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The Effects of Textual Input Enhancement and Inputflooding on the Comprehension and Retention of Macro/ Micro Discourse Markers Functions among Iraqi University EFL Students

A B S T R A C T

Discourse markers (DMs) are essential for improving the quality of speaking and writing as well as increasing comprehension of spoken and written text. This research aims at investigating the effects of two techniques (textual input enhancement and inputflooding) on students' comprehension and retention of macro/ micro discourse markers functions. 96 EFL University students were randomly chosen from a population of 120 students. The study subjects were split into two experimental groups and one control group and they took part in 8 sessions to teach them L2 DMs, by using two techniques, i.e., textual input enhancement and inputflooding. The students are tested before and after the sessions by the comprehension test of DMs functions. The outcomes showed that all two experimental groups did better than the control group in their post-tests. Moreover, the findings indicated a significant difference in the comprehension test between the two experimental groups in favour of the textual input enhancement group. Moreover, the performance of the Textual Enhancement group on the DMs Posttest is somewhat close to its performance in the retention test. On the other hand, the statistically significant effect of the inputflooding technique on the DMs Posttest is greater than its effect on the retention test. It is recommended to use input enhancement techniques to help the EFL students to master L2 materials effectively.

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تأثير تحسين المدخلات النصية وتدفق المدخلات على فهم وظائف علامات الخطاب الكلي/ الجزئي بين

طلاب الجامعة الدارسين اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية

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الخلاصة:

تقوم علامات الخطاب بدور حيوي في تحسين جودة التحدث والكتابة وزيادة فهم النص المنطوق والمكتوب. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقق من تأثير تقنيتين (تحسين المدخلات النصية وتدفع المدخلات) على فهم الطلاب لعلامات الخطاب الكلي / الجزئي. تم اختيار 96 طالبة عراقية من طالبات الجامعة الدراسات اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية بشكل عشوائي من بين 120 طالبة. تم تصنيف المشاركات في الدراسة إلى مجموعتين تجريبيتين ومجموعة ضابطة وشاركت الطالبات في 8 جلسات لتعليم علامات الخطاب في اللغة الثانية باستخدام طريقتين هما تحسين المدخلات النصية وتدفع المدخلات. يتم اختبار الطالبات قبل جلسات التدريس وبعدها من خلال اختبار الفهم لوظائف علامات الخطاب. أظهرت النتائج أن أداء المجموعتين التجريبيتين أفضل في الاختبارات اللاحقة لهما مقارنةً بالمجموعة الضابطة. كما أشارت النتائج إلى وجود فرق معنوي بين المجموعتين التجريبيتين في اختبار الفهم لعلامات الخطاب لصالح مجموعة تحسين المدخلات النصية. وأداء مجموعة المدخلات النصية في الاختبار البعدي لفهم علامات الخطاب قريب الى حد ما من ادائها في اختبار الاحتفاظ. من ناحية أخرى ، فإن التأثير ذا الدلالة الإحصائية لتقنية تدفق المدخلات على الاختبار البعدي لفهم علامات الخطاب أكبر من تأثيرها على اختبار الاحتفاظ و توصي الباحثة باستخدام تقنيات تحسين المدخلات لمساعدة الطلبة الدارسين اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية على إتقان مواد اللغة الثانية بشكل فعال. الكلمات المفتاحية: تدفق المدخلات، تحسين المدخلات النصية و علامات الخطاب.

1. Introduction

Grammar acquisition has been a source of debate among L2 acquisition scholars. They have different points of view, some of them focus on implicit teaching methods (Krashen, 1982; Ellis, 1997; Celce-Murcia, 2001) and are against explicit instruction with its form-oriented language because the student acquires grammar naturally by exposing them to sufficient input (Mahvelati& Mukundan, 2012: 184). In contrast, other scholars as advocates of explicit teaching methods like Larsen-Freeman, (1995:136) argued that grammar should be included in formal teaching because grammatical features need to be taught and are not acquired naturally. It means that the input given should be enhanced in the explicit instruction to speed up the process of learning through "input enhancement" or "consciousness raising". The technique of making language input more noticeable to learners is known as input enhancement (Sharwood Smith,1991: 118). To get the learner's focus on the desired grammatical parts, a variety of techniques are used, such as bolding, italicizing, and capitalizing (Farnaz& Davatgari Asl, 2014: 115).

Grammar is one of the key issues that EFL teachers face. The teaching of grammatical forms takes up a large portion of class time and effort. Coherence and cohesiveness are two other elements of written speech that are equally

crucial yet frequently ignored. The students' scant use of DMs implies that such an important part of any writing education is clearly disregarded. So, sufficient exposure to these linguistic items is essential, and writing teachers must address such discourse markers, both explicitly and implicitly. If such markers are available to students, they will be able to write coherent, cohesive essays (Modhish, 2012: 60). Moreover, the DMs utilized in the students' spoken speech did not attain complete cohesiveness and coherence because they were either misused or overused (Mahmood& Iman, 2022: 258).

L2 learners encounter a range of circumstances in which they have to give their ideas the desired meaning, furthermore, they are faced with different challenges such as examinations, assignments, tests, or presentations. In these challenges, they should communicate their ideas orally or in writing, and they are asked to perform many tasks such as answering comprehension questions, summarizing passages, and writing ideas logically in compositions and essays on different topics. DMs as building blocks are used for combining words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs and ordering information from the introduction to the end. By using discourse markers, the thought pattern flows logically and systematically from a key idea to several supporting details.

Some scripts with the poor performance of secondary students reveal their incorrect and injudicious use of discourse markers. The students in the sixth grade are asked to write a paragraph, summary, letter, email, or essay in the Baccalaureate examination and their lack of proficiency in using discourse markers will affect their performance. Moreover, this deficiency will appear in their future performance at the university level at which the English Language is most necessary. As a result, students are supposed to learn about discourse markers, and how to use them conveniently to join their ideas together and present a harmonious piece of writing. To this end, the current study examines the effect of using textual input enhancement techniques and input flooding on students' comprehension of the basic functions of DMs in written paragraphs and essays and how these techniques can be intervened in an actual classroom to teach English. Most researchers analyzed DMs in academic writing or investigated the relationship between language proficiency levels and the DMs' use without any attempt of teaching students how to use them. Consequently, the study investigates two techniques that contribute to the student's comprehension of the main Macro/ Micro functions of DMs used in written essays.

The rationale for the present study is that DMs are seldom investigated in foreign language teaching (Vellenga, 2004: 1) and there are no sufficient data

concerning the learning of DMs by foreign language learners necessary for communicating in a foreign language successfully.

1.1 Input Enhancement

Input is regarded as a crucial learning source for L2 students. Students focus on language because of its propositional content message when they hear or see it (VanPatten, 1996:10). Krashen's input hypothesis represents a powerful influence on SLA that will be attained automatically if the learner understands the input presented, and this input is a little more advanced than the current interlanguage of learners. To ensure the learner's understanding of the input, the interlocutors must make themselves understood in the communicative situation (Krashen, 1985: 2). Consequently, the learner must receive comprehensible input in his classroom. After that, Krashen's input hypothesis was not advocated by many researchers such as VanPatten, (2004) and Lightbrown & Spada (1990) who assert that being exposed to input for a long time is not enough for guaranteeing language acquisition messages. In a similar vein, as explained by (Widdowson, 1990), L2 learners' own resources are not sufficient for turning the input into intake (as cited in Safdari, 2019: 283). According to Schmidt (1994: 30), Persons gain knowledge about things more quickly when they pay attention to them than when they do not. As a cognitive process, attention has an important role to understand SLA (Simard & Wong, 2001: 104). Thus, with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1994:17), noticing is the essential condition for turning input into intake. It means that the learner's attention should be attracted by noticing the target second language features in the spoken or written input and making form-meaning connections simultaneously through the conscious process of noticing or attending necessary for converting input into intake (Schmidt, 1994: 30).

Schmidt (2010: 725) defined noticing as "conscious registration of attended particular instances of language". Accordingly, various techniques have been used like "consciousness-raising" or "input enhancement" (Sharwood Smith, 1993) in which there is a focus on formal features in L2 to draw learners' attention. The consciousness-raising technique aims at increasing learners' conscious awareness of certain linguistic structures and turning all input into intake by manipulating the given input with the purpose to make input salient to learners (Sharwood Smith, 1991: 118). Decarrico (2001: 289) stated that learning happens when the mind is on something else, like reading a text or utilizing a language for communication. The textual input enhancement technique has one or more typographical cues in which the target input is capitalized, italicized, highlighted with different colors, bolded, or underlined as stated by Sharwood Smith (1993:177) to draw attention to and highlight the desired aspects to be

noticed by learners through form-meaning connections. The learners' attention will be directed to form while processing the meaning of language input. Without using textual input enhancement, the target features of language input may be unnoticed by learners. Input flooding is to “promote students’ noticing by using particular language items with great frequency” (Larsen-Freeman& Anderson, 2011: 241). Doughty& Williams (1998: 236) explain that without giving any explicit instructions, it is occasionally possible to seek more or less implicitly to draw the learners' attention to linguistic aspects and encourage their processing of those features. Input flooding is a process of enhancing the target input that can be achieved by an abundance of its occurrences orally or in a written mode as described by Wong (2005:37).

"In input flood, the input learners receive is saturated with the form that we hope learners will notice and possibly acquire. We don't usually highlight the form in any way to draw attention to it nor do we tell learners to pay attention to the form".

In addition to making specific input features more common and hence more noticeable, input flooding may also stimulate the formation of a specific structure. A speaker's propensity to construct a previously said or heard structure is known as syntactic priming (Mackey& Gass, 2006: 173). According to Han, et al. (2008: 610), the target form is not enhanced and presented in a way to be more salient to learners through frequency. Moreover, textual input enhancement and inputflooding are similar because both of them do not ensure that the target forms are noticed and understood by the students. The target forms in a reading text are the major focus of textual input enhancement since they may prevent the complete interpretation of meaning. Highlighted features created by textual input enhancement contribute to perceptual salience in the learner’s memory, and the great saliency of language features helps him to notice these features eventually to become intake which in turn will be internalized and used by the learner. This process of converting input into intake is illustrated in Figure 1 below (Catherine Kim, 2010: 23).

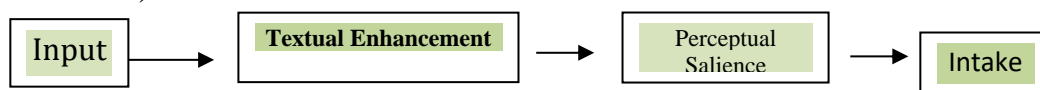


Figure 1. The Turning of Input into Intake

The research intends to answer the question below:

1. Does textual input enhancement have a significant effect on the EFL students' comprehension of DMs functions?
2. Does inputflooding have a significant effect on the EFL students' comprehension of DMs functions?

3. Is there a significant difference between the effect of textual input enhancement and inputflooding on the EFL students' comprehension of DMs functions?
4. Does textual input enhancement have a significant effect on the EFL students' retention of DMs functions?
5. Does inputflooding have a significant effect on the EFL students' retention of DMs functions?

2. Literature Review

2.1 What are DMs?

Theoretically, DMs belong to a group of verbal (and nonverbal) devices that provide contextual coordinates for the dialogue in progress (Schiffrin, 1987: 41). And he defined DMs operationally as components that bracket speech units sequentially (ibid: 31). As a multi- categorized and multi-functional term, DMs have been a subject of controversy and researchers do not agree on their definitions, characteristics, classifications, functions, and meanings. And they are described as “a growth market in linguistics” (Fraser,1998: 54).

DMs play a basic role in discourse analysis and contribute to the text's cohesiveness and promote clarity by the smooth moving from one point to the next with the use of apt transitional phrases (Guth, 1980:49). And Sloan recommends using discourse markers to avoid ambiguity in logical analyses and arguments (Sloan, 1986: 168). Also, macro-markers are different from micro-markers. Their features and effects should take into account. The reader can use macro-markers to comprehend the text's fundamental content. whereas micro-markers enable the reader to discern internal relationships and the links between sentences within a text. Hence, the absence of micro-markers may result in unclarity that can create misunderstanding. Consequently, discourse markers are analyzed in a pragmatic way, not a grammatical one as a group of words that have distinctive formal, functional, and pragmatic characteristics (Aijmer, 2002: 2).

2.2 Definitions

According to Fraser (1988: 29; 1999: 936), DMs are lexical expressions that have a generic core meaning that the context can transmit and indicate the relationship between the interpretation of the second part introduced by DMs and the previous one. They are syntactically independent of the fundamental sentence structure. DMs are also defined as language constructs like thus, because, etc. They are a group of cues that give discourse coherence, cohesiveness, and meaning (Martínez, 2004: 63).

Textual enhancement (TE) is a method for drawing external attention to a particular aspect of oral or written input so that L2 learners can recognize the desired forms without the requirement for any explicit explanation (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011, as cited in Jahan, & Kormos, 2015: 41).

Input enhancement is an educational strategy for highlighting formal elements in L2 input. (Kim, 2006: 345).

The inputflooding technique is defined by Wong (2005:37) as the input which is "saturated with the form" that students are supposed to recognize and understand. However, it is an implicit strategy to attract learners' attention to the form. Wong claims that the form isn't highlighted to draw attention to it and that students aren't told to concentrate on it. In other words, input flooding is the process of enriching the input by providing a significant number of examples of the desired feature without openly calling attention to it. It is a tactic that subtly emphasizes form.

2.3 The Functions of DMs

DMs are referred to as the 'glue' that sticks the various elements of the text together. A text would be written illogically and the sentences and paragraphs would not be clearly connected if DMs were not actively used (Sharndama & Yakuba, 2014: 18). The semantic dimension is not enough in analyzing the DMs as in Redeker's (2006: 339) emphasis, discourse markers are seen from a cognitive perspective, unlike lexical items, discourse markers are contextual uses of expressions, and the functions of these expressions are identified in terms of the interactional environment in which they are used communicatively. Blakemore (2006:232) states that discourse markers are defined according to their "function in establishing connectivity in discourse". These functions are as follows:

1. Unlike cohesive devices such as conjunctions, discourse markers highlight cohesion and coherence relations in discourse. They involve speaker choice as opposed to conjunctions which are selected automatically by speakers because of their inherent meaning.
2. Discourse markers facilitate the interpretation process on the part of the hearer toward the desired meaning. They have interactive signaling of the emotional involvement of speakers such as politeness or face-threatening. Moreover, discourse markers have an indexical function in which the hearer can make the relation between current and prior discourse.
3. Discourse makers play a functional role in discourse management. They can be used in focusing attention (e.g. look), initiating discourse (e.g. so, indeed, and now), marking a boundary or a shift (e.g. well), reformulating (e.g. actually)

holding on the floor (e.g. because), and resuming (e.g. to sum up) (Matei, 2010: 124).

4. Discourse makers have subjective functions and interpersonal as presented in Castro's (2009: 61) research. subjective functions mean to understand and continue attention or to respond to the preceding discourse. DMs such as I see and All right are used to signal the hearer's attention and his involvement. Discourse markers are also used interpersonally to express shared knowledge between speakers. They are also used to express agreement, disagreement, acknowledgement, politeness, consent, uncertainty, modification, hesitation, support, and confirmation (Jabeen et al. 2011: 80-84). Moreover, discourse markers elicit responses from the audience regarding the understanding of a previous statement as well as their agreement or disagreement "provide feedback from listeners about whether a prior utterance has been understood or not, and whether they agree or disagree" and indicate the speaker's attitude towards the discourse (Andersen et al. 1999: 1340).

2.4 Features of Discourse Markers

DMs have several features as stated by Hasund (2003: 56-57) in the following:

1. Lexical and Phonological features

Phonologically, DMs are short and reduced, with marginal and heterogeneous forms, and they may be a separate word or subordinated to another word.

2. Syntactic features: DMs occur in all positions of a sentence-initially, medially, and finally (Müller, 2005: 5), and they have no grammatical function and they are grammatically optional, being "independent of an already well-formed sentence" (Fraser 1988: 22).

3. Semantic features: They do not represent the sentence's propositional content and they lack semantic meaning.

4. Functional features: They serve textual and interpersonal functions at the same time.

5. Sociolinguistic and stylistic features: DMs are used with high frequency in spoken discourses rather than written ones. Also, they are commonly used in women's speech as compared with men's speech.

There are three necessary features of DMs as identified by Schourup (1999:232) including "connectivity, optionality, and non-truth conditionality". Connectivity refers to the use of DMs to connect parts of discourse (Fraser,1996: 186), optionality refers to the optional use of the DM that can be removed without affecting the sentence's grammatical (Brinton (1996, 267), and third feature non-truth conditionality means that DMs have no contribution to the utterance's truth conditions in which they are used (Fung & Carter 2007: 414).

Furthermore, multigrammaticality is a distinctive feature of DMs and they represent “a broad and diverse class of elements with different developmental trajectories” (Koops & Lohmann, 2015: 233). The grammatical and lexical origins of DMs are highly diverse because they may be verbs (e.g. say, look), adverbs (e.g. anyway), coordinating (e.g. but), response words (e.g. no), and minor clauses (e.g. I think).

2.5 Discourse Classifications

As a natural part of conversations and interactions, DMs are words or phrases that have different grammatical properties and these properties make the difficulty in classifying these words into certain categories (Sandal, 2016:7). Moreover, the words themselves have little or vague meaning, and extra pragmatic meaning is added to the utterance through their use as DMs (Müller, 2005:1-6). They provide a broad meta-interactional (or procedural) purpose of commenting on or indicating how an impending speech fits into the evolving conversation (Aijmer, 2002: 265). The semantic function of DMs can be ideational, textual, or interpersonal (Sandholtet, 2018:12).

According to Müller (2005: 9) DMs are multifunctional, and serve different functions that facilitate the listener's understanding of the speaker's utterances. He summarizes the functions and uses of discourse markers as follows:

- Change a topic and set a boundary in discourse
- Hold on the floor by the speaker
- Notice or a reaction or response
- Classify the discourse either "cataphorically or anaphorically"
- Determine prior and ensuing information
- Create an interaction between the speaker and the hearer

In Quirk et al (1972: 664) classification, macro discourse markers are put into nine categories as follows: 1) Enumeration: The first point I want to make is this... 2) Transition: Let us now turn to ... 3) Summation: My conclusion is... 4) Apposition: Another example is... 5) Result: The consequence was... 6) Inference: That implies.. 7) Reformation: A better way of putting it is... 8) Replacement: The alternative is... 9) Concession: The truth is that. Another classification was presented by Halliday & Hasan (1976) in which discourse markers are classified according to their functions into four categories as follows: 1) Additive: in addition, furthermore, and; 2) Adversative: in spite of, however, but; 3) Causal: for; so, therefore, due to; 4) Temporal: first, then, finally (Ang, 2014: 30).

Finally, in the discourse markers category model made by Belles-Fortuno (2006), discourse markers are classified into two categories: 1) micro-markers

which describe the internal relations, and 2) macro-markers Which describe the overall relations as in Figure 2 below:

Micro-markers				
Additional	Causal	Temporal	Contrastive	Consecutive
Starter	Rephrase	Organiser	Topic-Shifter	Conclusion
To start with, First First of all	I guess, I suppose, I mean,	In fact, Well, The next thing	Incidentally By the way, As you may have heard	Briefly In short To sum up,

Figure 2: Discourse Markers Category Model by Belles-Fortuno (2006: 173-204)

DMs as "lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases" (Fraser,1999: 937). DMs are basically characterized according to their common features as identified in many studies and realized by Schourup (1999: 231-234; Kohlani, 2010: 39-48), these features are embodied in the following expressions which are: optionality, orality, non-truth-conditionality, initiality, connectivity, and multi-categoriality".

2.6 Previous Research

Zarei et al. (2016) investigate the impacts of input flooding, visual input, and semantic input on the Iranian EFL learners' comprehension of lexical collocations. 80 students from two institutes in Karaj, ranging in age from 16 to 40, participated in the study. An ECCE test was given to the participants to assess their degree of proficiency. Participants (divided into three experimental groups and one comparison group) read ten passages containing lexical collocations throughout ten sessions after taking a pretest consisting of 110 collocations items. The results revealed no discernible differences in the effects of the three input enhancement procedures on comprehension and lexical collocation creation.

Shartika, Mira& Mazroatul Ishlahiyah (2018) look into the usage of textual enhancement in the development of students' abilities in identifying forms of noun phrases. The EFL subjects in one of the Islamic universities in Indonesia were divided into 2 classes (high and low achievers). The quantitative design was used to obtain information. The difference is found between the high and low achievers in noun phrase acquisition through textual enhancement. The high achievers outperform the low achievers due to the use of textual enhancement. There was a significant difference in learning noun phrases between the high achievers and the low achievers.

Safdari (2019) explores the effects of inputflooding and input enhancement on the writing of Iranian learners in the present simple and continuous tenses. The researcher uses two types of input to improve Iranian EFL learners' writing. The subjects are split into three groups of 20. The first experimental group's students

are taught the tenses (present simple and continuous) by text enhancement through the use of italicization, underlining, colour coding, capitalization, and boldfacing. In the second experimental group, learners are exposed to flooded materials that show the tenses frequently and profusely. The same texts are given to the control group without input flooding or textual enhancement. After the experiment, the writing posttest was administrated to the three groups. The results showed that learners' writing is positively improved by both input enhancement and input flooding.

3. Methodology

To address the study's questions, the researcher employed a quasi-experimental design.

3.1 Participants

The study population is first-year English Department students enrolled at Al-Anbar University's College of Education for Women during the academic year 2019-2020. This study was implemented with the participation of ninety-six female students, aged between (19 to 20) years. To achieve equivalence of the three groups, the age of the female students was calculated by months. Additionally, students' average scores in the Baccalaureate Exam of the sixth secondary stage have been taken into account. Randomly, the subjects were chosen and assigned to two groups of experimental and one group of control as illustrated in Table 1.

(1)The Study Sample

Group	Section	Number of Students Before Exclusion	Number of Excluded Students	Number of Students After Exclusion
Experimental 1	A	39	7	32
Experimental 2	B	40	8	32
Control	C	41	9	32
Total		120	24	96

3.2 The Experimental Design

The study groups were given the same test as a pretest and posttest to examine the effect of the "textual input enhancement" and "input flooding" techniques as independent variables on the comprehension of DMs' functions as a dependent variable (see Table 2).

(2) The Experimental Design

Group	Test	The Independent Variable	Test
Experimental Group1	Pre-test	Using Textual Input	Post-test Written test of Discourse Markers

Experimental Group2	Pre-test	Using Inputflooding	Post-test Written test of Discourse Markers
Control Group	Pre-test	Without additional technique or Material	Post-test Written test of Discourse Markers

3.3 Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to get the data for the research, a TOEFL Test and the comprehension test. First, a modified test of old versions of the TOEFL test (Philips, 2001, 2003, and 2006), was designed by the researcher. Before the experiment, it was administrated to assess the participants' level of proficiency and the homogeneity of the two groups. The proficiency test revealed that all students were at the intermediate level of proficiency with test scores ranging from 60 to 74.

Then a pre- Discourse Markers Comprehension test was also administrated to measure students' performance in comprehending DMs functions and to compare the effect of employing textual input and input flooding techniques with that of the control group. The comprehension test of DMs' functions was constructed by the researcher and it consists of 5 tasks and is scored out of (50) (see Appendix 1). The test was used as a pre, post, and delayed post-test, to assess DMs' comprehension in various settings and different functions. The test assessed the respondents' comprehension and retention of DMs. Furthermore, the test was given to an ELT and language testing experts at the university to evaluate its face and content validity. Finally, the tests' reliability was also evaluated using Cronbach's formula, and pre-, post-, and delayed post-values were (0.78, 0.84, and 0.76) respectively.

3.4 Materials

Different types of essays were chosen from Essay King - IELTS Writing-Apps on Google Play entitled 1. Factors that measure a country's success, 2. The influence of teaching technology on Art, 3. Vertical VS. Horizontal cities, 4. Should countries produce food for themselves, 5. The pros and cons of Online Courses, 6. Reality TV shows are good entertainment, 7. The value of music, and 8. Old people and modern technology. Essay King is a useful tool designed for all IELTS writing students that enables users to read and listen to essays using a strong audio player.

3.5 Procedure

Before the treatment, the participants' level of proficiency was assessed using a TOEFL Test. Then, all participants took a pre-test to assess the groups' level of understanding of DMs and their homogeneity. After that, the students were split into two experimental groups and one control group at random. Then, the

experiment was conducted for eight weeks in which the participants were given an essay each week to read within an hour. Before handing the students the essay, these steps were followed in the experimental groups (Textual input enhancement and inputflooding) precisely:

1. The instructor first posed a few topic-related warm-up questions about the DMs and their functions as (1. Additional, 2. Causal, 3. Temporal, 4. Contrastive, 5. Consecutive, 6. Starter, 7. Rephrase, 8. Organiser, 9. Topic-Shifter, and 10. Conclusion), and to debate the warm-up questions, the students were divided into pairs.
2. The instructor handed out the essays to the students and instructed them to read them silently.
3. The teacher gave the students instructions to write down as many DMs from class exercises as they could remember, along with their functions, on paper strips, and turn them in.

In the textual enhancement experimental group, the teacher tried to draw the students' attention by using textual enhancement in which the target input is (capitalized, italicized, underlined, and highlighted with different colors) to raise their consciousness about the types and functions of DMs. Consequently, they are aware of the DMs used (see appendix 2).

On the other hand, in the inputflooding experimental group, DMs were taught implicitly in which the students are introduced to DMs with various types of essays, and the students concentrate on the gist of these essays rather than the DMs flooded. The frequency of the DMs was increased by presenting many examples in which the DMs were used. The students are exposed to these DMs several times in the texts and in the instances given that enable them to know about the DMs and their functions. Following Nemati& Motallebzadeh (2013: 409), input flooding occurs when the frequency of appearance of a specific feature in the EFL input series increases, making that feature more prominent. The participants in the input flooding group were "flooded" with the DMs found in the essays. It means that the participants encountered the DMs frequently throughout the texts and the instances.

In the third group (the control one), the subjects attended their regular English lessons without receiving any implicit or explicit textual enhancement of the essays given. Then, all groups in the study were given a post-test to evaluate the effects of utilizing these techniques (textual enhancement and inputflooding) on the subjects' comprehension of Macro/ Micro Discourse Markers Functions. The post-test findings were utilized to demonstrate any significant differences between the TE and IF groups' acquisition of DMs. After two weeks, the subjects

were then invited to complete the delayed post-test to determine the treatments' effects on students' retention of DMs. It is worth mentioning that the explicit/implicit dichotomy is used in the experimental groups.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 The First Question-related Result

The 1st question investigated whether textual enhancement had a significant effect on the EFL students' comprehension of DMs functions. To answer this question statistically, the mean scores on the post-Comprehension Test of DMs for the textual enhancement group as the first experimental one and the control one have been computed and compared. Table 3 below displays the descriptive statistics and t-test procedure for two independent samples indicating a significant effect of the textual input enhancement on the comprehension of the DMs functions by the Iraqi EFL students.

(3) Descriptive Statistics and T-test for Posttest Scores of the Textual Enhancement Group on the Comprehension Test of DMs

Groups	No.	Mean	Std.	T-test	Sig, at 0.05 Level
Exp. G 1 (Textual Enhancement)	32	37.0000	3.58311	14.34	0.000
CG.	32	21.2500	4.97088		

On the DMs comprehension test, the Textual Enhancement Group (TE) mean score (37.0) is higher than the mean of the control one (21.2), and the results of the comparison between the experimental group (TE) and the control one, show that the t-test is (14.34) and there are significant differences statistically at a level less than (0.05), in favour of the (TE) Group.

4.2 The Second Question-related Result

The 2nd research question posed whether inputflooding had a significant effect on the Iraqi students' comprehension of DMs functions. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics and t-test findings, which show that the mean of the 2nd experimental inputflooding group's mean (32.0) is bigger than the control group's mean on the comprehension test of DMs functions, which is (21.2). And the t-test procedure was next applied. to make a comparison between the inputflooding group and the control one.

(4) Descriptive Statistics and t-test for Posttest Scores of the Inputflooding Group on the Comprehension Test of DMs

Groups	No.	Mean	Std.	T-test	Sig, at 0.05 Level
Exp. G 2 (Inputflooding)	32	2.0938	4.15319	9.55	0.000
CG.	32	1.2500	4.97088		

The results show that the t-test is (9.55), indicating that there is a significant difference statistically at a level less than (0.05), in favour of the inputflooding group.

4.3 The Third Question-related Result

The 3rd research question sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the effects of textual enhancement (TE) and inputflooding (IF) on EFL students' comprehension of DM functions. Table 5 compares the post-test scores of the TE and IF groups on the DMs test using descriptive statistics and T-test.

(5) Descriptive Statistics and t-test for Posttest Scores of the Two Experimental groups on the Comprehension Test of DMs

Groups	No.	Mean	Std.	T-test	Sig, at 0.05 Level
Exp. G 1 (Textual Enhancement)	32	37.0000	3.58311	12.50	0.000
Exp. G 2 (Inputflooding)	32	32.0938	4.15319		

The Textual Enhancement Group's mean (37.0) is greater than the Inputflooding group's mean, on the post-comprehension test of DMs, which is (32.0), and the results also show that the t-test is (12.5) and there are significant differences statistically at a level less than (0.05) between the scores in the TE group and the IF group, in favour of the TE group. The post-test mean scores for the three groups are shown in Table 6 below.

(6) The Mean Score of the Three Groups in the Post-tests of the DMs

No	Groups	Post-Test
1	Experimental 1	37.0000
2	Experimental 2	32.0938
3	Control	21.2500

The results revealed that the mean scores of the TE and IF groups are greater than the control one in the post-test and the first experimental one (textual input enhancement) is higher than the second one (inputflooding) in the post-test (see Figure 3).

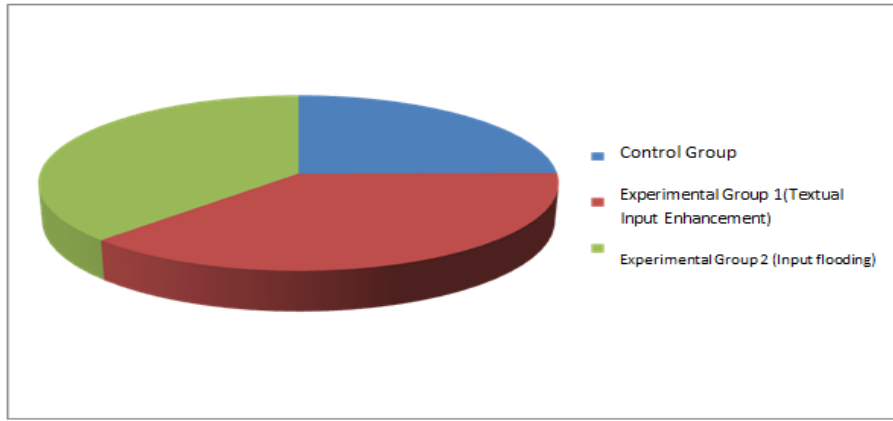


Figure 3. The Mean Score of the Three Groups in the DMs Post-test

The obtained results showed that learning DMs via TE and IF techniques was beneficial for both experimental groups, with TE having a stronger impact than IF on learning DMs functions. This result is similar to that of Nikbakht & Mehdi (2019:137) in which using TE and IF techniques to learn restrictive relative clauses and wh-questions benefited both experimental groups., with TE having a bigger impact than IF on wh- questions learning. Similarly, Mahvelati& Mukundan (2012: 182) showed that both approaches were positive in teaching collocations; however, the explicit technique of consciousness-raising outperformed the implicit one of input flooding. And Yaghoubi& Seyyedi (2017: 15) concluded that learners' vocabulary learning was more positively impacted by explicit learning. Unlike the present study, the findings in Rashtchi& Etebari(2018) showed that the impacts of "input flooding" and "input enhancement" on participants' passive voice knowledge did not differ statistically, indicating these techniques have the same impact on students' passive voice knowledge.

4.4 The Fourth Question-related Result

The fourth research question looked into whether textual enhancement (TE) had any influence on EFL students' retention of DMs functions. The means and standard deviations and T-test of the Textual Enhancement Group's performances on the DMs Posttest and the Retention test have been calculated as displayed in Table 7.

(7) Descriptive Statistics and T-test of the Textual Enhancement Group's Scores on the DMs Posttest and the Retention Test

Groups	No.	Mean	Std.	T-test	Sig, at 0.05 Level
Exp. G 1 (Textual Enhancement) on the DMs Posttest	32	37.0000	3.58311	1.482	0.148
Exp. G 1 (Textual Enhancement) on the Retention Test	32	35.6563	3.52511		

According to the findings, the Textual Enhancement group's mean on the DMs Posttest (37.0), is somewhat close to the mean of its performance in the retention test, which amounted to (35.6) To examine the significance of the apparent difference between the mean scores of the two Textual Enhancement group performances, the t-test procedure was next applied. The results also show that the t-test is 1.482 and indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at a level less than (0.05).

4.5 The Fifth Question-related Result

The 5th research question investigated whether inputflooding has a significant effect on the students' retention of DMs functions. The findings of the Descriptive Statistics and T-test of the Inputflooding Group's performances on the DMs Posttest and the Retention Test are revealed in Table 8.

(8) Descriptive Statistics and T-test of the Inputflooding Group's Scores on the Comprehension Posttest and the Retention Test

Groups	No.	Mean	Std.	T-test	Sig, at 0.05 Level
Exp. G 2 (Inputflooding) on the DMs Posttest	32	32.0938	4.15319	3.548	0.001
Exp. G 2 (Inputflooding) on the Retention Test	32	30.6250	4.59839		

In Table 8, the mean of the inputflooding group in the post-test (32.0) is more than its mean in the retention test, amounting to (30.0). To determine the significance of the apparent difference between the two performances' mean scores of inputflooding group in the DMs Posttest and the Retention Test, the t-test procedure was next applied. The t-test is (3.548) which indicates statistically significant differences at a lower level than (0.05) in favour of the inputflooding group's performance on the post-test. Therefore, the inputflooding strategy is found to have a considerable impact on student comprehension of the DMs. The inputflooding groups' performance in the comprehension posttest was better than that of the retention test. The statistical analyses revealed that using textual input enhancement and inputflooding has a significant effect on EFL students' comprehension of DMs functions. Moreover, a significant difference is revealed between the effects of textual input enhancement and inputflooding on students' performance in favour of the Textual input enhancement group. Moreover, the Textual input enhancement group has a positive effect on the comprehension and retention of the DMs. Whereas, the effect of inputflooding on the comprehension of DMs was greater than that on the retention of DMs.

It is worth mentioning that the outcomes of this study are in consistence with prior studies in which textually enriched input had a statistically significant

influence on passive form acquisition (Khoshnevis& Zohreh Mikaeli, 2014:102). In Farnaz & Hanieh Davatgari Asl. (2014:115) The experimental group performs better than the control group. Also, the outcomes of the present study support Fahim& Vaezi (2011: 552) who showed the significant impact of enhanced input on learning collocations. In a similar line, Mayén (2013: 83) discovered that using input enhancement to help second language learners acquire and recall verbal morphology was beneficial. Similarly, Birjandi& Najafi (2015:43), found that the enhanced input had a much better influence on L2 students' learning of English phrasal verbs than unenhanced input. Likewise, Mahvelati& Mukundan (2012:182) discovered that, while both techniques were effective in teaching collocations, the explicit way of consciousness-raising outperformed the implicit one of inputflooding significantly.

However, the current study's results about the positive effect of input enhancement contradict the findings of Loewen& Inceoglu's (2016:89) study, which showed that visual input enhancement did not add significantly to learning the Spanish past tense.

5. Conclusions and Suggestion

After discussing the major theoretical aspects and pedagogical implications of incorporating textual input enhancement and inputflooding in teaching English, it showed these intervention techniques can be effectively used to promote the learning of DMs. The use of these techniques increase students' grammatical and linguistic skills. TE and IF can help learners to notice and focus on the target forms or learn them without overtly drawing their attention to them.

The study's findings showed that without any instructional techniques, DMs could not be easily learnt during regular teaching sessions. In other words, the fact that both experimental groups of students outperformed the control group indicated the effectiveness of employing these techniques to teach DMs in the classroom. Also, it can be maintained that input enhancement techniques have a substantial effect on the Iraqi EFL students' comprehension and retention of DMs functions. As a conclusion, these techniques have proven to be very successful in that students have the opportunity to acquire various skills including exploration, discovery, and problem-solving for building independent language acquisition abilities.

Furthermore, the statistically significant difference in the performance levels between the two experimental groups demonstrated that explicit and targeted teaching, in which the instructor expressly called attention to the DMs, was more effective than the implicit inputflooding technique.

The research has pedagogical implications and applications in the field of grammar instruction and acquisition, especially for syllabus writers, teachers, and students. Moreover, the study's outcomes may be useful for creating grammatical exercises and tasks that incorporate TE and IF techniques for syllabus designers. When TE and IF are used, EFL students may be encouraged to pay attention to grammar concepts and make links between their forms and meanings to develop their grammatical knowledge. The results may have significant ramifications for EFL teachers as well, as they will help them understand the value of TE and IF strategies for instructing grammar features. The successful and native-like performance of EFL learners depends heavily on the comprehension of DMs functions. Knowing how to use DMs effectively is crucial for both linguistic accuracy and fluency. EFL teachers should be aware of the DMs functions to increase their students' proficiency in using English DMs. Furthermore, instructors must use input enhancement approaches to draw students' attention to DMs.

Learning individual words and their definitions is not enough to become fluent in a second language. The readers' interest in the material they read serves as motivation for language learners. Provoking concepts and alluring verbal or visual cues encourage language learners to enthusiastically learn the subject matter. Also, language learners will be more receptive to learning if they experience a sense of accomplishment in their learning process as a result of input enhancement approaches. By creating high-quality materials that could encompass all possible forms of input enhancement strategies, material makers should foster favorable attitudes among language learners. And the language syllabus needs to incorporate DMs, as grammatical and lexical expressions, using input enhancement strategies in which they should be explicitly and implicitly taught.

Future study is desperately needed to assess the efficacy of these teaching techniques on learning other target language forms (simple and complex) such as relative clauses, wh-questions, verbal phrases, passive form, and collocations in a wider population and different levels of language achievement and proficiency. Furthermore, many programs built on the integration of IF and IE can be designed to examine the effect of these techniques on reading comprehension, learning vocabulary, and writing essays. Only a brief two-month test period was used for this research. Therefore, there is a need to do additional studies to show the long-term impact of these techniques on foreign language development.

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(Appendix 1)

Discourse Markers Comprehension test

Task 1: Underline/highlight the discourse markers in the sentences below. (10 M.)

1. He has been warned before. In this case, he shouldn't have repeated this.
2. Broadly speaking nurses are overworked and underpaid
3. Prices are rising worldwide, thus encouraging investment.
4. I don't believe in ghosts. At least I haven't seen one yet.
5. I think he should be acquitted. After all, he is too young to know the difference between right and wrong.
6. The man was sleeping soundly on the river bank. Meanwhile, a crocodile was creeping closer.
7. The child didn't get any medical attention. As a result, she died soon after.
8. Due to the high rate of inflation, interest rates were raised.
9. Finally, the role of the computer in education will be discussed
10. Various writers have examined this issue, for instance, Van Exel (2000).

Task 2: Highlight/Underline all the discourse markers, including those associated with the specific function of the text. (10 M.)

French and American business managers have decidedly different management styles. French meetings, for example, are long and rambling and rarely end on time. Furthermore, meetings often end without closure. Americans, on the other hand, make an effort to start and stop a meeting on time, and American business meetings typically end with decisions and action plans. Another difference involves documentation. Americans adore documentation; they have a procedure manual for everything. The French, in contrast, think this is childish. French managers find it difficult to stick to a schedule, but American managers are intolerant of delays. In addition, the French prefer to work alone, whereas Americans like to work in teams. Another major difference in management style is that in French companies, authority comes from the top; French managers do not share information with subordinates and make decisions with little participation by employees beneath them. In American companies, however, top managers share information and frequently solicit input from subordinates.

Task 3: Add appropriate discourse markers so that the text makes sense! (10 M.)

1. Louie rushed and got ready for work, -----, when he went out the door, he saw the snowstorm was very heavy. -----, he decided not to go to work. -----, he sat down to enjoy his newspaper. -----, he realized his boss might get angry ----- he did not go to the office. -----, he made another decision, that he must go to work. -----, he went out the door and walked to the bus stop.
2. Many different subjects from the different parts of Earth were available to all users and that ---- leads under-aged children getting exposed to age-inappropriate content. ----, their safety can be protected through monitoring the sites they use and blocking any harmful ones. -----, educating children on the correct usage of the internet and which age-appropriate content to browse will be helpful.

Task 4: Classify the following discourse markers according to their functions. (10 M.)

Therefore, In conclusion, Eventually, Furthermore, On the other hand, By the way, Incidentally, However, In addition, For the moment, First of all, In other words, Due to, Actually, Accordingly, As a matter of fact, Because of, I think, To begin with, To sum up

1. Additional	
2. Causal	
3. Temporal	
4. Contrastive	
5. Consecutive	

6. Starter	
7. Rephrase	
8. Organiser	
9. Topic-Shifter	
10. Conclusion	

Task 5: Match the discourse markers with their synonyms. (10 M.)

e.g. incidentally – by the way

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Apparently | A. That is (to say) |
| 2. Surely | B. On the contrary |
| 3. Admittedly | C. Of course, clearly |
| 4. Even so | D. On the whole |
| 5. Obviously | E. Despite earlier problems |
| 6. After all | F. Quite honestly |
| 7. Quite frankly | G. In truth |
| 8. In other words | H. Seemingly |
| 9. All in all | I. Without doubt |
| 10. As a matter of fact | J. Although this is true |

(Appendix 2)

1. A Sample Essay for the Textual Input Enhancement Group

Reality TV shows are good entertainment

Reality shows are a very popular form of entertainment on TV nowadays. There are dozens of different types of programmes such as singing, contests cooking competitions, or going to live in the jungle.

Firstly, I think that there is a lot of variety in reality Tv. People at home can choose which types of programme they want to watch depending on what they are interested in. Some people like watching, singing, or cooking competitions while others prefer watching programmes about building houses or travelling around the world. **In addition**, reality TV programmes are a great opportunity to discover talented singers, dancers, or chefs. Several people who take part in these programmes get jobs as a result of being on TV. **Another advantage is that** the people on the shows have interesting experiences and meet new people.

On the other hand, some people think that reality TV is an easy way for them to become famous. **However**, most successful singers, actors, or chefs have worked hard all their lives and are good at their job because of their hard work. **ALSO**, sometimes the people on the shows have to do really difficult and dangerous things.

To sum up, I think that reality TV shows are good entertainment. There is lots of variety which means there is something for everyone and they are interesting to watch.

2. A Sample Essay for the Input Flooding Group

Reality TV shows are good entertainment

Reality shows are a very popular form of entertainment on TV nowadays. There are dozens of different types of programmes such as singing, contests cooking competitions, or going to live in the jungle.

Firstly, I think that there is a lot of variety in reality Tv. People at home can choose which type of programme they want to watch depending on what they are interested in. Some people like watching, singing, or cooking competitions while others prefer watching programmes about building houses or travelling around the world. In addition, reality TV programmes are a great opportunity to discover

talented singers, dancers, or chefs. Several people who take part in these programmes get jobs as a result of being on TV. Another advantage is that the people on the shows have interesting experiences and meet new people.

On the other hand, some people think that reality TV is an easy way for them to become famous. However, most successful singers, actors, or chefs have worked hard all their lives and are good at their job because of their hard work. Also, sometimes the people on the shows have to do really difficult and dangerous things.

To sum up, I think that reality TV shows are good entertainment. There is lots of variety which means there is something for everyone and they are interesting to watch.

First, we started walking quickly.

Also, they are a crucial segment of a nation's development and their contribution, therefore, is highly needed.

In addition, the French prefer to work alone, whereas Americans like to work in teams.

However, money is far from being the only intensive, another aspect affecting performance is job satisfaction.

To sum up, I would like to say that it is always better for the people to have a teacher because a teacher has good knowledge, experience and is educated how to teach others.

On the other hand, many countries are unable to reach their economic potential due to a lack of skilled workforces.