



Explicit Lexical Inferencing Instruction and Performance on Inferencing Related Reading Tasks in a Thai University EFL Context

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Received 12/01/2026	ABSTRACT The study investigated whether explicit lexical inferencing instruction was associated with higher performance on reading comprehension tasks that contained inferencing related items among Thai university learners. It sought to address the gap in the literature, as some previous studies have focused on a limited number of strategies or short-term interventions. Two intact classes of Thai undergraduate EFL students at the B1 to B2 level were assigned as experimental and control groups in a quasi-experimental design lasting six weeks. The experimental group received explicit instruction in a five-step inferencing strategy and eight types of contextual clues. The control group followed standard reading instruction without the explicit inferencing training. Three post-tests were administered after the reading tasks and included items that required inferring word meanings from context. The raw scores favored the experimental group across all three tests, suggesting a
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	directional pattern in favor of the treatment. However, after controlling for initial baseline ability, a significant group effect was found on only one measure. Ceiling effects, including zero variance in the experimental group on two post-tests, limited the sensitivity of the measures. These findings suggest that structured explicit inferencing instruction may support performance on reading comprehension tasks involving lexical inferencing, but they should be interpreted cautiously because the study did not directly measure general lexical inferencing ability. Keywords: lexical inferencing, context clues instruction, EFL reading, vocabulary learning strategies, quasi-experimental study
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Introduction

One component of reading comprehension involves dealing with unknown words or lexical items. Encountering unknown words while reading may cause a loss of comprehension. This may lead readers to ignore the word, consult a dictionary, or use their contextual information to guess the meaning. This latter process, called lexical inferencing, has been widely researched in second language vocabulary literature and is considered an important strategy for dealing with unknown words.

Studies of reading in both L1 and L2 have shown that lexical inferencing is strongly linked to reading comprehension. An early foundational study by Nagy et al. (1985) showed that vocabulary growth occurs largely through repeated exposure to unfamiliar words in comprehensible contexts. Their study showed that young native speakers may gain hundreds or even thousands of lexical items in a year, with much of it learned in context, rather than through explicit instruction. Direct vocabulary instruction can only teach a small proportion of the vocabulary that students need to acquire. Learners therefore need to develop the ability to guess the meanings of words from context. Lexical inferencing is more difficult for second language learners than native speakers because they have less developed vocabulary networks, weaker syntactic awareness, and reduced background knowledge. They are also less familiar with the background information needed to interpret contextual clues correctly.

Kaivanpanah and Alavi (2008) and Mokhtar and Rawian (2012) showed that L2 learners often make partial or incorrect inferences. One reason for this may be that the clues in the text are unclear, indirect or misleading. Without strategic instruction, the learners may guess using only surface-level clues, such as by focusing on existing vocabulary knowledge, or

guessing randomly (Nassaji, 2004). Training may also improve learners' confidence and willingness to continue to read without resorting to a dictionary. For example, Narakantha et al. (2022) report positive learner perceptions following inferencing training.

Nassaji (2003) and Anvari and Farvardin (2016) indicate that proficient readers do not rely on single clues when inferring word meaning. Typically, they integrate multiple sources of information simultaneously. These can include semantic and discourse-level clues in co-text, as well as morphological or syntactic clues at the word or phrase level. Instructional approaches often remain limited because many teaching materials focus on only one or two strategies such as morphological analysis, which ignores the multidimensional nature of inferencing, and as a result learners may receive incomplete strategy training.

Despite the substantial number of studies on lexical inferencing, few classroom-based studies have examined how explicit multi-strategy instruction may support Thai university EFL learners' performance on tasks that require contextual meaning-making. Specifically, there is a need for more research into part-of-speech awareness, contextual clue identification and guided inferencing practice within a normal EAP classroom environment. This study examines whether learners' performance on short reading tasks with inferencing demands is associated with such instruction, but does not claim to measure lexical inferencing ability directly. Rather, it examines task performance after instruction in a normal EAP classroom.

Literature Review

Vocabulary growth largely occurs through repeated contextual exposure and is widely recognized as an essential part of second language reading (Nation, 2001; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Nassaji, 2003). Second language readers cannot be expected to know all the words in a text, so inferencing is unavoidable. Early foundational studies in this area have defined lexical inferencing as the process of deriving meaning from unknown words using contextual clues and prior knowledge (Haastrup, 1991) and have identified it as an essential element of meaning construction in reading comprehension (Nassaji, 2003). More recent intervention studies have also continued to examine the classroom value of contextual guessing and lexical inferencing strategy instruction. For example, Hassanzadeh, et al. (2020) reported that lexical inferencing strategy instruction supported reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners, while Hasanah et al. (2024) found positive effects of contextual guessing strategy instruction in an Indonesian EFL context. These studies suggest that explicit instruction can be pedagogically useful, although the strength of findings varies according to research design, measurement type, learner proficiency, and intervention

duration.

Lexical inferencing is a multi-componential process, including subskills such as word form and word class awareness, which help identify possible meanings and grammatical roles. Evidence from think-aloud protocols shows that a learner's strategic knowledge also plays a part in selecting and evaluating guesses when learners combine multiple clues simultaneously, rather than sequentially (Haastrup, 1991; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; de Bot et al., 1997; Wang, 2011). This suggests that strategy training can bring potential benefits.

Text difficulty, lexical coverage, and prior vocabulary knowledge can constrain a learner's capacity for inferencing. Moreover, the quality and clarity of the context clues affect the accuracy of their guesses (Pulido, 2007). Nassaji (2004) used think-aloud protocols and a word association test to show that the depth of vocabulary knowledge predicts inferencing success beyond strategy use and could be a stronger predictor than vocabulary size. Learner factors also constrain learners' ability to guess meaningfully from context such as their proficiency, their background knowledge, and their ability to regulate their attention. Learners frequently make incorrect or partial guesses when inferring, as demonstrated by Paribakht and Wesche's (1999) detailed tracking of inferencing attempts, which showed many guesses were inaccurate or incomplete. Fraser (1999) showed that learners often ignore unknown words or use only shallow processing. Hu and Nassaji's (2014) study revealed low success rates when learners rely only on context without support. In sum, guessing becomes less reliable when unknown word density is high, or when learners make errors due to misinterpreting local clues, or through overconfidence.

Research has shown that explicit instruction can improve inferencing accuracy, but the effects vary. Fukkink and De Glopper's (1998) meta-analysis of context clue instruction found modest but significant gains. Baumann et al.'s (2003) study of morphological training improved word learning outcomes. Hasanah et al. (2024) also showed that classroom interventions can lead to gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Together, these studies suggest instruction can be effective when learners are taught how to analyse and verify guesses. Strategy instruction has been associated with higher metacognitive awareness. For example, Narakantha et al. (2022) study of Thai EFL learners reported higher confidence and engagement after training because the learners were more willing to attempt guessing rather than skip words. Wang (2011) also showed that learners used different strategy choices depending on their background. This shows that metacognitive awareness can increase with instruction, albeit individual differences can remain significant.

A limitation of some of these studies is that they only studied a limited number of strategies with the most common focus being on prefixes, suffixes,

or synonym clues only. Moreover, there is limited recycling and practice across texts in many interventions and many studies isolate single strategies rather than combine them. Some existing research studies do combine part-of-speech and multiple context clue types systematically, but our field lacks sufficiently developed multi-strategy instructional approaches, and lacks well-validated general tests of lexical inferencing.

This study's conceptual framework distinguishes between three related, but different, constructs. The first concerns lexical inferencing, a reading process in which learners use linguistic knowledge, contextual information, and background knowledge to make informed guesses about unfamiliar lexical items. Second, lexical inferencing strategy instruction refers to the explicit teaching of classroom procedures intended to support this process. Third, inferencing related reading task performance refers to the learners' scores on reading comprehension tasks which include items requiring contextual interpretation of unfamiliar words or phrases. This study examines the third construct by investigating whether explicit strategy instruction is associated with higher performance on reading tasks that include lexical inferencing demands. While this does not measure the learner's underlying lexical inferencing ability directly, this distinction is important because stronger performance on the tasks might reflect the contribution of inferencing instruction, but it might also be affected by other factors such as attention, motivation, engagement and task familiarity.

Research Questions

RQ1: "Is explicit lexical inferencing instruction positively associated with higher performance on reading comprehension tasks requiring lexical inferencing, compared with a control group, after controlling for baseline reading ability?"

RQ2: "Is the association between explicit lexical inferencing instruction and inferencing related reading task performance consistent across multiple reading tasks administered during the intervention period?"

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent groups design to investigate whether lexical inferencing instruction was associated with learners' performance on inferencing related reading tasks. As intact classes were used, baseline equivalence between groups cannot be assumed; therefore, both groups were given a 20-item reading test prior to the study. This was a part of their coursework and acted as a baseline measure. One of

the two intact classes was assigned as the experimental group, and the other as the control group from existing class groupings rather than random allocation. As random sampling was not feasible given the institutional constraints, the study employed a non-equivalent groups design. Both groups were taught by the same instructor to control for teacher variability, although this might have influenced engagement and performance.

The post-test scores of the experimental and control groups were compared to examine the differences in performance associated with the instructional treatment. During the intervention period, the experimental group received instruction in lexical inferencing using a five-step strategy and training in eight context clues. The control group followed the same course content but did not receive any explicit inferencing instruction. Instead, they engaged in standard pre-reading and post-reading activities and independent reading without strategy instruction.

The three instructional sessions were embedded in a six-week period. During each session, both groups read the same texts and completed identical post-tests immediately after the readings. The three texts, on different topics, Space Travel, Climate Change, and Online Privacy, were designed to measure reading comprehension and performance on tasks requiring the inference of unfamiliar lexical items from context. This design allowed for comparisons between groups at multiple points. However, as the tests measured immediate performance after the instructional sessions, some degree of task familiarity may have occurred, and long-term retention could not be measured. A combined post-test score was also calculated to gather a more stable measure of overall performance on reading tasks involving lexical inferencing.

The instructional sequence was not intended to represent a wholly original theory of lexical inferencing. Rather, it was a pedagogical synthesis of established principles in lexical inferencing research, including attention to word class, word parts, local and wider co-text, semantic plausibility, and verification of meaning. The five step strategy was designed to make these processes accessible to learners in classroom practice. The eight context clue categories were selected because they represent common forms of textual support that learners may encounter when inferring meaning from context.

Ethical considerations were addressed before data collection. The study was conducted within a regular course, and the instructional procedures were designed to avoid disadvantaging either group. Students were informed that their test scores would be used for research purposes only in anonymized form and that individual identities would not be reported. Participation in the research and the use of the learners' data did not affect course grades beyond normal course requirements. The data were coded before analysis, and no student names or identifying details were included in the reporting.

Population and Sample

Population

The population of this study was undergraduate EFL students at a public university in Thailand taking Academic English II during Semester 1/2025.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of intact classes taught by one of the researchers, which may have introduced potential instructor and expectancy effects. One class was assigned as the control group and had 20 to 22 students across the three testing points, while the experimental group had 21 to 24 students due to absences across testing points. The variations were small, but may have introduced minor variability across the testing points. Since random selection was not possible, the assignment of groups followed a quasi-experimental design based on existing class groupings rather than random allocation.

Research Setting and Teaching Context

The study was carried out at a public university in an Academic English II course. The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course was aimed at enhancing students' abilities to use academic English including reading various types of academic texts. The students came from diverse academic disciplines, including business, law, and computer science and were estimated to be at the B1 to B2 level due to them having successfully completed Academic English I. Academic English II is a 48-hour course held over a 16-week semester, with three hours of instruction per week. The main course material was an in-house coursebook written at the B1 to B2 level which was developed by one of the lecturers. It has seven units, each starting with a reading passage, then followed by reading comprehension exercises, vocabulary activities, and writing tasks. Listening and speaking activities were also included that complemented the functions and themes presented in the writing section.

Instructional Intervention and Procedure

The study was conducted over a six-week period during which the instructional intervention was integrated with their regular coursework. Both groups received the same instruction for all components of the units except for the reading section, where the experimental group received explicit lexical inferencing guidance during the reading tasks.

Experimental Group: Context Clues Instruction

In the experimental group, students received explicit instruction with two types of exercises. The first was a series of worksheets introducing a five-step strategy to help learners guess successfully from context and constituted Stage 1 of the process. Stage 2 consisted of a second set of worksheets covering eight types of context clues that could be used alongside the five-step strategy when guessing.

During Stage 1, students were introduced to inferencing strategies such as identifying the part of speech and learning how to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. The teacher provided examples, after which students practiced identifying the part of speech (Worksheet 1). They were then given the following five-step strategy for guessing the meanings of target words. They then completed Worksheets 2-4 to practice and consolidate their knowledge:

1. Look at the sentence structure – Is the word a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb?
2. Look at the word parts – Does the word contain prefixes, suffixes, or root words?
3. Look at surrounding words – Synonyms, hints etc.
4. Make a guess – What would make sense in the sentence?
5. Confirm the meaning – Replace the unknown word with a guessed meaning and check if the sentence still makes sense. If not, try again.

Students were then asked (Worksheet 5) to practice what they had learnt by guessing unknown words from their book. They wrote their guesses in the worksheet and then were told the correct words by the teacher. The students then self-rated their guesses on a scale of 0-3 depending on how close each guess was to the correct meaning so as to ensure they were reflecting on the success of their guesses. The students then read Text A, but no data were gathered to confirm that the students did in fact use what they learned in the strategy training while reading the texts.

In Meeting 2, students were taught eight types of context clues. These were exercises highlighting definitions, restatements, identifying cause and effect, example clues, making comparisons and contrasts, identifying general knowledge, identifying inference, and identifying mood and tone. The instructor presented examples of each type, followed by guided practice. After the reading of Text B, students then completed the post-test.

In the third meeting, the instructor reviewed the types of context clues with the experimental class. The students then read Text C and completed the post-test. All three lessons concluded with teacher-led discussion of the answers. During each of the sessions, the teacher of the experimental group discouraged dictionary use and reminded them to use the

five-step strategy and the eight cues to encourage active engagement with the task. However, this may have increased task engagement compared to the control group.

Control Group: No Context Clues Instruction

In the control group, no explicit instruction on context clues was provided. At the beginning of each meeting, students participated in schema-building speaking activities designed to activate students' background knowledge and prepare them for the reading topic. These activities did not introduce the target vocabulary from the texts in order to avoid pre-teaching any vocabulary that could influence post-test performance.

The control group did not have equivalent explicit strategy instruction, which could have resulted in differences in instructional support between the two groups. After reading the set texts, students completed the same reading comprehension post-tests as the experimental group.

Research Instruments

The research instruments consisted of three reading comprehension tests on the topics of Space Travel (Test A), Climate Change (Test B), and Online Privacy (Test C). Each test had eight multiple-choice questions, with four options each, designed to measure a range of reading comprehension sub-skills, including identifying main ideas, locating specific information, understanding the relationships between ideas, and making inferences. The three tests included items to assess students' performance on tasks requiring them to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words from context. All the tests were designed to align with the course content and were reviewed for appropriateness of level and clarity by both researchers. No formal reliability estimate was calculated due to the small number of test items and the impracticality of conducting longer tests given institutional constraints. As the tests primarily measured reading comprehension, they do not constitute a direct measure of general lexical inferencing ability. After all the data had been collected, the students' test scores were compiled and prepared for statistical analysis in order to examine differences in reading comprehension performance associated with the context clues instruction. Because the post-tests were reading comprehension measures rather than direct lexical inferencing tests, the items were reviewed to identify which questions required inferencing-related processing. Table 1 summarizes the number and type of inferencing-related items in each test.

Table 1

Distribution of Lexical Inferencing and Reading Comprehension Items Across the Three Post-tests

Test	Text topic	Total items	Inferencing related items	Other reading comprehension items	Main inferencing demand
Test A	Space Travel	8	5	3	Definition, synonym, and example clues
Test B	Climate Change	8	6	2	Cause-effect, contrast, and logical relationship clues
Test C	Online Privacy	8	6	2	Mixed contextual clues requiring integration across sentences

This classification shows that the tests included inferencing demands, but they were not pure measures of lexical inferencing ability. Therefore, the outcome variable is best interpreted as inferencing related reading task performance. The instruments were reviewed by the two researchers for level appropriateness, item clarity, and alignment with the course content. However, no independent expert validation process was conducted. This is acknowledged as a limitation because external review would have strengthened the validity evidence for the instruments.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated to analyze the data from the three reading comprehension tests (Tests A, B, and C) to measure the students' performance in the experimental and control groups, and for each test. As the experimental and control groups were independent, independent-samples t-tests were conducted as preliminary analyses. The primary analyses used ANCOVA to control for baseline reading ability. Due to occasional absences across testing sessions, ANCOVA analyses were conducted using available cases for each post-test, resulting in slight variations in sample size and degrees of freedom.

Results

The results are reported at three levels. First, the descriptive statistics show a consistent raw score advantage for the treatment group across the

three post-tests. Second, after controlling for baseline reading ability through ANCOVA, only Test B showed a statistically significant group effect. Third, the interpretation of these results is constrained by measurement limitations, especially the ceiling effects observed in the experimental group on Tests B and C. Therefore, the findings should be treated as suggestive rather than confirmatory. Both groups' performance was examined across the three post-test reading measures using descriptive statistics. The experimental group had higher mean scores than the control group on all the post-tests. This suggests a positive directional pattern favouring the intervention. However, the experimental group showed minimal variation on two of the three post-tests.

Preliminary analyses were conducted using independent-samples t-tests with Welch's correction. This was followed by ANCOVA to control for baseline reading ability. The preliminary t-tests showed raw differences favouring the experimental group on all three post-tests. The experimental group outperformed the control group in each case. The unadjusted effect sizes ranged from medium to large, although these results should be interpreted cautiously due to ceiling effects. However, as the groups differed in baseline reading ability, these results should be interpreted with caution. A composite score was included as a supplementary indicator in order to reduce task-specific variability across the three short post-tests, but should be interpreted cautiously given differences in test content and the presence of ceiling effects. No formal reliability estimate (e.g. Cronbach's α) was calculated for the three tests due to the small number of items and the multi-construct nature of the tests, which were designed to assess a range of reading comprehension skills rather than a single underlying construct.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Independent T-tests, and ANCOVA Results for Post-test Reading Scores

Test	Group	n	M	SD	t	df	p	d	ANCOVA F	ANCOVA p	η^2
A	Control	22	6.59	2.17	-2.82	21.7	.010	.84	2.03	.166	.07
A	Experimental	21	7.90	0.27							
B	Control	21	7.38	1.16	-2.46	20.0	.023	.76	4.38	.046	.14
B	Experimental	22	8.00	0.00							

Test	Group	n	M	SD	t	df	p	d	ANCOVA F	ANCOVA p	η^2
C	Control	24	7.33	1.01	-3.25	23.0	.003	.94	0.58	.451	.02
C	Experimental	20	8.00	0.00							

A series of ANCOVA tests were conducted with group (experimental vs control) as the independent variable and pre-test reading score as the covariate. This was done to compare group differences while controlling for baseline reading ability.

The effect of group was significant $F(1, 33) = 4.38$, $p = .046$ on the second post-test, but not the first $F(1, 31) = 2.03$, $p = .166$, or the third $F(1, 34) = 0.58$, $p = .451$. The effect size estimates for η^2 ranged from .02 to .14, which indicated small or moderate effects across the post-tests. The direction of the effect consistently favoured the experimental group on all measures.

The tests of the homogeneity of regression slopes assumption were non-significant, indicating the appropriate use of ANCOVA. However, some level of caution is warranted because the use of three separate ANCOVAs without adjustment for multiple comparisons increases the risk of Type I error. This suggests the statistically significant finding on Test B ($p = .046$) should be interpreted with some degree of caution.

The experimental group showed no variation on two of the three post-tests, as all participants achieved maximum scores. This finding points to a substantial ceiling effect that likely reduced the measures' ability to determine differences between groups. As a result, the effect size estimates may be inflated, and may not reflect true variation in reading performance.

Despite this, these findings suggest a consistent directional advantage even though there was a statistical difference on only one of the three post-tests after controlling for baseline ability. The results tentatively suggest that lexical inferencing instruction could be helpful; however, the findings should be viewed cautiously because of the limits of the measures and analysis.

Discussion

RQ1 examined whether explicit lexical inferencing instruction was associated with higher performance on reading comprehension tasks that included lexical inferencing demands. The results showed a consistent descriptive advantage for the experimental group, although adjusted statistical evidence was limited to one post-test. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as suggestive evidence of stronger inferencing related reading task performance, rather than as direct evidence of improved general lexical

inferencing ability (Baumann et al., 2003; Fukkink & de Glopper, 1998; Hasanah et al., 2024).

RQ2 examined whether the association between explicit lexical inferencing instruction and inferencing related reading task performance was consistent across the three reading texts. The raw score pattern favoured the experimental group across all three tests. However, after controlling for baseline reading ability, only one of the three ANCOVA results reached statistical significance. This suggests a positive directional pattern, but does not provide evidence of a conclusive intervention effect across all measures. This pattern is consistent with previous findings that strategy instruction effects are often modest and context dependent (e.g. Fukkink & De Glopper, 1998). Moreover, the ceiling effect in the experimental group raises questions about the sensitivity of the test instruments. The findings are therefore best interpreted as evidence of stronger performance on inferencing related reading tasks, rather than as direct evidence of improved underlying lexical inferencing ability.

These results are also consistent with the notion that lexical inferencing is a multi-component skill (de Bot et al., 1997; Haastrup, 1991) that can be supported through instruction. It is plausible that targeting various lexical inferencing strategies can support the development of a structural framework for interpreting unknown words by drawing on semantic, syntactic, and discourse-level clues (Huckin & Bloch, 1993). The five-step strategy, controlled practice, and training in the eight context clue types may have provided learners with a clear set of strategies for coping with unknown words, as reflected in the observed reading performance. From a pedagogical perspective, these results suggest that explicit lexical inferencing instruction may be a useful addition to reading classes, particularly when it is presented as a way to deal with unfamiliar words. However, these implications should be treated as provisional due to the short duration of the study and the ceiling effects in the post-tests. The findings therefore suggest that brief instruction may be useful in classroom contexts, although extended practice would probably be needed for learners to develop more stable inferencing skills.

One possible explanation for the experimental group's higher performance is that the instruction gave learners a more explicit procedure for approaching unfamiliar words. The five-step strategy may have helped learners slow down, identify the grammatical role of the unknown word, inspect nearby textual clues, make a plausible guess, and check whether the guessed meaning fitted the sentence. The eight context clue categories may also have made textual support more visible to learners. However, this interpretation remains tentative because the study did not collect think-aloud data, stimulated recall, or written justifications to confirm the actual strategies used during task completion.

Limitations

We acknowledge the absence of a general lexical inferencing ability test before and after the treatment. This was not done because robust, well-validated tests of general lexical inferencing ability normed for Thai students are not yet available. The lack of such a tool restricted our study to measuring reading comprehension rather than examining the effect of instruction through the use of a validated general lexical inferencing tool. If such a tool were to exist, it could be constructed to measure individual components of lexical inferencing ability to further our understanding of these processes. The use of intact classes meant that group factors such as prior ability, motivation, or class dynamics could not be fully controlled. In addition, since the researcher taught the classes, expectancy and delivery differences are possible. We also acknowledge that the post-tests showed a ceiling effect, particularly in the experimental group, where scores reached the maximum on two tests. This reduced score variability and likely limited the sensitivity of the measures, meaning differences between groups may have been underestimated and effect sizes inflated. More discriminating test items are needed in future research.

Moreover, because each post-test contained only eight multiple-choice items, the measures may not have provided sufficient score range or reliability to capture fine-grained differences in learner performance. No direct evidence was collected to confirm that learners applied the inferencing strategies during the tasks. The findings therefore may reflect performance outcomes rather than observed strategy use, and may partly be influenced by factors such as increased engagement. Future studies should include process measures to examine strategy use during reading. The absence of item level process data means that correct answers cannot be confidently attributed to lexical inferencing strategy use rather than general comprehension, prior knowledge, test-taking skill, or chance. Lastly, as the duration of the experiment was short, future studies could investigate longer-term effects.

Conclusion

This study provides tentative classroom-based evidence that explicit lexical inferencing instruction was associated with higher performance on reading tasks that included lexical inferencing demands. The experimental group outperformed the control group descriptively across all three post-tests, but after controlling for baseline reading ability, statistically significant evidence was found on only one measure. In addition, the interpretation of the findings is constrained by the short tests, lack of formal reliability evidence, intact class design, and ceiling effects in the experimental group. Therefore, the study should not be interpreted as demonstrating

improvement in general lexical inferencing ability. Rather, it suggests that a brief multi-strategy instructional approach may support inferencing-related reading task performance and deserves further investigation using more sensitive measures and direct evidence of strategy use.

Future studies should examine whether this association is sustained over time. They should also include more sensitive pre-test and post-test measures, direct evidence of strategy use, and instruments designed specifically to assess lexical inferencing processes. Further research could also investigate how lexical inferencing instruction interacts with other approaches to vocabulary development, including extensive reading.

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