including: 1) Make the workshop less difficult, 2) Make the workshop more difficult, 3) Slow down the pace of the workshop, 4) Speed up the pace of the workshop, 5) Allot more time for the workshop, and 6) Shorten the time for the workshop. Students were allowed to check any items which they thought would help the instructor to improve the workshop. Moreover, open-ended questions were also used to ask

students three questions as follows, 1) What are other suggestions and preferences? , 2) What is the most valuable of this workshop? , and 3) What is the least valuable of this workshop?

Data Analysis

1. The score of Pre-test/Post-test score was analyzed by using mean, S.D., and paired-sample t-test in order to examine the ability to use DMs after receiving DMs Workshop at the statistically significant level at a level of 0.5.

2. The students' opinions reported from students 'opinions questionnaire of the DMs Workshop was analyzed including: 1) Part 1 was examined by using mean, 2) Part 2 was investigated by using frequency, and 3) Part 3 was explored by using content analysis.

Results

The results of the study were summarized based on research questions as follows:

Research question 1: To what extent does Discourse Marker Workshop enhance the ability to use DMs of grade 10 EFL Thai learners?

After attending the DMs workshop, students' mean score of the overall posttest ($\bar{X}$= 6.42) was higher than the mean score of the overall pre-test ($\bar{X}$=4.09). As seen in Table 1, the lowest score of the pre-test was 1 and the highest score was 8, whereas the lowest score of the post-test was 2 and the highest score was 10. The mean difference was 2.34. The result revealed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores at the significant level of 0.5. Therefore, it could be concluded that the students improved their ability to use appropriate DMs significantly.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, t-values, and the significance of the pre-test/post-test (n = 42)

	$\bar{X}$	Min	Max	S.D	MD	t	Sig.
Pretest	4.0952	1	8	1.60502	2.33333	-7.819	.000*
Posttest	6.4286	2	10	1.97722			

*p < .05

Research question 2: What are students' opinions towards the Discourse Markers Workshop?

In order to answer this research question, the data received from the questionnaire which consisted of three parts: rating scale questions, checklist questions and the open-ended questions were analyzed. According to the rating scale questions, it obviously illustrated that students had positive opinions towards the workshop. The mean score of all aspects were rated higher than 4.00. The workshop instructor gained the highest mean score ($\bar{X}$=4.76), followed by the workshop results ($\bar{X}$=4.67), the workshop content ($\bar{X}$=4.60), the workshop design ($\bar{X}$=4.52), and the self-paced delivery ($\bar{X}$=4.50) respectively. (See Table 2) However, for the checklist part, the 21 answers received from the students suggested the improvement of three main aspects of the workshop as follows: 1) adding more time to the workshop, 2) reducing the difficulty of the workshop, and 3) reducing the speed of the workshop.

For the open ended questions, the first two reported opinions included that they liked the teaching style and activities in the workshop, and they gained more knowledge about DMs words after training. Nevertheless, the students indicated suggestions about the workshop including 1) longer time of training, 2) simplified vocabulary of the movie synopses, and 3) stating the rule directly.

Table 2: Student's opinions toward the the DMs Workshop (n=42)

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
WORKSHOP CONTENT 1 .I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.	4.50	.594
2 .This workshop lived up to my expectations.	4.31	.604
3 3. The content is relevant to my study.	4.60	.496
WORKSHOP DESIGN 4. The workshop objectives were clear to me.	4.43	.630
5. The workshop activities stimulated my learning.	4.45	.550
6. The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback.	4.21	.682
7. The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate.	4.52	.505
WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR 8. The instructor was well prepared.	4.76	.431
9. The instructor was helpful.	4.74	.496
WORKSHOP RESULTS 10. I accomplished the objectives of this workshop.	4.55	.503
11. 11 .I will be able to bring what I learned from this workshop to use.	4.67	.477
SELF –PACED DELIVERY 12. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content.	4.50	.552
Grand Mean Score	4.52	0.543

Notes: 1) The student's opinions was categorized using Likert 5-point scale: 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3=natural, 2=disagree, 1= strongly disagree

2) Means of opinion scale ≥4 refers to "positive opinion".

Discussion

The discussion would follow the two topics of the findings: the students' appropriate use of DMs and students' opinions toward the DMs workshop, as follows.

The students' appropriate use of DMs

After the participants learning through the DMs workshop, the posttest mean score of the appropriateness of using DMs in the written texts was higher than the pretest mean score at the 0.05 significant level. This finding was congruent with several studies which supported the positive effects of implementing DMs instruction on students' writing ability (Asadzadian, Saad, & Asadzadian, 2017; Cubukcu, 2017; Aidinlou; 2012; Tehrani & Dastjerdi, 2012). There have been also several studies reporting positive effects of DMs instruction on other skills: reading (Hassanein, 2016), speaking (DavatgariAsl & Moradinejad, 2016; Jones, 2011), and listening (Tabrizi & Vaezi; 2015).

However, among the four semantic classes of DMs in the current study including: Contrastive DMs (e.g., but, however), Elaborative DMs (e.g., and, besides), Implicative DMs (e.g., therefore ,as a result), and Temporal DMs (e.g., finally, eventually), there were two semantic classes which could be considered the most problematic for the students in the pretest since all of them gave the wrong answers for the implicative DMs while 37 out of 42 made mistakes for contrastive DMs. The students' lack of knowledge of using implicative DMs in the pretest was also reported in Ali and Mahadin (2016) who did the study about using DMs of EFL learners at Jordan University. The result revealed that 93 percent of intermediate students used only limited implicative DMs words such as 'because' and 'so' to apply as the implicative markers in the sentences used in their essays. The study suggested teachers should pay more attention to teach implicative DMs. For contrastive DMs, a study by Sitthirak (2013) also reported that Thai students had some problems using contrastive DMs. The study revealed that, when compared to the native speakers, Thai students in general still had problems in differentiating between the contrastive DMs (the DMs used to connect the contrastive ideas) and the non-contrastive DMs (the DMs used to connect the reasons and additional information).

Students' Opinion toward DMs Workshop

In the part of the open-ended questions, there were interesting seventeen remarks asking for: 1) longer time of the training (10), 2) movie synopsis vocabulary simplification (4), and 3) directly stating the rules (3), which would be discussed as follows.

The remark about the longer time of the workshop can mean that the students enjoyed attending the DMs workshop. They liked the use of movie trailers, enjoyed reading the movie synopses, and doing the interactive activity group. Some students mentioned that they were entertained by watching the movie trailers and they liked reading the movie synopses since it could clarify more about the story of the movies. Moreover, some students stated that movie trailers were utilized in order to motivate the students' interest and encouraged them to read story from the movie synopsis worksheets. The texts in the movie synopses were meaningful after the students watched the movie trailers. The result was concurrent with the studies of Badura (2002); McKeachine & Svinicki (2006); Généreux & Thomson, (2008) stating that the use of movies or video clips rendered positive effects to English language learning in term of increasing the involvement of the students and helped them learn with more attention

For their preference in the interactive group activity, some students commented that doing a group work facilitated them to have more confidence to speak, to share some ideas about the rules of use of DMs in group and with the whole class. Moreover, some students gave the comment that they could learn about the use of DMS more easily when they did

the activities with their friends. That was also found in the study of Hurst, Wallace & Nixon (2013). The study investigated 180 students' responses about how social interaction affected on students' learning and found out that 57 percent of them reported they could learn faster when cooperated in group work.

For the remark about simplified language in the movie synopses, balancing between authentic material and simplified material should be considered. Authentic movie synopsis texts were assisted to motivate the students' learning and helping them to explore the real language. Just as claimed by Guariento and Morley (2001), they mentioned that using authentic material could increase student's motivation for their learning because learners could feel that they were in touch with the target language. There was another supportive idea from Kelly, Offner, and Vorland (2002) who they mentioned that after they had been teaching more than a decade, using authentic materials could motivate students and generate positive attitude about the learning.

However, for the current study, only a few difficult words in the synopsis texts were simplified (e.g., acclimatize --> adapt, custody--> care, manipulative--> managing) but a few students still found the texts difficult and wanted them to be more simplified. As claimed in the study of Guo (2012), they investigated fifty college students about the reading speed, reading habits, and the preferences. The study revealed that using simplified materials could improve student's reading habits, reading speed, and vocabulary knowledge in the students. Therefore, using authentic material or simplified materials should be made appropriately balance of the teacher and be congruent to the level of the students as well.

About the remark of directly stating the rules, there were only three students which commented that they did not like to state the rules of use of the DMs by themselves, and they would like the teacher to generate the rules directly for them. Since the current study promoted the cooperative learning, the students needed to help each other generate the rules inductively. The ones who were not familiar with the method might have the desire to get the answer directly. However, as claimed by Kyndt and others (2013), they reported on the effects of cooperative learning on the the students' achievement attitude, and perceptions from sixty five studies that the cooperative learning rendered more positive effects on the students' achievement than traditional methods or the direct teaching.

Limitation and Recommendation for the Future Research

Time allocation is the limitation in this study as the workshop was conducted in only 4 sessions which lasted about 50 minutes per each. As the findings showed that the desirable results from the student's preferences, it would be better to have longer periods of the DMs workshop so that the students could have more time to participate in the learning activities provided.

The recommendations are as follows:

First, adding more time to the workshop should be considered. Each session should be more than 50 minutes because the teacher could provide more activities and give advices to the students. Therefore, the students could have more time to involve in learning activities.

Second, designing the course of how to use appropriate DMs could be implemented by English teachers. Since the finding of the current study implied that after the students attending DMs Workshop, they performed better on the use of appropriate DMs. To increase the efficacy of the use of the appropriate DMs in Thai students, the school curriculum need to add the course or the instruction about the role of DMs.

Third, conducting DMs workshop on the other level English proficiency should be investigated. Since this workshop was conducted for normal program of grade 10 students in which the students might have low or intermediate level of English proficiency. Further studies can investigate an experiment with the participants with an advance level of English proficiency to infer some generalizations.

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