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**The Role of the Corpus-Based Approach in
Developing E.F.L Students' Writing
Proficiency: The Case of Second Year L.M.D
Students in the Department of Letters and
English Language, Hadj Lakhdar University.
Batna**

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Statement of Originality

I, Abdeldjalil Boughezal, declare that my thesis entitled “The Role of the Corpus-Based Approach in Developing E.F.L Students’ Writing Proficiency: The Case of Second Year L.M.D Students in the Department of Letters and English Language, Hadj Lakhdar University. Batna.” contains no materials that have been submitted previously for the qualification of any academic degree or diploma of a university or any other educational institution, except where otherwise indicated and stated. This thesis is my own work.

June 10th, 2020

Mr. Abdeldjalil Boughezal

Dedications

To the most precious people to my heart; to those who have given meaning to my life,

To the persons who have given me strength and hope:

My dear mother and beloved father,

My brother and sisters,

To my precious wife Nadjat and my son Kinene.

To all those who have prayed for me and have besought God to help me.

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Abstract

The ability to express oneself in a foreign language through an adequate and accurate writing remains at the heart of the academic achievement. Mastering a foreign language writing competency is a long and complex undertaking. One's whole person is affected when struggling to reach beyond the confines of one's first language into proficiently writing in a foreign language. Achieving a high level in such a skill is a complex undertaking. This complexity stems from the high standardised and conventionalised nature of writing, which entails awareness and mastery of the cognitive, linguistic, and psychological factors associated with such a process. Therefore, the present study sets out to scrutinize the extent to which the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the teaching of writing would enhance second year L.M.D students' writing proficiency at the University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna2. Relying on such an approach, as the suitable and fruitful strategy teachers can use as a panacea for their learners' writing lacunas and deficiencies, is the objective of this thesis. The nature of the current research implies the need of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thus, this research is carried out by means of two questionnaires and a quasi-experimental design in terms of t-test for independent groups. 60 second year L.M.D students in the Department of Letters and English Language at Hadj Lakhdar University, assigned into experimental and control groups, were invited to fill in a questionnaire and participate in the conduction of the quasi-experiment. On the other hand, 24 teachers of "written expression" with a considerable experience were mannerly asked to provide us with their standpoints about some aspects that have a direct relation with the subject matter. The findings reveal that the adequate implementation of a corpus oriented paradigm in the teaching of writing serve the purpose of establishing common grounds between writing instruction and evaluation. It helps teachers keep their interest on accuracy by accounting for the students' lexico-grammatical competence and answer the communicative needs of writing by equipping them skills to produce adequate written products.

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List of Abbreviations

- ARCHER:** A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers
- BASE:** The British Academic Spoken English
- BNC:** The British National Corpus
- BAWE:** The British Academic Written English
- CBA:** Corpus Based Approach
- CI:** Comprehensible Input
- COHA:** Corpus of Historical American English
- CUCASE:** City University Corpus of Academic Spoken English
- DCPSE:** The Diachronic Corpus of Present-Day Spoken English
- Df:** Degree of Freedom
- EAP:** English for Academic Purposes
- EEBO:** Early English Books On-line
- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- ESL:** English as a Second Language
- ESP:** English for Specific Purposes
- FL:** Foreign Languages
- Fr.:** Frequency
- ICE:** International Corpus of English
- ICLE:** The International Corpus of Learner English
- JDEST:** The Jiao Da English for Science and Technology
- LIBEL CASE:** Limerick-Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English

LION: Literature Online

LOCNESS: The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays

L1: The First Language

MICASE: The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English

N: The Number of the Students per Group

N₁: The Number of the Participants of the First Group

N₂: The Number of the Participants of the Second Group

PERC: The Professional English Research Consortium

RAT: The Reading Academic Text

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPACE: The Chemnitz Corpus of Specialised and Popular Academic English

S₁²: The Variance of the First Group

S₂²: The Variance of the Second Group

USA: United States of America

\bar{X} : The Mean

\bar{X}_1 : The Mean of the First Group

\bar{X}_2 : The Mean of the Second Group

ZPD: The Zone of Proximal Development

General Introduction

English has become one of the widespread staple languages around the world. Regardless of the diverse motives to learn English, the fundamental and common desire for most learners is to acquire the potential to communicate their ideas effectively to accomplish the different tasks they come across daily. Much of today's professional communication is done in writing; proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, and e-mails are part of a college student's daily life (Walsh, 2010). Hence, writing is an indispensable skill that has been proven to be highly necessary for language apprenticeship and getting involved in all professions. Over the course of history, the way in which writing is conveyed has substantially been altered. Nevertheless, the core objective has remained the same; to proficiently and effectively communicate ideas in a clear, concise and precise manner. Writing skill, therefore, serves as the starting point from which individuals can be contributive and active members of society. This is easier said than done when one considers the various dilemmas students are constantly facing whenever engaged in such a complex process.

The 21st century witnessed an unprecedented development in all fields of technology. These advances resulted, inter alia, in the innovation which has since become a household 'appliance', the computer. Computer technology, consequently, has influenced all areas of scientific research; and it has also contributed to the emergence of a new field within Applied Linguistics called "Corpus Linguistics". The latter, in the last two decades, revolutionised the language related fields and domains. In this respect, Widdowson (2004) acknowledges the impact of technology on the current modes of language use and communication. He, further, stresses that over the last two decades, linguistic description witnessed a noticeable development through the use of the computer to collect and analyse vast corpora of actually occurring data.

As far as writing is concerned, corpus technology has manifested a great potential for foreign language (FL) writing instruction by integrating collocation conventions, words' frequencies and concordances, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns of given types of writing into the teaching of foreign language writing (Gledhill, 2000; Hyland, 2002; Jabbour, 1997, 2001; Tribble, 1999, 2002). A large number of corpus studies have been involved in fostering corpus-informed syllabi, teaching materials, and classroom activities (e.g., Conrad, 1999; Flowerdew, 1998; Thurstun & Candlin, 1998). Those studies have stressed that corpus linguistics can not only enhance learners' awareness of lexicogrammatical features of texts, but can also promote inductive learning. Whereas early corpus research had an influence on the betterment of classroom materials and grammar references, researchers have begun to look at academic written discourse, in combination with genre analysis, to inform English for Academic Purposes (EAP) materials (Flowerdew, 2002), and get students to be able to promote their competence as writers within particular academic domains (Tribble, 2002).

Notwithstanding the substantial need to get a grip on such an intricate skill in language teaching and learning, students, in the department of English at the University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna 2, demonstrate great deficiencies in expressing themselves through writing. Therefore, we have conducted a pilot study through a questionnaire delivered to 10 "Written Expression" teachers in order to identify the origin and causes of the students' poor writing performance. The results demonstrated that the majority of the respondents reported that the difficulties 2nd year EFL students show stem from their poor lexical repertoire, unawareness of the collocation mechanisms needed to exploit the available vocabulary, and the lack of grammatical rules and conventions to reach the desired syntactic maturity. Moreover, the results showed a gap between the way writing is taught and the expected compositional outcomes. Simply put, the approach adopted in their instruction does not account for the students' final written products, but rather places a major focus on the steps and the processes students tend to go through whenever involved in the act of writing such as planning, monitoring, and revising.

The aforementioned deficiencies, when combined together, seem to make students consider writing as a thorny task. To bridge the gap and create a balance between instruction and evaluation, the researcher suggests replacing the currently implemented process paradigm with the Corpus-Based Approach to the teaching of second year L.M.D writing. Such an approach, if implemented adequately, might serve the purpose of establishing common grounds between writing instruction and evaluation, between accuracy and fluency, and between correctness and communication. It allows teachers to be involved in an instruction that best reflects their expectations. It further helps teachers keep their interest on accuracy by accounting for the students' lexico-grammatical competence and answer the communicative needs of writing by equipping them skills of producing adequate written products.

The modern digital world places the necessity of implementing new-fangled technological advances to meet the requirements, tasks, and activities current language teaching contexts should cover. This new philosophy of teaching/learning entails an immediate adherence to the modernisation of educational practices. A lot of researches and studies have suggested the advocacy of technology epitomised in the Corpus-Based Approach as a remedial tool to enrich the students' knowledge of collocation and lexico-grammatical features. The advocates of using corpora have argued that the latter can provide a vigorous tool with which learners can explore and discover patterns of authentic language, providing such information as collocations, colligation, and semantic prosody that are hardly obtainable otherwise (Bernardini, 2004; Meunier, 2002).

The research at hand is designed to investigate in what ways the Corpus-Based Approach has an impact on writing and how second year EFL learners at Hadj Lakhdar University perceive the effects of corpus-informed materials on their English writing. The present study, therefore, purports at highlighting the significant role the Corpus-Based Approach plays in enriching second year students' lexical repertoire. It, also, aims at raising their awareness of collocation mechanisms necessary to reach both the semantic prosody as well as the syntactic maturity. The latter are considered indispensable pillars in building a sustained writing proficiency system. For these reasons, the study at hand serves the purpose of demonstrating that the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the teaching of writing contributes in improving the students' writing performance.

In the pursuit of the aforementioned aims, it is of consequence to answer the following array of research questions:

- 1- To what extent does the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the teaching of writing at the University of Hadj Lakhdar enrich second year EFL students' lexical repertoire and foster their awareness of collocation mechanisms?
- 2- Does the Corpus-Based Approach ensure the authenticity and representativeness of the income second year EFL students at Hadj Lakhdar University are exposed to in the teaching of writing?
- 3- Is the lexico-grammatical competence contributive to a better writing performance?

Based on the aforementioned research questions, three hypotheses have been elaborated:

- 1- If Written Expression teachers do incorporate Corpus-Based Approach in their second year L.M.D classes at University of Hadj Lakhdar, this would enhance their students' vocabulary and collocational competence.
- 2- Adopting the Corpus-Based Approach in the writing instruction may provide second year students at Hadj Lakhdar University with representative and authentic input.
- 3- If students, under study, acquire a lexico-grammatical competence, this would foster their writing proficiency.

In order to check the validity of the set hypotheses and achieve the objectives of this research, we have opted for a mixed methodology both quantitative and qualitative. A quasi-experimental design in terms of a pre-test post-test control experimental design using t-test for independent groups is selected to be the first research tool. Based on a cluster random and judgemental sampling, the sample consisted of 60 second year students of English at Hadj Lakhdar University. The chosen sample is divided into two groups of 30 students assigned into control and experimental groups. The experiment, therefore, has gone through three phases. The first phase was through exposing both groups to a pre-test in order to gauge the sample's writing proficiency level. The second phase was through exposing both groups to a treatment in which the students received discrepant instructional approaches and methods so that their writing performance can be compared. The control group was taught the usual way using the Process Approach to the teaching of writing.

However, the experimental group received instruction that is based on teaching writing through the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach relying on corpus software, known as the British Academic Written English corpus (BAWE). The post-test was the last phase that took place after the treatment. It was administered mainly to check the effectiveness of the manipulated independent variable (the Corpus-Based Approach) on the dependent variable (students' writing proficiency).

The second research tool opted for is the questionnaire. Two questionnaires were designed for both teachers and students. On the one hand, the teachers' questionnaire was administered to 24 written expression teachers at Hadj Lakhdar University. The ultimate purpose is to evoke information about the teachers' adopted approach(es) and method(s) whenever involved in the teaching of writing, and to probe their students' level in writing. It, furthermore, purports at demonstrating their attitudes and standpoints towards the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach in their written expression instructions. Therefore, the extent to which the corpus-based paradigm is contributive to the betterment of the writing skill in the Department of Letters and English Language, University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna 2. On the other hand, the students' questionnaire was administered to the experimental group participants. It aims at gauging the respondents' attitudes towards the use of corpora software and concordances in the accomplishment of their written tasks with a special account to their lexico-grammatical competence. The students' questionnaire is meant, also, to support the findings of both pre and post-tests.

Following the general introduction, the current thesis is consisted of seven chapters delineated into two main parts; theoretical and empirical. The former embodies three chapters and the latter comprises four chapters. The first chapter scrutinizes a general overview of the writing skill, its nature, its history, its importance. In addition to its instructional approaches, it elaborates the writing skill's difficulties and how it pertains to some other skills such as speaking and reading. The second chapter highlights the literary review on Corpus Linguistics. It elaborates its history of development, definitions, and how Corpus Linguistics may serve as a tool for linguistic analysis. It, further, addresses the various types of corpora and their most salient characteristics. At last, this chapter tackles the various approaches to Corpus Linguistics, and its limitations. The third chapter is meant to establish a theoretical bridge between the two variables of the research at hand namely writing and the Corpus-Based Approach.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters are practical in nature. The fourth chapter emphasizes the methodological design, data collection tools, data analysis procedures, and evaluations used in the study. It, also, stresses the limitations of the study. As for the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of this research, they deal with the exposition of the obtained results through all the tools used in this study. They display results and numerical findings in correspondence with the research questions and hypotheses put forward. The thesis ends with a general conclusion which synthesises the various procedures being opted for during the conduction of this research, tackles some pedagogical implications, and further research suggestions. In addition to the general conclusion, a list of references and appendices are provided. At last, it is worth mentioning that the whole work is written following the APA style 6th edition.

Chapter

One

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Chapter One

An Overview of the Writing Skill

1.1. Introduction

Writing is a crucial skill in the realm of foreign language learning. Achieving a high level in such a skill is a complex undertaking. This complexity stems from the high standardised and conventionalised nature of writing, which entails awareness and mastery of the cognitive, linguistic, and psychological factors associated with such a process. It is not surprising therefore that even professional authors lament the kaleidoscopic entity of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Nunan, 1999; Jafarpour, Hashemian, & Alipour, 2013). To address this dilemma, scholars, instructors, and educators have launched an appeal for an immediate coalescence of all the language-related research communities.

In this chapter, we intend to scrutinise the history of writing and its development before becoming a subject of first inquiry within the educational context with its own scholarly journals, textbooks, and conferences. It will shed light on the contemporary understanding of writing and its instructional approaches such as the Process and the Product Approaches. The chapter at hand will, also, refer to the importance of writing as a skill, its difficulties, and how it possibly pertains to reading, and speaking.

1.2. The Nature of Foreign Language Writing

Obviously, one cannot talk about the writing skill without a reference to how it has been dealt with in the different language teaching approaches and methods. The significance of this vital and fundamental skill has been frequently referred to, but with discrepant degrees of interest. A glance through the history of the teaching profession yields an account of an array of mainstream orthodoxies. Each of these doctrines has a unique, yet distinctive, methodology in analysing, describing and identifying the nature of the writing process and how best can the latter be taught.

Research on foreign language (FL) writing has been widely known as a multidisciplinary field of inquiry within Applied Linguistics. During the high day of the Grammar Translation Method (1950's), writing was of minor interest by comparison to reading and text comprehension. In the early 1960's, the resurgent number of international students led scholars to describe and analyse FL writing and pedagogy. In the United States, a big number of foreigners enrolled in higher education. During that period, scholars have come to notice a huge chasm between L1 and FL students. These observed dichotomies created impetuses for teaching writing to foreign language learners (Matsuda, 2003).

A decade after, the Audio-lingual Method (1970) emerged and became quite widely known and practised. In such a traditional paradigm, writing was thought of as a reinforcement of oral patterns (Leki, 1992). Educators, adhering to this philosophy, emphasised the teaching of sound structures. They place major focus on phonological competency, analogies, mechanical drills, imitation, and practice in language classrooms. Nonetheless, writing remained as a means through which instructors foster their students' grammatical competence.

Few years later, a radical change in both FL writing and foreign language studies led researchers to account for other elements, instead of being restricted to the texts themselves. In composition studies the focus has shifted from textuality to the process of writing itself. The concept of writing as a process was coined by Zamel (1976), paving the way to the emergence of the Process-based Approach (Reid, 2001). In such an approach, writing was no longer thought of as the final product, but as a long process. According to Zamel (1982), "Writing was reconceptualised as the process of discovering meaning" (p. 56).

In the 1990's, various socio-political views were perceived as a revolution and a rebellion against the cognitive tendency that governed the Process-oriented Approach, Johns (2002) argues that, "Here the focus is on explicitly guided apprenticeship into discourse communities that share an implicit understanding of the conventions of genres or road patterns and expectations created within discipline-specific writing" (p.109).

The previously mentioned brief history of FL writing illustrates how writing has been conceived throughout the years within discrepant paradigms. The previously mentioned history, further, makes it legitimate to argue that there is no consensus among linguists, lexicographers, and educators about the notion of writing, its nature, and use. In this respect, Weigle (2002) states:

This is not a simple task, since, as researchers in both first and foreign language writing have pointed out, the uses to which writing is put by different people in different situations are so varied that no single definition can cover all situations (p. 03).

For the sake of simplicity and directness, writing stands for the act of putting down graphic symbols, and translating speech into letters and words that are joined together to form sentences according to some rules and conventions.

Another description of writing goes beyond restricting the latter to the ability of putting down graphic symbols; it rather expands to reach more complex aspects of writing. To elaborate such a view, Brown (2001, p. 335) states that “The view that writing is graphic symbols is not valid anymore and that it is defined by major theme in the field of EFL writing, that of the composing process of writing.” Brown (2001) describes the nature of writing epitomised in written products which “are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills... the compositional nature of writing has produced writing pedagogy that focuses students on how to generate ideas” (p. 335).

To go further, writing is thought of as a substantial medium of communication, reflecting one’s thoughts and beliefs. To support such a view, Spratt, Pullverness, and William (2005) argue that writing is the act of conveying appropriately a particular message to other individuals. In doing so, adequate style, well-organised ideas are required. Weigle (2002, p. 19) points out that “writing is also social because it is a social artefact and is carried out in a social setting. What we write, how we write, whom we write to are shaped by social conventions and by our history of social interaction...”

In relation to language learning, writing is considered as the key to the academic achievement owing to the fact that writing is far away from being a mere subject of study, but also a means by which students prove their accumulation of knowledge, and perception of their teachers' incomes when being evaluated. Suleiman (2000) argues that, "Writing is a central element of language, any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development" (p. 155).

In a nutshell, the researcher believes that writing is an academic as well as professional skill that must be mastered. It is the only available tool through which teachers assess both the effectiveness of their instruction and their students' learning development. Besides, the communicative competence is not restricted to the oral proficiency; it rather encompasses the written form of language. In addition to the daily spoken encounters, we consume hundreds of written products; emails, memos, journals, articles, diaries. As proficiency is primordial in speech, this quality is also expected to characterise the written products.

1.3. Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

The research literature provides an array of approaches that have long governed the teaching of writing in the course of history. This part of the current chapter highlights some of these philosophies that seem to pertain to the investigation at hand. The Controlled to Free Method, the Product Approach, the Process Approach, and the Genre Approach are the main professional chasms that would be highlighted.

In the first half of the twentieth century, writing was not accounted for as an important skill within the field of foreign language teaching. Controlled and guided composition made up the basis for instructing FL writing in EFL classes. In the mid 1960's, writing began to trigger more and more attention of both teachers and researchers. They began to delve into the dynamics of teaching writing and question the expediency of the adopted methods. This analysis of the instructional practices brought about the need for taking into account the rhetorical functions which resulted in radical change in the teaching of writing from the sentence level to the discourse level.

No matter how necessary this magnificent shift in the field of FL writing is perceived by scholars, teachers found great difficulties in putting it into practice. Hirano (1997) argues that teachers were unable to smoothly alter their instructional practices that were based on teaching grammatical and syntactic forms and adapt their teaching to the newly emerging paradigms. To address such a dilemma, some EFL scholars attempted to aid L1 writing teachers by engaging them in their methods of teaching writing in EFL classes.

When highlighting the various features and elements involved in the accomplishment of writing tasks, Raimes (2010) argues that the writer should consider various features when composing in a foreign language as content, organisation, the writing process, word choice, grammar and syntax. Most of the approaches to teaching EFL composition pay attention to both form and content; some of these approaches are identical to those implemented in L1 writing owing to the fact that all of them focus, to some extent, on FL.

There is an array of some generally agreed-upon elements that need to be accounted for regardless of the adopted philosophy of teaching FL writing. These features have been summarised in a diagram by Raimes (2010, p. 32) as follows:

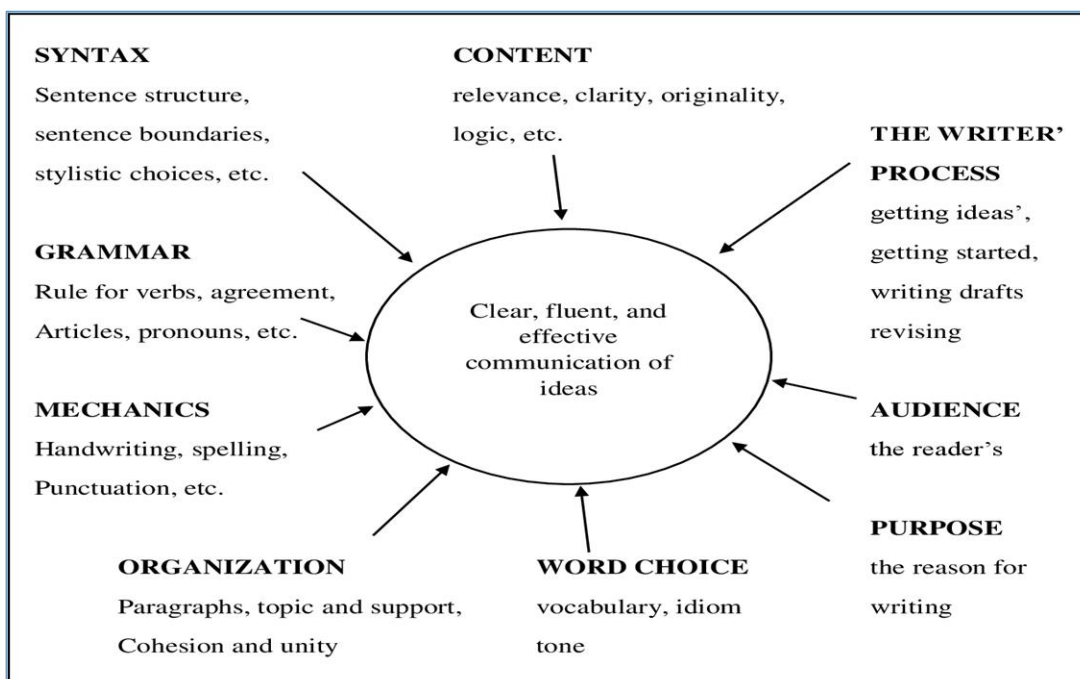


Figure 1.1 Raimes Diagram to Produce a Piece of Writing

1.3.1. The Controlled to Free Method

Controlled Composition, also referred to as Guided Composition, is based on the general tenets of the Audio-lingual Method to language teaching. The latter emphasises the habit formation model of learning through imitation, repetition, drills, correctness, and absence of errors. In such a paradigm, writing was thought of as a mere reinforcement of oral patterns.

1.3.1.1. The Nature of the Controlled to Free Method

The commonly held dogma was that the familiarisation with grammatical rules could facilitate the mastery of a foreign language particularly in its spoken form. This argument triggered the importance of teaching grammar in the time allotted to writing. In Controlled Composition, Pincas (cited in Silva, 1990, p. 12) stresses that:

The use of language means the manipulation of fixed patterns; that these patterns are learned by imitation; and that not until they have been learned can originality occur in the manipulation of patterns, or in the choice of variables within the patterns.

Practice in writing substantially considers formal accuracy and correctness. The teaching methodology comprises “the imitation and manipulation (substitutions, transformations, expansions, completions, etc.) of model passages carefully constructed and graded for vocabulary and sentence patterns” (Silva, 1990).

In its classroom implementation teachers provided their students with sentences or paragraphs, and asked them to make some grammatical or lexical changes. By way of example, students can be asked to change the present tense into the past tense within the sentence, to change the singular into plural, or to change phrases into clauses. This kind of practice helps the learners write more frequently and provides the students with an opportunity to generate correct and accurate written products that are mistake-free because they are severely controlled. Only after fulfilling this initial phase of controlled-writing may the students shift to free writing whereby the expression of their own, personal, subjective ideas is allowed. The move from controlled-to-free composition smoothly occupies the scene of writing instruction as the teacher’s feedback decreases gradually from the initial task to the very last one.

Abbot and Wingard (1992) argue that “the important thing is to adjust the exercise to the class so as to strike the right balance between predictability and unpredictability. Too much predictability means dullness, too much unpredictability means confusion” (p. 228). In other words, when designing exercises teachers should bear some preconceptions about their students’ responses and remain open to other unpredictable outcomes. One of the most defining characteristics of the controlled-to-free method is its focus on accuracy over fluency. Being as such, the structural aspect of the language is regarded as the focal point that dominates the writing instruction with an absolute marginalisation of the communicative use of language. Raimes (1983, p. 76) states that “this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax, and mechanics.”

1.3.1.2. Limitations of the Controlled to Free Method

In the late 1960’s, scholars began to indicate their dissatisfaction with the outcome yielded by the controlled-to-free method. Various demerits, according to Silva (1990, p. 13), were attributed to such an instructional practice following four aspects:

- Writing was thought of as a matter of mechanical habit formation in which the students are required to manipulate “previously learned structures”.
- Readership was limited to the instructor who emphasised only the “formal linguistic features”, with peripheral attention to the quality of ideas and the content organisation.
- A total ignorance of the audience and the purpose of writing because of the latter’s limitation to the classroom environment.
- Chiefly, composition was used as the “hand-made of the other skills”; writing was not thought of as a skill on its own, rather as a kind of “service activity”.

1.3.2. The Product Oriented Approach

As the title indicates, the Product Approach considers the ending state and the ultimate result of the writing process. It is rooted in the traditions of rhetoric which place major focus on the grammatical conventions and textual features. In terms of methodology, the approach of concern entails a profound scrutiny, analysis, classification, and identification of the students’ areas of strength and weaknesses in order to facilitate the production of accurate, correct, and adequate written products. Obviously, therefore, such a paradigm is meant to foster the students’ accuracy over fluency.

1.3.2.1. The Nature of the Product Approach

The Product Approach endeavours to raise the learners' familiarisation with the conventions of the high-quality compositions through model texts. According to Soonpaa (1984, p. 3), students, in this approach, are given a particular text which serves as a model and are motivated to mimic it to produce an identical product. Imitation and transformation of texts, accordingly, make up the basis of classroom practice. The imitation of a model was thought of as an indispensable initial phase in helping students reach full competence. White (cited in Soonpaa, 1984), sees the model based approach as follows:

Study the model → **Manipulate elements** → **Produce a parallel text**

Badger and White (2000, p. 3) hold the view that the model text is described and analysed from diversified stand points encompassing: structures of grammar, content, sentences organisation, and rhetorical patterns. After gaining mastery of these elements, students are provided with a new topic and are required to realise a parallel writing task. In their description of such a model, Badger and White (2000) argue that “what the model does not demonstrate is how the writer arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of process.” (p. 3).

Soonpaa, (2007) claims that the model, in such a paradigm, occupies the scene of teaching writing at the very beginning, while the product comes at the end of FL instruction. In this respect, White (1978) argues:

Not only does the model come first in the teaching sequence, it also shows a finished text. In other words, the focus right from the start is on the product, which is, of course, someone else's writing. What the model does not demonstrate is how the original writer arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of process. (p. 3).

In 1984, Pincas (cited in Crawford, 2008), suggested a discrepant description of the Product Approach. The new description stipulates that writing is initially concerned with linguistic knowledge with a particular reference and an efficient incorporation of appropriate vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices. Pincas (1984) goes on with arguing that the product approach is consisted of four phases namely: familiarisation, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. She claims that teachers must first suggest a topic which

may lead to a classroom discussion, then elaborate what needs to be done when engaging in the act of writing, and ask them to write a composition. During the writing composition, instructors must guide their students and provide feedback through commenting on the students' products with particular emphasis on form rather than the content. Pincas, further, believes that the Product Approach is a teacher-centred paradigm (1984, p. 10).

The expediency of incorporating the Product Approach in the teaching of FL writing can be captured in various advantages. Crawford (2008, p. 10) argued that the first impact is identified in the linguistic knowledge such an approach supplies the learners with and the manner in which texts are organised. Such a practice, further, equips the students with the necessary requirements of the syntactic maturity in terms of rules and structures.

Nunan, (2001, p. 2) states an array of characteristics which make the Product Approach distinctive from other FL instructional practices. These characteristics are as follows:

- Imitation of model text.
- The organization of ideas is much more important than the ideas themselves.
- One draft.
- Features highlighted including controlled practice of those features.
- Individual.
- Emphasis on end product.

1.3.2.2. Limitations of the Product Approach

Along with the afore mentioned advantages, the Product-oriented Approach has its shortcomings which kept students perform poorly whenever accomplishing the writing tasks. One such obvious failure is captured in the marginalisation of the content in pursuit of perfect form and grammar. The Algerian educational system used to epitomise the implementation of the Product Approach where the major focus was placed on the students' final composition with peripheral, or no, attention to how it was produced. It is, then, crystal clear that neither teachers nor students had interest in the process of generating ideas, and this was the source of the Product Approach's failure.

Harwood (2005), goes further in criticising the Product Approach when arguing that the latter is mindless, repetitive and anti-intellectual. The approach seemed to erode the students' motivation with no consideration of rewriting at the revision stage.

Harwood (2005), also, indicated another criticism of the Product Approach when stating that the teachers' concern was restricted to grammatical accuracy where instructors judge the students' writing through their final products instead of paying attention to the various processes students go through to produce the final outcome (p. 5).

It is noteworthy that the aforementioned disadvantages do not imply by any means that teachers should exclude the implementation of the Product-Oriented Approach when teaching FL writing. Teachers' choices of what approach to rely on are grounded in a variety of principles which govern the classroom practice. In this respect, Steel (2007) argues that the choice of what approach to use depends on the teacher, the students and the genre of the text. Some genres require the implementation of particular approach and not another. As far as the Product-driven Approach is concerned, it would be much desirable to use it when teaching how to write formal letters or postcards, since the features of these are more fixed where the major focus would be on the layout, style, organisation and grammar.

1.3.3. The Process Oriented Approach

The Process Approach is rooted in the process movement in teaching composition to English native-speakers. It emerged in tandem with, and as a reaction to, the traditional, old-fashioned, so called the Product Approach. The latter was criticised for its demerits in fulfilling the students' needs and meeting their expectations. Such deficiencies stem from the Product Approach's main concern with teaching literature rather than writing. Teachers, following such a philosophy, designed writing tasks and evaluated their students' outcomes without an explicit elaboration of what happened in the writing course. Correct use of grammar and style characterised the classroom practice in which students were thoroughly unable to foster their writing abilities. The deficiencies stated earlier led scholars to consider the need for a paradigm shift in the approach adopted in the teaching of FL composition.

1.3.3.1. The Nature of the Process Approach

In the early 1980s, a substantial move from the Product Approach to the Process Approach took place. The new emerging trend purported mainly at indentifying and gaining control over the several steps learners undergo when accomplishing the writing tasks. The major focus, accordingly, is no longer on the final results and the written products, but on the steps that make up the act of writing.

The Process Approach drew many insights from research in (L1) composition. Spack (1984, p. 650) provides a compilation of empirical studies on the composing processes of proficient and unskilled native English-speaking writers conducted by Perl (1979), Pianko (1979), Flower and Hayes (1980). They provided evidence that “the writing process is a series of overlapping and interacting processes.”

As for the teacher’s role, the approach of concern considers teachers as facilitators and monitors. In such an environment, writing is believed to be a learned skill, rather than taught. Giving students input is of minor attention, since the teacher’s main job is to facilitate the practice of writing process and to trigger the students’ full potential. Thus, the Process Approach relies on the student-centred philosophy to language teaching.

There exists no single definition of the Process Approach among linguists and scholars. For the sake of simplicity and directness, such an approach is thought of as a tool which facilitates the accomplishment of writing tasks, provides guidance to students through the writing process, aids them raise their awareness of their own writing, and creates a room for practising effective strategies at each stage of writing. In fact, this approach posits that writing is a process which encompasses four stages that students must go through before producing the final product; pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. These stages enable the writer to go back and forward without disarranging the flow of his ideas.

Another description of the Process Approach is provided by Soonpaa (2007) who argues that “The process approach focuses more on the process of getting to the product, by using techniques such as brainstorming, exploring ideas, peer editing and rewriting” (p. 18). Sun and Feng (2009), further, referred to many scholars who described the Process Approach from different perspectives. One such example is the Graham Stanley view which states that the Process Approach is a method to deal with all kinds of writing as a creative act which demands time and positive feedback to be produced efficiently. For Steel (2004), the Process Approach is mainly concerned with the different classroom activities which foster the promotion of language use as: brainstorming, group discussion and re-writing. The Process Approach is based on the assumption that writing is a recursive, rather than a linear process.

Raimes (1983, p. 4) elaborated the notion of recursiveness by stating that:

Contrary to what many text books advice, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing and then revising. For a while, a writer's product the finished essay, story, or novel--is presented in lines, the process that produces it is not linear at all. Instead, it is recursive, a cyclical process during which writers move back and forth on a continuum discovering analysing and synthesizing ideas.

By recursive, Raimes meant that when producing and preparing the text, writers very frequently move backwards and forwards while composing. As further elaboration of the recursiveness nature of writing, Tribble (1996) stated that: "the writer may then need to revise the plan radically in order to cope with changes that have developed in the argument, or may want to revise the style of earlier sections before going to write later parts of the text as they come to appreciate how best to their intended audience" (p. 70).

For Raimes (1983), this approach primarily considers the way writing is taught with a particular reference to the techniques and habits of successful writers. In this approach, instructors guide students through the writing steps to create proficient writing outcomes. The most important elements of such an approach, asserts Raimes, are the ideas of planning and rewriting. The steps of writing are expected to serve as a process of discovery by which students learn how to write and also acquire knowledge about the topic. The foremost objective is to make them autonomous and competent writers (p. 3).

To address the effectiveness of such an approach, some researches in Hong Kong indicated that the Process Approach is contributive in developing the students' writing abilities. By way of example, Ho (2006) asserted that it is necessary to implement such a paradigm in the primary school classrooms to build the basic foundations of writing. If the Process Approach is taken to be the means of practice in FL writing, it certainly provides the right direction and guidance through the whole process of writing (p. 3). In the Process Approach, learners are exposed to instruction about how to generate ideas for writing, to set a goal, account for the audience, ways of communication, and so forth. The Process Approach is a developmental process which starts from generating ideas to expressing them, drafting, redrafting, and organizing.

1.3.3.2. Limitations of the Process Approach

Recently, the Process Approach has come under profound investigation. Badger and White (2000) argue that such an approach has a monolithic view of writing. The latter is believed to involve the same processes irrespective of the intended audience and the content of the text. This paradigm, Atkinson (2003) asserts, seems to be limited to merely consider the skills and process of writing; as a result, it is deficient in addressing the cultural and social aspects which exert an influence on writing. Johns (1995), for instance, strongly demonstrated her dissatisfaction with the results the process approach does yield. She states:

This movement's emphasis on developing students as authors when they are not ready to be foreign language writers, in developing students' voice while ignoring issues of register and careful argumentation, in promoting the author's purpose while minimising understanding of role, audience, and community have put our diverse students at a distinct disadvantage (p. 95).

Another criticism made by Reid (1984) states that the Process Approach did not account for issues such as the needs and demands of a particular writing task, the development of schemata in composition, in the varieties captured in a given writing situation. Other scholars went further in questioning the Process Approach efficiency for making students ready to be involved in writing in specific settings. In this respect, Horowitz (1986) argues that "This led to a focus on examining what is expected of students in academic and professional settings and the kind of genres they need to gain control of to succeed in these settings" (p. 67).

1.3.4. Comparison between Product and Process Approaches

Before moving to other professional practices that govern the teaching of writing, it is of consequence to briefly sift through the relevant literature in search for the similarities and differences that exist among the Process and the Product Approaches. Teachers have no choice but to adhere to the non-negotiated necessity of perceiving such dichotomies in order to acquire the ability to absorb what best works within their own dynamic contexts when teaching FL writing.

Some scholars, (eg, McCrimmon) distinguished between the Process and the Product Approaches. They consider writing which is a way of gathering knowledge as the process, and writing as a way of telling which as the product. For Murray (1992), these approaches are discrepant in the internal and external revision. The former is meant as a clarification of meaning for one-self, while the latter is believed to be a clarification of meaning for the readers.

Nunan (2001, p. 2) in his turn, argues that in the Product Approach, the teacher provides models in which learners mimic, copies and transform; whereas in the Process Approach, students concentrate on the stages involved in creating a composition. Above all, the most important discrepancy is captured in the very common belief upon which all the theorists agree which is good product is dependent on good process.

When comparing these two approaches, Soonpaa (2007) claimed that the Product Approach is a traditional trend in which students are given a particular model and are encouraged to produce an identical one. The Process Approach, on the other hand, has a defining characteristic of focusing more on what needs to be done to get learners produce a piece of writing by using some techniques as: brainstorming, exploring ideas, peer editing, and rewriting.

To go further, writing in the Process Approach is regarded as means of raising the students' familiarisation with the linguistic features such as planning and drafting with peripheral attention to linguistic knowledge such as knowledge about grammar and text structure. While in the Product Approach, linguistic knowledge and grammar make up the focal point of instruction and the basic requirements for producing written discourse. Another explicit and well-detailed comparison between the two approaches is made by Murray (1992):

Product Approach	Process Approach
<p>This is a traditional approach, in which students focus on the study of model texts. Accuracy is given priority and conventions are taken from the model. The following stages have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model texts are read, and then features of the genre are highlighted. For example, if studying a formal letter, students’ attention may be drawn to the importance of paragraphing and the language used to make formal requests. If studying a story, the focus may be on the techniques used to make the story interesting, and students focus on where and how the writer employs these techniques. ○ This consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So if students are studying a formal letter, they may be asked to practice the language used to make formal requests, practicing the “I would be grateful if you would...” structure. ○ Organization of ideas. Those who favour this approach believe that the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the control of language. ○ The end result of the learning process. Students choose from comparable writing tasks. Individually, they use the skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce. 	<p>This is the new trend of teaching writing in which priority is given to fluency. It is mainly based on the identification of the steps a writer goes through in his act of writing. He should be made aware of them so that he can gain control on them. These steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Generating ideas by brainstorming and discussion. Students could be discussing qualities needed to do a certain job, or giving reasons as to why people take drugs or gamble. The teacher remains in the background during this phase, only providing language support if required, so as not inhibiting students in the production of ideas. ○ Students extend ideas into note form, and judge quality and usefulness of ideas. ○ Students organize ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form. This stage helps make the hierarchical relationship of ideas more immediately obvious, which helps students with structure of their texts. ○ Students write their first draft. This is done in class and frequently in pairs or groups. ○ Drafts are exchanged, so that students become the readers of each other’s work. By responding as readers, students can improve their own drafts. ○ Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback.

Table 1.1. Murray’s Comparison of the Product and the Process Approaches

1.3.5. The Genre Approach

The Genre Approach mainly aims at raising the students' knowledge about language. The methodology of such an approach is indebted to the Russian psychologist Vygotski. The latter suggested that learners have two levels of development; one which pertains to independent performance, while the other is related to the potential performance. This lacuna between these two models is technically referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The genre based pedagogy is an attempt to take the instruction of writing into a new territory. It is a way to empower students through bringing more meaning and relevance to their writing.

After the limitations captured in the Process Approach, researchers began to de-emphasise the use of such an approach because of its deficiency in developing the students' writing skills. A need, thus, immediately arose to come out with new instructional practices which keep the advantages of the previous approaches of FL writing, and provide solutions to the encountered dilemmas.

1.3.5.1. The Nature of the Genre Approach

In the 1980's, considerable attention was given to the Genre Approach to teaching writing. By definition, the Genre Approach is "a framework for language instruction" (Byram, 2004, p. 234) based on examples of a particular genre. This framework reinforces learners' writing with generalised and systematic principles about the way of producing meaningful written products. Before going on with describing the genre approach, it is of necessity to highlight the notion of « genre ». Swales (1990, p. 58) defines a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes." This definition acknowledges the existence of certain conventions that are associated with the writer's goal. For instance, a personal letter begins with a cordial question in a friendly temper since it purports at maintaining good friendship with others.

Swales (1990) and Martin (1984) believe that all genres manipulate an array of communicative purposes within certain social contexts. Put differently, it is the communicative purpose that determines the structural quality of each genre. Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features need to be accounted for when a variety of genres is implemented in a given writing course. The structural features that comprise genres encompass standards of organisation and linguistic elements.

The former refers to the sequence of a given text, while the latter can be a type of a particular text. Hammond (1992) claimed that the various types of texts involve different knowledge and an array of skills. Teachers, as a result, must introduce a variety of genres and ascertain their learners' understanding, and practice the different sets of skills associated with a variety of genres (p. 2).

Harwood (2005) regards the genre approach as a method which emphasises a particular genre students are willing to write about. Scholars like Hyland (2000), Salager-Meyer (1994), Tang and John (1998) conducted some corpus based studies in which they provided evidence that the Genre Approach helps readers expect how writing in a given genre will look like in terms of organisation and linguistic features.

In the Genre Approach, writing is seen as the act of reproducing a text based on the genre provided by the teacher. Imitation and exploration are believed to be the conduits through which learning takes place. As such, students are systematically exposed to various genres which would ascertain the ability to write efficiently about a particular genre. By exposing the students to different texts, they can capture the specific configurations of that genre and therefore use their experiences while producing a new piece of the same genre (Miyoun, 2006).

The application of the Genre Approach in the teaching of FL writing is three fold. Hyon (1996) acknowledges three applications of the Genre Approach in terms of English for specific purposes (ESP), Australian Genre-based Educational Linguistics, and North American New Rhetoric Studies. Most of ESP researchers, Bhatia, Flower, and Swales dealt with the Genre Approach with particular attention to the formal discrepancies of genres as an attempt to help students decode the communicative purposes and the linguistic features of texts they are supposed to write in. Genres are perceived by ESP scholars as materials for instructing written texts that learners needed to gain mastery of.

Under the impact of Halliday's functional grammar, Hyon (1996) states that a genre is defined as "a systematic functional linguistics that is concerned with the relationship between language and its function in social settings" (p. 696). This implies that the specific features of language dictate the way of analysing the given text in which each particular genre demonstrates a particular type of texts. by way of example, recipes are notoriously believed to have the form of a command.

The Australian Genre Theory was, also, established for the objective of non-professional settings like primary and secondary schools rather than universities and professional domains.

As for the new rhetoric style of genre research, it places a major focus on the social contexts in which genres are used as well as on the ethnographic description, contrary to the two previous models of genre models studies which mainly emphasised linguistic methods for describing genres. Freedman and Medway (1994) argue that genre should be regarded within “the complex social, cultural, institutional disciplinary factors at play in the production of specific pieces of writing” (p. 235). This implies that the Genre Approach must consider not only the form of communication rather also the social action it is meant to accomplish. Accordingly, the New Rhetoric Approach stresses a consideration of what kinds of social contexts produce a particular genre to improve the efficiency of the genre approach.

The Genre Approach has different advantages. It provides the students with a clear understanding of a particular communication style through an analysis of its social context and purpose. The Genre Approach is highly contributive in reconciling between the formal and functional properties of a language in writing instruction by acknowledging the strong associations between them. In this respect, Bhatia, (1993) argues “it is meaningful for writing instructors to tie the formal and functional properties of a language together in order to facilitate students’ recognition of how and why linguistic conventions are employed for particular rhetorical effects” (p. 6). Such a type of analysis enables the students to form a kind of background which can be activated in the coming learning situation.

1.3.5.2. Limitations of the Genre Approach

Along with the previously mentioned advantages, various shortcomings have been reported on the Genre Approach. One such a criticism pertains to “the disjuncture between the claim that meaning is encapsulated in textual objects, genres as autonomous systems, and the avowal of a social constructionist functional model of language” (Freedman & Richardson, 1997). Theoretically speaking, the objection stems from over-emphasising the formal features of genres and the resulting downplay of the socially situated nature of writing. Pedagogically speaking, the objection stems from that the study and use of particular genres tends to be proceeded mainly from a linguistic standpoint instead of a genuine focus on the communicative purpose.

The Genre Approach is also believed to overlook the necessary skills in producing content and to erode students' self-sufficiency (Byram, 2004). The Genre Approach requires teachers to spend the whole class time elaborating language use for particular purposes with a variety of audience. Accordingly, learners are believed to be thoroughly dependant and passive recipient of knowledge. Such an approach, thus, is believed to restrict learners' creativity and marginalisation of the natural and mental processes associated with learners' creativity (Badger & White ,2000).

1.4. Writing versus Other Skills

Any language learning's quest entails a good mastery of the four skills. this part of the chapter is dedicated to a comparison between our skill of concern and other skills. In other words, the relationship and differences between writing and speaking in addition to writing versus reading. The comparison between writing and listening was deliberately neglected since there was no sufficient information found in literature.

1.4.1. Writing versus Speaking

The discrepancy between speech and written language has a long and undeniable history. Throughout the years, linguists, independent thinkers, scholars, sociologists, and philosophers have tackled the issue of writing-speech connection and have long endeavoured to dispel such a puzzling enigma. The recognised starting point of highlighting such a relationship dates back to the Greek Philosopher Aristotle. In his book "The Art of Rhetoric", Aristotle argued that writing and speech differ in terms of function and style. His work scrutinised the differences at three major levels; the precision and detailed entity found in writing, the very frequent repetition found in speech, and dichotomies posed by the availability of prosody (intonation, stress and rhythm) in speech, but not writing.

Psychology has also its role to play when highlighting the difference between speech and written forms of language. By way of example, the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1962) identified some differences between writing and speech in terms of sentence structure, precision, and detail. "In writing, we are obliged to use many more words and to use them with more accuracy and adequacy" (p. 99). Vygotsky's description is worth considering. According to him, "writing is addressed to an absent or an imaginary person or to no one in particular, while in conversation, every sentence is prompted by a motive. Desire or need lead to request, question to answer, bewilderment to explanation" (p. 101).

The changing impetuses of the people engaged in a given conversation govern the way turn-taking in speech takes place. The writing' motives are more abstract and intellectualised. In written language, there is the necessity of creating the situation, and then representing it to ourselves. This necessity detaches and distinguishes the created sitting from the actual situation.

In the course of analysing the differences between speech and writing, three categories of discrepancies are accounted for. These categories are the differences in the physical natures of speech and writing, their uses, and in the characteristics of the language that generally define each of these skills. In the differences of the physical nature, there exist three major issues to address. Initially, speech provides auditory information and writing provides visual information. Secondly, speech is generally restricted by the notion of time (temporary), while writing is permanent. Finally, speech contains prosodic elements (rhythm, stress, and intonation), which are not found in the written form of language (Gibson & Levin, 1975).

As for the differences in use, anything written can be read aloud and anything spoken can be written down. Nevertheless, the two forms of language are far away from being interchangeable. Some contexts and purposes entail spoken communication, while others require the written one. For the sake of clarity, it is most common to use speech in situations where the interlocutors share the same place and time. Speakers and listeners share a mutual non-linguistic context. Writing, contrariwise, is very rarely used in such circumstances (Snow, 1972). Furthermore, speech and writing are intended to convey different types of information. In interactions, the speaker must consider the listener's knowledge of the language and vision of the world, and it is agreed-upon that speakers refine their language to suit their listeners (Gleason, 1973; Gelman & Shatz, 1976). It is also possible that the speaker manipulates listener's understanding by observing their reactions. The latter, further, has the ability to ask questions, request clarification and direct the former in many different ways. Unlike written discourse, speech provides listeners with the ability to give constant feedback to speakers (Wilkinson, 1971).

Additionally, authors cannot compose a given text with an individual reader in mind (letter writing is excepted). Readers are confronted with the predicament of learning to comprehend language that is intended for a holistic audience and not addressed to them particularly, and to do so without having the ability to ask for clarification.

They must enlarge their knowledge of language and the world to decode what is being conveyed in writing. In this respect, Cazden (1972) states “written language is the final point on the developmental dimension towards independence from nonlinguistic context” (p. 199). The absence of a shared context creates certain dilemmas to the reader's mission of understanding meaning.

In speech and writing, there are various words whose interpretation is thoroughly dependent on the context in which they are used. These are referred to as deictic terms. Rommetveit (1973) argues that all sentences have “deictic anchorage” in the context that facilitates their interpretation. For example, the following request is made without contextual information: Meet me here at noon tomorrow with a stick about this big (from Fillmore, 1971). If there is a shared speaker-listener context, the latter can rely on both linguistic and nonlinguistic information to decode these deictic terms. The reader, however, has only the linguistic context at his disposition to interpret the meaning. The deictic terms in speech and writing exert an influence on the way discourse is interpreted and may lead to confusion and communication breakdowns.

Concerning the differences in the linguistic characteristics of speech and writing, some linguists believe that writing is a much more complex skill than speech, however, this dogma does not receive consensus on the part of scholars. Some language professionals and linguists, as Bullock (1975), believes that:

Oral language is just as linguistically complex as written language, but the complexity is of a different kind. The inevitable difference in the structures and use of speech and writing come about because they are produced in very different communicative situations (p. 20).

To conclude, it is of a consequence to briefly refer to how these two skills tend to be acquired. Based on psychological findings, the acquisition of speech takes place as a result of being naturally exposed to it. However, learning how to write must take place under conditions of explicit instruction with a lot of practice. Unlike speaking, writing is the only available tool by which teachers receive, assess, and evaluate their learners’ development and mastery of all the subjects. Consequently, proficient writing is seen as the basic element that paves the way towards success in the academic as well as professional fields.

Grabowski (1996) insightfully remarks:

Writing as compared to speaking can be seen as a more standardised system that must be acquired through special instruction. Mastery of this standard system is an important prerequisite of cultural and educational participation and the maintenance of one's rights and duties...The fact that writing is more standardized than speaking allows for a higher degree of sanctions when people deviate from standard (p. 4).

1.4.2. Writing versus Reading

The investigation of reading-writing connection is rooted in first language studies. In the 1980s, scholars considered reading and writing as similar cognitive processes. For example, Tierney and Pearson (1983, p. 213) hold the view that “at the heart of understanding the reading-writing connection one must begin to view reading and writing as essentially similar processes of meaning construction.”

In their educational nature, writing and reading are the two most primordial academic skills which if mastered competently, they lay the foundation for prosperous academic as well as professional careers. Albeit they are radically discrepant, writing as a productive skill and reading as a receptive skill, both complement each other. Stosky (1983) states the important complementarity between writing and reading when he argues:

Better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. (p. 9).

This implies that there is a close connection that ties reading achievement and writing proficiency in which the former leads to the latter; better writers tend to be better readers. The quote also indicates a strong correlation between writing quality and reading experience in the sense that competent writers are believed to read more frequently than poorer writers.

Hence, reading and writing are two complementary skills in which the mastery of one creates a room for improvement in the other. Reading is seen as an indispensable prerequisite of writing and vice versa. Students' writing, thus, cannot be improved unless they are exposed to extensive reading. It is now made clear that reading and writing go hand in

hand, and students cannot master the first without manipulating the second. To address this issue, Hyland (1996) argues that foreign language writing cannot be developed by merely practicing it, but also entails reinforcement by extensive reading. The latter is proved to exert a positive influence on writing at all levels of proficiency.

The reading ability, as a result, equips students with new knowledge, ideas, and information that aid them enlarge their cognitive and intellectual horizon. More deeply, reading provides learners with rhetorical and structural knowledge that facilitates improvement of style. Put differently, reading increases students' awareness and familiarisation with the conventional features of written text such as grammar, norm, organisational patterns, markers of cohesion and coherence, and so on. Celce-Murcia (2001) elaborates this point when arguing:

At the very least, reading provides models of what English language texts look like, and even if not used for the purpose of imitation, they provide input that helps students develop awareness of English language prose style. (p. 224-225).

Writing and reading are thought of as the backbone of literacy; they represent the basic language skills a foreign language learner should master. Therefore, the investigation of writing-reading connection has triggered a considerable controversy in various language-related fields such as linguistics, psychology, education and many others. Traditionally, teachers and educators categorised writing and reading as two discrete skills that should be taught separately. However, in recent years, scholars insisted, through empirical evidence, that reading and writing complement each other and need to be instructed together. Byrne (1979; cited in Ouskourt, 2008) argues that "reading of course can be a goal in itself and in any case is likely to be a more important one than writing, but the two skills can and should be developed in close collaboration" (p. 37).

To go further, the practice of writing is believed to be contributive in fostering the reading skills. For advanced learners, the ability to insightfully analyse of the composition they read cannot be acquired unless they constantly practise writing. They can rely on their acquired knowledge to capture the accurate and correct manner of using a particular language style, text structure, lexis, or content to better comprehend the professional construction of texts.

The implementation of reading and writing in a syllabus has been found to be greatly beneficial, especially in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Such a realisation dates back to the 1960's. During that era, scholars argued that the necessity of integrating these two skills is captured in the very fact that the style of writing must be determined by the audience's taste and expectation. Accordingly, writing is closely related and totally dependent on reading. White (1978) notes down "The process of writing depends upon reading before, during, and after the act of creating, and the writer who takes no account of the fact that he is writing something for someone to read runs the risk of producing a text that is unreadable" (p. 132).

In their Natural approach, Krashen and Terrell (1983) suggested the idea that "learning" a language is substantially different from "acquiring" it. Language acquisition tends to be the unconscious processing of language, whereas learning a language entails a conscious monitoring of knowledge about language. During the first stage of language acquisition, children do not practise a frequent imitation of what they hear; they are more inclined to produce their own products. This hypothesis states the argument that children internalise the linguistic elements that equip them with the ability of producing an infinite set of utterances, and not just repeating and imitating the expressions or phrases they were exposed to. Such a process is beyond consciousness and is technically referred to as the Comprehensible Input (CI). Krashen argues that the same philosophy is to be adopted when dealing with reading and writing. Students must be exposed to the maximum comprehensible input available in reading before they move to the stage of producing accurate pieces of writing.

As a conclusion, the researcher believes that the expediency of learning reading and writing lies in their ability to engage learners in meaningful interaction with texts. Scholars, accordingly, argued that FL teachers must use techniques that would ensure an effective integration of the concept of interaction into their instructions. Writing to read and reading to write are two available activities that must receive primordial consideration. In order to do so, instructors must ascertain that their students are extensively exposed to genuine English texts and help them develop an eager will and inner desire to write and read in English.

1.5. Difficulties of Writing

The ability to master the writing skills is a non-negotiated pre-requisite of success in the academic as well as professional settings. Mastering a foreign language writing competency is a long and complex undertaking. One's whole person is affected when struggling to reach beyond the confines of one's first language into proficiently writing in a foreign language. Total commitment, total involvement, total physical, emotional, and intellectual responses are necessary to successfully receive and send a message.

Writing, thus, is regarded as the most difficult acquired language skill. To elaborate such an issue, Hilton and Hyder (1992, p. 7) state that many people "regard writing as a chore; something that is difficult, which you delay or try to avoid". This belief or realisation is widespread among writers whether amateurs or professionals. However, foreign language students regard writing as a far more problematic skill and more likely to encounter much more dilemmas when engaged in the writing process than those who compose in their native language. This realisation is attributed to the fact that FL composition requires abilities that might be "less well developed than in one's first language" (Schoonen et al., 2003, p. 166).

Overtly, writing seems to be a simple task; all what needs to be done is to pick up a topic, write down all the ideas that pertain to the chosen topic, and ultimately link all these ideas together to form sentences or paragraphs. All students wish to be able to write effectively in the context of a foreign language. Nonetheless, writing is far away from being a simple undertaking; frankly, it is thought of as the least easy skill to acquire in comparison with the other language skills, even for native speakers. To address such a huge deficiency, teachers and scholars must note, capture, identify, analyse, classify, and seek remedy to the various writing difficulties.

After many years of research, conducted in the field of learning and teaching, researchers and educators figured out three categories of difficulties; psychological, linguistic, and cognitive. The interest of the investigation at hand highly pertains to the linguistic dilemmas of the writing process, with a relatively minor attention to the other sources of writing complexity in terms of psychological and cognitive features.

Accordingly, the linguistic elements of writing are to be highlighted more profoundly in this research. Bell and Burnaby, (1984; cited in Nunan, 1989, p. 36) highlight the cognitive and linguistic problems when they state:

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

Bell and Burnaby (1984) claimed that composing entails a mastery of the content, the sentence structure, the vocabulary, the punctuation, the spelling, and most importantly the way paragraphs and texts are developed and organised coherently and cohesively (p. 36). Additionally, Nunan (1989) argued that the proficient writers are those who have the potential of going beyond the sentence (p. 36).

For Brown and Hood (1989, p. 6), the development of the writing skills is highly dependent on constant practice. Put differently, students will gain profit from lots of practice, so they are advised to compose more frequently at home even if it is only for themselves.

To tackle such deficiencies, teachers should aid their students reach the need level and skills of writing. In doing so, there are some techniques that could be employed so as to overcome the writing difficulties. For example, teachers can begin with teaching their learners the arrangement of ideas, how to use the suitable vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In this respect, Spratt, Pulverness and William (2005) state:

Mistakes in spelling or grammar are difficult to ignore; they must be corrected. Students want their language mistakes to be corrected. Generally, language mistakes are more easily and quickly diagnosed and then corrected than ones of content and organization (p. 171).

Spratt, Pulverness, and William (2005), once again, argue that teaching students the writing sub-skills entails a major focus on:

- Accuracy which involves spelling correctly, punctuating correctly, using grammar correctly, join sentences correctly, paragraphing correctly, choosing the right vocabulary and using correct layouts.

- Communicating a message; by writing students have something to say, so they have to communicate this message successfully to readers.
- The writing process stages: if teachers encourage using the writing process in the classroom, learners will become more creative. (pp. 26-27).

Taylor (2009) holds the view that there exists no magical formula to dispel the linguistic difficulties of writing, there is, rather, a relation that exists among four elements that are contributive in helping students write adequately. These elements are: the writer, the content, the reader, and the forms of the language. These elements must be accounted for harmonically and holistically whenever involved in the act of writing because each of which completes the other (pp. 2-3).

In the last two decades, scholars have stressed the need for integrating collocation conventions, words' frequencies and concordances, and discourse patterns of given types of writing into the teaching of FL writing (Gledhill, 2000; Hyland, 2002; Jabbour, 1997, 2001; Tribble, 1999, 2002). Those studies have stressed that the lexico-grammatical features of texts can promote inductive learning and achievement in writing. While the traditional instructional practice was limited to overcome the difficulties of accuracy, punctuation, spelling etc, researchers have recently begun to look at academic written discourse, in combination with genre analysis, to inform English for Academic Purposes (EAP) materials (Flowerdew, 2002), and "help students to develop competence as writers within specific academic domains" (Tribble, 2002, p. 131). Accordingly, the current teaching practice entails not only a consideration of grammar, vocabulary and syntactic difficulties of writing, but expands to encompass collocation, colligation, register, concordances, and phraseology.

As discussed previously, each of these difficulties do exert a negative influence on the students writing skills. With diversified degrees of influence, scholars suggest various solutions that would serve as the basis in overcoming the difficulties of writing and rendering the latter an enjoyable act every student wish to gain mastery of. Similarly, the linguistic intricacies of writing are believed to hinder students' potential of proficiency and competence. The researcher hypothesises that the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach might be a method, inter alia, by means of which teachers and learners could respectively make their instruction much more effective and develop their writing abilities.

A question that would now be legitimately asked is: How then can the Corpus-Based Approach help learners overcome the linguistic, cognitive, and psychological difficulties attributed to the writing process? The answer to such a critical wondering would be explicitly accounted for in the coming chapters.

1.6. Conclusion

Writing is a skill of a paramount importance. This vital and fundamental skill is used for boundless purposes and motives among which communication, documentation, socialising, recording information, and sharing knowledge are counted for. Much of ink has been poured in research in order to provide a clear idea to teachers on how to help their students scaffold step by step their building of a successful and adequate written composition. In the course of doing so, students must have an appropriate understanding of the various characteristics of FL writing. As for teachers, it necessitates reflective development and implementation of a large array of writing activities as well as approaches that would best fit their students' needs in the process of producing high quality compositions.

The chapter we conclude endeavoured to scrutinise the writing skill. Purposefully, the elements that constructed this chapter are restricted to the history of writing and its development before becoming a subject of first inquiry within the educational context. It shed light on the contemporary understanding of writing and its instructional approaches. The major focus was placed on the process and the product approaches. The chapter at hand, also, referred to the importance of writing as a skill, its difficulties, and how it pertains to reading, and speaking.

Chapter

Two

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Chapter Two

An Overview on Corpus Linguistics

2.1. Introduction

In the course of history, teachers have long been faced with the challenging task of teaching their students and how to make them responsible for their own learning. Researchers have suggested an array of potential remedies to the previously underlined difficulty. As far as language learning is concerned, instructors should always seek common grounds between psychology, cognition, and linguistics. Under the umbrella of the latter, Corpus Linguistics is thought of as a pillar of paramount importance which may serve the purpose of clarifying critical issues related to how students learn, in addition to how they take advantage of linguistic analysis and use the latter to reach high quality compositions.

The current chapter will endeavour to present a general overview on Corpus Linguistics. It will include the latter's history of development, definitions, and how Corpus Linguistics may serve as a tool for linguistic analysis. This chapter, further, will address the various types of corpora and their most salient characteristics. At the end, the various approaches to Corpus Linguistics will be highlighted.

2.1. The Nature of Corpus Linguistics

Prior to highlighting the notion of Corpus Linguistics (CL), it is necessary to very briefly elaborate the meaning of the word "Corpus". The term corpus is a Latin word meaning "body". Today, it is used to refer to representative collection of texts in a particular language or dialect to be subject for linguistic analysis. Chiefly, a corpus is "a finite collection of machine-readable texts sampled to be representative of a language or variety" (McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p. 218).

Corpora stand for the process of using of a vast collection of representative samples of texts encompassing several varieties of a language used in discrepant trends of linguistic interactions. Theoretically, corpus is “(C)apable (O)f (R)epresenting (P)otentially (U)nlimited (S)elections of texts. It is compatible to computer, operational in research and application, representative of the source language, processable by man and machine, unlimited in data, and systematic in formation and representation” (Dash, 2005, p. 35).

As for Corpus Linguistics, it is believed to be a multidimensional area with a huge spectrum that includes all varieties of language use in all linguistics contexts, communication, and comprehension. The implementation of Corpus Linguistics into language study has yielded a new understanding of what is language, its use, nature, design, and how it should be studied.

Chiefly, Corpus Linguistics is a philosophy which has the aim of investigating language and all its properties by describing large collections of text samples. Such a philosophy has been adopted in a variety of research areas for ages: from descriptive study of a language, to language education, to lexicography, etc. It generally stands for the extensive analysis of any authentic, spoken and/or written literary or non-literary text samples decode, analyse, and interpret the synchronic and diachronic aspects of a language (Collins, 2002).

The distinctive feature of CL is captured in the manner of using modern computer technology in gathering language data, methods adopted in processing language databases, techniques used in language data and information retrieval, and strategies used in applying these in all domains language-oriented research (Schütze, 1997).

The notion of CL has long been conceived as a perplexing and confusing concept. Lexicographers, linguists, and language professionals have made tremendous endeavours to decode some of the intricacies associated with such a term. In this respect, Stubbs (2006) emphasises the frequent reticence of corpus analysts in establishing a scientific elaboration of their operational methods. This ambiguity which governs the discussion of the methodological framework adopted is very surprising with rapport to the scientific frame that CL claims to hold.

Under such skepticism, thus, it is legitimate to ask whether Corpus Linguistics is a discipline, a methodology, a paradigm, or none, or all of these? Although such a question might seem easy and manageable, there exists no concrete, documented, and well-established answer provided by scholars. Therefore, the researcher has no intention of offering any definitive answers, but rather intends to elaborate a number of observations on how CL has been conceived, analysed, and construed in its own literature. The researcher, hence, takes the specific term Corpus Linguistics and looks at how it is explicitly and implicitly defined and described both explicitly in a variety of relevant sources.

There is no general agreement about what CL is or what it should be. Therefore, a bewildering variety of descriptions have been pointed out. Aarts and Meijs (1984) are accredited to be the source of the notion CL and the first who have ever used it. As for the term “Corpora”, Aarts (1984) argues that the term was coined with some hesitation “Because we thought (and I still think) that it was not a very good name: it is an odd discipline that is called by the name of its major research tool and data source. Perhaps the term has outlived its usefulness by now”. This hesitation brings to light the major concerns of talking about CL, and may pave the way towards the preference for alternatives.

When addressing the issue of what CL ‘is’, not only have discrepant descriptions been provided, but alternatives have been explicitly suggested and rejected. These involve statements which regard Corpus Linguistics as either a tool, a method, a methodology, a methodological approach, a discipline, a theory, a theoretical approach, a paradigm (theoretical or methodological), or a combination of these.

In 1992, Leech argued that “computer corpus linguistics defines not just a newly emerging methodology for studying language, but a new research enterprise, and in fact a new philosophical approach to the subject” and goes further to define the characteristics of computer Corpus Linguistics as a new paradigm (Leech, 1992, p. 106). Similarly, Stubbs (1993) refutes the restricted definition of CL as a methodology. In this respect, Stubbs (1993) believes that “in this vision of the subject, a corpus is not merely a tool of linguistic analysis but an important concept in linguistic theory” (pp. 23–24). Teubert (2005) also stresses the theoretical conceptualisation and considers Corpus Linguistics as “a theoretical approach to the study of language” (p. 2).

The belief that Corpus Linguistics is a paradigm is attributed to Gries (2006) with an explicit emphasis on the methodological conceptualisation of CL. Gries, (2006, p. 191) holds the view that “over the past few decades, corpus linguistics has become a major methodological paradigm in applied and theoretical linguistics”. Tognini-Bonelli (2001) describes CL as a “pre-application methodology” with a “theoretical status” (p. 1). Similarly, Mahlberg (2005) considers CL as “an approach to the description of English with its own theoretical framework” (p. 2), and to stress this, she used the concept “corpus theoretical approach”. Mahlberg (2006) goes on with arguing that dichotomies of perceiving such a term stems from the type of CL which the researcher practices. She states that:

There is still disagreement on whether corpus linguistics is mainly a methodology or needs its own theoretical framework. Advocates of corpus-driven approaches to the description of English claim that new descriptive tools are needed to account for the situation of real text, and ideas of theoretical frameworks to accommodate such tools have started to emerge (p. 370).

Thompson and Hunston (2006, p. 8) argue that “at its most basic, corpus linguistics is a methodology that can be aligned to any theoretical approach to language”. Nevertheless, they emphasise two basic theories which CL has yielded. First of all, that meaning is not reflected in single and decontextualised words, but in ‘units of meaning’. Consequently, “the communicative discourse unfolds largely as a series of semi-fixed phrases” (Thompson and Hunston, 2006, p. 11–12).

McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2005) note that as “corpus linguistics is a whole system of methods and principles of how to apply corpora in language studies and in teaching/learning, it certainly has a theoretical status. Yet theoretical status is not theory in itself” (pp. 7-8). As such, CL is seen as a methodology. Corpus Linguistics is further described as a methodology for McEnery and Wilson (1996) and Meyer (2002). It is conceptualised as “an approach or a methodology for studying language use” (Bowker and Pearson, 2002, p. 9). Nevertheless, McEnery and Gabrielotos (2006) believe that “corpus linguistics may be viewed as a methodology, but the methodological practices adopted by corpus linguists are not uniform” (p. 44), and they elaborate how these methodological differences are determined by theoretical considerations.

Similarly, Teubert (2005) believes in the diversity of methods, and states that “corpus linguistics is not in itself a method: many different methods are used in processing and analyzing corpus data. It is, rather, an insistence on working only with real language data taken from the discourse in a principled way and compiled into a corpus”, (4).

Aarts (2002), Teubert (2005), and Williams (2006), *inter alia*, hold the motion that CL is a discipline. This, further, raises the concern of what type of discipline CL is. For example, while Stubbs (1993, p. 3) describes linguistics as an “applied social science”, Teubert (2005) states that “linguistics is not a science like the natural sciences whose remit is the search for ‘truth’. It belongs to the humanities, and as such it is a part of the endeavour to make sense of the human condition” (p. 7).

In defining and characterising CL, other scholars have accounted for the hard-science credentials of corpus linguistics. For example, McCarthy (2001) sees CL as representing “cutting edge change in terms of scientific techniques and methods” (p. 125), and Stubbs (2001) explicitly parallels CL and science, when stating that:

Geologists are interested in processes which are not directly observable because they take place over vast periods of time. Corpus linguists are, rather, interested in processes which are not directly observable because they are instantiated across the language use of many different speakers and writers (p. 243).

It is noteworthy that it is the claim to be scientifically oriented that triggered Chomsky’s criticism of CL. He believes “my judgment, if you like, is that we learn more about language by following the standard method of the sciences. The standard method of the sciences is not to accumulate huge masses of unanalyzed data and to try to draw some generalization from them” (2004, p. 97). Chomskyan linguistics is often rejected and criticised in CL. Carter (2004) believes that it has:

No interest in language beyond the level of the sentence, there is no recognition that authentic data is of any significance and there is no acceptance that studies of large corpora or real language in use play any part in descriptive theories of language. Most significantly, too, there is a clear sense that the analysis of meaning is not a primary purpose (p. 2).

Following the same path, Sinclair (1991) also rejected introspective linguistics pointing to science, arguing that “one does not study all of botany by making artificial flowers” (p. 6). In recent years, Teubert and Krishnamurthy (2007) posit that Corpus Linguistics is a “Parole linguistics” as opposed to the “Langue linguistics” of Saussure (1894) and Chomsky (1965). This implies that the substantial focus of corpus studies on “Performance”, rather than “Competence” as corpus linguists describe the everyday use of language and not how the language faculty is represented within the brains of its native speakers.

In a nutshell, one may argue that the aforementioned descriptions of CL are far away from being useless. The discrepant array of interpretations is well found to be logical and legitimate, not only because, as Hoey (1993) notes, the scientific entity of linguistics per se has been hotly debated over time, but also because Corpus Linguistics is developing. Investigations, in such a field, are conducted in various ways with a large scope of interest. The various interpretations should be welcomed in order to gain access to the complex image that reflects the functioning of CL as a sustained system, as Teubert (2005) states “only if the discourse of corpus linguistics remains controversial and pluralist, will there be progress” (p. 13). Thus, in order to dispel the enigmatic notion of Corpus Linguistics, there must be a consideration of the various interpretations, their common grounds, clear-cut boundaries, and contradictions.

2.3. Historical Development of Corpus Linguistics

The starting point of Corpus Linguistics is rooted in the issue of observable data. Obviously, historical linguistics has been often thought of as corpus-based owing to the fact that capturing the essence of language evolution is conducted by collecting texts of different eras and locations (Johansson, 1995). As such, historical linguistics was conceived as the basic pillar for establishing as well as developing theoretical as well as practical frameworks of modern linguistics. Thereafter, modern linguistics, in a relatively short space of time, was confronted with the necessity of shifting its interest away from the data-based approach to a paradigm which accounts for intuition and introspection, (Aarts and Meijs, 1984).

Being influenced by the positivist (1865) and behaviourist (1920), post-Bloomfieldian linguistics (1950) in the USA placed major focus on the observable data, with a peripheral attention to abstract speculation. Chomsky (1965), nevertheless, took

another position where he was inclined to refute observable data as the basis for linguistic investigations. Chomsky (1965) made clear his standpoint by arguing:

Like most facts of interest and importance ... information about the speaker-hearer's competence ... is neither presented for direct observation nor extractable from data by inductive procedures of any known sort. (p. 18)

Certainly, the above-mentioned statement is sharply discrepant from the theoretical assumptions of Corpus Linguistics. The latter epitomises a movement towards the linguistics of parole where the concern is with 'performance' rather than 'competence'. The task of linguists, here, is to describe the use of language and not to identify linguistic universals. In describing language use, corpus linguists rely on the quantitative element (frequency of occurrence) which is believed to be indispensable in determining the categories of description.

To go further, Corpus Linguistics emerged in the 1960s. It was mainly derived from the traditional trend of lexicography (Francis, 1992). At that era, well-known writers were quoted since they were believed to be authority figures in a prescriptive tradition. By way of example, Johnson (1755) (the reference point for English lexicography), made use of sentences taken from highly influential scholars like Hume (1741). However, Johnson's interest was on the meaning of the words in use, not on the ideas expressed in the sentences. In addition to gathering the words of the great and famous, "another tradition of scholarship that grew with modern linguistics was that of the field linguists, who spread all over the world reaching ever more remote communities and building up records of the languages – usually spoken – that they found. Their informants were in the main quite ordinary people, their conversations also ordinary" (Aston, 2004, p.78).

The contemporary corpus was primarily based on such prior methods of obtaining data for linguistic investigations. Nevertheless, the idea of gathering an array of texts that would entail concrete evidence of the state of a language was new. Having marginalised the identification of the cultural signs, the early corpora had limited aims; to collect a big variety of language in use by ordinary people to investigate easily the currently used grammar and vocabulary. As noted by Biber (1998), an early example of corpus-based work is found in Fries' grammars of written and spoken American English (1940 and 1952). By the end of the 1960s, few small corpora emerged and occupied the scenes of language study.

It is noteworthy that The Survey of English Usage, conducted by Randolph Quirk from its inauguration in 1959 was an exceptional contribution to the modern Corpus Linguistics because of its focus on the everyday linguistic interactions, spoken and written, of non-celebrities. It collected a huge database on file cards at University College London. There were, however, no intentions to computerise it until many years later.

To elaborate more the development of corpora, it is of necessity to very briefly refer to the contributions made by technology, in general, and computers, more specifically. It was the technological climate that triggered the development of corpora, not the linguistic one. Despite the extreme complexity of computers at the beginning, their great potential for language study was highly noticed. Computational work on texts was first conducted by Father Busa's Index Thomisticus before the 1950s (completed in 1978, Busa 2000), maintaining the scholarly tradition of making concordances to works of high status, but relying on the potential of computers. Nowadays, there exists a huge library of electronic versions of literary, philosophical, and religious texts in which the term corpus is often believed to cover some of these collections. Beginning with databases of legal and journalistic files, the movement has substantially developed in tandem with the access offered by the internet, in general, and the world-wide web more precisely (Barnbrook, 1998).

To go deeper, the Brown Corpus represents the first electronic corpus of written language. It was compiled in the 1960s at Brown University by Nelson Francis and Henry Kucera (Francis and Kucera, 1964) and remains widely used today. The Brown corpus contains a million words of American English from documents published in 1961. Its design withstood the notion of time and remained the standard for many years. Thirty years later, it was repeated in the Frown Corpus.

In the 1970s, Corpus Linguistics development was slow mainly because of the limitations of the available technology. Computers were taken to be machines of calculation with small memories. Nevertheless, during that era, corpora containing one million words were assembled, annotated corpora were first accounted for, and also a spoken corpus in a detailed phonological transcription was established. All of these achievements were advanced by Sweden, and Scandinavian scholars such as Sture (1972), Hofland, Johansson, and Svartvik (1975). These scholars paved the way towards the emergence of mainstream Corpus Linguistics for a generation. They were not alone. Other ground breaking corpus

studies were progressing with French, Hebrew, and Frisian, among other projects. As for the first corpus of a special variety of a language, it was called the Jiao Da English for Science and Technology (JDEST) corpus, compiled by Yang Huizhong in Shanghai in the 1970s

In the late 1980s, the invention of scanners facilitated access to the printed word enormously, and the growth of computer typesetting became universally spread. As Sinclair (1991) points out:

In the 1990s, linguistics had changed from a subject that was constrained by a scarcity of data to one that was confused by more data than the methodologies could cope with. Some may even claim that it has not yet come to terms with this abundance (p. 7).

At that era, specific classes of data are still scarce, with no likelihood of change in the foreseeable future. Examples of these data classes might include the difficulty with the sound wave that is still not directly associated with the automatic linguistic interpretation despite some successes in the field of speech recognition. Another difficulty concerns handwritten material which must be transcribed, and a variety of older printed materials resist the best scanners.

The contemporary enormous corpora often make use of material from essentially unlimited sources. This feature preserves the dichotomy between ‘balance’ and ‘representativeness’ that have been critical considerations since computer typesetting occupied the universal scene. Today, the growth of electronic communication has paved the way towards several new and equally abundant sources, notably web pages, e-mail, and blogging.

In a nutshell, one may argue that the development of Corpus Linguistics has undergone three major phases, as pointed out by Tognini and Sinclair (2006, pp. 208). In a rough-and-ready way, the relatively brief progress of electronic corpus building and availability can be seen as falling into three stages, or ‘generations’

- (a) The first twenty years, c. 1960–80; learning how to build and maintain corpora of up to a million words; no material available in electronic form, so everything has to be transliterated on a keyboard.

- (b) The second twenty years, 1980–2000; divisible into two decades:
- (i) The eighties, the decade of the scanner, where with even the early scanners a target of twenty million words becomes realistic.
 - (ii) The nineties, the first serendipity, when text becomes available as the product of computer typesetting, allowing another order of magnitude to the target size of corpora.
- (c) The new millennium, the second serendipity, when text that never had existence as hard copy becomes available in unlimited quantities from the internet.

2.4. Some Characteristics of Corpora

The characteristics of corpora are believed to be features that should be taken into consideration whenever a corpus is designed. They vary according to their intended purposes. Researchers have identified various features that govern the design as well as the reliability of corpora. In this respect, Dash (2009, p. 4) states the following aspects:

- **Quantity:** It should be big in size containing large amount of data either in spoken or written form. Size is virtually the sum of its components, which constitute its body.
- **Quality (authenticity).** All texts should be obtained from actual examples of speech and writing. The role of a linguist is very important here. He has to verify if language data is collected from ordinary communication, and not from experimental conditions or artificial circumstances.
- **Representation:** It should include samples from a wide range of texts. It should be balanced to all areas of language use to represent maximum linguistic diversities, as future analysis devised on it needs verification and authentication of information from the corpus representing a language.
- **Simplicity:** It should contain plain texts in simple format. This means that we expect an unbroken string of characters (or words) without any additional linguistic information marked-up within texts. A simple plain text is opposed to any kind of annotation with various types of linguistic and non-linguistic information.

- **Equality:** Samples used in corpus should be of even size. However, this is a controversial issue and will not be adopted everywhere. Sampling model may change considerably to make a corpus more representative and multi-dimensional.
- **Retrievability:** Data, information, examples, and references should be easily retrievable from corpus by the end-users. This pays attention to preserving techniques of language data in electronic format in computer. The present technology makes it possible to generate corpus in PC and preserve it in such way that we can easily retrieve data as and when required.
- **Verifiability:** Corpus should be open to any kind of empirical verification. We can use data from corpus for any kind of verification. This puts corpus linguistics steps ahead of intuitive approach to language study.
- **Augmentation:** It should be increased regularly. This will put corpus 'at par' to register linguistic changes occurring in a language in course of time. Over time, by addition of new linguistic data, a corpus achieves historical dimension for diachronic studies, and for displaying linguistic cues to arrest changes in life and society.
- **Documentation:** Full information of components should be kept separate from the text itself. It is always better to keep documentation information separate from the text, and include only a minimal header containing reference to documentation. In case of corpus management, this allows effective separation of plain texts from annotation with only a small amount of programming effort.

2.5. Types of Corpora

In this part of the chapter, the researcher intends to address some of the various available types of corpora. It is noteworthy that there exists no general consensus among linguists about the exact typology of corpora. The disagreement takes place in the disparity of effectiveness, relevance, and application to language teaching, insofar that some corpora are exclusively used in various areas of language research, while others are, to some extent, marginalized and not relied on. The researcher, thus, attempts to briefly consider some of the most common types of corpora available and their different characteristics. Once again, there exist now various corpora for so many purposes that go beyond one's ability of listing all of them. The time, space, and scope constraints of the current research preclude a profound scrutiny of all corpora types.

The sketchy classification of corpora, offered here, was originally proposed in the course of an EU project (EAGLES website, 1996; Tognini Bonelli & Sinclair, 2006).

2.5.1. Sample Corpora

The majority of corpora are ‘snapshots’ in time. As such, they are taken to be samples of a particular language at a very precise era. The substantial purpose a sample corpus is the elaboration of the basic linguistic features of a language or variety in the approximate proportion determined in general use. The Brown Corpus represents the initial and the sample corpus. It epitomises a very representative simulation of the way such corpora are constructed. The Brown Corpus is subdivided into informative and imaginative prose, then into sixteen sub-categories of these, and ultimately, into 500 samples each containing approximately 2,000 words. Despite the long period of collection sample corpora and the texts dealt with that cover twenty years or more, their major concern is the presentation of a state-of-a-language, with a steady, fixed, and non-dynamic time dimension. Their most commonly identified deficiency of sample corpora is that they become outdated rapidly (Sinclair, 2006).

If a sample corpus is to claim for the reliability of its repository, it may be referred to as a reference corpus. Today, it should be enormously large, 100 million words is the typical size, and it will contain substantial amounts of all the main kinds of language that are found in a society. Language, spoken and written, public and private, informative and fictional, etc. will all be there. (Hunston, 2002).

2.5.2. Parallel and Comparable Corpora

A parallel corpus refers to a corpus that is made of source texts and their translations. Parallel corpora can be bilingual or multilingual. They can be unidirectional (e.g., from English into Chinese or from Chinese into English alone), bi-directional (e.g., containing both English source texts with their Chinese translations as well as Chinese source texts with their English translations), or multi-directional (e.g., the same piece of writing with English, French and German versions). In this sense, texts which are produced simultaneously in different languages (e.g., EU and UN regulations) also belong to the category of parallel corpora (Hunston, 2002, p. 15).

Nevertheless, a comparable corpus stands for a given corpus which contains elements that are amassed through identical sampling frame, balance, and representativeness (McEnery, 2003) (e.g., the same proportions of the texts of the same genres in the same domains in a range of different languages in the same sampling period). Therefore, the sub-corpora of a comparable corpus are far away from being translations of each other. They, rather, share the same sampling frame and identical balance.

It is now made clear that corpora that are based on elements pertinent to varieties of the same language (International Corpus of English (ICE)) are not comparable corpora as reported in the literature (Hunston, 2002, p. 15). The reason behind this is that all corpora have “always been, particularly, fit for comparative studies” (Aarts, 1998), either intra-lingual or inter-lingual. Brown, LOB, Frown and FLOB are created for conducting a comparison between language varieties synchronically and diachronically. The British National Corpus (BNC), while designed for representing modern British English, is also a useful basis for various intra-lingual studies (e.g., spoken vs. written, monologue vs. dialogue, and variations caused by socio-economic parameters). Nevertheless, these corpora are generally not referred to as comparable corpora (Faber and Lauridsen, 1991).

Parallel and comparable corpora are thought of as indispensable in non-English corpus linguistics, mainly due to the fact that these two types of corpora are primordial resources for translation and contrastive studies. Aijmer and Altenberg (1996) point out:

Parallel and comparable corpora offer specific uses and possibilities for contrastive and translation studies:

- They give new insights into the languages compared – insights that are not likely to be noticed in studies of monolingual corpora;
- They can be used for a range of comparative purposes and increase our knowledge of language-specific, typological and cultural differences, as well as of universal features;
- They illuminate differences between source texts and translations, and between native and non-native texts;
- They can be used for a number of practical applications, e.g. in lexicography, language teaching and translation. (p. 12).

2.5.3. General Corpora

General corpus contains general texts that belong to different disciplines, genres, subject fields, and registers. Taking into account the nature of its form and utility, it has a limited number of text collections. In other words, the number of text types, words and sentences are finite. It has largely developed over the last decades with the availability of new data and texts. Its major defining characteristics are the large size, redundant of varieties, wide, and representative scope.

To go further, general corpora are balanced in relation to a given language variety. The concept “balance” is slippery and closely pertinent to a precise research area. That is if the corpus under scrutiny claims to be categorised as general, then it would usually be balanced with consideration to genres and domains that reflect the language of concern. The corpus may contain written data, spoken data, or both.

The British National Corpus (BNC) is one of the most widely spread general corpora in the world. The BNC contains 100,106,008 words, organised in 4,124 written texts and transcripts of speech in modern British English (Leech, 2000). It is intended to epitomise an authentic representation of modern British English. The written section occupies (90%) of the whole corpus. It involves samples from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, as well as school and university essays. The spoken section, however, is believed to occupy (10%) of such a corpus. It contains 863 transcripts of a huge array of informal interactions, selected from language users of various ages, from several regions and from all social classes in “a demographically balanced way, together with spoken language collected in all kinds of different contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins” (Laviosa, 1998, p. 43).

Because of the generality feature and the adherence to the internationally agreed-upon criteria, general corpora are believed to be an outstanding resource for different research purposes, in fields as distinct as lexicography, artificial intelligence, speech recognition and synthesis, literary studies, and, of course, linguistics (McEnery, 2003).

2.5.4. Specialised Corpora

Corpora that are labeled as “general” belong to the category of “special corpora”. The latter’s goal is not to comprehensively represent a language as a whole, rather as specialised segments of it (e.g., domains or genres). Specialised corpora usually are smaller in scale in contrast to the general language corpora mainly due to their limited scope. “This is not a problem, however, as the greater homogeneity among texts in a specialised area confers the advantage of fewer texts being required for the corpus to be representative of that language variety” (Carter, 1988, p. 89).

One such highly significant specialised corpus is that of academic English. Such a corpus is taken to be among the very few, which fulfil the needs of practitioners of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Examples of specialised corpora might include the MICASE (the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English; 1.8 million words). This corpus of spoken English transcribed from about 190 hours of recordings of various speech events in a North American University (Simpson et al. 2003). It paved the way towards the emergence of equivalent corpora which adhere to a similar philosophy such as BASE (the British Academic Spoken English corpus; 1.6 million words), LIBEL CASE (Limerick-Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English), and CUCASE (City University Corpus of Academic Spoken English, in Hong Kong). The use of these corpora entailed representative results of the profound examinations that focus on the discrepancies across national contexts.

As for written academic English, the following two purpose-built corpora are of a great importance, the Chemnitz Corpus of Specialised and Popular Academic English (SPACE), containing comparable academic texts driven from scholarly papers (specialised expert-to-expert communication) and derived popular versions (broader journalist-to-layperson communication); and the Reading Academic Text corpus (RAT), consisting of research articles and PhD theses from different fields of science. The Professional English Research Consortium (PERC) is an international institution that has created a 100-million-word corpus of professional English. It includes journal texts used by professionals in science, engineering, technology, law, medicine, finance and other fields. This corpus is meant to contribute in developing research and generating educational applications in the area of ESP/Professional English, leading to the betterment of educational resources such

as specialised dictionaries, handbooks, language tests, and other pedagogic materials (Collins, 1998).

2.5.5. Historical Corpora

There exist many corpora covering the English of earlier periods. Scholars have conducted an array of empirical investigations in an attempt to capture and identify how language use changes over time. There are three main collections of historical English that encompass a wide span of time and a variety of genres. These three highly influential historical corpus are known as “ARCHER” (A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers), and COHA (Corpus of Historical American English).

The ARCHER Corpus (1.8 million words) highlights the era of 750 to 1700s. It contains Old English (413,300 words), Middle English (608,600 words) and early modern (British) English (551,000 words). “ARCHER is a multi-genre corpus (currently 1.8 million words) covering the early modern English period right up to the present (1650–1990) for both British and American English. It is divided into fifty-year blocks to facilitate comparisons” (Edwards & Lampert, 1991, p. 57). Such a corpus is not accessible publicly; only certain scholars who may have access to such a corpus.

As for the COHA, it has the aim of creating a 300-million-word corpus of historical American English covering the early 1800s up to date. It takes its data from the various genres of fiction, popular magazines, newspapers and academic prose. Other historical corpora emphasise a particular historical era with an interest restricted to a given genre. Examples of historical corpora might include the Newdigate Newsletters Corpus (one million words), consisting of manuscript newsletters dated 1674–92, the Corpus of Late Eighteenth-Century Prose (300,000 words) containing letters on practical subjects from the period 1761–90 and the Corpus of late Modern English Prose (100,000 words) consisting of informal private letters by British writers from the period 1861 to 1919 are other widely spread and highly influential historical corpora.

It is noteworthy that many electronic libraries are now available on the net for those who are interested in downloading early literary texts. For example, Early English Books On-line (EEBO; mainly 1500s–1600s), Literature Online (LION; mainly 1700s–1800s) are available sites from which one can consult historical corpora.

2.5.6. Diachronic Corpora

Diachronic Corpora that relate to a very precise era in history are not very common, and are of twofold. Diachronic corpora which analyses language use diversified at intervals of time, usually lasting at least for a generation, while monitor corpora are created to capture changes in language use as they occur.

The Helsinki corpus represents the first diachronic corpus. It has an access to English texts from c.750 to c.1700. As the primary sample corpora date back to the 1960s, it is now possible to reproduce their design with contemporary texts and approach profound comparisons. The Frown corpus, which has the same layout of the Brown corpus but with a time interval of thirty years, so that it records the American printed English of a generation later than the Brown. The Frown corpus was, therefore, designed to be an updated version of the Brown corpus.

These corpora have an exclusive emphasis on collecting and analysing printed texts. As for the spoken language, the diachronic dimension dates back to the invention of sound recording techniques which paved the way towards the emergence of spoken corpora. One such widely spread speech corpus is known as the Diachronic Corpus of Present-Day Spoken English (DCPSE). This corpus contains two spoken corpora with a span of a generation and with such a format that facilitates comparison.

As for the Monitor corpora, they are attributed to Sinclair (1982). Monitor corpora were created to ascertain that synchronic corpora are not outdated. Instead of neglecting material that was meant to be replicated by more contemporary exemplars, it used a time tag to preserve the material, and thus bring a diachronic dimension to the corpus. Gerbig (1997, p. 109) states that:

After several years of development, they are still in a provisional state because their intrinsic importance is not as yet fully recognized. The first attempt was the Aviator project, which layered an annual ten million words of The Times newspaper and devised software that would detect innovations of various kinds.

2.5.7. Normative Corpora

The initial corpora were created to record the natural language use by members of a given community. This implies that the majority of authors and speakers would be native speakers. The Brown Corpus was known as the ‘standard’ corpus. By being exclusively limited to printed documents, it gained the status of standardisation offered by printing and publishing process. As people got more access to corpora, the latter’s role in providing models for language apprenticeship was appreciated. Today, “corpora are widely accepted despite some doubts concerning their reliability as repositories of ‘correct’ sentences of the first multi-million-word corpora, as the Birmingham Collection of English Texts” (Sinclair, 1987, p. 78).

To go further, Normativeness is believed to be a problematic feature to reach in spoken texts; it is based on the normal practices of legal and administrative transcription, and court reporting. These, however, were the primary available electronic representations of spoken language to become accessible. Normalisation, thus, is not to be found in corpora of dialectal material, spoken or written.

2.5.8. Learner Corpora

The major focus of SLA research has been traditionally placed on experimental data with a total disregard of natural language use data. Scholars (e.g., Gilquin) believe that learner corpus research has the potential to alter this, but, to date, such an area of study has seldom contributed to the interpretation and betterment of language acquisition.

As far as language learning is concerned, corpora have been subject to various applications. By gathering instances of how learners use language and comparing these with normative model corpora, learners’ learning processes and linguistic development might be put under scrutiny in a much more profound way than traditionally found in error analysis research. The main work in Europe on learner corpora is at the University of Louvain in Belgium, but there are many other projects in learner corpora around the world. Obviously, the best-known learner corpus is the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) (Nesselhauf, 2004; Gilquin & Granger, 2003).

The ICLE corpus is made up of three million words of essays written by advanced learners of English (i.e. university students of English as a foreign language in their 3rd or 4th year of study) from fourteen discrepant native languages (French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Swedish, Finnish, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Russian, Italian, Hebrew, Japanese and Chinese). Such a corpus is not just used to compare the compositions of learners from different L1 backgrounds; it rather goes beyond to be used in combination with the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) to compare native and learner English (Schneider, 1997).

In a nutshell, the researcher emphasises again that the above mentioned classification of corpora does not meet the approval of all corpus linguists. This part of the chapter was merely intended to introduce some of the major publicly available corpus resources and explore the possible advantages of using ready-made corpora. As referred to earlier, corpora are always designed for a given purpose. Thus, the efficiency of a ready-made corpus must be judged with respect to the purpose for which it was designed. There exist thousands of corpora; the majority of which are created for specific research projects and are, thus, not publicly available.

2.6. Approaches to Corpus Linguistics

This part of the chapter is exclusively intended to highlight the approaches of corpus linguistics with a primordial focus on scrutinising the independent variable of the investigation at hand (the Corpus-Based Approach). It includes a general overview on such approaches and how they have been associated and applied in the field of language studies. It is noteworthy that the researcher does not intend to dig deeper into the dynamics of the Corpus-Based Approach and how it correlates with the teaching of FL writing. The discussion of the correlation between such a paradigm and writing instruction will be further explained with more details in the third chapter. That is why the scope presented in the current section will be limited to addressing how the Corpus-Based Approach has been dealt with in the available research literature, its salient characteristics, importance, emergence, application to language studies, its efficiency in gathering as well as interpreting the various linguistic data, and not how it has been applied in language teaching, in general, and FL writing instruction, more specifically which is the scope of the third chapter.

Prior to elaborating the approaches to Corpus Linguistics, it is of necessity to very address the nature of such a philosophy and its functioning mechanisms. In recent years, Corpus Linguistics research has developed dramatically to support empirical studies of language use, yielding findings that have brought about much greater generalizability and validity than would otherwise be achieved. Corpus Linguistics is not per se a model of language, rather, at certain levels, it is thought of as primarily a methodological approach. When stating the characteristics of Corpus Linguistics. Biber et al. (1998) note down that:

- it is empirical, analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts;
- it utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts, known as a “corpus”, as the basis for analysis;
- it makes extensive use of computers for analysis, using both automatic and interactive techniques;
- it depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. (p. 4)

To go further, Corpus Linguistics’ research provides a remarkable support for the stance that language use is systematic and can be explained using empirical and quantitative methods. Its major contribution is to document the existence of linguistic constructs that are not captured, and analysed by other linguistic theories. Such type of studies, known as the “corpus-driven” approach, describe strong tendencies for words and grammatical constructions that go together in a given context, while other theoretically possible combinations have less frequency of occurrence. Corpus-driven research has been able to provide extensive evidence that these tendencies are stronger and more frequent than previously expected and that they generally have semantic or functional relations.

Corpus-driven research accounts for all features of language use and variation, including the choice among synonymous words (e.g., big, large, great), and the choice among tied grammatical aspects (e.g., active vs. passive voice). As for the corpus-based research, it has a larger scope that extends to investigate distributional discrepancies in the basic grammatical features (e.g., the relative frequency of nouns, verbs, prepositional phrases, etc.). All these linguistic aspects are interpreted in notional as well as functional terms. That is the Corpus-Based Approach explains the linguistic patterns from a communicative and situational perspective (descriptive linguistics) and from an abstract idealised perspective, as found in historical sources of language and corpora that are taken to be the norm of rules and conventions (prescriptive linguistics) (Jensen, 1990).

2.6.1. The Corpus-Based Approach

The corpus-based research posits that it is the linguistic theory that ensures the validity of linguistic forms and structures. The major purpose of investigation, thus, is to describe the systematic patterns of use for those predetermined linguistic aspects. One tremendous finding of the corpus-based research is that descriptions of grammatical features are often deficient in reflecting the language as a whole. Criteria of the textual environment are, rather, dependent on register conundrums, insofar that patterns redundantly found in a given register often rarely exist in other registers. Therefore, most corpus-based investigations of grammatical variation explicitly account for register differences (Selincar, 1991).

As such, the corpus-based research had the unprecedented initiative of defying and questioning the reliability of general linguistic descriptions of a language; rather, such a paradigm has shown that any linguistic description that does not account for register is incomplete and even misleading. The recent Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al., 1999) is taken to be the best comprehensive reference work of this kind, implementing corpus-based paradigm to demonstrate how any grammatical feature can be described for its patterns of use across discourse contexts in various spoken and written registers.

Another important feature of the Corpus-Based Approach is that it often yields surprising results that usually contradict the linguists' prior assumptions. Scholars often claim to have strong, valid, and reliable intuitions about language use, nature and design. While it is problematic to legitimise intuitions about grammaticality, intuitions about language use are taken to be subject to empirical studies. According to Biber (2003) "Corpus-based research is ideally suited for this task, since one of the main research goals of this approach is to empirically identify the linguistic patterns that are extremely frequent or rare in discourse from a particular variety" (p. 164). When such empirical researches take place, the results often run counter to the linguists' prior intuitions. A study of this type, investigating the dependent clause types, shows how corpus-based research has empowered the centrality of register for descriptions of language use. Dependent clauses are often seen as one of the best means of measuring grammatical complexity. In some linguistic models, all types of dependent are put together as manifesting complexity.

Moreover, there is a widely held belief and strong assumption that dependent clauses are much more used in writing than in speech. So, for example, students are expected to develop increasing use of dependent clauses as they progress in their academic writing skills (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998).

Corpus-based research opposes such a notion and documents that these intuitions have no rational and scientific grounds. That is, various dependent clauses are used and distributed in substantially different ways, and some dependent clause types are used in conversation much more than in academic writing. Hence, the belief that all types of dependent clause as a single unified construct has no basis in actual language use. For example, the use of dependent clause types in five spoken and written registers: conversation, university office hours, university teaching, university textbooks, and academic prose. Relative clauses follow the expected pattern of being much more common in academic writing and textbooks than in conversation. Class teaching is intermediate between conversation and academic writing in the use of relative clauses. However, the other two clause types, adverbial clauses and complement clauses, are much more common in conversation than in academic writing.

Recently, the call for implementing the results of corpus research to foreign language pedagogy has dramatically increased in such a manner that enables learners to investigate with specific language uses within the corpus. For instance, a learner of English who wishes to use the word “access” in an essay might be confronted with the predicament of finding which words best collocate with that word. By using a corpus database and then typing in the word “access”, the student would eventually see a long list of possible uses of the word with different collocations. These uses occur in the form of portions of sentences, with the keyword positioned in the middle of them. The aim of the concordance program is to produce such a list. Each example of the keyword in use is a concordance, and the concordancing software provides a series of concordances. Yoon and Hirvela (2004) point out this in the following samples for the keyword “access”:

Film and TV producers worldwide access to locations available for shooting. A particularly easy and fruitful access to that area of the mind. REP: their own military contacts to gain access to the arsenals, and within hours Arab landowner: his bedroom, with access to the boudoirs of his three wives, seem to be when children have access to wide green spaces. (p. 258).

The aforementioned information is technically known as the “concordance output”. Students can study this output to acquire the ability of knowing how a keyword operates in context with pertinent words. They can also obtain a second key type of output known as “collocate output”. The corpus research is, thus, contributive in providing a rich collection of such uses covering as wide a range of words and word combinations as possible, and in providing feedback about the frequency of using these word combinations.

Being primarily concerned with textual analysis and the description of written language in use, corpus-based studies are especially amenable to the teaching of writing skills and the development of academic literacy (Flowerdew, 2002). In this respect, Jabbour (2001) points out that “a corpus approach befits teaching foreign language reading and writing, since both activities are text oriented and make use of words and word combinations, or lexical patterns, within the confines of discourse” (p. 294). Differently put, a corpus approach brings meaningful input into the scene of teaching FL writing. Despite the huge importance of the rhetorical issues in the teaching of FL writing, the mechanics, syntax, punctuation, style, vocabulary development, etc., remain indispensable in building a sustained writing proficiency system. EFL writers, despite all the communicative appeals for functionalism, still have the eager desire to raise their awareness and mastery of the linguistic resources necessary for effective writing. “A corpus is now seen as a primary contributor of these resources because of its potential to make explicit the more common patterns of language use” (Tao, 2001, p. 116).

The Corpus-Based Approach is based on the assumption that vocabulary and grammar are intertwined and not distinctive from each other (Halliday, 1992). Within such interrelation of vocabulary and grammar, also known as lexico-grammar, there emerges a focus on the co-occurrence or most frequent combinations of words, i.e., “collocation” (Biber & Conrad, 2001; Conrad, 2000). For instance, the noun “location” is often followed by the prepositions “of” and “for.” This combination of the lexical input and grammatical function is of an utmost importance to a learner who is acquiring English as foreign language, as well as to EFL teachers.

Along with the lexico-grammatical orientation, the corpus-based activity has also been proved to be fruitful to FL writing by equipping students a rich experience of real language use. Corpora are rich of large quantities of the authentic target language discourse that learners might gain profit from. Exposure to these examples of genuine language use

is contributive in raising the students' familiarization with specific uses of target words in an array of contexts and in enlarging their FL linguistic repertoire, thus, equips learners with the necessary means to internalise the target language (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998).

Taking into account such advantages of using corpora in FL writing, many researchers such as, (Biber, 1993; Biber et al., 1998; McEnery et al., 2006) have launched an appeal for the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach in teaching materials and classroom activities. This does not mean that writing instruction must be restricted to a corpus-based pedagogy, but rather the inclusion of some corpus-based activities with reference to the other linguistic, social, psychological, and cognitive aspects of FL composition.

When stating the most salient features that should be accounted for when using the Corpus-Based Approach in language teaching, scholars emphasise the importance of its representativeness. Yoon and Hirvela (2004) assert that:

Two considerations are crucial for corpus design; size and composition. First, corpora need to be large enough to accurately represent the distribution of linguistic features. Second, the texts in a corpus must be deliberately sampled to represent the registers in the target domain of use. (p. 262).

Once again, the researcher emphasises that the above mentioned information is a mere quick glance of CBA. We deliberately did not refer to other elements of such an approach that are at the heart of the investigation at hand. These elements would be profoundly scrutinised in the third chapter. The latter is meant to dig into the dynamics of CBA and bring about data that would serve the purpose of establishing a correlation between such an approach and the writing skill as well as demonstrating how this correlation could be noted, analysed, established, and appropriately implemented in writing apprenticeship.

2.6.2. The Corpus-Driven Approach

In this passage, the researcher briefly highlights the most salient features of the Corpus-Driven Approach, its definition, scope, and efficiency in language studies. As it does not substantially pertain to the scope of the investigation at hand, we do not intend to present a detailed theoretical review, or refer to the studies that function under the

auspices of such an approach. Tognini-Bonelli, (2001) argues that “In a corpus-driven approach the commitment of the linguist is to the integrity of the data as a whole, and the analysis aims to be representative in reflecting language functioning” (p. 54).

As such, scholars who use the Corpus-Driven Approach use the empirical form of study with big quantities of corpus data and generate their own linguistic hypotheses that would later be generalised. In so doing, Steyer and Lauer, (2007) argue that the following steps should be accounted for:

- Study of all evidence of the corpus and acceptance of this evidence: We use collocation profiles as well as pattern matching to get a starting point for our analysis that is as close to real life usage of language and as objective as possible.
- Generation of hypotheses on the basis of the evidence: We take interactive steps in formulating and refining pattern matching queries to study the evidence.
- Empirical checking of those hypotheses: We check the results of our queries for plausibility and revise if necessary.
- Generalization leads to usage rules: Generalization happens on several hierarchical levels and is detailed by narrative comments if necessary. Usage is always the key factor for justifying generalization (p. 494).

While corpus-based studies place a major focus on patterns of language use, corpus-driven research makes use of the potential of a corpus to determine linguistic categories and units that still not yet recognised. Tognini-Bonelli (2001, p. 84) state that “in a corpus-driven analysis, the descriptions aim to be comprehensive with respect to corpus evidence” so that even the “linguistic categories” are drawn “systematically from the recurrent patterns and the frequency distributions that emerge from language in context”. The Corpus-Driven Approach limits its interest to the study of word forms; grammatical classes and syntactic structures are not taken to be interesting areas of investigation. In this respect, Sinclair, (1991) claims that “even inflected variants of the same lemma are treated separately, with the underlying claim that each word form has its own grammar and its own meanings” (p. 67). To elaborate such a statement, Stubbs (1993, p. 16) cites the example of “eye vs. eyes”. The plural form ‘eyes’ often refers to the physical body part and is refined by an attributive adjective (e.g., green eyes) or a possessive determiner (e.g., her eyes).

Nonetheless, the singular form seldom refers to a particular body, but is commonly used in fixed expressions like “make eye contact, keep an eye on/out, catch your eye, in my mind's eye” (Stubbs, 1993, p. 16).

As such, the corpus-driven paradigm is based on the assumption that each word form has a tendency of occurring in discrepant grammatical contexts with a potential of diverse meanings and uses (Dash, 1997). Practically, an array of various methodologies has been used under the philosophy of the corpus-driven research. These methodologies may be distinguished from corpus-based research by the nature of their main investigation goals. That is the corpus-driven study aims at unveiling new linguistic constructs through inductive analysis of corpora, while the corpus-based research has the aim of determining the systematic patterns of language use for linguistic rules and convention that have been previously described by linguists. Nevertheless, corpus-driven paradigm might be discrepant from one study to another. Such a dichotomy can be captured at three levels; “the extent to which they are based on analysis of lemmas vs. each word form; the extent to which they are based on previously defined linguistic constructs (e.g., part-of-speech categories and syntactic structures) vs. simple sequences of words; the role of frequency evidence in the analysis” (Steyer & Brunner, 2009, p. 51).

2.7. Conclusion

As referred to earlier, Corpus Linguistics is a slippery term about which there are perceived various difficulties. Scholars suggested many possible ways of interpreting such a problematic notion. As a field, Corpus Linguistics covers multiple heterogeneous fields such lexicography, descriptive linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, and natural language processing. As a tool or an activity, various types of corpora are used in various studies of language variation, dialect, register and style, and other diachronic studies. The chapter we conclude is an attempt to present a historical overview on Corpus Linguistics. Purposefully, the first part is restricted to some brief presentations of its development over time, and its various definitions. The second part of the chapter highlighted the types of corpora and their most salient characteristics. Furthermore, this chapter examined some instructional practices adopted in the arena of Corpus Linguistics. A major focus was placed on the Corpus-Based as well as the Corpus-Driven Approaches. The coming chapter will attempt to establish a theoretical correlation between the Corpus-Based Approach and the writing skill.

Chapter

Three

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Chapter Three

The Corpus-Based Approach and the Writing Skill

3.1. Introduction

For decades, teachers have long been confronted with the predicament of how to approach their instructions and how to positively involve their students in the complex process of learning. Researchers have suggested an array of potential methodologies and approaches to fulfill the overwhelming necessity of meeting the teaching/learning objectives. One such widely accepted suggestion is to implement the Corpus-Based Approach in the context of second language acquisition.

Corpus-based research is a newly emerging trend within foreign language (FL) apprenticeship. The conspicuous development of computer technology has led to the popularization of corpus-based analyses in language research. It has been given the credit of enabling extensive text analysis and provides empirical language description based on large quantities of authentic texts. An increasing number of studies have recently applied the insights and methodologies of Corpus Linguistics to EFL pedagogy and research. The current chapter is meant to establish a theoretical bridge between the two variables of the research at hand namely writing and the Corpus-Based Approach. In doing so, the researcher must detect all level at which the independent variable (Corpus-Based Approach) exerts an influence on the dependent variable (writing skill).

3.2. The Corpus-Based Analysis and Methodology

Corpus-based analysis is seen as a sophisticated method of answering questions that have long been asked by linguists. Corpora can serve the purpose of testing hypotheses and adding a quantitative dimension to many linguistic studies. As such, it is legitimate to argue that corpus software offers the researcher with language in a form that is not normally encountered and that this might bring to light patterning that often skips the realm of linguistic detection. Corpus-based research, thus, has led to a reassessment of what language is like, its nature, use, and design.

3.2.1. Searches, Software, and Methodologies

Corpus based studies are manifested through the use of dedicated software. The latter inevitably mirrors assumptions about methodology in corpus investigation. At its basic *modus operandi*, corpus software:

- Searches the corpus for a given target item,
- Counts the number of instances of the target item in the corpus and calculates relative frequencies,
- Displays instances of the target item so that the corpus user can carry out further investigation (Meyer, 2002).

It is generally held that corpus methodologies are basically quantitative. Actually, corpora have been criticised for being limited to merely observing relative quantity as well as being unable to expand the explanation of linguistic theory. Taking the risk of contradicting the previously mentioned demerit of corpus analyses, the research holds the motion that corpora, if implemented insightfully, would enrich language theory.

3.2.1.1. Search Items, Word Lists and Frequency Information

All corpora may be searched for use instances of a single word (e.g., week). The majority of search software, also, have the potential of conducting a single search to find sets of words (e.g., week, century, decade) and strings of words (e.g., the coming week).

Using the software, one can search for a word when it is tagged for a particular word class only, “such as light when it is tagged as an adjective, not as a noun or a verb; given sequences of tags, such as ‘preposition, determiner, noun’; or individual words followed or preceded by given word classes, such as fundamentally followed by an adjective. Similarly, a corpus that is parsed will allow searches for particular clause types or structures. For example, searching the International Corpus of English for sentences containing an if clause before or after the main clause” Nelson et al. (2002, p. 57).

Further, corpora are well equipped with the potential of annotating other types of information, such as semantic categories, categories of cohesion, collocation, parallelism (Garside et al., 1997). Software calculates the frequency of occurrence of such categories and, usually, compares this frequency in other corpora.

As for word lists, they are lists, generally ordered either alphabetically or in frequency order, of all the words in a particular corpus with feedback about the frequency with which that word occurs in the corpus. The most basic word lists interpret ‘word’ as merely a collection of letters; so, for example, the occurrences of walk are searched without no difference between the noun and the verb, and the occurrences of walks, walking, and walk are given separately. More specialized lists make a distinction between the noun and verb occurrences of walk (Leech et al., 2001). Much more sophisticated are word lists that provide distinction in meaning and use (e.g., between walk meaning ‘move in slow motion’ and other meanings of walk).

3.2.1.2 Comparative Frequencies

Unless it is comparative, information about frequency can never be authentic and representative. In the Nelson et al. (2002) study of “if clauses”, for example, it is believed that would it be written registers or formal spoken registers, these clauses are more frequent before the main clause than after, which is not the case in informal spoken registers. Therefore, the expediency of frequency analysis is to compare one corpus with another and, by necessity, to compare two languages, varieties of a language, or text types.

A much precise calculation takes place when comparing relatively small corpora of specialised texts with larger, more general corpora, using the Keywords Program (part of the Wordsmith Tools, Scott, 1996). Keywords ranks the words in the specialised corpus in order of the magnitude of their difference from the general corpus. This illustrates the difference between specialised texts and other texts types. For example, “a corpus of newspaper feature articles, when compared with a more general corpus of newspaper texts, is found to have Keywords such as tax, European, war, education, schools, and church” (Scott, 2001, p. 116). This gives a clear idea about the orientation as well as the dominating themes of the articles in question. Other Keywords have a grammatical dimension such as pronouns, prepositions, or be (Scott, 2001, p. 126). Such words often occur in specific phraseological sequences that are more frequent in the specialised corpus than in the general one, (Gledhill, 2000).

3.2.1.3 Concordance Lines

The aforementioned software has a number of statistical operations on items found in the corpus, ranging from simply counting the number of occurrence to calculating the degree of significance of occurrence. Contrariwise, software that provide concordance lines is used to identify the target item (usually a word or phrase) each time it occurs in the corpus and presents each instance, or as many as are required, to the corpus user. “Usually this is done with the target item in the center of the screen and a few words to the left and right of that item” (Hunston, 2006, p. 236). This ‘key word in context’ presentation, as it is known, has a number of uses. “Even the small amount of context is usually enough to show what the word or phrase means, what phrases it often occurs in, and/or the discourse function that it has” (Hunston, 2006, p. 236).

To go deeper, concordance lines are administered so that the word(s) coming before or after the node (searched word) are organised alphabetically. This is contributive in clarifying the recurring phraseology that many words are parts which are not revealed otherwise. Concordance lines are relatively long in order to fit the computer window or on a normal size piece of paper, with each ‘line,’ or instance of the target word, occupying one line of print. This makes patterning easy to observe.

3.2.1.4 Register

Much of the conducted comparative investigations used corpora to scrutinize a language such as English as it manifests in various contexts. The latter has been defined under the auspices of the linguistic theory (e.g., in Matthiessen, 2005, where register is defined according to systemic theory), or according to a less theoretical, ‘commonsense’ view of where clear distinctions might lie. Biber et al. (1999), for instance, “use broad ‘register’ categories of conversation, fiction, news reporting, and academic prose. Others have made more refined distinctions: the CANCODE corpus of spoken English, for example, distinguishes between ‘transactional,’ ‘professional,’ ‘socializing,’ and ‘intimate’ contexts (Carter, 2004; Hyland 2000) distinguishes between academic genres such as research articles, book reviews, abstracts, and textbooks and between different academic disciplines. The major focus of woks of this genre is placed in the explanation of quantitative results qualitatively.

Comparing registers may have interest in single words, or in sets of words, phrases, or patterns that often share a meaning or a grammatical function, with the major purpose of detecting variation between registers in the realisation of that function. Conrad and Biber (2000, p. 67), for example, compare frequencies of stance adverbials in conversation, news reporting, and academic prose. They found that such adverbials are most frequent in conversation and that single adverbs expressing epistemic meaning are the most frequent, though prepositional phrases are relatively frequent in academic prose and news. Semino and Short (2004), further, take categories of representation of speech and writing (such as direct speech and free indirect speech) and compare their frequency in corpora composed of fiction, newspapers, and (auto)biography. Their investigation yielded results which posit that direct speech is much more frequent over all. News-papers tend to use more indirect speech, and summaries of speech events, than fiction does.

Another very common register comparisons are the grammatical categories. The most influential of these is Biber et al. (1999), which compares the frequency of grammatical categories between conversation, fiction, news reporting, and the academic prosody. word class (more nouns in the written registers, more pronouns and verbs in conversation), clause types (there were more interrogative and imperative clauses in conversation than in the other registers), and tense and aspect (more present tense in conversation and academic prose, more past tense in fiction, about equal proportions in news) are the most salient and common categories that are subject to comparison.

3.3. Corpora and Foreign Language Teaching

The primordial aim of second language acquisition is to build models of particular representations of learners at a particular stage of apprenticeship. The most salient evidence behind these mental representations is the language produced by learners whether spontaneously or through data elicitation procedures (Myles, 2005). The efficiency of the SLA process is highly dependent on the reliability as well as the validity of these elicitations, procedures, and data collection. As far as language learning is concerned, SLA research has long exploited elicited experimental data with a major disregard of natural language data. While the use of corpora has been a common tradition in L1 instruction over the past 50 years, FL corpora are still scarce in language teaching/learning, particularly in the formal methods of SLA.

Not before the mid-1980s that language corpora have shown tremendous potential in computer-assisted language learning, research, and teaching. Convergence between corpora and pedagogy has triggered radical changes in the way foreign language (FL) materials development, curriculum design, and teaching methodology are approached and designed. Despite the fact that classroom applications of corpora do not fully occupy the arena of SLA practice, they have been very attractive to language teachers largely due to such advantages as salience of linguistic phenomena and extensive exposure to authentic language use in various registers and genres. This availability has led educators to adopt corpus-based learning to boost inductive, discovery-oriented learning opportunities whereby students themselves conduct a corpus-based analysis and, therefore, engage in active and autonomous learning (Chambers, 2010; Boulton, 2009, 2010; Braun, 2007). Nevertheless, empirical evaluations of hands-on uses of corpora by FL learners have remained relatively marginal (Rodgers, Chambers & Le Baron-Earle, 2011).

To further elaborate the contribution of the corpus-based analysis to the field of EAP, Flowerdew (2002) highlights four major different research realms for investigating English for Academic Purposes (EAP), namely (Swalesian) genre analysis, contrastive rhetoric, ethnographic approaches and corpus-based analysis. The three preliminary paradigms to EAP have a major interest in the situational or cultural context of academic discourse. However, corpus-based methods have the agenda of concentrating more on the co-text of selected lexical items in academic texts. This co-textual approach has aided corpus-linguists to exert two significant contributions to the field of EAP in terms of the well elaborated descriptions of its unique linguistic features as well as its highly particular phraseology, along with a profound description of linguistic variability across academic genres and disciplines.

Corpus-based analyses are conducted through the software program such as Wordsmith Tools 4 (Scott, 2004), which encompasses various text-handling tools to approach quantitative and qualitative textual data analysis. Wordlists provide information on the frequency and distribution of the vocabulary – single words but also word sequences – used in one or more corpora. Wordlists for two corpora can be compared automatically to highlight the vocabulary that is particularly salient in a given corpus, i.e. its keywords or key word sequences.

As for Concordances, they are implemented to describe the co-text of a linguistic feature, i.e. its linguistic environment in terms of preferred co-occurrences and grammatical structures. Recently, more tools are currently being developed to help researchers explore large corpora. For example, the Sketch Engine provides “word sketches”, i.e. “one-page automatic, corpus-based summaries of a word’s grammatical and collocational behaviour” (Kilgarriff and Rundell, 2002; Kilgarriff et al., 2004).

As referred to in the previous section, frequency is a substantial element as corpus-based studies have the goal of providing automated descriptions of what is frequent and common in the corpus being investigated. The research orientation, therefore, of the Corpus Based Approach is essentially designated to describe the linguistic features of academic discourse as it can highlight which words, phrases or structures are most typical of the genre and how they are generally used.

In light of the above mentioned paradigms, corpus-based studies have had interest in variety of distinctive linguistic features of academic discourse as compared with other genres. Biber et al. (1999) have shown, for instance, “that nouns, nominalisations, derivational suffixes and linking adverbials are particularly frequent in academic prose while private verbs, that-deletions and contractions occur very rarely” (p. 57). Studies of vocabulary in academic prose have emphasised the primordial role of a sub-technical vocabulary that is typical in a vast array of academic texts and disciplines which generally serve organisational or rhetorical functions prominent in academic writing, e.g. introducing a topic, hypothesizing, exemplifying, explaining, evaluating, concluding (Thurstun and Candlin, 1998). Other investigations referred to the existence of an EAP-specific phraseology epitomised in word combinations that are semantically as well as syntactically compositional, for example, in the presence of, the aim of this study, the extent to which, it has been suggested, it is likely that (Biber et al 1999). These studies have the credit of speculating that the phraseology of academic discourse is highly conventionalised and that “novice writers differ from professional writers in their use of EAP-specific lexical bundles” (Cortes, 2002). The ever-increasing development of specialised genre-based corpora (Flowerdew, 2002, p. 96) revolutionised the field of academic discourse research. Scholars have examined the similarities and differences between different genres within the same academic discipline (e.g. Conrad, 1996). Others have described differences in the same genre across several disciplines (e.g. Hyland, 2000; Fløttum et al., 2006) and even sub-disciplines (e.g. Ozturk 2007).

Some studies have also compared the use of linguistic features across text sections (e.g. Biber and Finegan, 1994; Martínez, 2003).

A number of these variationist studies have also focused on the phraseological preferences of academic prose and have shown that phraseological patterns may differ across genres and disciplines. They have also suggested that phraseological patterns correlate closely with the communicative purposes that they serve in different genres or disciplines (Groom, 2005; Charles, 2006) and with the rhetorical functions that they perform in specific text sections (Gledhill, 2000).

To date, over hundreds of corpora have been developed, and interest in using them has increased steadily, especially in the area of academic writing. Numerous corpus-based findings have emerged from contrastive interlanguage analyses (Granger, 1996) identifying lexical, grammatical, phraseological, stylistic, and pragmatic features of learner language. Research suggests that English language learners clearly exhibit problems of frequency, register, positioning, semantics, and phraseology (Gilquin et al., 2007). Although most of the findings are still largely at the level of implications, which may have delayed pedagogical use (Granger, 2009), corpus-based methodologies are slowly but surely making their way toward the classroom.

3.4. Corpus-Based Approach and Writing Pedagogy

This part of the chapter at hand profoundly highlights the way EFL students use corpus-based materials in FL writing instruction so as to gain deeper insight into how learners may benefit from corpus-based writing activity. As learners are supposed to gain profit from such an experience, it is crucial to determine how they react to a classroom environment in which corpus use has the lion's share. As such, EFL teachers can dynamically adopt corpus-based techniques in such a way that creates more effective and meaningful learning conditions.

One of the central principles of the Corpus Based Approach to language descriptions is that vocabulary and grammar are interrelated rather than distinctive from each other (Halliday, 1992; Sinclair, 1991). Within this linking of vocabulary and grammar, also known as lexico-grammar, there is an emphasis on the co-occurrence or most frequent combinations of words, i.e., “collocation” (Biber & Conrad, 2001; Conrad, 2000). For instance, the noun “location” is often followed by the prepositions “of” and “for.”

This combined focus on lexical input and grammatical function is of a considerable value to someone acquiring English as a foreign language, as well as to EFL teachers.

Recent attempts to connect the Corpus Based Approach with genre analysis have been particularly beneficial in such domains as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Genre-based corpus analysis looks for common collocational frameworks within particular genres of communication, and in the process facilitates more effective communication of the kind expected inside specific genres, such as medical or legal English, where specialised word patterns are likely to occur. Given such emphasis, the use of corpus data has become increasingly appealing in the context of FL writing instruction, where the simultaneous focus on vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns provides foreign language writers with the kinds of target language input they especially need to achieve high levels of proficiency as FL writers.

In addition to the lexico-grammatical expediency, the Corpus-Based Approach has also been regarded as contributive to FL writing by providing students with authentic experience of real language use corpora and large quantities of real-life target language discourse. Thurstun and Candlin (1998) demonstrate that:

exposure to these examples of genuine language use can (a) enrich learners' understanding of specific uses of target words in a wide variety of contexts and (b) expand their FL linguistic repertoire. Students' encounters with these multiple samples of discourse combinations should then contribute to growth as FL writers (and readers) (p. 256).

As corpora have proved to facilitate the process FL writing, an appeal has been launched for an immediate implementation of such a paradigm in teaching materials and classroom activities. This does not mean an exclusive corpus-dominated writing pedagogy, but rather the inclusion of some corpus-based activities with respect to treating the language side of FL writing. This shift towards a corpus component has been growing concern about the traditional way in which teachers and textbook writers have provided language input for students. Biber (2001) points out that "these decisions have usually been based on the author's gut-level impressions and anecdotal evidence of how speakers and writers use language" (p. 101). Similarly, teachers may include their own notions of which language items are most useful for students to learn.

In this context, Biber (2001) argues “empirical analyses of representative corpora provide a much more solid foundation for descriptions of language use.”

As noted earlier, another fruitful implementation useful of the Corpus-Based Approach to teaching FL writing resides in exposing students to various authentic texts in order to raise their familiarisation with the functions of words in specific contexts or genres. Odlin (2001) states that:

By helping students acquire contextualized grammatical knowledge, this corpus-based approach teaches them (indirectly or directly, depending on the explicitness of the instruction) how and where to put words into sentences, which a dictionary often fails to do. (p. 25).

In a study of a course employing corpora, Tribble (2002, p. 133) argued that corpus-based activity increased “contextual and linguistic awareness raising during an EAP course.” This is the very defining contribution of corpora: their potential of providing FL writers with the concrete linguistic input necessary for high-quality compositions.

Including a corpus-based dimension in FL writing instruction further boosts inductive language learning, which is a crucial facet of second language acquisition. Inductive learners acquire the ability of elucidating their own inductive discoveries about the target language as they are exposed to multiple instances of a specific linguistic item in use. The result is student-centered discovery learning, which fosters self-confidence and mastery of the learning process (Johns, 1991; Stevens, 1995).

The computer-based nature of a corpus component can also favour EFL learning because it significantly increases opportunities for exposure to and contact with English language texts. That is, through such computer-based artifacts as the Internet and hypertexts, with their multiple links to other texts, students gain access to an almost limitless supply of target language texts (Conrad, 2000). Computational analysis, then, facilitates the selection of texts from whichever discourses students prefer to work within, as opposed to relying on more general texts. A student interested in chemical engineering, for example, can quickly locate and surf chemical engineering-based Internet sites and select those texts of greatest linguistic value relative to her or his needs. Then, web-based corpora are becoming increasingly available for language learning and teaching purposes (Sun, 2000).

For example, the computer provides access to the vast riches of the Bank of English, a storehouse of tens of millions of samples of authentic English collocations and other linguistic items based at the University of Birmingham in England (Powell and Simpson, 2001; Swales and Malczewski, 2001).

Furthermore, research has yet to confirm the benefits of corpus-based activities, and only a few empirical studies have investigated student responses to corpus use. “Some supplementary findings suggest that students have a positive attitude toward vocabulary learning while using corpora” (Cobb, 1997; Thurstun and Candlin, 1998, p. 254). In Thurstun and Candlin’s pilot study (1998), for example, “participants reacted positively toward this innovation in vocabulary teaching. However, they also reported some negative reactions, such as, some students were puzzled by the cut-off sentences of the one-line concordances and daunted by the difficulty of the authentic academic texts” (p. 271).

In an attempt to capture the students’ reaction to a corpus-based instruction, Sun (2000) used a questionnaire to identify the Taiwanese EFL students’ stances about a web-based concordancing. The findings demonstrated that majority of the students have positively reacted to the web-based concordancing mostly due to the latter ability of providing authentic language use. Among its specific benefits, they felt the approach was most helpful in acquiring knowledge of the actual usage of individual words as well as phrases, and in reading comprehension. The least effective areas, in their view, were writing proficiency, application of grammatical rules, and understanding the meaning of vocabulary. The students also expressed concern about the slow speed of Internet connections and the time involved in conducting an analysis of concordance data. Qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions likewise showed that students perceived data analysis of concordance output as problematic due to the huge amount of data available and difficulties in adjusting to the inductive learning style fostered by corpus pedagogy. As Sun (2000) noted, “they seem most comfortable with the traditional role of learning, being in a deductive learning model” (p. 8).

Kennedy and Miceli (2001) conducted perhaps the most interesting study of classroom teachers relying on a corpus component in their daily teaching activities. The study was about teaching Italian as a foreign language in Australia. The researchers compiled their own small corpus that mainly consisted of texts of informal personal writing.

Noting that “there is relatively little [research] on how learners actually go about investigations” (p. 77). By doing so, they aimed to evaluate how independent students became in using the corpus for their own purposes after being trained in the approach. Of particular note here is their use of the apprenticeship approach in order to lead the students to successful corpus investigations “in a gradual and guided manner” (2001, p.77). Based on the results of their study, Kennedy and Miceli (2001) highlighted the need to first train students to develop corpus research skills necessary for successful corpus investigations prior to immersing them in the corpus activities themselves. The main positive finding was the enhanced ability to provide authentic examples of word use in various contexts and specific expressions in particular types of text. As in Sun’s study, they found that the most serious problem is the time-consuming nature of data analysis.

Thus, Kennedy and Miceli’s studies (2001) were deficient in providing a clear understanding of student reactions to the corpus-based pedagogical activity which is critically needed if teachers are to insightfully apply a corpus component in EFL teaching, particularly FL writing instruction. As an attempt to dispel this enigmatic issue, the researcher must scrutinise how and in what ways a corpus-based paradigm contributes to development of FL writing ability, the nature of student difficulties in the use of a corpus, and what needs to be done to help learners overcome those difficulties. These issues reside at the heart of the challenges the researcher is willing to capture, address, tackle, undertake, and deal with both in the theoretical as well as the practical parts of the study at hand.

3.5. Corpus-Based Approach and Lexico-Grammatical Competence

In recent years, interest in teaching grammar has been revived as indicated, evidenced by many publications on the issue, including those demonstrating the importance and benefits of grammar instruction on students’ writing proficiency (N. Ellis, 2005; R. Ellis, 2001, 2002; Philp, 2003; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) and those suggesting new theories and approaches to grammar instruction (Conrad, 2000; R. Ellis, 1995; Francis, 1993; Hahn, 2000; Hinkel & Fotos, 2002; Hughes & McCarthy, 1998; Johns, 1994; Larsen-Freeman, 2002, 2003; Liu & Master, 2003; Thornbury, 2001). Among the suggested theories and paradigms, three speculate: grammar teaching in discourse contexts, teaching grammar with a lexico-grammatical approach, and corpus or data-based teaching. It is worth mentioning that these three trends are intertwined and interrelated as will be shown later in this part of the chapter.

The idea of teaching grammar in contextual discourse is rooted in functional grammar and is based on the dogma that grammar is not limited to forms, but rather expands to include semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (context-appropriate use) (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). The Functionalism trend considers grammar as a resource for language users in the process of meaning-making in a given social context. In this respect Larsen-Freeman (2003) argues that:

language form, meaning, and use should be approached as an integrated whole. The three aspects of grammar are interwoven because a change in one will involve a change in another”. English language students should learn not only how to use correct grammatical forms but also how to use them in a meaningful and appropriate way.

As documented in the research literature; traditional grammar teaching has characteristics of being limited to merely teaching grammatical forms and conventions with minimal, sometimes no, reference to their discourse contexts. As such, it has been deficient to inform appropriately the matter of when and why a grammatical form is used in a given context. As a result, students often do not know how to use grammatical forms meaningfully and appropriately. Contrariwise, grammar instruction in context is proved to be contributive in aiding students examine and learn how given forms are used in contexts for meaningful communication.

To go deeper, lexico-grammar views lexicon and grammar as two inherently connected parts of a single entity, challenging the traditional “wisdom of postulating separate domains of lexis and syntax” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 104). In this view, Francis (1993) asserts that “a grammatical structure may be lexically restricted and, conversely, lexical items are often grammatical in nature, for the use of a lexical item often has grammatical implications” (p. 142). Many corpus-based studies have exhibited this close lexical and grammatical connection (Biber et al., 1998; Biber and Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan, 1999; Francis, Hunston, and Manning, 1996, 1998). There also has been increasing evidence in applied linguistics showing the importance of contextual patterns in language use and learning (Hunston & Francis, 1998). In light of these findings, many scholars have argued for the use of a lexico-grammatical approach in language instruction (Aston, 2001; Clear, 2000; Schmitt, 2004, 2005; Sinclair, 1991).

Aston (2001, p. 15) claims that:

insofar as different words appear to have distinctive collocational, colligational, semantic, pragmatic and generic associations, . . . every word may have its own grammar in these respects, a grammar which can only be acquired through experience of its typical contextual patterning.

The suggestion of using corpus analysis in grammar teaching has resulted from rapid advancement in computer technology and Corpus Linguistics in recent years, which has showed unprecedented potential for language learning and teaching. Corpus concordance not only makes accessible enormous amount of authentic language input but also creates various inductive and deductive language learning opportunities not available in the past (Aston, 2001; Conrad, 2000; Francis, 1993; Hunston, 2002; Hunston & Francis, 1998; Johns, 1994; Sinclair, 2004; Stevens, 1995).

In terms of inductive learning, language learners observe grammar and vocabulary usages in concordance data, and then they discover and generalise findings about usage patterns and rules. In deductive learning, language learners use corpora either to test the rules and patterns they have learned or to classify concordance data by applying the rules and patterns. It has been argued that such learning activities, especially the inductive type, motivate students and promote discovering learning. They are “particularly effective for the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary” because they help learners notice and retain lexico-grammatical usage patterns better by engaging them in a deeper language processing. Francis and Johns (1998) also contended that conducting concordance analyses of recurrent collocational and colligational patterns leads to acquisition of more useful general grammatical rules. Furthermore, corpus data offer contextualised language, which enables learners to better understand what Larsen-Freeman (2002) called “grammar of choice” in language use, a choice that native speakers often make according to the context.

Although arising from different theoretical domains, the three suggested practices (teaching grammar in context, approaching grammar from a lexico-grammatical perspective, and using corpora in teaching lexico-grammar) are inherently connected, as shown in many studies (e.g., Aston, 2001; Biber et al., 1998; Conrad, 2000; Hunston & Francis, 2000). Specifically, for example, lexico-grammar relies heavily on “contextual patterning” (Aston, 2001, p. 15).

Identifying such patterning requires contextualised corpus analyses. Similarly, contextualised grammar teaching entails the analysis of contextualised grammar usage, an undertaking that calls for corpus study. In short, examined closely together, research findings have shown the need for a contextualized lexico-grammatical approach to grammar instruction and the useful role that corpora can play in such teaching. In other words, the integration of corpus use, lexico-grammar, and contextualisation in grammar teaching is not a random proposition, but one motivated by the inherent connection and interdependency found among the three practices. However, although there have been quite a few publications introducing the use of corpora in language teaching (Aston, 2001; Flowerdew, 1996; Hunston & Francis, 1998; O’Keeffe and Farr, 2003; Tribble & Jones, 1997), little empirical research has been conducted on the effectiveness of these novel theories and practices. The present study, therefore, was conducted to examine whether and to what extent these new theories and practices are applicable and effective when used as a unified approach in the classroom.

In the publication of Thurstun and Candlin’s (1998) textbook *Exploring Academic English: A Workbook for Student Essay Writing*, based on the one-million-word Micro Concord Corpus of Academic Texts, there do not seem to have been any other similar initiatives, quite possibly owing to the fact that producing such corpus-based writing activities is a time-consuming task. In this workbook, the lexico-grammar is introduced according to its specific rhetorical function, e.g. referring to the literature, reporting the research of others. Within each broad function, each key word (e.g., claim, identify) is examined within the following chain of activities:

- Look at concordances for the key term and words surrounding it, thinking of meaning.
- Familiarise yourself with the patterns of language surrounding the key term by referring to the concordances as you complete the tasks.
- Practise key terms without referring to the concordances.
- Create your own piece of writing using the terms studied to fulfil a particular function of academic writing. (Thurstun and Candlin 1998, p. 272).

3.6. Corpus-Based Approach and Collocation

Collocation is one of the most useful assets that corpus research can provide for language description. Collocation refers to strings of words that conventionally go together, which can be more easily understood as “wording” or “word combinations.” The term ‘collocation’ was first used by Firth in its modern linguistic sense, but it was popularised by Sinclair later (McEnery & Wilson, 2001; Partington, 1998). As Sinclair (1991, p. 57) observes “collocation is originally confined to lexical association patterns, but it often expands to include the association with grammatical items”. Many scholars claim that collocation is at the heart of lexico-grammar that looks at words in lexical as well as grammatical surrounding contexts of occurrence.

To further elaborate the notion of collocation, Kennedy (1998) argues that the concept of collocation as the place “where grammar and lexis meet in the phrase” (p. 289). Aijmer and Altenberg (1991) also assert that “collocations ... represent the intersection of lexicon and grammar, an area which can be fruitfully studied in corpora” (p. 4). Whereas Chomskyan linguistics views the irregularity of collocation as a challenge to the rule-governed generative grammar, many scholars claim that human beings’ language use is not so much creative or generative and that the conventional and idiomatic use of language comprises an integral part of language (Hopper, 1998). In their groundbreaking article “Two puzzles for linguistic theory: native-like selection and native-like fluency”, Pawley and Syder (1983, p.191) claimed that native-like usage is much more restricted and predictable than is often assumed. They argued:

alternative explanations about the idiomatic use of language, which was not clearly explained by the then dominant generative grammar approach to language. In order to solve the puzzle of native speakers’ ability to select natural and conventional usage among the wide possibility of grammatically correct sentences, they drew upon a ‘lexical sentence stem, a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed.

According to them, one of the key factors in the fixed word combinations or “form-meaning pairings” is social recognition or institutionalisation. Most importantly, they argued, using idiomatic phrases reduces the work of information retrieval and processing and allows speakers/listeners to engage in other discourse-level communication skills.

Pawley and Syder's work is congruent with the Corpus Linguistics approach to language. From the Corpus-Based Approach viewpoint, native speakers' language use is not so much inventive as conventional, as is evident in fixed collocational patterns (Hill, 2000). The collocational field has recently gained great attention from those interested in FL acquisition and pedagogy. Hill (2000), who emphasises the importance of collocational knowledge in FL pedagogy, addresses a fundamental question of what it means to know a language. He claims that "students do not really 'know' or 'own' a word unless they also know how that word is used emphasis in original, which means knowing something about its collocational field" (p. 60). That is, knowing a language really means knowing a variety of collocation patterns and learning "word grammar". Consequently, this view of language calls for a change in the traditional approach to teaching a foreign language. It asks for the combination of lexis and grammar rather than teaching grammatical rules and vocabulary separately.

Like Pawley and Syder, Hill (2000) argues that the use of fixed expressions can facilitate naturalness, fluency, and effectiveness in language use. Further, according to Hill, the barrier for intermediate students to move up to the advanced level is the lack of collocational knowledge. As he puts it:

Spending a lot of class time on traditional EFL grammar condemns learners to remaining on the intermediate plateau. Helping learners to become advanced, one needs a huge injection of lexis. It is lexis in general, and collocational competence in particular, which allows students to read more widely, understand more quickly, and speak more fluently (2000, p. 68).

Collocational knowledge has become widely recognised as an important component of FL writing proficiency (Lewis, 2000). One of the most difficult challenges for language learners is to acquire the natural, idiomatic word combinations that are commonly used in the language. While there is still a lack of a clear understanding of how EFL learners (even with sufficient grammatical knowledge) acquire native-like fluency that is not fully explained by rule-based formal system, CBA can contribute to solving a chronic puzzle in FL pedagogy.

A number of scholars have addressed the role of collocation in foreign language acquisition (Cowie, 1992; Fillmore, 1979; Granger, 2001; Hakuta, 1974; Howarth 1996, 1998; Krashen & Scarcella, 1978; Lewis 1997, 2000; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Nesselhauf, 2003). Although they used different terminology to refer to collocation, they relied on a common framework for defining the characteristics of collocation. They often used different terms interchangeably: “recurrent or fixed combinations” (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993), “lexical phrases” (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992), “lexicalized sentence stem” (Pawley & Syder, 1983), “idiom principle” (Sinclair, 1991), “phraseological composite units” (Howarth, 1996, 1998), “prefabricated patterns” (Granger, 2001), “prefabricated routines” (Hakuta, 1974; Krashen & Scarcella, 1978), “formulaic expressions” (Fillmore, 1979), and “formulas, prefabricated or ready-made language, chunks, unanalyzed language or wholes, etc” (Weinert, 1995).

Despite their uses of different terms, the researchers seemed to agree that collocation should be understood as a continuum according to their restrictions of word combinations. Howarth (1996, 1998) and Nesselhauf (2003) presented the most explicit continuum model. Both of them focused on “verb-noun combinations” and presented three classifications of the collocation: “free combinations (both verb and noun are used unrestrictedly, e.g., want a car), restricted collocations (the verb is used restrictedly and combined with certain nouns, e.g., take a picture), and idioms (both verb and noun are used restrictedly and seen as a chunk, e.g., foot the bill)”. They pointed out that traditional English education has focused on the idioms at the expense of “collocations that are much less fixed in form than idioms and, thus, potential problems for learners” (Howarth, 1996, p. 1).

Further, Howarth (1996, 1998) emphasised the importance of the awareness in production rather than in comprehension: The difference can be seen between problems of encoding and decoding. “Foot the bill might pose problems of decoding, but would be avoided by most learners in production. Problems of encoding might arise more often at the free end of the spectrum, where learners are unaware of the arbitrary way in which restrictions operate” (1996, p. 44). In particular, Howarth (1998) argued that “collocations can be considered most centrally involved in the process of composition at clause level, therefore potentially sensitive indicators of learners’ acquisition” (p. 26). Many researchers agreed that collocation plays a particularly important role in production rather than in comprehension (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993). As Gabry_Biskup (1990) puts it, “collocations do not cause a problem of perception (understanding) but that of production” (p. 35).

A body of research based on this framework exists in order to investigate learners' use of collocation in FL writing. Although they adopted different tasks for the study, most of them focused mainly on quantitative analysis of students' one-time collocation use or final products of writing. "Those studies can be categorized into three areas: 1) test on students' collocation knowledge, 2) error analysis in students' actual writing, and 3) comparison of native speakers' writing with learners' writing" (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993, p. 2). The first area mostly used a cloze test or translation task to test learners' FL collocation knowledge, while focusing on a smaller unit of clause level. The second area examined learners' writing that was produced through composition tasks and developed error analysis in their collocational uses, (Nesselhauf, 2003). Thus, the studies in the area often focused on the impact of students' native language on their FL collocation production and mostly presented the result of L1 interference. The last area often adopted corpus analysis to compare production data of native speakers with that of learners to identify differences in the use of collocation (Granger, 2001; Howarth, 1996, 1998).

The predominant quantitative analysis of students' collocation uses leaves other areas unexplored. Few studies have examined EFL students' collocation learning and writing processes, and the relationship between the two. In particular, little research has investigated students' own use of corpus technology and its impact on their collocational knowledge and FL writing. In order to fully understand how the corpus approach contributes to learners' acquisition of collocation and FL writing proficiency, however, it is needed to look at their writing processes as well as products. Further investigation is needed to explore not only EFL students' writing experiences associated with corpus use, but also how corpus technology can facilitate their collocational competence.

3.7. The Corpus-Based Approach and the Development of Classroom Materials

Several researchers have used corpus findings to critically examine English textbooks (Holmes, 1988; Kennedy, 1987a, 1987b; Ljung, 1990; Mindt, 1996, 1997). These studies used similar methods. They compared English textbooks with major (general) corpora to investigate whether the textbooks reflect actual language use as it is shown in the corpora. Their focus was on the examination of certain lexical or grammatical items of interest in the EFL textbooks. They analysed the frequency and the treatment of those items in both sample textbooks and standard corpora of English.

From their results, most of the studies discovered considerable differences in the presentations of the items between the textbooks and the corpora. Some textbooks emphasised the items that were found less frequently in real language use, while paying less attention to the items that were actually more often used. The researchers conclude that the findings of corpus-based studies should be incorporated into the textbooks in order to provide students with authentic language use.

With the development of various kinds of corpora, there has been another line of research that has used the corpora more extensively. Importantly, most of the corpus studies have focused on writing pedagogy. The studies can be divided into two areas: sentence-based corpus analysis and genre-based corpus analysis. Whereas corpus-based studies in the 1980s and early 1990s largely concentrated on linguistic analysis at the sentence level, corpus research has now expanded to embrace a broader genre-based analysis at the discourse level (Flowerdew, 2002). It is important to remember, though, that the studies share one common characteristic of corpus research, regardless of their use of a sentence or a genre as a unit of analysis. That is, they all look for lexico-grammatical patterning of texts, which is a central concept of any corpus research. In addition, they both aim to enhance materials development and syllabus design based on the insights and findings of corpus analysis (Conrad, 1999; Gavioli & Aston, 2001). In other words, their common objective is to employ more accurate descriptions of language use by corpus analysis to create teaching materials and activities with a particular focus on writing skills.

The first area, sentence-based corpus analysis, focuses on linguistic patterns of a text at the sentence level, while mainly drawing upon general corpora for analysis. Thus it investigates linguistic characteristics across genres and attempts to obtain general descriptions of language. Also, this line of research is largely concerned with a micro level of analysis, such as articles, prepositions, and certain words (Johns 1991, 1994; McCay, 1980; Thurstun & Candlin, 1998; Tribble, 1991). However, although the analysis is at a micro level, it aims not only to enhance students' awareness of contextualised grammar, but also to expand their understanding of functions of words in a variety of contexts. The studies of this area often demonstrate a strategy of designing corpus/concordance-based materials and tasks that can be used in the classroom. In so doing, they present possibilities of using corpus approaches in FL instruction.

On the other hand, the second area, genre-based corpus analysis, has recently developed genre-based approaches into the corpus analysis of texts. The studies of this area look for identification of lexico-grammatical patterns of a particular genre rather than general descriptions across the genres. In other words, this area of research aims to illuminate idiosyncratic linguistic characteristics of a particular genre. Biber's (1988) study is seminal in this area. Biber (1998) conducted an exhaustive analysis of spoken and written genres by use of large English corpora. His study was built on the idea that a single dimension cannot explain textual variation among genres and that a multi-dimensional approach is necessary. Biber (1998) thus developed a "multi-feature/multi-dimensional" model of which methodology embraces both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

In particular, his analysis was based on patterns of collocation as well as frequency counts of linguistic features. The main assumption of his analysis was "particular sets of linguistic features co-occur frequently in texts because they are serving some common communicative function in those texts" (1998, p. 13). As a result, he identified linguistic co-occurrence patterns that were grouped into factors, which showed underlying functional dimensions. His study contributed to establishing a linguistic basis for stylistic variation among genres. Since Biber's attempt (1998), a growing number of studies have used corpus techniques in combination with genre analysis. Since corpus methodology and genre analysis are both based on text analysis, many researchers have argued for the usefulness of integrating the two approaches (e.g., Gledhill, 2000). The emphasis of this line of research is on linguistic specification of a given type of discourse by use of corpus analysis. It is, then, no surprise that the studies usually employ specialised corpora, which are compiled from texts of the target genre.

More particularly, those studies have argued that the teaching of academic writing needs to focus on the most frequent linguistic and rhetorical features that are specific within a discipline so that students can become aware of the function of the common collocational frameworks of the target genre and thus finally improve their writing skills (Gledhill, 2000; Hyland, 2002; Jabbour, 2001). It is worth noticing here that the studies often aim to provide insights into the teaching of a particular genre, which is commonly associated with the field of EAP/ESP. Consequently, the best use of those studies seems to enhance the development of materials for teaching the target genre, but, as Flowerdew (2002) notes, their findings have yet to be transferred to EAP teaching materials.

3.8. Limitations of the Corpus-Based Pedagogy

During the last few years, some scholars have adopted a more critical stance, drawing attention to potential drawbacks of using corpora in language teaching. The following key issues have been elaborated by Flowerdew (2003, p. 59) as the main reservations about applying corpus linguistics to pedagogy.

- Corpus linguistic techniques encourage a more bottom-up rather than top-down processing of text in which truncated concordance lines are examined atomistically.
- Corpus data are decontextualised and, for this reason, may not be directly transferable to students' own context of writing.
- Corpus-based learning is usually associated with an inductive approach to learning, in which rules, or indeed patterns, are derived from multiple examples, rather than a rule-based deductive approach. This approach might not be the most appropriate choice for some students.
- There are different types of corpora (general, specialized, learner) and different types of online resources (dictionaries, grammars). Students may have difficulty in selecting the most appropriate corpus and resource for a particular query.

The previously outlined issues are not in fact discrete but interrelated, as the following passage will show. They are examined more profoundly with a particular reference to corpora of written text.

1. Corpus-Based Analysis Favors a Bottom-up Processing of Text

The major critic of corpus-based analysis resides in the argument of encouraging a more bottom-up rather than top-down processing of text. As such, the concordance lines are analysed in a somewhat separate and discrete way without recourse to the overall discourse. In this respect, Mehlmauer-Larcher (2005, p. 71) argues "There are, however, certain parts of a text that even a concordancer cannot reach. These are aspects of the macro-structure of a text, such as textual moves, i.e. a unit of text that expresses a specific communicative function".

In the last two decades, however, corpus-based research has moved away from being merely restricted to the bottom-up paradigm to implement the dynamics of the top-down analysis. Current corpus realms pay much more attention to these two different modes of text processing. In this respect, Biber et al. (2007) explain the concept behind these two different, yet complementary, approaches thus:

In the ‘top-down’ approach, the functional components of a genre are determined first and then all texts in a corpus are analysed in terms of these components. In contrast, textual components emerge from the corpus analysis in the ‘bottom-up’ approach, and the discourse organization of individual texts is then analysed in terms of linguistically-defined textual categories (p. 11).

2. Corpus Data are Decontextualised and may not be Directly Transferable

Widdowson’s (2004) arguments on the decontextualised nature of corpus data are well-rehearsed in the literature. He believes that corpus stands for a mere sample of language, as opposed to an example of authentic language, because it is detached from the communicative context in which it was used “the text travels but the context does not travel with it” (p. 202).

To address the issue of decontextualisation, one has to analyse the demerits with a detailed scrutiny. Whether Widdowson is correct or not would depend very much on what is being transferred. In this respect, Charles (2007) disagrees with Widdowson on the issue of decontextualisation and maintains that one of the advantages of the type of corpus work described above is that “... it allows students to gain a greater sense of contextualization than is possible to achieve through the use of paper-based materials” (p. 295).

3. Corpus-Based Pedagogy is usually Associated with an Inductive Approach which may not be Appropriate for all Students

Foreign language teachers have long been confronted with the predicament of approaching their instruction deductively or by the use of an inductive teaching. As far as CBA is concerned, scholars label it to be an inductive approach. In this respect, Gavioli (2005) and Meunier (2002) have noted the drawbacks of an inductive approach, in which students extrapolate the rules, or patterning.

Meunier (2002), from examples, states that:

Despite their advantages, corpus-based activities have some drawbacks.... The various learning strategies (deductive vs. inductive) that students adopt can lead to problems. Some students hate working inductively and teachers should aim at a combined approach (p.135).

Following Meunier, Flowerdew (2008) also believes that an inductive approach may not be suitable for students with regard to their diversified cognitive styles. Field-dependent students who have cooperative and interactive learning styles may benefit from this type of pedagogy. However, field-independent learners who tend to prefer instruction emphasising rules may not take to the inductive approach inherent in corpus-based pedagogy.

Another reason is whether an inductive or deductive approach is to be adopted depends on the nature of a particular enquiry. If the enquiry is based on a grammar rule (e.g., the difference between *for* and *since* in time expressions) (Tribble & Jones, 1990), then the discrepancies are salient and predetermined. Nevertheless, if the enquiry focuses on an aspect of phraseology, students may find it difficult to extrapolate the tendencies associated with patterns in language (Hunston & Francis, 2000), as they may be confronted with conflicting examples which do not adhere to a specific facet in all situations.

4. Lack of Linguistic Generativity

Chomsky and his supporters have strongly criticised the value of corpus in linguistic research. At the University of Texas in 1957, he argued, "any natural corpus will be skewed. Some sentences won't occur because they are obvious; others because they are false, still others because they are impolite. The corpus, if natural, will be so wildly skewed that the description [based upon it] would be no more than a mere list" (p. 159). Generativists argue that corpus cannot provide evidence for linguistic innateness. By virtue of its structure and content, it only can represent the linguistic 'performances' but does not reflect on the linguistic 'competence' and 'generativity' of the users. A corpus, which records only the examples of performance, cannot be useful to linguists, who seek to understand the tacit, internalised knowledge of language rather than the external evidences of language use on various contexts. For brevity reasons, the researcher avoided illustrating a counter-argument

here as it is deeply analysed and stated in the previous passages of the theoretical correlation between writing and the Corpus-Based Approach.

5. Technical Difficulties and Lack of Information from Visual Elements

Making a corpus is a large, multidirectional, complex undertaking. The whole process entails an effective data processing system, which may be out of reach. Both teachers and students need to be trained in computer use and data handling. Unlike native speakers, foreign language teachers are less willing to take up computer into their stride. Computer scientists, on the other hand, are also not enthusiastic to work with the linguists in tandem. The lacuna is huge and the appeal for a common ground is as necessary as never. Moreover, corpus does not contain graphs, tables, pictures, diagrams, figures, images, formulae and similar other visual elements, which are often used in a piece of text for proper cognition and understanding. A corpus devoid of such visual elements is bound to lose much of its information.

3.9. Conclusion

The application of the corpus-based paradigm in English teaching and learning has gained a ubiquitous growing interest. The mergence between corpora and language apprenticeship has prompted radical changes in the way FL materials' development, syllabus design, and teaching methodology are approached and designed. As the focus of this research is on the teaching of FL writing, including a corpus-based dimension in FL writing instruction have contributed in discovering the behaviour of various lexical and grammatical features. It further boosts inductive language learning through an intensive exposure to a bundle of authentic language use data.

In this chapter that we culminate, an attempt has been made to establish a theoretical correlation between the Corpus-Based Approach and the writing skill. The theoretical foundations also included a detailed elaboration of Corpus Linguistics as a field of inquiry with a particular reference to the Corpus-Based Approach as well as the latter's implementation to the field of teaching writing. Last but not least, the current chapter tackled an array of limitations of the corpus-based pedagogy.

Chapter

Four

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Procedures

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Chapter Four

Research Methodology and Procedures

4.1. Introduction

Research methodology refers to the scientific steps and procedures through which a specific research is systematically conducted. It is, generally, considered as a way to solve the research problem using various methods and techniques to evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability (Kothari, 2004). Studies, methods, and approaches to accomplish a given study are the main parts of the research which indicate the validity of the study in addition to the research hypothesis, which in its turn is conceived as the starting point of the research.

The main aim of the chapter at hand is to shed light on the research methodology employed in the current study. It purports to depict and emphasise the methodological design and the elements used to carry out this study. This part of the chapter, thus, analyses how the investigation was administered, encompassing profound descriptions of the participants, research design, methods, and the procedures. The latter are scrutinized having started with the pilot study and ending up with the main study. The statistical tools used in computation are displayed at the end of this chapter. Additionally, all the problems that were faced and the limitations of the study are involved.

4.2. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a term that stands for any scientific procedure through which a study is carried on to solve a research problem (Burn, 1994). It tackles the various steps, methods, techniques the researcher adopt whenever he/she intends to study a research problem. This part of the chapter is devoted to describe and explain the sample selection and the procedure used to analyse the available data for this study.

4.2.1. Sampling and Research Participants

In order to successfully select representative informants, it is necessary to identify the population. Theoretically speaking, the population in researches is “the entire group of individuals to be considered” (Kalat, 2011). To ascertain the representative nature of the informants and the tendency of generating data from the entire population, the researcher opted for two major techniques of selecting a sample in terms of probability and nonprobability sampling.

Probability sampling elaborates itself when “each member of the population has an equal like hood of being selected to be part of the sample” (Jackson, 2011). This kind of sampling in turn consists of three types: random sampling (each participant of the population is provided with an equal opportunity to be a part of the study), stratified sampling (the entire population is divided to different sub-groups with specific characteristics and a random sample is selected according to these characteristics), and cluster sampling (the entire population is already divided to groups or clusters and a random group or groups are taken as samples) (Jackson, 2011).

As for the Nonprobability sampling, it is used when the sample is engaged in a procedure that does not employ equal opportunities to all the individual members of the population to be chosen. The nonprobability sampling is twofold: convenience sampling (taking the participant who are conveniently available), and quota sampling (deciding in advance certain characteristics that the study needs) Jackson (2011). In addition to the two types of nonprobability sampling pointed at by Jackson, Zikmund and Babin (2007) add the judgment or purposive sampling type. This pertains to the selection of the sample with predetermined purposes, even when the sample is not fully representative. As such, considering the sampling techniques available, a combination of cluster random sampling for EFL students and judgment sampling for EFL teachers was used in this study.

4.2.1.1. Students’ Participants

The selected population had formally studied English for at least eight years at diversified apprenticeship levels. In their current stage, they are instructed over a period of three years for getting a ‘Licence degree’ in English as a foreign language. During the first two years of education, they are all exposed to the same kind of English courses such as

Written Expression, Oral Expression, Grammar, etc. However, once in third year, the students belonging to a particular branch receive different courses in separate groups. Thus, we may consider that second year students as homogeneous regarding learning English.

The researcher selected second year LMD students of the department of English at Batna 2 University, during the academic year 2017-2018 as a population of the current study. We restricted the population to second year instead of first year mainly due to the fact that the former best introduces students to the subject matter of the study at hand which is lexicogrammatical competence. Further, the choice of second year population comes from the belief that writing, lexis and grammar must be developed and mastered at the beginning levels so that the students can go beyond the basics and pursue other difficult aspects with less anxiety in the higher level.

Additionally, selecting second year students offered us the possibility to deal with students who have been more adapted to university study habits in comparison to first year university students. Having been used to learning that relied totally on the teachers' guidance in high school, first year students may not be prepared for the sudden shift to more autonomous learning entailed through the intervention of this study. Moreover, having received in first year the basic knowledge of sentence parts, sentence types, mechanics, and sentence level accuracy, the students are now ready for instruction targeting paragraph writing. The targeted population, to which we intend to generalize the findings of this investigation, are 283 in number divided into eight groups. From such a population, the researcher was given two groups to teach the module of Written Expression. Initially, the sample consisted of 65 students, but later on five of them were discarded from either the experimental group or the control group.

The remaining sample who accompanied the teacher researcher until the end of the experiment was 60 participants assigned into experimental group and control group (30 participants per group). Their ages ranged from 19 to 24 years old. The number of female participants amounted to 47, whereas that of the male participants corresponded to 13, the fact which reflects the gender bias within the department of English as a whole. The two groups were equally instructed by the same teacher (the researcher); however, the major difference between the two conditions is that the control group was taught differently from the experimental group. The control group was taught the usual way using the Process

Approach to the teaching of writing. However, the experimental group received instruction that is based on teaching writing through the implementation of CBA relying on corpus software, known as the British Academic Written English corpus (BAWE). Lastly, the participants were not informed that they were taking part in a research study for the sake of avoiding the biasing of the experiment's results.

4.2.1.2. Teachers' Participants

Teachers also played a major role in the accomplishment of this study. The researcher has the major aim of detecting their standpoints concerning the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the composition course. Actually, part time teachers who hold Master and who are preparing their doctorate theses seem to constitute a considerable number of the teachers' population in the department of English at Batna 2 University; of course, in collaboration with full time teachers whose being there is notably weighty. As detailed earlier, a sample of teachers was selected from this population on the basis of purposive sampling. The researcher selected the teachers intentionally as they are involved in teaching the module of written expression with at least four years of experience. The teacher participants were both females and males. Their experience of teaching EFL writing varies substantially (from three years to more than 20 years). Moreover, their levels of qualification are as follows: 18 teachers hold either Master or Magister and six teachers hold PhD.

4.2.2. Research Design

Basically, experimental psychology speculates frameworks of human sciences and utilizes various procedures of measuring the credibility and representativeness of these theories. Miller (1974, p. 2) argues that a psychological concept "has to fit the facts of behaviour as derived from systematic observations taken in carefully controlled conditions." The implemented methods must be planned to smoothly collect the data that would be able to arbitrate the relationship between variables; dependent or independent. Research design involves the planning of relevant information collection. The independent variable is "the factor that the experimenter can manipulate or arrange" (Chen, 2005, p. 25) while for the dependent variable, the experimenter cannot arrange the values due to the fact that they can only be obtained from the contributors. Research design is the fundamental step of a research after determining the problem and setting of the hypothesis.

According to Zikmund and Babin (2007), it “provides a framework or plan of action for the research” (p. 64). In the current study, the experimental and descriptive research types were opted for. Descriptive research takes place when the aim is to explore a variable or a set of variables as they exist naturally. It is mainly concerned with describing individual variables than investigating the causal relationship between the variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011). Here, descriptive approach was used partially as closing research to report the students and teachers’ attitudes toward some relevant research areas. In addition, it was used to find out about the major problems linked to aspects being investigated by the researcher.

As for the experimental research, it is “the only research method in psychology that allows for systematically observing causal relationships between variables.” (Dumont, 2008, p. 17). The variables which constitute this research are classified under the sub-headings ‘independent variable’ and ‘dependent variable’. This distinction is crucial to experimental research as it reveals how the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

In the current context, investigating the influence of the independent variable (the Corpus-Based Approach) on the dependent variable (students’ writing proficiency) was based on pre-test post-test control experimental group design. Kraska (2010) provides an inclusive description of this design as follows:

A pre-test is administered to a control group and an experimental group prior to the administration of the treatment. After the experiment, a post-test is administered to both groups, and gain scores from the pre-test to the post-test may be compared. Statistically, differences between gain score means may be computed using a t-test for independent samples if only two groups are involved. (p. 169)

A quasi-experimental design in terms of a pre-test post-test control experimental design using t-test for independent groups, therefore, was a research tool relied on in order to test the variables under investigation. The independent variables contain two groups of students: the experimental group students who were taught through the Corpus-Based Approach and the control group students who were taught writing through the dynamics of the Process Approach. As for the dependent variables, they consist of the writing tests scores which both groups obtained before and after the treatment.

4.2.3. Research Methods

Methodically speaking, there are two major approaches to data gathering and evaluation: quantitative and qualitative. A basic distinction between quantitative and qualitative studies is that the former entails numeric information, while the latter includes data that are not numeric. The quantitative approaches to research design, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis are the dominant paradigm in the area of empirical research (Adams, Fujii, & Mackey, 2005). Moreover, quantitative approaches provide precise presentations of findings related to research hypothesis (Chen, 2005). The nature of the current research implies the need of both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

4.2.4. Data Collection Instruments

The validity and reliability of any scientific findings is rooted in the adequacy and the appropriateness of the procedures as well the tools used. The latter encompass various types such as questionnaires, tests, interviews, and observations vary in their complexity, design, administration, and interpretation. In more details, researchers select these instruments depending on their efficiency in obtaining particular types of data and information. In tandem with the experimental and descriptive nature of the current study, the students' test and student and teacher questionnaires were taken to be the bedrock and the most salient instrument of data collection. The reason behind establishing such a combination is threefold: to test the hypotheses, provide a clearer detail and analysis, and to confirm the obtained results from each instrument.

4.2.4.1. Writing Tests

A test, according to Brown (2001) "is a way of measuring someone's ability or understanding in a given area" (p. 384). In other words, a test is administered to determine the learner's achievements in a particular field. A test is said to "measure what is meant to measure" (Hughes, 1989, p. 22; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 4) and its suitability is anchored in three criteria: practicality, reliability and validity. A practicality test is a test that is easy to manage, to score and to interpret. It is also enclosed by means of time constraints and financial limitations. However, a reliability test is a test that is dependable and consistent; whereas a valid test reveals "its appropriateness or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is supposed to measure" (Henning, 1987, p. 170; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 4).

In this study, two tests were used as a form of measurement of the students' writing performance for the purpose of confirming or disconfirming the hypotheses of this research. More specifically, the researcher was interested in measuring the use of CBA in developing the students writing before and after the treatment. As such, a writing pre-test was administered prior to the beginning of the treatment and a post-test following it. Further details are reported throughout this chapter.

4.2.4.2. Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires

In EFL studies, one of the most frequently used data gathering instruments is the questionnaire. In fact, the questionnaire is the most used tool in human sciences. Its popularity is rooted in many factors "They are easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable." (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 1). To go further, an effective questionnaire construction begins with respecting, first, the length, in the sense that, it must not be more than four (4) pages and, the time, for it should not take more than thirty minutes to be completed (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei & Clement, 2001).

By definition, questionnaires are "Any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Brown, 2001, p. 6). In the current study, two questionnaires were designed. The first questionnaire was administered to the experimental group participants to gauge their attitudes toward using corpora software and concordances in the accomplishment of their written tasks. The second questionnaire was given to second year Written Expression teachers to demonstrate their attitudes and beliefs about nearly the same themes addressed in the student questionnaire. Again, further details will be displayed throughout this chapter.

4.2.5. Statistical Methods

For the sake of reliability and scientifically valid analysis of research results, set of statistical analysis tools were opted for. First, the researcher used descriptive statistics to describe the obtained data. Second, we used inferential statistics to make conclusions beyond the data that we analysed and to reach conclusions regarding the postulated hypotheses.

4.2.5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, as the name denotes, stand for any descriptive coefficients that compile a set of data which represent a sample. The main objective is to provide a summary of the measures and calculations done on a specific study in terms of central tendency, and median.

The central tendency is considered to be the estimation of the centre of the values' distribution. In this research, the central tendency was indicated through two indicators: the mean and the mode. The mean "is found by adding together every score and dividing the total by the number of scores" (Miller, 1974, p. 23), while the mode is "the most frequently occurring value in a set of scores", Miller adds.

Dispersion, on the other hand, is a statistical term that refers to the extent to which a set of scores are spread out on either side of the central value (Miller, 1974, p. 27). Dispersion is calculated and measured through the range of the standard deviation and variances. In much simpler words, this was indicated through a comparison between the lowest and highest scores and values with their respective frequencies.

4.2.5.2. Inferential Statistics

Inferential data consists of the methods that permit the researcher to generalise his/her findings from a sample to the whole population by means of testing the hypothesis (Chen, 2005). It, additionally, enables the researcher to determine "whether or not the results confirm the anticipated outcomes of the independent variable" (Miller, 1974, p. 35). These procedures are accomplished in the mathematical universe by inferring the mathematical formula from the real world sample, working on the formula in the mathematical universe (Katz, 2006), and draw conclusions about the experiment effects. Moreover, it allows to detect the main differences in variables in addition to correlations between the variables which are relevant to the research questions.

a. The Statistical Test

Quantitative researches are usually administered by the use of specific statistical tests. Putting in place the adequate statistical test might be a problematic issue in research methodology, yet Chen (2005) speculates two types of research interests to be implemented

if a researcher is to determine the test that best fits his/her data and variables: evaluating group differences and examining relations between variables. The t test is one practice of group assessment for mean differences which anticipates that the rankings of the two groups come from normal populations with equal variance and the measurements are on an interval scale (Miller, 1974). In the contemporary research, the independent samples t tests appear to fit the data. It includes a "comparison of the performance between an experiment group and a control group to assess the effectiveness of a certain remedy." (Chen, 2005, p. 34).

To add more validity to the findings drawn from the comparison of central tendency and dispersion aspects, the researcher must use a specific statistical test. The choice of an effective selection of an effective statistical test is highly dependent on a few decisions about the research design. It is one of the most difficult decisions a researcher makes in the experimental process, for a misjudgement or an incorrect test may result in invalidation of the findings.

The most frequently implemented statistical significance tools for the analysis of the findings in which the data of two independent groups of subjects are compared can be either parametric (the z-test and t-test) or non-parametric (the Mann-Whitney and Chi-square test). However, the parametric tests are the most powerful ones to detect significance when it is present in the data (Miller, 1974, pp. 55-77).

Although the z-test and t-test are basically the same as they compare between two means, t-test is more adaptable than z-test because the latter often requires certain conditions to be reliable. Additionally, t-test has many techniques that suit any need. More importantly, the t-test is the most widely adopted test in language studies, Brown (1988, p. 165) asserts.

On the basis of the previous elaboration, the researcher opted for the t-test among the others as the adequate statistical test to discover the probability that the difference between the experimental group and the control group performances.

b. The Independent Sample t-test

The independent t-test is a statistical procedure that contrasts and compares the means between two unrelated groups. It answers the question of whether the difference between the compared means is statistically significant. For this purpose, one needs two variables from one population and sample.

This test involves a mathematical formula for calculating the value of the observed t , and then comparing it to the value of the tabulated t . The latter is determined by three criteria namely: the type of the hypothesis, the number of degree of freedom, and the level of significance. First, one needs to know the nature of the research hypothesis: whether it is one-tailed or a two-tailed hypothesis. In this study, it is one-tailed because the researcher was hoping to promote the aspects of grammatical as well as discourse structure levels in the students' writing. In other words, the students' performance was expected to go in one direction: positive. However, in case the researcher did not determine the effects of the treatment being a positive or negative one, the hypothesis should be two tailed so that the researcher can draw the right inferences from the statistical test. Second, to specify the critical value, it is important to calculate the degree of freedom. Mathematically, its formula is $N_1 + N_2 - 2$ (N_1 and N_2 stand for the number of the two independent sets of subjects). The third criterion refers to the level of significance. In this study, the researcher selected 0.05 level; that is, we were 95% confident that the results were due to the reflection of the treatment, but 5% of the results were actually just due to chance.

Before listing the steps needed for calculating an independent t -test, below are the meanings of the abbreviation used in the computation of the observed t .

- N_1 = stands for the number of the participants of the first group.
- N_2 = stands for the number of the participants of the second group.
- \bar{X}_1 = stands for the mean of the first group.
- \bar{X}_2 = stands for the mean of the second group.
- S_1^2 = stands for the variance of the first group.
- S_2^2 = stands for the variance of the second group.
- df = degree of freedom.

The steps:

1st Calculation of the Mean

The formula is: $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$ / N: The number of the students per group

2nd Calculation of the Variances

The formula is: $S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2$

3rd Calculation of the degree of freedom

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2$$

4th Calculation of the computed 't'

The formula is: $(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2) (N_1 N_2)}$

$$t_{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2) (N_1 + N_2)}}$$

5th Comparing the obtained t with the critical value.

4.3. Research Procedures

After completing the research design, the researcher moved the phase of application. Prior to embarking to the main study, it is necessary to conduct a pilot study that would detect the bugs of the implemented procedures.

4.3.1. Piloting the Study

Usually, the direct investigation of the experiment could be misleading, resulting in concrete shortcomings. The pilot study may be a substantial undertaken to avoid any sort of a problem that might arise when conducting a study.

Anderson and Arsenault (2004) refer to the pilot study as:

A small scale study conducted prior to the actual research. The entire pilot study is conducted in order to test the procedures and techniques to that they work satisfactory. Additionally, pilot studies are used to test questionnaires and other instruments and to see whether there is any possibility that worthwhile results will be found. (pp. 11- 12)

The pilot study of the current research was the initial step of the practical application of the experiment, as well as the initial step of the use of the students and teachers' questionnaires.

4.3.1.1. The Experiment

The students writing tests were not piloted because the instructions were simple and therefore comprehensible. Moreover, it was not possible to conduct a pilot study with its detailed procedures, with the same participants, during the same academic year 2017- 2018, because the time devoted to the main study would not have been enough. Given this situation, a pilot study was undertaken in 2016-2017 in the department of English at Batna 2 University with other participants who share the same characteristics with our participants. In other terms, during the academic year of 2016- 2017, the participants of the main study were in first year, while those whom the researcher conducted with the pilot study were in second year. During that year, the researcher did not intend to reach conclusions but, rather to get properly prepared for the experiment which would take place the next year with other participants. Through the pilot study, the researcher endeavoured to:

- Design carefully the experiment.
- Train himself and get accustomed to the aspects of the experiment
- Identify the potential practical problems which may occur while teaching aspects of Corpus Linguistics or using corpora and concordances
- Discard or re-examine the difficult aspects of the Corpus-Based Approach
- Try out the selected corpora used for the experiment.
- Record approximately the time needed for conducting the experiment.

To attain the aforementioned aims, primary data was gleaned from the researcher classroom observation and secondary data from a conversation with the student participants. As obtaining final results was out of the researcher concerns, we reported what happens in the pilot study qualitatively for the sake of describing only the design and the changes which took place in the main study. The researcher carried out eight observation sessions in total. The duration of each was 30 minutes. We exclusively limited to observe what took place with regards to the aims set for the pilot study. We provided a description according to three dimensions: teaching aspects of writing using the Corpus Based Approach, time allocated, and the corpora used in teaching. The researcher recorded field notes by writing down short words or phrases which serve as prompts to a full interpretation after leaving the field.

As stated earlier, the pilot study took place in the department of English at Batna 2 University. The participants were 35 second year students (28 females and seven males). Five participants did not attend the course regularly during the observation sessions. As for the materials, they were selected from the “British Academic Written English Corpus”.

In each observation session, the teacher researcher engaged the students in writing, focusing on the analysis of a specific aspect of grammar, cohesion, coherence, and collocation. The first three sessions were devoted to the cohesive devices associated with high-quality compositions, the second two sessions were about collocation in writing (main ideas and their locations), and the last three sessions were left to deal with the semantic prosody as well as the syntactic maturity at the macro level.

More specifically, each time the teacher researcher focuses on a specific aspect, he provides the students with a particular corpus-data to read first and discuss its content with them, then moves to introduce the selected aspect through referring to it. The students, after that, are provided with other data and are asked to analyse the selected aspect and demonstrate it to the class for a whole discussion. Besides classroom observation, the researcher undertook a conversation with the student participants in order to understand which aspect of corpus-based apprenticeship was challenging to them. Further to that, the researcher sought to know their reactions toward using such a means to teach writing. This informal conversation with the students was useful as it provided the researcher with interesting details that may not be captured through observation.

To summarise the findings of the pilot study, the researcher argues that it could provide some valuable insights. First, the researcher could identify the areas which might engender difficulties for the students. For example, teaching some aspects of cohesion and collocation without preliminary theoretical basis could not be so useful. As such, the researcher proposed to give students handouts about each aspect so that they get familiar with them before the analysis. Second, the pilot study was a good attempt to try out the difficulty of the selected corpora and concordances software. Third, the pilot study allowed the researcher to reconsider the time allocated for the experiment. Finally, as the student participants showed a positive attitude toward the assignments in the course of writing, the researcher maintained the Corpus-Based Approach as the main means for teaching writing.

4.3.1.2. Students' and Teachers' Questionnaires

Once the students' and teachers' questionnaires were formulated, the researcher piloted them in order to check that the design works in practice and to point out, amend or discard the problematic questions. Any problem related to the content, layout, wording, length, or instructions was uncovered and amended accordingly. The students' questionnaire was distributed to seven participants of the main study out of 30 participants of the experimental group to whom the questionnaire was targeted. On the other hand, the first draft of the teachers' questionnaire was sent to 10 teachers in the field to comment. After receiving the students' and teachers' comments, the researcher reworked the questionnaires based on the comments obtained. Undoubtedly, some items of the questionnaires were revised and modified, others were removed at all for they did not provide pertinent data, and some others were appended to ensure getting the required information as recommended by the insightful remarks of the study supervisor.

4.3.2. Conducting the Main Study

The procedures followed in the main study are as follows:

4.3.2.1. The Pre-test

At the beginning of the treatment, both experimental group and control group took the pre-test concurrently. It was designed for the purpose of assessing the students writing performance in terms of the appropriate use of grammar, collocation, cohesion, and

coherence and for making sure that there is no significant difference between the performance of the experimental and control group participants. Ultimately, the writing pre-test aim was to evince the participants' main writing stumbling blocks regarding the use of aspects of writing. The pre-test consisted of a writing assignment which had to be completed in the classroom circumstances. It was dealt with in one of the regular writing sessions which lasted ninety minutes. The key requirement of the assignment was to produce an essay with not less than 250 words about the topic of "describe a city you have visited in the past". In fact, the participants were given a ternary choice of the topic, but it eventually fell on the mentioned topic, because, according to them, it was the most familiar, interesting, and motivating. Generally, the pre-test can be described as a simplified assignment since the instruction purposefully did not direct the participants' attention to the test's aim. It was entirely up to the subjects to fulfill the requirement according to their own interpretation. In other words, the statement of the topic was deliberately worded that way so that the subjects themselves decide how to organise the essay on the basis of the topic and their interpretation. An extra advantage of this open approach was that it avoided making the task impossible for the participants who had no knowledge of how a particular kind of essay should be structured. The unique emphasis of the instruction was on the words number of the essay. The aim was to ensure that all the participants would develop adequate sentences needed in the analysis. The longer the essay is the more the errors can be seen in the participants' essays. Once the participants completed the pre-test, their copies were gathered for analysing, assessing, and scoring.

a. Assessing the Pre-test

As detailed earlier in the theoretical account, there are three prominent ways of assessing students' written productions: analytic, holistic, and primary trait scales. Frequently used, the holistic scale reflects the rater's overall impression of the writing and therefore a single mark is assigned to the entire piece of writing. Analytic scale, on the other hand, provides separate scores in predetermined areas of effective writing like content, organisation, grammar, etc. Trait primary scale offers some feedback potential for a particular aspect of written production which improves the ultimate accomplishment of the purpose.

Although the last scale is the least common scoring type in assessing writing, it is usually reserved for research situations or situations in which data are desired concerning students' mastery of specific writing aspects or skills. As the current study is concerned with bringing corpus dimensions in writing, the primary trait is written accuracy and organisation. For this sake, the researcher has suggested for aspects arranged under one main level of evaluation. This level is the "Lexico-grammatical competence" and aspects include: grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation.

Once the aforementioned aspects have been intelligibly established, the researcher has shifted to establish a relevant scoring system that could measure appropriately the performance of the experimental and control group participants. The researcher first examined equally the four aspects of evaluation. Then, each aspect was given a score which was allocated in the rating scale from five points to zero according to a specific guideline. In other words, each aspect was worth a total of five points. In order to establish validity of the scoring according to the guideline, essays were re-examined and re-marked by another teacher. Discrepancies in the pair marking were resolved by having a third teacher.

The total scores obtained by each subject in the pre-test were calculated to make the global performance of each group emerge. This global pre-test performance was expressed statistically through the mean, mode, and dispersion aspects. The pre-test performance of each group in each aspect, however, was displayed only through the mean.

4.3.2.2. The Treatment

In the educational enterprise studies, a treatment is exerted to scrutinize the effectiveness of one variable on another. In this study, after completing the writing pre-test, the experimental group participants received a treatment which was based on CBA and that aimed at raising the subjects' awareness to use appropriately some basic aspects of writing, while the control group participants were treated differently. The treatment was delivered over a period of twelve weeks with an average of two sessions per week; that is, a total of 24 sessions, each lasted ninety minutes. The researcher also brought the students twice out of their normal sessions. Including this last, the pre-test, post-test, and the experimental group participants' questionnaire, the exact number of all the sessions was 29 sessions.

a. Teaching the Experimental Group

In the current study, the experimental group subjects received explicit instructions pertinent to grammatical accuracy, cohesion, coherence, and collocation. These phases in turn involved different lectures as shown under:

Lecture 1: Introduction

The treatment started with a broad introduction to the notions of lexico-grammatical competences. The overall aim of this introduction was to pave the way for the upcoming instruction. More specifically, the subjects were first introduced to the notion of lexico-grammar since it was a new term for them. Then, they were told about the requirements they must master in order to reach grammatical accuracy. Further details, after that, were devoted to explore such a competence on terms of accuracy, cohesion, coherence, and collocation. The subjects were also made aware that mastering the different aspects of these levels may improve their writing, especially in the accuracy and correctness.

Lectures [2-20]: Lexico-grammar

Throughout this period of training, the researcher opted for four elements that reveal the accuracy of essays, namely: grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and coherence, and collocation.

- **Grammar**

Throughout these lectures, the researcher attempted to guide the subjects to become more aware and familiar with the different grammatical patterns that are omnipresent in the curriculum of second year as well as highly pertinent to the scope of the study at hand. Among the selected aspects, the treatment was based on teaching some grammatical areas like prepositions, passive and active voices, and tenses. These aspects were taught the traditional way in the control group instruction which is not the case with the experimental group in which they were presented by means of the Corpus-Based Approach. It is noteworthy that these aspects of instruction were used in the evaluation of the students written products.

- **Vocabulary**

Once the teaching of grammar was over, the researcher moved to the instruction of vocabulary. The participants' attention was drawn first to the importance such an element plays in the development of their writing skills. The researcher also focused that vocabulary is often a neglected aspect in language studies, and thus, designed an instruction that would first raise the students' awareness about the importance of lexis and how foreign language writing entails certain regulations while using vocabulary. Issues of formality, appropriateness, register, contraction, *inter alia*, were accounted for in the instructional period of vocabulary.

- **Cohesion**

The overall purpose of this lecture was to make the participants aware of the different cohesive devices. They were introduced to Halliday and Hasan (1976) taxonomy which comprises: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, reiteration, and collocation.

- **Coherence relation**

This phase was about the identification of the different coherence relations found between the sentences. The teacher researcher, here, did not designate the kinds of the relations because they are plenty, but rather focused on the subjects grasp the notion of logical coherence relations and apply it in written productions appropriately.

- **Collocation**

Despite belonging to the cohesive devices identified by Halliday and Hassan, the researcher specified a whole lecture for collocation. We carried out the lesson by exposing students to the analysis of the "British Academic Written English Corpus" by scrutinizing the dynamics of collocation as it appears in natural texts of everyday use by native speakers.

Lecture [21- 25]: Overall Practice

The last phase of the treatment was devoted to the application of the knowledge gained from the previous lectures. Throughout this phase, the participants were asked to produce essays with the aim of putting in practice all what they learnt. The teacher's job was to provide them with corrective feedback. During this phase, the participants were also told

to practise the use of concordances software in the accomplishment of their written products. At the end, they were requested to exchange their papers with each other for the sake of reading, analysing, and discussing the success or failure of the essay structure, grammatical accuracy, and the correctness carried out by means of exclusive corpus-based materials.

b. Procedures of the Lesson Plan

During the first two phases of intervention, the instruction of the aforementioned aspects was explicit and corpus-based. It involved four basic stages namely: anticipatory set, modelling, awareness-raising, and writing practice. These stages of instruction, portrayed below in details, were applied to each individual aspect targeted in this study.

- **Anticipatory Set**

This stage of instruction was designed to have a direct relevance to the instructional objectives set for the lecture. Via an opening statement, the teacher researcher attempted to acquaint the participants with the selected aspect of interest. He provided a general description of what the aspect is about. It is worth mentioning that the participants were furnished prior to the lecture with a corpus software related to the subject matter. However, the software and the concordances handout were given as a home practice assignment because of some practical constraints, mainly time. The researcher considered that taking these materials home may allow the participants to take more time to practice and understand as well as to use other available sources of information that could help them. They may, for instance, use internet as general corpora which serves the purpose of raising their familiarisation with the specific corpora adopted in the current research.

- **Modelling**

According to Hirvela (2004, p. 126), modelling is to “have students study, through close reading, models of the kinds of texts they are expected to write.” In this stage, the participants were exposed to the “British Academic Written English Corpus”. The latter will be introduced to the students by the teacher through modelling its various functioning mechanisms and how to apply it in a written task. The teacher researcher got the lion’s share of the instruction, especially in text analysis, while the students’ main job was to follow him.

- **Awareness-raising**

To whatever extent the teacher can be successful in explaining and modelling the selected aspect, it does not replace the participants' individual performance. In the course of repeating the teacher behaviour of dealing with the software, the participants may develop more awareness of its successful application. Accordingly, during this stage, the participants were provided with another text and asked to apply a corpus-based analysis and deconstruction of it, while the teacher's assistance was withdrawn increasingly.

The aim was to cause the participants absorb lonely what they learnt in the two preceding stages, and therefore make conscious decisions about how to apply the corpus software in their writing tasks.

- **Writing Practice**

In this stage, the subjects were asked to write an essay. The students' were asked to focus on the learnt aspects of composition, while the teacher's role was to provide feedback.

c. Teaching the Control Group

The control group participants were taught through the following procedures. They were not introduced to the notions of grammatical competence. More specifically, they were taught aspects of grammar through a set of compiled handouts providing theoretical lessons about grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and coherence. The participants of the control group were provided with only few models of essays for the sake of illustrating parts of the lessons; of course, without stressing the significance of the corpus-based materials.

With respect to teaching cohesion, coherence, vocabulary and grammar, the participants were not introduced explicitly to the aspects of cohesive devices, and coherence relations. When it happened, that the teacher focused on these aspects during this level, it was not through devoting specific explicit lectures, but through providing feedback.

In short, the teacher's main emphasis with the experimental group participants was to have the students learn, use, and analyse aspects of lexis and grammar structures through the concordances software of corpora, and then apply them in writing. On the other hand, the teacher's major emphasis with the control group was on having the students write as many possible essays in order to provide feedback about aspects of writing in general.

4.3.2.3. The Post-test

Immediately, after the treatment was over, a post-test was administered to both experimental group and control group under similar environmental conditions as were available for the pre-test. The aim was to check to what extent the experimental group participants' writing improved as a result of the proposed method of teaching. The participants' post-test writing essays were assessed following the same procedures used in the pre-test.

4.2.2.4. Students' Questionnaire

Following the collection of the post-test essays, and in a usually held class meeting, a questionnaire was administered to the experimental group participants. It was mainly designed to find out about the participants' attitudes toward the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach to the teaching of FL writing. It was divided into five highly pertinent sections. The first one is entitled "the writing skill", it includes questions about the students' perceptions, abilities, opinions, and difficulties of the writing skill after being taught writing using the Corpus-Based Approach. The second section is entitled "Students' Attitudes toward the Significance of the Corpus-Based Approach". It encompasses the students view point about the efficiency of such an approach and its contribution to the betterment of their writing skills.

The third section of the students' questionnaire is known as "The Significance of Corpus-Based Approach in Improving Lexico-grammatical Competence in Writing". This section aims at unveiling the experimental group's assimilation and perception of the corpus instruction provided by the researcher in the instructional period as well as their attitudes toward the feasibility, effectiveness, and the efficiency of the implemented approach in developing their lexico-grammatical skills particularly. The fourth section is entitled "Students' Opinions about Using Corpus of Academic Written English in Writing". This section is taken to be the most important part of the student questionnaire; it is at the heart of the research at hand. It encompasses all the areas of concern that the researcher referred to in the theoretical chapters and investigated in the practical ones. As for the last section, it is specified for the participants' suggestions that they believe relevant to the subject matter.

As far as the items are concerned, they were 28 in number arranged in the previous main sections. They were either one closed items (requiring from the students to choose ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers, to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, or just to order); two scale items (requesting them to select their responses from among a set of fixed alternatives representing degrees of difficulties); three open ended items (designed with the purpose of yielding data through responses written in the respondents’ own words).

The first section, from item one to item seven, purported at getting an idea about writing in general since it is the skill desired by the researcher to be developed. For example, item one and two were devoted to knowing whether the students perceive the difficulty of writing and its sources. Items three and four were designed to confirm the actual unsatisfying level of writing and what makes the students unsatisfied. Items five, six, and seven were put to get information about aspects of writing; the aim was to know whether the students were aware of the importance, difficulty, and improvement of some aspects, especially lexicogrammar, which is the study main concern.

The second section main aim was to view the students’ standpoints about the significance of CBA. The section started from item eight to item 14. Initially, through item eight and nine, the researcher had insights about the students’ frequency and expediency of using computers in the accomplishment of their tasks. Item 10 was put to find out whether or not the participants used the Corpus-Based Approach in any language field before being exposed to it during the experiment. Item 11 was included to detect the student adherence to using the corpus-based philosophy in writing after the treatment. Then, items, 12, 13, and 14 were set for the sake of determining the frequency of using CBA in the other language courses and the extent to which the participants think it is helpful in developing their abilities.

As for the third section, it was mainly included to gauge the participants’ views about the efficiency of the implemented corpus. It, further focused on the students’ standpoints and awareness about the types of corpora and which type they are more inclined to use. After the experiment, section three revealed data about the use of the corpus mechanisms and allowed the researcher to dig deeper into the dynamic of its use and implementation in teaching FL writing. The items included in this section brought to light the students’ attitudes towards the use of the concordances, corpus software, register application, and corpora research. (items 15 to 24).

The fourth section was conducted mainly to determine the participants' opinions about the use of the corpus of British Academic Written English in the accomplishment of their written tasks. It encompasses items 25, 26, and 27. Item 25, 26, and 27 are taken to be the most important questions in the whole students' questionnaire; they are at the heart of the research at hand. The researcher included them to unveil data about aspects that are highly pertinent to the realm of lexico-grammar investigated in this study. They encompass all the areas of concern that the researcher referred to in the theoretical chapters and investigated in the practical ones. As such these questions revealed data about the efficiency of CBA in dispelling some of the difficulties the participants tended to manifest in the pre-test before being exposed to the treatment in the instructional period.

The questionnaire also included 'any suggestion' section. This last section aimed to allow the experimental group students to voice any concerns that they may had with regards to the significance of CBA in the accomplishment of their writing tasks.

4.3.2.5. Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was administered to teachers of writing and of different modules; they were asked to fill in the questionnaire to indicate the extent to which the corpus-based paradigm is contributive to the betterment of the writing skill in the department of the English language, University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna 2.

In order to meet the aforementioned aims set for this questionnaire, the latter was divided into four main parts entitled: general information, teaching writing, teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of CBA to the teaching of FL writing, and further suggestions.

As for the items, they are the same types used in the students' questionnaire. In other words, teachers were required to choose 'yes' or 'no' answers, pick up the appropriate answers from a number of alternatives, or just order. In addition, a scale of items was used to select a response among a set of fixed alternatives representing degrees of emphasis, as well as open ended items designed with the purpose of yielding written responses in the teachers' own words.

The first three items constitute the first section and are meant to get general information about the teachers' degree held and number of years of teaching Written Expression

The second section is entitled "the writing skill". It seeks to reveal the teachers' opinion about their students' written performance, their interest in such a skill, the difficulties that may arise whenever teaching/learning writing. At the end of this section, teachers were kindly asked to note some suggestions to the previously referred issues that are omnipresent in the writing classroom. (items four to 14)

The third section of this questionnaire is devoted to determining the teachers' attitudes towards the currently adopted philosophies of teaching FL writing. Q15 and 16 are administered to show what approach teachers use as the source of their instruction and the extent to which it meets their expectations. Item 17 is an attempt to give teachers space to indicate the shortcomings they think attributable to the approach adopted.

As far as the field of Corpus Linguistics is concerned, items 18 and 19 are administered to identify the teachers' standpoints about the recently emerging field of inquiry known as Corpus Linguistics. As for Q20 and 21, they are meant to reveal the participants' awareness and frequency of using the various types of corpora in their instructions. To further detect the participants' opinions about the role computers, corpora, and concordances software play in developing their students writing skill, question 22, 23; and 24 are administered.

The two last questions in the third section of this questionnaire are intended to gain more insights about to the dynamics of the Corpus-Based Approach by referring to the specific types of corpus the researcher used in the current study. This corpus is known as the corpus of British Academic Written English, (Q25, 26).

At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher opened up 'any suggestions' section, where the teachers were asked to share any comment or feedback regarding the aim set for this questionnaire.

4.4. Limitations of the Study

In spite of the encouraging results that have shown consistency with the previous research findings, investigating the role of CBA in developing EFL students' writing proficiency encountered many difficulties and limitations. Among the obstacles that have been faced along the investigation of this research is the lack of digital laboratories and computers in the department of letters and English Language at the University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna2. The absence of access to computers and internet in the classrooms affected to some extent the instructional time and the conduction of the treatment in a smooth way. Moreover, in spite of the large amount of corpora software available online, very few software are free to access. This lack of disposal led the researcher to opt for a specific software (BAWE) due to its availability for free. Another limitation which constituted an obstacle at the beginning of the treatment was the students' unreadiness to effectively use the corpora software. As a result, the researcher had to lose some time in order to provide the participants with the appropriate tutoring to master the competence of this software.

4.5. Conclusion

The main aim of the chapter at hand was to shed light on the research methodology employed in the current study. It emphasised the methodological design and the elements as well as the instruments used to carry out this study. Throughout this chapter, the researcher attempted to describe what has been put into practice. As detailed earlier, the current study participants were students and teachers and the research design was a mixture of experimental and descriptive as the nature of the study entails. Moreover, the quantitative method of collecting data was dominantly used. In accordance with the experimental and descriptive nature of the methodological decision opted for, the writing tests, student questionnaire, and teacher questionnaire were used as instruments. As for calculating the significance of the results, the independent sample t-test was used as a statistical test. The chapter, also, dealt with the procedures adopted in the pilot and the main study. Finally, the various limitations encountered were accounted for at the end of this chapter. In the next chapters, data analysis and interpretation will be reported and lengthily discussed.

Chapter

Five

Chapter Five: The Test

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Chapter Five

The Test

5.1. Introduction

The results of the study at hand are displayed by means of three instruments as explained in the methodology description. The current chapter is considered to be the first empirical chapter in this thesis. It purports at reporting part of the global findings of the current investigation. Precisely speaking, chapter five is devoted to the conduction of the statistical test carried on by means of t-test. It provides the analysis of the students' written products handed out by both the experimental as well as the control groups. Initially, the pre-test results are displayed to identify to what extent both groups are effective in using aspects of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation in the writing process. Afterwards, the post test results are displayed in order to identify whether the performance of the experimental group has developed due to the experimental instructions. The data gathered throughout this chapter enable the researcher to confirm the set hypothesis which is formulated as follows: if second year students acquire a lexico-grammatical competence, this would foster their writing proficiency.

5.2. The Pre-test Results

In this part of the chapter, the pre-test data are gathered, analysed and displayed. Put differently, the results of the overall behaviour of the experimental and the control groups should be scrutinized primarily with rapport to the corresponding central tendency and dispersion so that we may get a grip on the clear image of the participants' overall behaviours. Then, the findings of each group are compared with respect to the effective use of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation; and ultimately, the efficiency of their written products.

As far as the pre-test results are of concern, it is noteworthy to refer to the way the researcher structured the research at hand. For the sake of simplicity and directness, the efficiency of the writing skill, in the current investigation, is reflected in the students' mastery of four aspects selected by the researcher, referred to in the theoretical chapters, and implemented in the instructional practice. These four aspects are grouped under one general category named the lexico-grammatical competence.

The choice of the lexico-grammatical competence is far away from being random. On the contrary, it is at the heart of the research at hand in the sense that it accompanies the investigation's main interests with endeavours to achieve them. The instructional practice we suggest to tackle the underlined difficulties of writing is an implementation of CBA to the teaching of FL writing. Such a field of inquiry (Corpus Linguistics) has long proved its efficiency in the field of English as a foreign language. The researcher adopted some of the dynamic insights this field has to offer and created a framework that accounts for CBA as the source of FL writing instruction. This adoption, the researcher speculates, might be helpful in the facilitation composition instruction; and thus, helps learners overcome some of the difficulties that are omnipresent whenever involved in the writing process.

5.2.1. Overall Pre-test Performance

Table 5.1.

The Participants' Overall Behaviour during the Pre-test

Groups	Subjects		Dispersion			
	Mean	Mode	Low	Fr.	High	Fr.
Experimental	08.85	07	05	02	13	01
Control	08.95	08	05.50	01	13	01

Table (5.1) shows that the mean score of the overall performance on the pre-test of the participants in the experimental group is (8.85), while that of the participants in the control group is (8.95). As such, the control group seems to have the better performance. The mode indicates that the most frequent score is (7) in the experimental group and (8) in

the control group. As for dispersion indicators, both of the groups are nearly similar. The lowest scores (5) and (5.5) were obtained by two participants of the experimental group and the only one in the control group respectively, and the highest score (13) was got by a single participant in both groups as well.

Chiefly, comparisons of the means, central tendency, and dispersion aspects denote that prior to the treatment, the students in both groups produced nearly equivalent levels in writing; therefore, if any increase or decrease in the students writing skills is to take place after the treatment, it would be attributable to the underwent instructional practice.

5.2.1.1. Pre-test Means of the Collocation Levels of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 5.2.

The Means of Collocation

Pre-test	Groups	The Mean (\bar{X})
Collocation	Experimental	02.46
	Control	02.50

The results tabulated in Table (5.2) indicate that the collocation competence mean of the experimental group is (2.46) and that of the control group is (2.50). As mentioned earlier, the accuracy of both groups' written products was nearly identical. Furthermore, in both groups, one may guarantee the equivalent performance when it comes to the use of collocation in the participants written products.

In Corpus Linguistics, a collocation is a sequence of words that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. In phraseology, collocation is a sub-type of phraseme. An example of a phraseological collocation, as propounded by Halliday (1966), is the expression strong tea. While the same meaning could be conveyed by the roughly equivalent powerful tea, this expression is considered excessive and awkward by English speakers. The ability to use writing in English effectively involves an awareness of

a distinctive feature of the language known as collocation. Collocation is that behaviour of the language by which two or more words go together in writing.

Different approaches to operationalizing the complex notion of collocation have been noted in the literature (McEnery & Hardie, 2011). The two most distinct approaches typically recognized are the “phraseological approach,” which focuses on establishing the semantic relationship between two (or more) words, and the “frequency-based” approach, which draws on quantitative evidence about word co-occurrence in corpora (Granger and Paquot, 2008). There are about six main types of collocations: adjective noun, noun + noun (such as collective nouns), verb + noun, adverb + adjective, verbs-prepositional phrase (phrasal verbs), and verb + adverb. As for the practical implementation of collocation in CBA, instructors favour the use of collocation extraction. The latter is a computational corpus-based technique that finds collocations in a document or corpus, using various computational linguistics elements such as the used corpus in this research (corpus of British Academic Written English). As far as this study is concerned, the researcher selected three main types of collocation in the treatment as well as in the evaluation of both groups’ performances. The types in question are:

- adverb + adjective: completely satisfied (not downright satisfied)
- adjective + noun: excruciating pain (not excruciating joy)
- verb + preposition: burst into tears (not blow up in tears)

As far as the pre-test results are concerned, the researcher observed that students face great deficiency in using these types in their writing. The most salient problematic difficulty seemed to be the use of the verb+ preposition types. 20 and 18 participants respectively from the experimental and the control groups manifested deficiencies in dealing with this category of collocation. It is noteworthy that phrasal verbs occupy a considerable part in the second year curriculum of the grammar subject in which students are extensively exposed to this element, yet they still encounter difficulties when it comes to the acquisition and transfer of the phrasal-verbs learned into their written products. As for the other two types of collocation, shortcomings were noticed in 14, 16 participants in the experimental and control groups essays respectively.

5.2.1.2. Pre-test Means of Vocabulary Levels of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 5.3.

The Means of vocabulary

Pre-test	Groups	The Mean (\bar{X})
Vocabulary	Experimental	02.06
	Control	02.16

Table (5.3) indicates that the experimental group and the control group have marked respectively a mean of (2.06) and (2.16). That is, the participants in both groups have reported equivalent levels in the effectiveness of their vocabulary with a minor discrepancy between the two groups.

When a student is faced with a writing assignment, an accurate vocabulary is an indispensable tool. If several synonyms are available in the students' repertoires, they would be able to choose the best word for the most appropriate situation, the intended audience, and the context of writing. This criterion is technically referred to as Register. The latter is the level and style of one's writing. The language register determines the vocabulary, structure, and some grammar in writing. As far as the latter is concerned, three most common registers must be accounted for: Formal, Informal, and Neutral. Different language registers are used for various types of writing, just as in speaking.

To fulfill the aforementioned convention, the researcher exposed the participants to instruction that accounts for register during the treatment. The Corpus-Based Approach emphasizes that formal register does not tolerate the use of contractions in writing. For example, instead of using "don't", learners must use do not. Formal register also entails the spelling of numbers less than one hundred; so instead of writing down 50, it is more accurate to write fifty. Other requirements of the formal register are severely demanded within the corpus-based paradigm.

The requirements can be summarised as follows:

- Writing in third person point of view: In formal writing, it is preferable to not use first person (I, we) or second person (you) unless it is a quote.
- Avoiding the use of too much passive voice: in formal writing it is better to use an active voice.
- Avoiding the use of slang, idioms, exaggeration, and clichés.
- Do not start sentences with words like and, so, but, also.
- Avoiding vague words like “stuff” or “things” when they write: these words do not give the reader a good sense of meaning or guide him in the course of capturing the ultimate communicative purpose of the written product.

As far as the pre-test is concerned, the researcher selected the previously mentioned conventions to be the basics of his evaluation. Statistically speaking, 22 students (12 of the control group and 10 of the experimental group) did not conform to at least one of the principles listed above. An example of one subject illustrates this issue in the following passage.

“Motivation in learning is the thing that drives learners to achieve. It’s an internal willingness we need to succeed. If we have it, it would be too much of a good thing. But, motivation is not easily acquired, we must be highly aware of our capacities and learning goals in order to be able to trigger it”.

The above passage was intentionally selected among the others because it best reflects the vocabulary issue in writing and contains all the errors that the researcher tackled in the evaluation of the participants’ papers. The underlined words and expressions refer to the several vocabulary mistakes referred to earlier.

The first mistake is elaborated in the participant’s use of the word “things” which resulted in a vagueness issue. The second element is shown in the use of the “**but**” at the beginning of the sentence which is not accepted in formal register. The third error is manifested in the participant’s clear inability to adapt his writing to the objectivity convention by avoiding the use of subjective “**I, WE, and OUR**”.

Another mistake is the use of “contractions” like in “it’s”. The last error is never allowed in formal register like in the students’ use of “**too much of a good thing**” in the above passage.

It is noteworthy that vocabulary and register issues are highly neglected and underestimated in the teaching of FL writing, especially in the Algerian context. The researcher believes that this limitation is rooted in the learners and teachers’ beliefs that the lexical competence is limited into the correct use of words. The above mentioned facts, hopefully, bring to light the serious dilemma of vocabulary and the fact that it is far away from being merely restricted to a rich linguistic repertoire. It is a whole dimension of writing with such a great impact that if accounted for, betters the whole composition quality; while if disregarded, dismantles the writing accuracy and efficiency.

5.2.1.3. Pre-test Means of Cohesion Levels of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 5.4.

The Means of Cohesion

Pre-test	Groups	The Mean (\bar{X})
Cohesion	Experimental	02.31
	Control	02.23

According to the results in Table (5.4), the pre-test average score of cohesion is (2.31) for the experimental group and (2.23) for the control group. Thus, both groups could be treated as equal based on these approximate cohesion means. Cohesive writing is one which holds together well. It is easy to follow because it uses language effectively to guide the reader. In English, cohesion is achieved in a number of ways. The researcher selected elements that are most associated with cohesive writing to be subject of evaluating the participants’ written product. These aspects are:

- Firstly, the logical relationships between ideas are stated so that the reader can easily understand the relationship between the parts of a text.

The logical relationships between clauses, between sentences, and between paragraphs can be expressed by conjunctions (and, or, because, so etc...).

- Secondly, reference is used to introduce the nouns in a text and to keep track of them.
- Thirdly, lexical cohesion in which words are selected go together and relate to each other in an insightful way.
- Finally, in a well written text there is logical progression to the development of the text. New information is presented in a way which does not disrupt the flow of the text and its meaning.

a. Conjunction errors

Errors related to conjunction are of three main kinds as follows:

1. Incorrect use of conjunctions

This kind of errors was present in 20 papers (eight of the experimental group and 12 of the control group). The wrong choice of conjunctions might be due to the lack of sensitivity to conjunctions variety and the insufficient understanding of the usage of some of them. Below are some examples taken from the students' papers:

1/ Some scholars believe that internal motivation is the most effective type. **Also** others like to emphasise the role of extrinsic motivation based on compliments and rewards.

2/ The parents can establish good conditions of for their children. **So**, they can take care of the children in order to motivate them to work hard and succeed.

In the first example, the conjunction “**also**” is used to show the additive relationship between the two discourse units it conjoins. Yet, the participant failed to employ it in the appropriate place as the second sentence adds nothing to the preceding sentence. Rather, this last introduces a contrast of what was mentioned before.

In the second example, the conjunction “**so**” failed to establish a cohesive relationship between the discourse units as it is neither result nor purpose of what has been formerly mentioned. This conjunction then should be removed from between these sentences in order to make the text unified.

2. Overuse of conjunctions

Taking a closer look at the participants' use of conjunction devices, 22 participants (10 of the experimental group and 12 of the control group) had a tendency to overuse conjunctions between the sentences, relying on the mistaken belief that they were keeping the writing flowing. Unquestionably, conjunctions provide explicit cues about the logical relationships among sentences, and thus help readers to construct the mental representations of the meaning of the essays; however, an excessive use of them may make the essay boring and less academic instead.

3. Omission of conjunctions

While certain papers used improperly and too much conjunctions between the sentences, 16 others (six from the experimental group and 10 from the control group) have been found to use this cohesive device less frequently, letting the reader struggle to understand the intended meaning between the sentences.

In addition to the preceding three kinds of conjunction's problems, it was noticed that the students do not account for using different conjunctions: they just used the most common ones such as and, so, but, after, ...etc.

b. Incorrect pronoun reference

22 Participants (12 cases of the experimental group and 10 cases of the control group) structured some sentences such that they ended up containing pronouns that could refer back to wrong or ambiguous antecedents. These faulty pronouns lead to vague, confusing and grammatically incorrect sentences; therefore, upset the clarity. Faulty pronoun reference fell into one of the three cases: pronoun with ambiguous antecedent, singular pronoun with plural antecedent, or plural pronoun with singular antecedent. The following is an example of faulty pronoun reference found in the subjects' papers:

*Being motivated moves away all the negative stress and anxiety. In addition to that **he** is considered as an exit from inhibition who hinders learners' capacities*

In the above example, the participant used the personal pronoun "**he**" to establish reference to "**motivation**" instead of using "**it**". This caused ambiguity and confusion in working out the meaning of the sentence.

c. Lexical cohesion and overuse of repetition

The third area of cohesion limitations observed in the subject's writings, listed above by the researcher, is lexical cohesion. One aspect of lexical cohesion is known as repetition. The latter is an important technique for achieving lexical cohesion, but in an attempt to do so, 20 participants (nine of the experimental group and 11 of the control group) produced many redundancies which result to the production of some key words multiple times without adding new information. Put differently, they just cluttered up sentences with a host of superfluous words and expressions that give nothing new, but deter text flow and make the piece of writing boring, monotonous, and less academic.

d. Raising new information

The fourth aspect of evaluation under the section of cohesion is the logical development of texts and presentation of information. In 19 papers (12 of the experimental group and seven of the control group), the conclusions did not arise from the evidence discussed in the body, but rather new material was brought. Doing so makes part of the conclusion irrelevant and adds to it a sort of filler as these two examples show:

Being healthy does not mean only loving and deciding to achieve but also having a clear vision of the task and what needs to be done in order to accomplish it. If vision is not accounted for, we will make ourselves motivated.

In the above example, the participant has made of the conclusion the best place to discuss the idea of 'vision' instead of devoting one paragraph to it in the body.

5.2.1.4. Pre-test Means of the Grammatical Accuracy Levels of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 5.5.

The Means of the Grammatical Accuracy

Pre-test	Groups	The Mean (\bar{X})
Grammar	Experimental	02.03
	Control	02.08

The data displayed in Table (5.5) indicate that the grammatical competence mean of the experimental group is (2.03) and that of the control group is (2.08). As stated above, the accuracy of both group's written products was nearly identical. Furthermore, in both groups, one may guarantee the equivalent performance when it comes to the accurate use of grammar in the participants written products. Under the auspices of grammar, the researcher made reference to the correct use of tenses as well as prepositions. It is to be noted that the aforementioned aspects reflect the income the participants are exposed to during the instructional period either in written expression or in the other subjects of their second year curriculum. The following is a detailed description of these data.

a. Passive and Active Voices

The passive and active voices are a form of an action with respective time. Second year L.M.D students are exposed to the "Grammar" subject in which they receive extensive instruction of passive and active forms, their use, and various types in English. As such, the participants are supposed to smoothly transfer the acquired knowledge and put it into practice whenever involved into the act of writing. Unfortunately, though, this was not the case. When evaluation the papers, 12, 13 of the experimental as well as control groups denoted great shortcomings in their ability to achieve an accurate employment of the aforementioned grammatical element in their compositions. This weakness is one of the main reasons for the students' poor grammatical competence, thus, inefficient writing skills.

b. Preposition

Prepositions are commonly used to demonstrate a relationship in space, time, or a logical relationship between two or more people, places or things. Prepositions tend to be followed by a noun phrase or pronoun (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Once again, this grammatical aspect is well accounted for in the curriculum of second year L.M.D students. The researcher selected it to be one aspect of the grammatical evaluation due to its huge frequency in the English language as well as its major contribution in the production of high-quality compositions. Unsurprisingly, 20, 18 participants of the experimental and control groups indicated their absolute inability to master such a critical grammatical aspect. Thus, their performances indicated weaknesses and shortcomings in using prepositions while writing. Because prepositions are very frequent, the influence of such a deficiency went beyond hindering the grammatical accuracy of the essays to encompass even the discourse and rhetorical quality of their compositions.

5.3. The Post-test Results

Chiefly, the post-test findings of the overall performance of both experimental and control groups are initially reported in the form of central tendency and dispersion aspects, followed by the means of each aspect of writing obtained by the two groups.

5.3.1. Overall Post-test Performance

Table 5.6.

The Participants' Overall Behaviour during the Post-test

Groups	Subjects		Dispersion			
	Mean	Mode	Low	Fr.	High	Fr.
Experimental	11.60	11	09.50	02	15.50	01
Control	09.38	09	07	02	13	01

Table (5.6) denotes that the mean score for post-test of control group is (9.38), and the mean score for the post-test of experimental group is (11.6). As such, the participants in the experimental group reached a higher mean post-test score than that recorded by the participants in the control group. As for the mode, the experimental group's one (11) is found to be higher than that displayed by the control group (9). The dispersion aspects bring to light that the experimental group participants' lowest score is (9.5) obtained by two participants. The same is the case with the control group participants who obtained (7) as the lowest score. The top grade, another dispersion index, in the experimental group is (15.5), scored by one post-test taker, whereas, there is only one subject who achieved (13) out of (20) in the control group.

So far, comparisons of the means, central tendency, and dispersion aspects are in tandem with the set hypothesis which speculates that the experimental group participants will perform better in the post-test which may imply that the research findings move in the realm predetermined by the researcher.

5.3.2. The Post-test Results of Lexico-grammatical Levels

The post-test findings of the lexico-grammatical levels are displayed through the calculation of the means of both experimental and control groups. In more details, the table below shows the individual aspects' means in terms of collocation, vocabulary, cohesion, and grammar.

Table 5.7.

The Post-test Means of the Individual Aspects

Levels of Writing	Aspects	Experimental Group Mean (\bar{X})	Control Group Mean (\bar{X})
Lexico-grammatical Levels	Collocation	02.93	02.70
	Vocabulary	02.61	02.23
	Cohesion	02.70	02.35
	Grammar	03.01	02.13

The first impression one gets while looking at the performance in each aspect of writing is that there is a significant discrepancy in the outcomes of the experimental and the control groups. Obviously, the experimental group outperformed the control group in all aspects.

5.4. The Overall Results of Comparative Evaluation

This section is dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of the overall data gathered through post and pre-test that were administered to the two groups. The researcher will elaborate a comparison of the two groups' results in terms of pre-test, post-test, and rates of increase or decrease. Afterwards, he will conduct a detailed comparison between the pre-test and post-test performance of each aspect of writing.

5.4.1. The Results of Overall Performance

Table 5.8.

Mean Scores of Overall Performance's Change from Pre-test to Post-test of the Experimental and the Control Group

	Experimental Group			Control Group		
The Mean	Pre-test	Post-test	Change	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
	08.85	11.60	02.75	08.95	09.38	0.43

Having a close look at table (5.8) above, one may deduce that both experimental and control groups developed their performances. The experimental group's participants began with a mean of (8.85) on the pre-test and ended with a mean score of (11.6) on the post-test, an increase of (2.75). On the other hand, the mean of the control group was (8.95) in the pre-test, but jumped to (9.38) in the post-test, an increase of (0.43). The progress of each experimental group's participant, in comparison with that of the control group's participants, can be regarded as highly significant.

5.4.2. Comparative Evaluation of the Results of the Individual Aspects

Table 5.9.

Comparative Evaluation of Pre-test and Post-test Performance in Individual Aspects of Experimental and Control Groups

Levels of Writing	Aspects	Experimental Group Mean (\bar{X})			Control Group Mean (\bar{X})		
		Pre-test	Post-test	Change	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
Lexico-grammatical Levels	Collocation	02.46	02.93	0.47	02.50	02.70	0.20
	Vocabulary	02.06	02.61	0.55	02.16	02.23	0.07
	Cohesion	02.31	02.70	0.39	02.23	02.35	0.12
	Grammar	02.03	03.01	0.98	02.08	02.13	0.05

In table (5.9), it is crystal clear that both group's participants achieved nearly the same means in all aspects in the pre-test. A more detailed description is that when comparing the low means of participants' performance in some aspects, we notice that the two groups obtained approximately the same low scores. For example, in vocabulary, the experimental group mean was (2.06) and the control group (2.16). In collocation, another low achieved mean, the experimental group got (2.46) and the control group mean was (2.5). Similarly, when comparing the means of some aspects which are around the average, we find that the two groups obtained approximately the same means. For example, in cohesion, the experimental group obtained a mean of (2.31) and the control group (2.08). Lastly, in grammar, the experimental group obtained (2.03) and the control group (2.08). Put succinctly, all the aspects' means elaborate quite clearly that all the participants in both groups started with a comparable level. However, in the post-test, the results bring to light great dichotomies in the four aspects of writing across the two groups.

The data displayed in the third column of the previous table presents the rates of increase or decrease per aspect of each group. As it can be seen, the control group got minor increase in all aspects. This slight increase in the writing aspects can be attributed to the students' writing overall development. One, however, needs to use a statistical test to prove whether this improvement is significant or not.

Unlike the control group, the experimental group got rates of increase in all aspects. Its highest rate of increase was in grammar with a mean change of (0.98), followed by vocabulary (0.55), then, collocation (0.47), and finally cohesion (0.39). This distinctive increase in all the aspects of composition proves the positive effects of the treatment. Again, it will be only through using a statistical test that this obvious improvement must be justified.

5.5. Testing the Hypotheses

Initially, a null hypothesis along with the alternative hypothesis should be elaborated. They are as follows:

- Null hypothesis (H_0): EFL teachers use the Corpus-Based Approach, their students would not exhibit a better writing performance.
- Alternative hypothesis (H_1): EFL teachers use the Corpus-Based Approach, their students would exhibit a better writing performance.

The data analysis phase will take the form of the version of comparing between the experimental and the control group post-test performances from one side, and between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group and the pre-test and post-test of the control group from the other side. The computed results are displayed in the next sections.

5.5.1. t-test for the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and Control Group

The required data to compute t-value are provided in Appendix C.

1st Calculation of the Mean

\bar{X} → The mean

The formula is: $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$ / N: The number of the students per group

$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1}$ / $N_1 = 30$, $\sum X_1 = 348$

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{348}{30}$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = 11.60$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} \quad /N_2 = 30, \quad \sum X_2 = 281.5$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{281.5}{30}$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = 09.38$$

2nd Calculation of the Variances

S_1^2 : The variance of the experimental group

S_2^2 : The variance of the control group

The formula is: $S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2$

$$\text{So: } S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{4274.5}{30} - 134.56 = 142.48 - 134.56$$

$$S_1^2 = 07.92$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{2851.25}{30} - 87.98 = 95.04 - 87.98$$

$$S_2^2 = 07.06$$

3rd Calculation of the degree of freedom

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2$$

$$df = (30 + 30) - 2 = 60 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

4th Calculation of the computed 't'

The formula is: $(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)(N_1 N_2)}$

$$t_{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)} = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)(N_1 N_2)}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

$$t_{(58)} = \frac{(11.6 - 9.38) \sqrt{(58)(900)}}{\sqrt{(237.6 + 211.8)(60)}}$$

$$t_{(58)} = \frac{2.22 \sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{26964}} = \frac{507.21}{164.2}$$

$$t_{(58)} = 3.08$$

$$t = 3.08$$

For **58** degrees of freedom corresponding to **0.05** level of significance and for one tailed hypothesis, the tabulated t value for independent samples is **1.59**. The results can be described as statistically significant because the computed **t** of **3.08** is higher than the critical value of **1.59**. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which stated that the experimental group would not exhibit a better writing performance in comparison to the control group.

5.5.2. t-test for Pre- and Post-tests of the Experimental Group

To add validity and reliability to the test findings, the significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the variables of pre-test and post-test scores was also tested at **0.05** level by using the independent t-test, and then the same procedures were made with the control group. As for the necessary data to compute t-value, they are shown in Appendix C.

1st Calculation of the Mean

\bar{X} → The mean

The formula is: $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$ / N: The number of the students per group

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} \quad /N_1= 30, \quad \sum X_1 = 265.5$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{265.5}{30}$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = 08.85$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} \quad /N_2= 30, \quad \sum X_2 = 348$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{348}{30}$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = 11.60$$

2nd Calculation of the Variances

S_1^2 : The variance of the experimental group in the pre-test

S_2^2 : The variance of the experimental group in the post-test

The formula is: $S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \bar{X}^2$

So: $S^2_1 = \frac{\sum X^2_1}{N_1} - \bar{X}^2_1$

$S^2_1 = \frac{2541.25}{30} - 78.32 = 84.70 - 78.32$

$S^2_1 = 06.38$

$S^2_2 = \frac{\sum X^2_2}{N_2} - \bar{X}^2_2$

$S^2_2 = \frac{4274.5}{30} - 134.56 = 142.48 - 134.56$

$S^2_2 = 07.92$

3rd Calculation of the degree of freedom

$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2$

$df = (30 + 30) - 2 = 60 - 2$

$df = 58$

4th Calculation of the computed 't'

The formula is: $(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)(N_1 N_2)}$

$t_{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)} = \frac{\quad}{\quad}$

$\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}$

$(8.85 - 11.60) \sqrt{(58)(900)}$

$t_{(58)} = \frac{\quad}{\quad}$

$\sqrt{(191.4 + 237.6)(60)}$

$$t_{(58)} = \frac{-2.75 \sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{25740}} = \frac{-628.29}{160.44}$$

$$t_{(58)} = 03.91$$

$$t = 03.91$$

It is worth mentioning that it is not important whether the t value is positive or negative as long as the means are reported; it is acceptable to drop the negative sign when reporting the t -value. Because the computed t of **3.91** is greater than the critical value of **1.59**, the experimental group results are statistically significant. This significant improvement obtained by the experimental group at the end of the treatment highly backs up the set theory which posits that providing the subjects with income presented through CBA would help students produce high-quality compositions.

5.5.3. t-test for Pre- and Post-tests of the Control Group

The required data to compute t -value are presented in Appendix C.

1st Calculation of the Mean

\bar{X} → The mean

The formula is: $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$ / N : The number of the students per group

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum X_1}{N_1} \quad /N_1 = 30, \quad \sum X_1 = 268.5$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{268.5}{30}$$

$$\bar{X}_1 = 08.95$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{\sum X_2}{N_2} \quad /N_2 = 30, \quad \sum X_2 = 281.5$$

$$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{281.5}{30}$$

30

$$\overline{X}_2 = 09.38$$

2nd Calculation of the Variances

S_1^2 : The variance of the control group in the pre-test

S_2^2 : The variance of the control group in the post-test

The formula is: $S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \overline{X}^2$

$$\text{So: } S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \overline{X}_1^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{2597.25}{30} - 80.10 = 86.57 - 80.10$$

30

$$S_1^2 = 06.47$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \overline{X}_2^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{2851.25}{30} - 87.98 = 95.04 - 87.98$$

30

$$S_2^2 = 07.06$$

3rd Calculation of the degree of freedom

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2$$

$$df = (30 + 30) - 2 = 60 - 2$$

$$df = 58$$

4th Calculation of the computed 't'

The formula is: $(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) \sqrt{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)(N_1 N_2)}$

$$t_{(N_1 + N_2 - 2)} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

$$(8.95 - 9.38) \sqrt{(58)(900)}$$

$$-0.43 \sqrt{52200} = -98.24$$

$$t_{(58)} = \frac{-0.43 \sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{24354}} = \frac{-98.24}{156.06}$$

$$\sqrt{(194.1 + 211.8)(60)}$$

$$-0.43 \sqrt{52200} = -98.24$$

$$t_{(58)} = \frac{-0.43 \sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{24354}} = \frac{-98.24}{156.06}$$

$$\sqrt{24354} \quad 156.06$$

$$t_{(58)} = 0.63$$

$$t = 0.63$$

As the computed **t 0.63** is less than the critical value **1.59**, the results of the control group could be reported as statistically non-significant. This insignificant improvement in the performance of the control group could be traced back to the subjects' unawareness of the use of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation.

5.5.3. Statistical Improvement in the Lexico-grammatical Competence**Table 5.10.**

Comparison of the Performance in Lexico-grammar between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	T
Lexico-grammar	Experimental	11.60	07.92	03.08
	Control	09.38	07.06	

Table 5.11.

Comparison of the Performance of Lexico-grammar between the Post and Pre-tests of the Experimental Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	t
Lexico-grammar	Experimental	11.60	07.92	03.91
	Control	09.38	07.06	

Table 5.12.

Comparison of the Performance of Lexico-grammar between the Post and Pre-tests of the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	T
Lexico-grammar	Experimental	08.95	06.47	0.63
	Control	09.38	07.06	

The data displayed in Table (5.10) indicate that there is a significant difference in the lexico-grammatical behaviour between the experimental and control group in favour of the post-test results ($t = 3.08$, $t > 1.59$). The results presented in Table (5.11) show that there is a significant change between the scores of the experimental group in the lexico-grammatical level as ($t = 3.91$). As for the results presented in table (5.12), the findings denote that there is not significant change in the participants' pre-post test data as the obtain $t = -0.63$. These results highly confirm that the Corpus-Based Approach is helpful in improving the students' skills of lexico-grammar.

5.5.5. Statistical Improvement in Individual Aspects

This section is dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of the statistical improvement in collocation, vocabulary, cohesion, and grammar through pre and post-tests that were administered to both experimental and control groups.

A detailed comparison between the post-tests performance of the experimental and the control groups of each aspect of writing will be elaborated in the following tables.

5.5.5.1. Collocation Improvement

Table 5.13.

Comparison of collocation between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Groups	Test	Mean	Variance	T
Experimental	Pre-test	02.46	0.51	-02.20
	Post-test	02.93	0.83	
Control	Pre-test	02.69	0.48	-1.08
	Post-test	02.89	0.51	

Table 5.14.

Comparison of Collocation between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	t
Collocation	Experimental	02.93	0.83	02.07
	Control	02.89	0.51	

Table (5.13) displays that the mean of the experimental group's performance in collocation has improved from (2.46) in the pre-test to (2.93) in the post-test; and therefore, the difference is significant ($t = -2.20 > 1.59$). On the other hand, the performance in the pre-test and post-test of the control group is not statistically different ($t = -1.08, > 1.59$). Moreover, the results indicate that there are significant differences between the control and experimental groups in favour of the post-test results ($t = 2.07, t > 1.59$).

In more details, (11) participants in the experimental group have gained similar scores in both pre-test and post-test, and (19) participants have achieved improvement in terms of collocation skills maintaining. As for the control group, only nine participants have improved their scores in the post-test, (13) participants have maintained the same scores, and eight participants have obtained scores that are worse than the ones obtained in the pre-test. These last participants have, especially, written elaborated an incorrect incorporation of collocation in their written products.

As far as the experimental group's post-test is concerned, the researcher has observed that students have developed their abilities in using the various types of collocation in their writing. The most salient problematic difficulty, as shown in the pre-test, seems to be the use of the verb + preposition type. Statistically speaking, 14 participants from the experimental group have manifested improvement in dealing with this category of collocation. It is noteworthy that phrasal verbs occupy a considerable part in the second year curriculum of the grammar subject in which students are extensively exposed to this element. As for the other two types of collocation, shortcomings that have been noticed in the pre-test, the post test results indicate that these difficulties have been eliminated by the use of CBA in the treatment.

5.5.5.2. Vocabulary Improvement

Table 5.15.

Comparison of Vocabulary Performance between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Groups	Test	Mean	Variance	T
Experimental	Pre-test	02.06	0.89	02.59
	Post-test	02.61	2.56	
Control	Pre-test	02.16	0.84	0.27
	Post-test	02.23	0.99	

Table 5.16.

Comparison of Vocabulary between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	T
Vocabulary	Experimental	02.61	0.89	03.08
	Control	02.23	0.99	

As it is represented in Table (5.15), there is a significant difference between the pre-test versus post-test scores of the experimental group subjects ($t = 2.59$, $t > \pm 1.59$) and the control group subjects as well ($t = 0.27$, $t < \pm 1.59$) in which there is no significance. The results of the t-test in Table (5.16), however, convey that the mean difference between the experimental group and control group of the post-tests is significant ($t = 3.08$, $t > \pm 1.59$). In other words, the experimental group have made a significant improvement in the post-test, while the control group have not. The performance of the experimental group is better than that of the control group.

Unlike in the pre-test, in the post-test, 20 experimental group's participants have obtained higher scores. This improvement is due to the participants' intensive exposure to instruction that accounts for register during the treatment. The Corpus-Based Approach emphasises that formal register does not tolerate the use of contractions in writing. Formal register, also, entails the spelling of numbers less than one hundred. Other requirements of the formal register were accounted while teaching the experimental group using the corpus-based paradigm. Once again, these aspects They are summarised as follows:

- Writing in third person point of view: In formal writing, it is preferable not to use first person (I, we) or second person (you) unless it is a quote.
- Avoiding the use of too much passive voice: in formal writing it is better to use an active voice.
- Avoiding the use of slang, idioms, exaggeration, and clichés.
- Do not start sentences with words like and, so, but, also.

- Avoiding vague words like “stuff” or “things” when they write: these words do not give the reader a good sense of meaning or guide him in the course of capturing the ultimate communicative purpose of the written product.

As far as the post-test is concerned, the researcher selected the previously mentioned conventions to be the basis of his evaluation. Statistically speaking, (22) students have denoted a positive change by accounting for the aforementioned areas of vocabulary. Some of which have developed various aspects while (10 out of 22) have adhered to the whole elements selected in the treatment.

5.5.5.3. Cohesion Improvement

Table 5.17.

Comparison of the Use of Cohesion between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Groups	Test	Mean	Variance	T
Experimental	Pre-test	02.31	0.54	02.51
	Post-test	02.70	0.71	
Control	Pre-test	02.23	0.78	0.66
	Post-test	02.35	0.17	

Table 5.18.

Comparison of the Use of Cohesion between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	t
Cohesion	Experimental	03.22	0.52	01.75
	Control	02.48	0.39	

As Table (5.17) illustrates, cohesion has improved significantly between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group ($t = 2.51, t > +/- 1.66$). On the other hand, the use of cohesion in the pre-test and post-test of the control group is not statistically different ($t = 0.66, t < +/- 1.66$). The results also indicate that there is a prominent distinction between the post-tests of the two groups. (see t value in Table 5.18). To be more precise, 20 experimental group participants have shown improvement either in pronoun shifts, pronoun reference, or use of conjunctions, and eight from them particularly avoided undue repetition of key words that have nothing to do with the structure and the content. The remaining 10 participants have obtained similar marks with that of the pre-test. As far as the control group is concerned, only six participants have improved their scores, 20 have maintained the same scores, and four have received low scores in comparison with their pre-test scores.

5.5.5.4. Grammar Improvement

Table 5.19.

Comparison of the Use of Grammar between the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Groups	Test	Mean	Variance	T
Experimental	Pre-test	02.03	0.95	03.78
	Post-test	03.01	0.99	
Control	Pre-test	02.08	0.98	0.19
	Post-test	02.13	01	

Table 5.20.

Comparison of the Use of Grammar between the Post-tests of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Post-test	Groups	Mean	Variance	T
Grammar	Experimental	03.01	0.52	03.35
	Control	02.13	01	

Table (5.19) brings to light the notion that there is a remarkable positive change in the grammatical skills between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group ($t = 3.78, t > +/- 1.59$). Contrariwise, in the pre-test and post-test of the control group is not statistically different ($t = 0.19, t < +/- 1.59$). The findings further encompass results yielded data which indicate that there is a prominent distinction between the post-tests of the two groups in which the obtained t was tabulated as follows ($t = 0.19, t < +/- 1.59$).

In more details, 18 experimental group participants have manifested improvement either in the use of prepositions or in the passive-active voices use. As far as the control group is concerned, only six students bettered their scores, 17 maintained the same scores, and seven received low scores in comparison with those of pre-test.

5.6. Summary of the Test's Main Findings

In this study, two tests were used as a form of measurement of the students' writing performance for the purpose of confirming or disconfirming the hypotheses of this research. More specifically, the researcher was interested in measuring the use of CBA in developing the students writing before and after the treatment. As such, a writing pre-test was administered prior to the beginning of the treatment and a post-test following it.

The results of the pre-test analysis show that the participants' overall performance of the experimental and the control group is nearly the same, though the mean scores of the control group (8.95) was slightly higher than that of the experimental group (8.85). This pre-test performance which can be described as near the average or average as the scores represent half of the expected best performance is not satisfying, because lexicogrammatical skills should be well mastered at the beginning levels so that the students can go beyond the basics and pursue other aspects of writing with less anxiety in the higher levels. Therefore, before embarking upon the treatment, it was evident that the participants in both groups have exhibited equivalent levels in writing, and any change takes place after the treatment would be attributable to the teacher researcher's intervention. Further, when the pre-test results were examined separately and according to the means of each set aspect of writing, it comes out that the experimental group participants performed nearly the same as the control group participants did.

The post-test results, on the other hand, indicate that the mean score of control group was (9.35), and that of the experimental group was (11.60). That is, the participants in the experimental group achieved a higher mean post-test score than that achieved by the participants in the control group. Statistically, it was proved that there is a significant difference in the overall performance between the experimental and the control group. In the post-test, the results also show a notable difference due to the positive performance of the experimental group in all aspects. Specifically, the control group made a slight insignificant improvement in some areas only, while the experimental group developed significantly in all the four areas of instruction in terms of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation. These significant differences indicate that the experimental group had positive responses towards bringing a corpus-based notion to the teaching of writing.

5.7. Conclusion

In a nutshell the present chapter was exclusively designed to the data analysis and interpretation of the test. The latter aimed at determining the students' writing proficiency level as well as measuring the degree to which our treatment was beneficial. The analysis of the findings presented previously indicates that the experimental group has shown an acceptable development in their writing organisation than the control group did. This improvement seems to be rooted in the experimental group's raised awareness of the use of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation that they grasped during the treatment. Accordingly, one can conclude that the first stated hypothesis has been confirmed. In the following chapters, the results and interpretation of both students' and teachers' questionnaires will be provided. In addition to that, some recommendations for teachers and students and suggestions for further research will be presented.

Chapter

Six

Chapter Six: The Students' Questionnaire

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Chapter Six

The Students' Questionnaire

6.1. Introduction

As the previous chapter was dedicated to the presentation, and the analysis of the data gauged from the writing tests, this chapter is devoted to the analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the students' questionnaire. The main objective of the students' questionnaire is to find out about the participants' attitudes toward the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach to the teaching of FL writing. Moreover, it purports to back up and support the findings gathered from both pre and post-tests. It is divided into five highly pertinent sections. The first section includes questions about the students' perceptions, abilities, opinions, and difficulties of the writing skill after being taught writing using the CBA. The second section encompasses the students view point about the efficiency of such an approach and its contribution to the betterment of their writing skills. The third section purports to unveil the experimental group's assimilation and perception of the corpus instruction provided by the researcher in the instructional period as well as their attitudes toward the effectiveness of the implemented approach in developing their lexico-grammatical skills particularly. The fourth section encompasses all areas of concern that the researcher referred to in the theoretical chapters and investigated in the practical ones. As for the last section, it is specified for the participants' suggestions they believe relevant to the subject matter.

6.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section one: The Writing Skill

Q.1- Is EFL writing more difficult to practice than the other language skills?

Table 6.1.

Writing Skill's Difficulty Compared to other Skills

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	21	70.00 %
No	09	30.00 %
Total	30	100.00

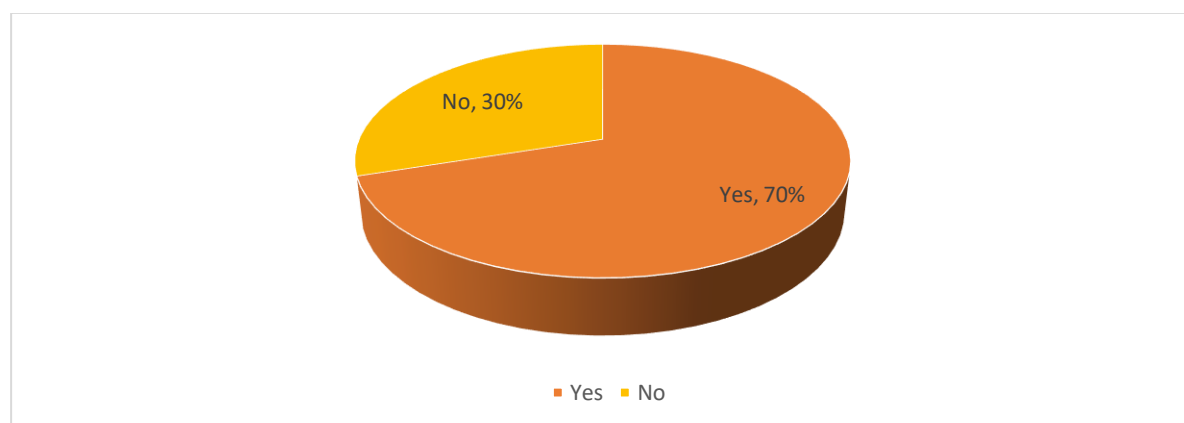


Figure 6.1. Writing Skill's Difficulty Compared to other Skills

As the table and the graph indicate, 21 (70%) of the respondents regarded writing as a difficult skill to master, while nine making up (30%) claim it was not. The results gathered prove that the majority of the students perceived the complexity of writing. This reflects the fact that such a skill entails too much time and efforts to acquire the possibility to produce high quality compositions, even in the native speakers' context. Accordingly, needless to emphasise that it remains a thorny issue for EFL learners to master a skill that is perceived to be out of reach even for an average native learner.

Suggesting as much as possible paradigms to cope with the aforementioned difficulty and meet the needs of students is one of the emerging objectives that this study claims to achieve.

Q.2- What are the sources of EFL writing difficulties?

Table 6.2.

The Sources of Writing Difficulties

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Insufficient English language proficiency	02	06.67 %
B- Lack of lexico-grammatical competence	07	23.33 %
C- Inefficiency of FL instructions	05	16.67 %
D- Lack of interest and motivation	02	06.67 %
E- Inefficiency of the teaching materials	04	13.33 %
B+C	03	10.00 %
A+B+C+D+E	07	23.33 %
Total	30	100.00 %

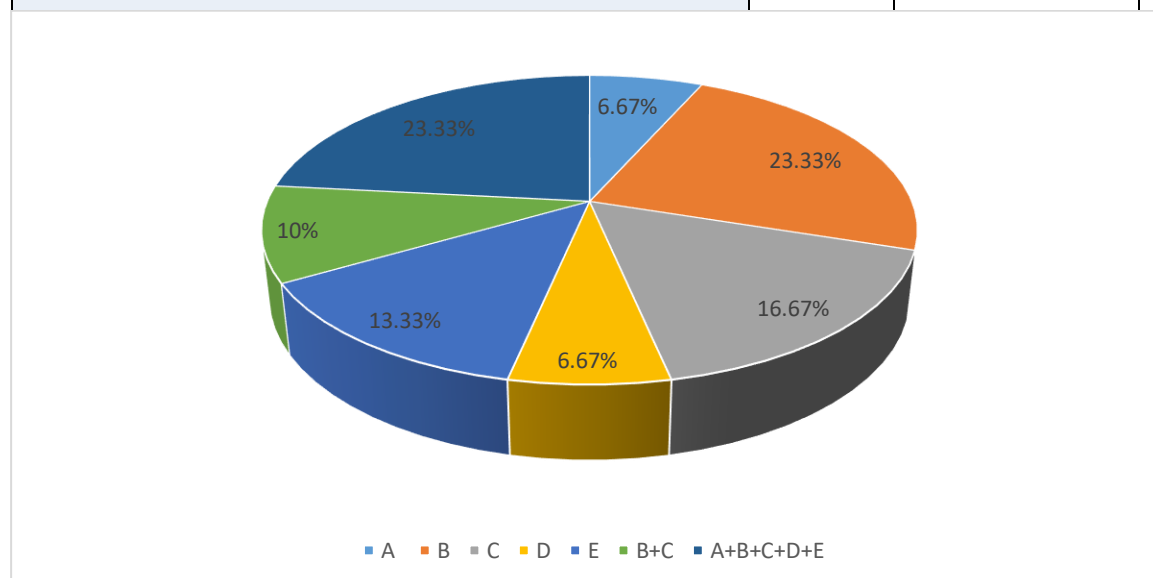


Figure 6.2. The Sources of Writing Difficulties

The table and the graph indicate that seven of the participants selected all the options, while three of them chose two options together. However, when considering the one option answers, the most frequently mentioned source of EFL writing difficulty is “lack of lexico-grammatical competence” with a percentage of (23.33%), and then “Inefficiency of FL instructions” with a percentage of (16.67 %), then “Inefficiency of the teaching materials” with a percentage of (13.33 %). Moreover, the remaining students viewed “Insufficient English language proficiency” and “Lack of interest and motivation” as the least prevailing source of writing difficulty.

A detailed analysis of this question indicates that the lexico-grammatical competence and the inefficiency of FL instructions to be the most salient sources of the students' poor performances. Indeed, these findings support the researcher's speculation when he initially started this questionnaire. Put differently, students at the department of English in the University of Batna 2 tend to manifest major lexico-grammatical deficiencies whenever involved in the process of writing. As a legitimate cause of such a dilemma, no wonder that the instructional practice plays a major, as the second most cited, source of difficulty by students.

Q.3- Are you satisfied with your level of writing?

Table 6.3.

Students' Opinions about their Writing Level

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	04	13.33 %
No	19	63.34 %
I cannot decide	07	23.33 %
Total	30	100.00 %

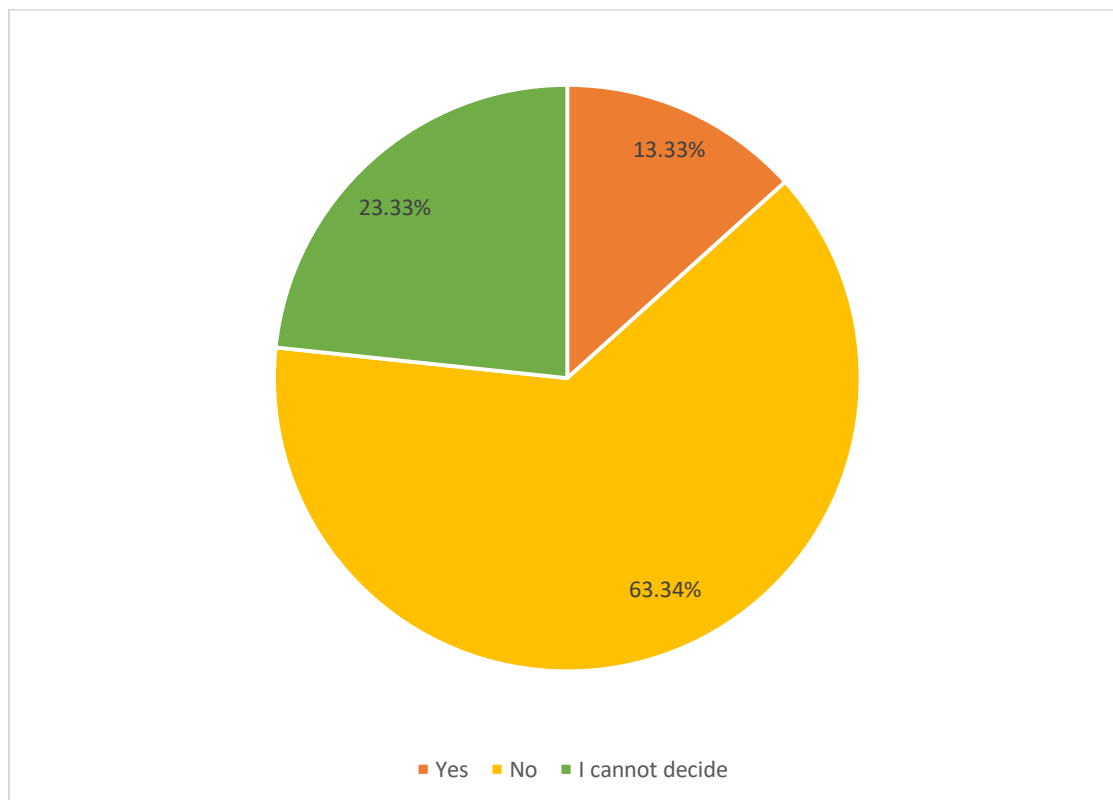


Figure 6.3. Students' Opinions about their Writing Level

Through the table and the graph, we notice that almost two thirds of the students 63,34% did not seem to be satisfied with their composition qualities, while the great minority 13,33% indicated their tendency to consider themselves good writers. 23.33% of the participants opted for "I cannot decide". The results obtained clearly indicate that the majority of the participants relate their dissatisfaction about their level of writing to many factors among which the difficult nature of writing, its mechanisms, and their general linguistic inferiority.

Q.4- If “no”, please, say why.

Table 6.4.

Students' Justifications Concerning their Dissatisfaction with their Writing Level

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Problems with some basic skills of writing	09	47.37 %
General linguistic inferiority	05	26.31 %
Insufficient knowledge of the writing process	02	10.53 %
No answer	03	15.79 %
Total	19	100.00 %

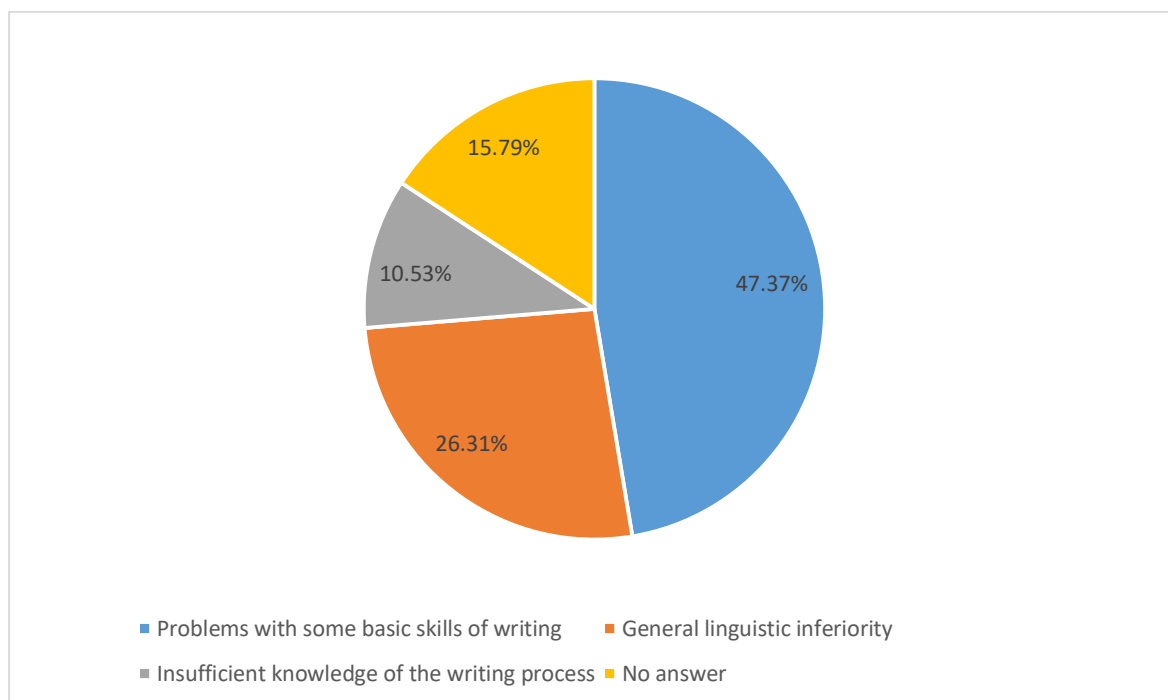


Figure 6.4. Students' Justifications Concerning their Dissatisfaction with their Writing Level

Taking into account the difficulty of writing leads the students to be unsatisfied with their level, even when they upsize their efforts. This was the case of 19 respondents whose dissatisfaction stems from the complexity of mastering the basic writing skills along with the general linguistic inferiority they seem to have. As general as these factors may seem, they govern the production of high quality compositions. Put differently, the mastery of the basic writing skills along with general linguistic knowledge certainly creates a room for improvement in the lexico-grammatical competence and thus dispels some of the issues associated with the act of writing.

Q.5- Which aspect does always cause you the greatest difficulty while writing?

Table 6.5.

Classification of the Aspects that Cause the Major Difficulty while Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A/ Cohesion + B/ Coherence	08	26.67 %
A/ Cohesion + C/ Grammar	07	23.34 %
A/ Cohesion + E/ Collocation	04	13.33 %
B/ Coherence + E/ Collocation	04	13.33 %
D/ Vocabulary + E/ Collocation	03	10.00 %
A/ Cohesion + B/ Coherence + C/ Grammar	02	06.67 %
B/ Coherence + D/ Vocabulary + E/ Collocation	01	03.33 %
A+B+C+D+E	01	03.33 %
Total	30	100.00 %

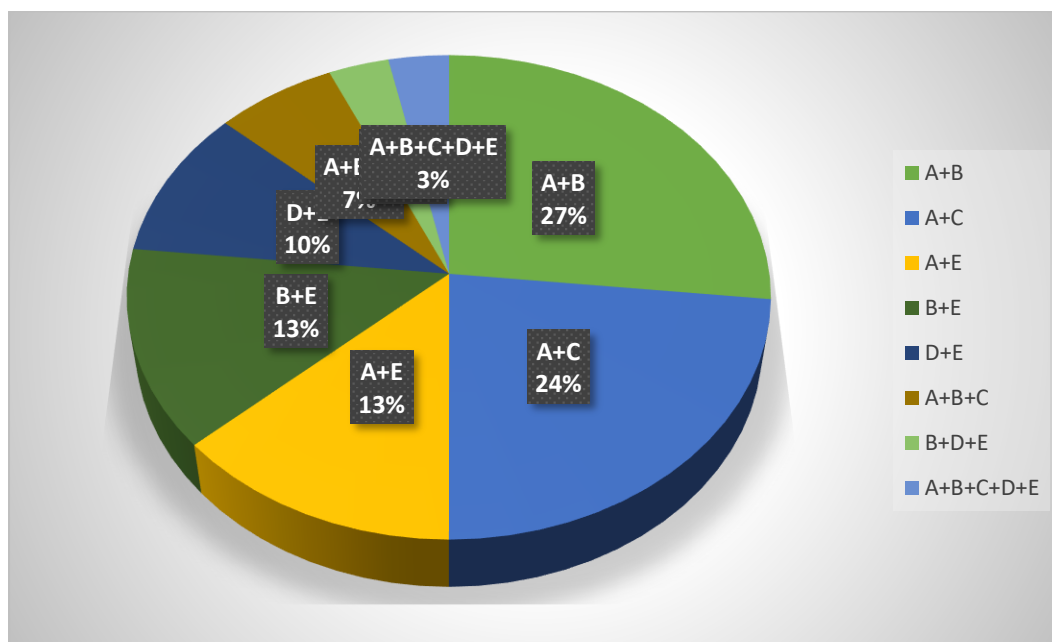


Figure 6.5. Classification of the Aspects that Cause the Major Difficulty while Writing

Due to the difficult nature of writing and its highly demanding entity, the students selected more than one aspect. More precisely, the highest percentage among them 26.67% noted that cohesion and coherence to be the most difficult aspects of writing, 23.34% opted for cohesion and grammar, 13.33% ticked cohesion and collocation, 13.33% selected coherence and collocation, and 10% chose vocabulary and collocation. The least percentage denoted by the respondents is cohesion, coherence and grammar or coherence, vocabulary and collocation. 3.33% of the participants opted for all the aspects to be equally important in producing high quality compositions.

Q.6- Classify the above aspects according to the importance you give them in writing (From the most important to the least important)

Table 6.6.

Students' Classification of Writing Aspects according to their Importance

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Cohesion	11	36.67 %
B- Coherence	08	26.67 %
C- Grammar	04	13.33 %
D- Vocabulary	04	13.33 %
E- Collocation	03	10.00 %
A+B+C+D+E	/	/
Total	30	100.00 %

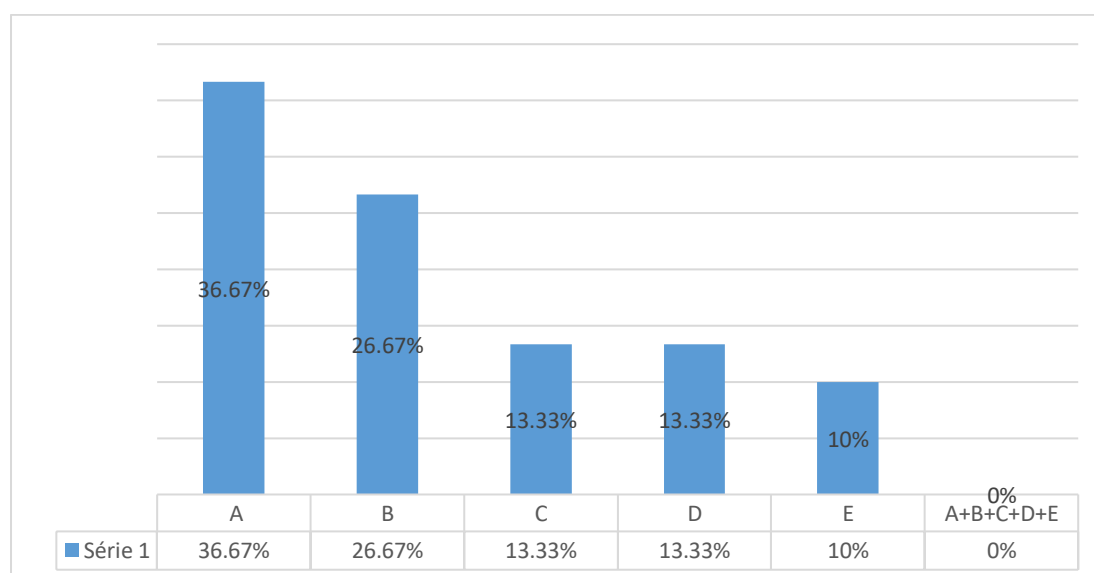


Figure 6.6. Students' Classification of Writing Aspects according to their Importance

As shown in the table and the graph, 11 of the respondents believed that cohesion is the most important aspect of writing, while eight of the participants opted for coherence. Equal percentage of the sample (13.33 %) ticked grammar and vocabulary, while a very tiny minority that represents three pointed out that collocation is the least important aspect associated with writing.

After being exposed to the instructional period, the participants' familiarization with the writing process and its requirements come to meet the standards. In other words, the instructional period allowed the students to figure out what needs to be acquired in order to be a competent writer. As far as a minor needs analysis is concerned, the analysis of the students' essays showed major shortcomings of producing cohesive and coherent paragraphs.

To tackle such an issue, the researcher incorporated an approach which accounts for the lexico-grammatical competence. As such, the instructional practice was two-fold process; to raise the students' familiarisation with the importance of the lexico-grammatical competence, and to install such a practice which equips the learners with the necessary pre-requisites of mastering such a competence. This involves an approach which incorporates teaching materials that not only account for cohesion, coherence, collocation, and grammar but endeavour to foster them.

Q.7-Which of the preceding aspects do you feel you have improved most this year?

As referred to in the previous question, 19 of the participants opted for cohesion, collocation, and grammar to be the most developed aspects during the course of the instructional period. This is rooted in the fact that the researcher used these three elements as the bedrock of the teaching approach being implemented.

Section two: Students' Attitudes towards the Significance of the Corpus-Based Approach

Q.8- Do you think that the implementation of computers is contributive in developing the writing skill?

Table 6.7.

Contribution of Computers in Developing Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	19	63.33 %
No	11	36.67 %
Total	30	100.00 %

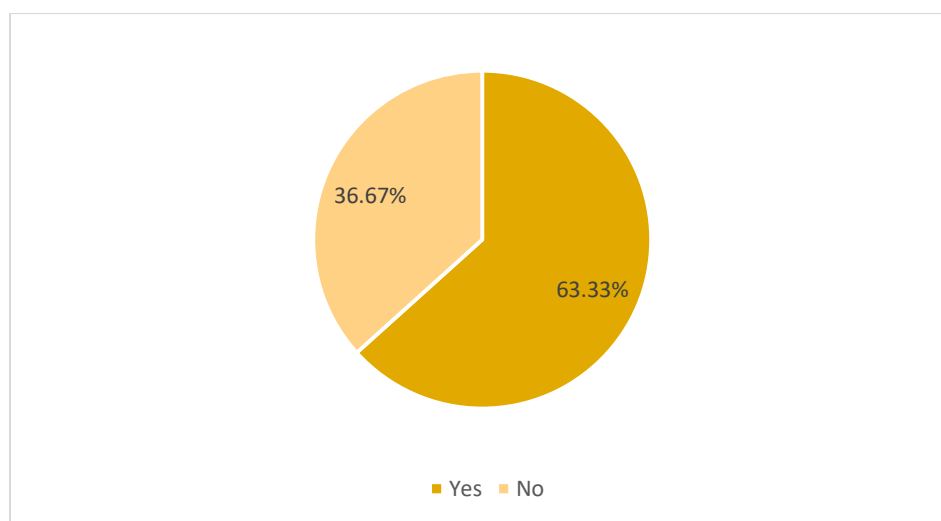


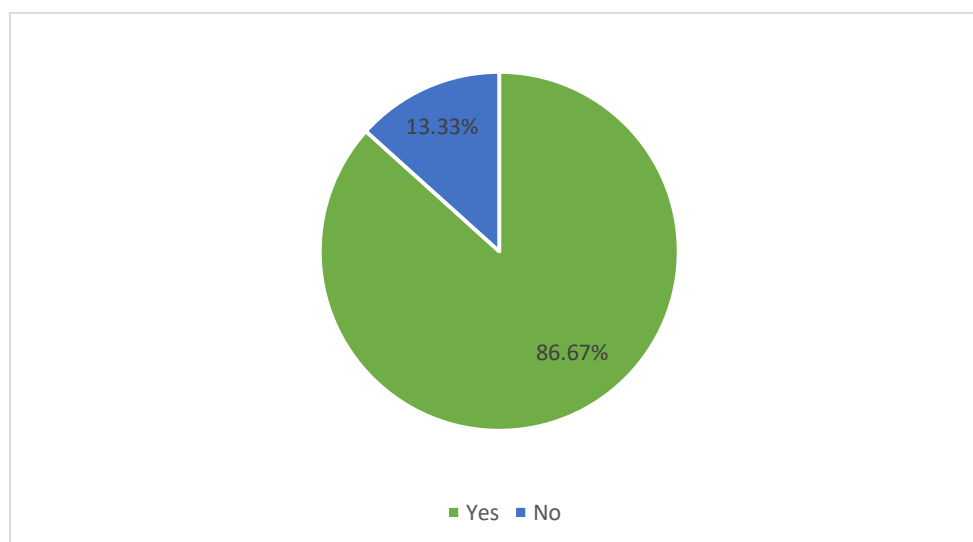
Figure 6.7. Contribution of Computers in Developing Writing

This question aims at capturing the students' attitudes towards the implementation of computers in the teaching of FL writing. The results indicated that 19 (63,33%) of the participants believed that computers are highly contributive in the betterment of the writing skill, while 11 (36,67%) opted for no as an answer. In light of the globalisation phenomenon and the ever-increasing development of technologies, it is a no surprise that computers occupy the arena of the educational enterprise in general, and EFL writing more precisely.

Q.9- Do you like using computers in the accomplishment of your writing tasks?**Table 6.8.**

Using Computers in Writing Tasks

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	26	86.67 %
No	04	13.33 %
Total	30	100.00 %

**Figure 6.8.** Using Computers in Writing Tasks

Unlike the previous question, this one seeks to unveil whether or not the students perceive the implementation of computers in writing as a pleasant task. The findings denote that a great majority of students 26 (86,67%) agree with the statement that computers are contributive in facilitating some of the composition difficulties. Only four making up (13,33%) of the respondents disagree with such a statement. Such results are rooted in the fact that the suggested approach used computers and equipped learners with the necessary tips and strategies needed to accomplish the writing tasks during the instructional practice.

Q.10- Before the instruction you have been exposed to, how often do you incorporate the corpus-based software when involved in writing tasks?

Table 6.9.

Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Writing Tasks before the Treatment

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Always	/	/
Sometimes	/	/
Rarely	09	30.00 %
Never	21	70.00 %
Total	30	100.00 %

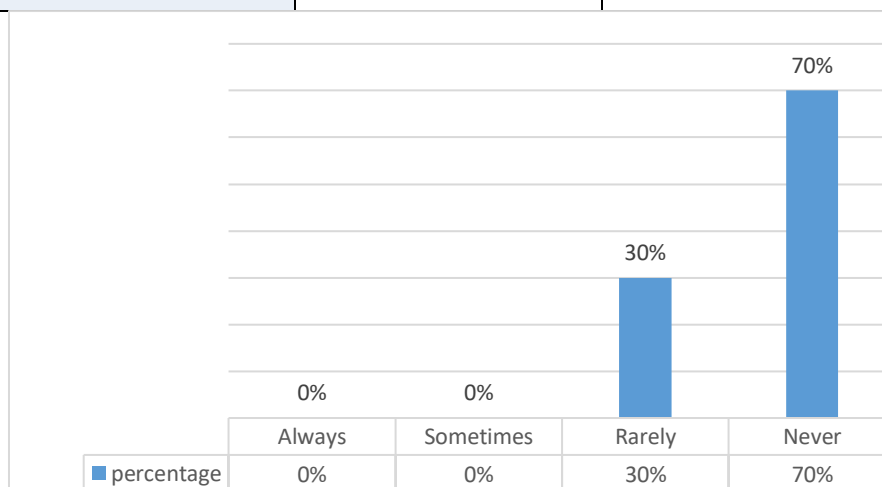


Figure 6.9 Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Writing Tasks before the Treatment

As indicated in the table and the graph, 21 (70 %) of the participants never used the corpus-based software in the writing classroom, nine (30 %) noted that they rarely incorporate the corpus-based dimension. None of the participants selected “always and sometimes” as the frequency of using corpus-based software. This is due to the high complex nature of such a software and its lack of disposal, especially, in the foreign language context; not to mention the need for a special tutoring that must be provided by the teacher.

Q.11- After the experiment, how often do you use corpus-based software in your writing assignments?

Table 6.10.

Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Writing Tasks after the Treatment

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Always	19	63.33 %
Sometimes	08	26.67 %
Rarely	03	10.00 %
Never	/	/
Total	30	100.00 %

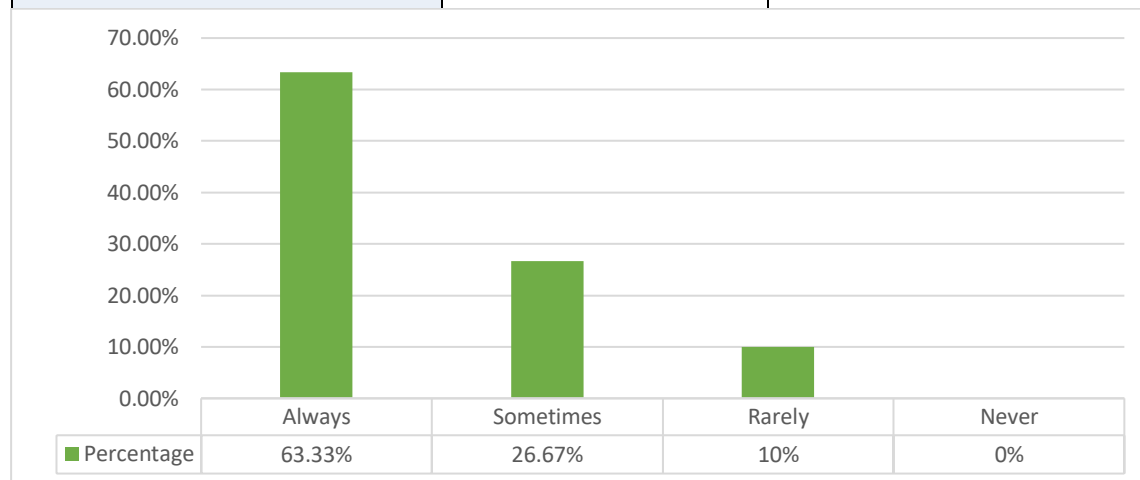


Figure 6.10 Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Writing Tasks after the Treatment

The answers to this question indicate that 19 of the respondents “always” implement CBA in the writing assignments, while eight opted for “sometimes”. None of the participants opted for “rarely and never”. These findings support the statement that the corpus software, if implemented efficiently, helps learners produce high quality compositions. Unsurprisingly, therefore, students were not given an opportunity to perceive the importance of such a

software. Hence, they tend to neglect its effective contribution. It is only after the experiment that they come to be familiarised with the expediency of incorporating such an approach.

Q.12- In the different language courses (grammar, linguistics, written expression ...etc.), how often do teachers use corpus-based software while teaching?

Table 6.11.

Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Different Language Courses

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Always	/	/
Sometimes	/	/
Rarely	03	10.00 %
Never	27	90.00 %
Total	30	100.00 %

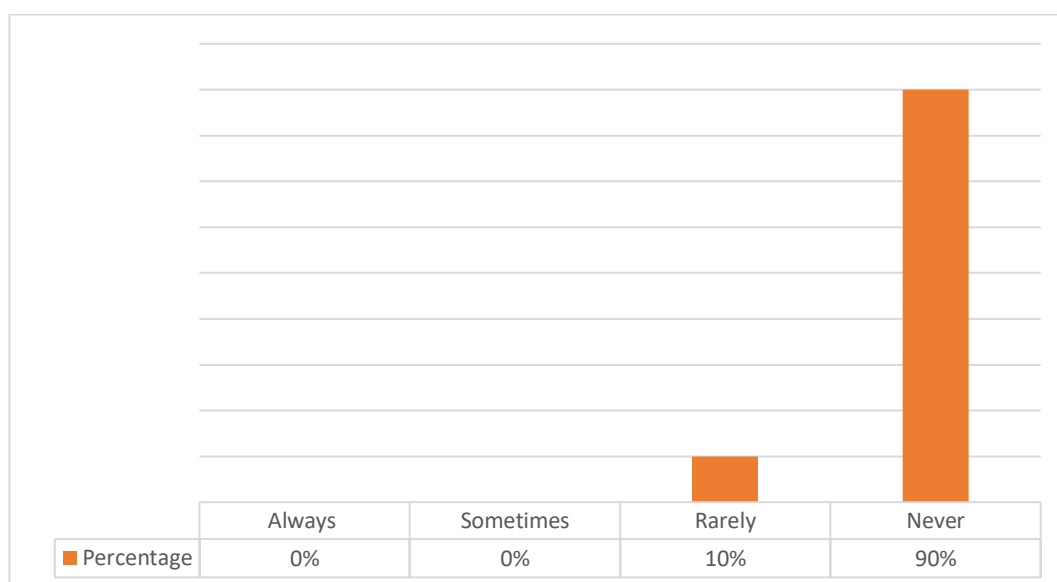


Figure 6.11. Frequency of Using the Corpus-Based Approach in Different Language Courses

This question purports at determining whether or not the corpus-based software is adopted in the teaching of the various language courses. The answers indicate that such a paradigm is never used in teaching the aforementioned subjects. This is, probably, due to the fact that teachers tend to underestimate the importance of computers in language teaching, the expensive nature of equipping the university with digital laboratories, the absence of access to the internet in the classrooms, and the high training requirements needed for teachers if they are to master the competence of the corpus-based software. Some of these obstacles can be removed if teachers use the appropriate software which can be used in the data show with no necessity of internet access.

Q.13- In your opinion, is the corpus-based software necessary for these language courses?

Table 6.12.

Students' Opinions about the Necessity of Implementing Corpus-based Software

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	17	56.67 %
No	05	16.67 %
I cannot decide	08	26.66 %
Total	30	100.00 %

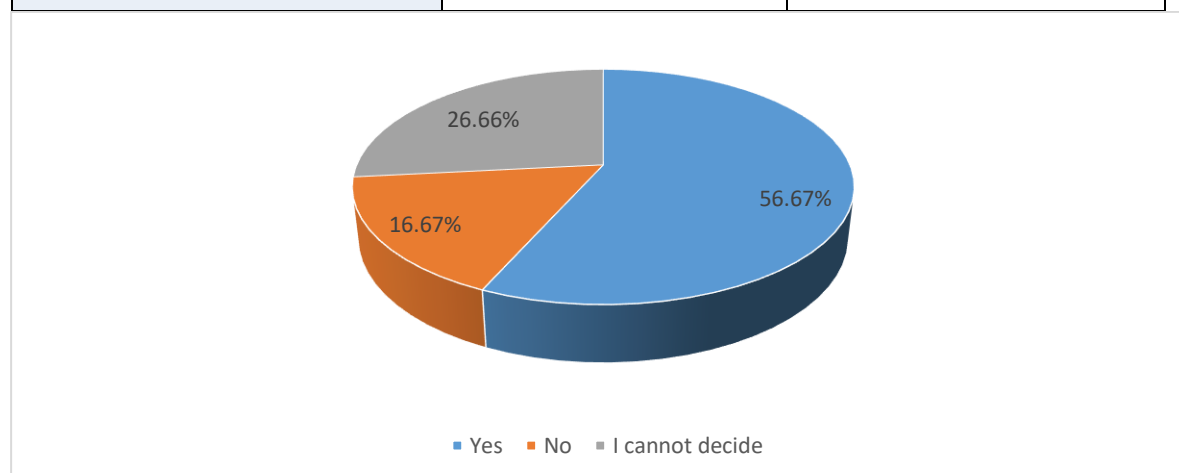


Figure 6.12. Students' Opinions about the Necessity of Implementing Corpus-based Software

The major purpose behind this question is to determine the students' attitudes towards implementing the corpus-based software in all language courses and not limiting it to written expression. The results showed that a great majority of students (56,67%) believe that it is doable to extend the use of such a software. This realisation may stem from the realistic expediency of incorporating this approach in the writing classroom. As a result, it can be generalised to be a homogeneous strategy to carry out various tasks even in the other language modules and courses.

Q.14- Whatever your answer is, please, say why.

Only 25 students answered this question. Their responses were grouped and tabulated under the following statements:

Table 6.13.

Classification of the Students' who Opted for the Necessity of Implementing Corpus-based Software

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
The corpus-based software provides an authentic input and facilitates the learning of language	10	56.67%
The corpus based software creates a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.	08	16.67%
The corpus-based paradigm triggers the students' attention, and develops their lexico-grammar	07	23.33%
Total	25	100.00%

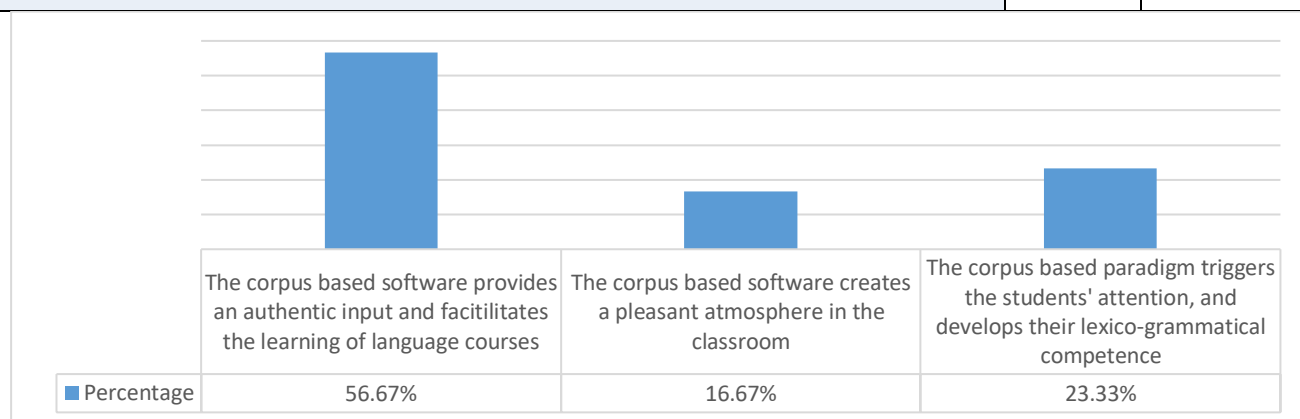


Figure 6.13. Classification of the Students' who Opted for the Necessity of Implementing Corpus-based Software

The responses obtained reveal that more than two-thirds of the students agreed that the corpus-based dimension is significant in the different language courses as it provides authentic input and facilitates language apprenticeship. Indeed, it is very satisfying that the students are fully aware of the major role CBA plays in dispelling the difficulties associated with the learning process. As far as the psychology of learning is concerned, it is also rewarding to know that students perceive such an approach to be contributive in creating a pleasant learning atmosphere.

Section Three: The Significance of Corpus-Based Approach in Improving Lexico-grammatical Competence in Writing

Q.15- Bringing a corpus-based dimension to the teaching of FL writing seems to be a better instructional practice than that of the traditional process approach.

Table 6.14.

Learners' Attitudes about Teaching Writing Using the Corpus-Based Approach

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Agree	18	60.00 %
Disagree	05	16.67 %
I cannot decide	07	23.33 %
Total	30	100.00 %

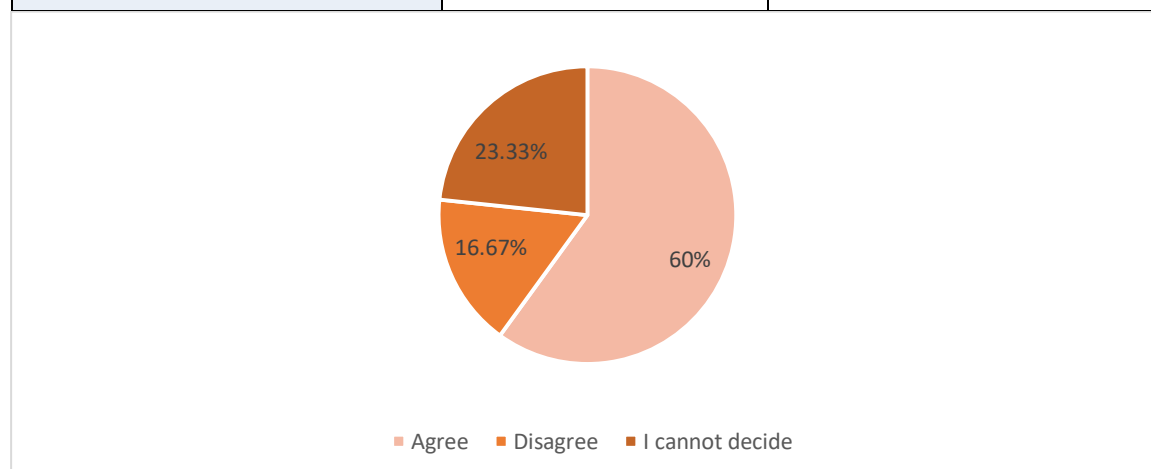


Figure 6.14. Learners' Attitudes about Teaching Writing Using the Corpus-Based Approach

The foremost aim of this question is to determine the students' attitudes towards the implementation of CBA in FL writing classrooms. The results indicated that 18 (60%) of the participants showed their approval with the results such an approach does yield if implemented correctly. This agreement stems from the participants' own experience elaborated in the classroom when dealing with the writing process. The latter seemed to be a less thorny act as the CBA helped learners work out their tasks and overcome some of the composition difficulties.

Q.16- What do you think of using corpora software in the composition course?

Table 6.15.

Benefits of Using Corpora in the Composition Course

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Beneficial	21	70%
Not beneficial	03	10%
I cannot decide	06	20%
Total	30	100%

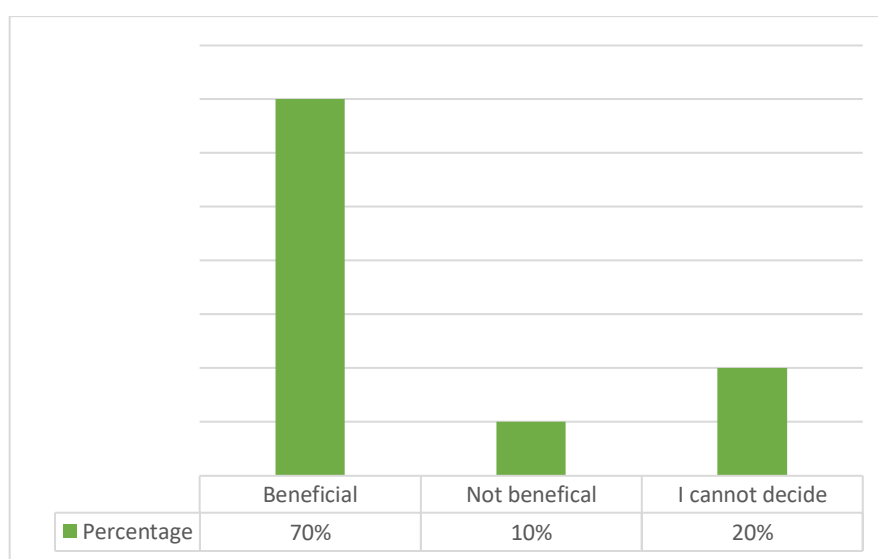


Figure 6.15. Benefits of Using Corpora in the Composition Course

This question seeks to unveil the participants' perception of the use of corpora software in the accomplishment of their writing tasks. The results indicated that 21 (70%) of the participants believed that corpora are very contributive in developing their writing skills. Whereas, three (10%), six (20%) respectively reported "not beneficial" and "I cannot decide". The researcher attributes these results to the fact that corpora software has created a room for self-motivation, ambition, and pleasant learning atmosphere. These resulting advantages, established by the corpora software, have triggered the students' inner will and eager desire to gain profit and work better on their composition tasks.

Q.17- Did the Corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you develop your grammatical skills?

Table 6.16.

Contribution of BAWE in Improving Grammatical Skills

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	21	70 %
No	09	30 %
Total	30	100 %

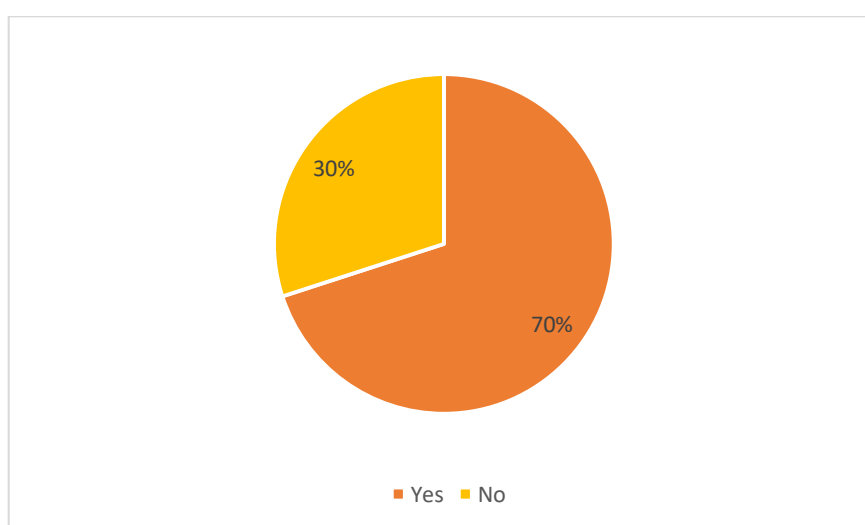


Figure 6.16. Contribution of BAWE in Improving Grammatical Skills

Question 17 was administered to shed light on the participants' reflection to the choice of corpus of British Academic Written English to be the source of the instruction in the writing classroom. The results denoted that the great majority of the students (70%) admired such a corpus due to its validity, simplicity, and availability on line. These findings are in tandem with what the researcher expected while selecting this corpus among the other available corpora. The participants noted the corpus' efficiency in developing their grammatical skills and elevating their written products' accuracy and correctness.

Q.18- If “yes”, how do you think it helped you? You may tick more than one option.

Table 6.17.

Students' Specification of the areas Developed through the Use of BAWE

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Develop your grammatical competence	03	14.29 %
B- Expanded your vocabulary	03	14.29 %
C- Improved your skills of collocation	01	04.76 %
D- Raised your motivation	01	04.76 %
A+B+C+D	13	61.90 %
Total	21	100 %

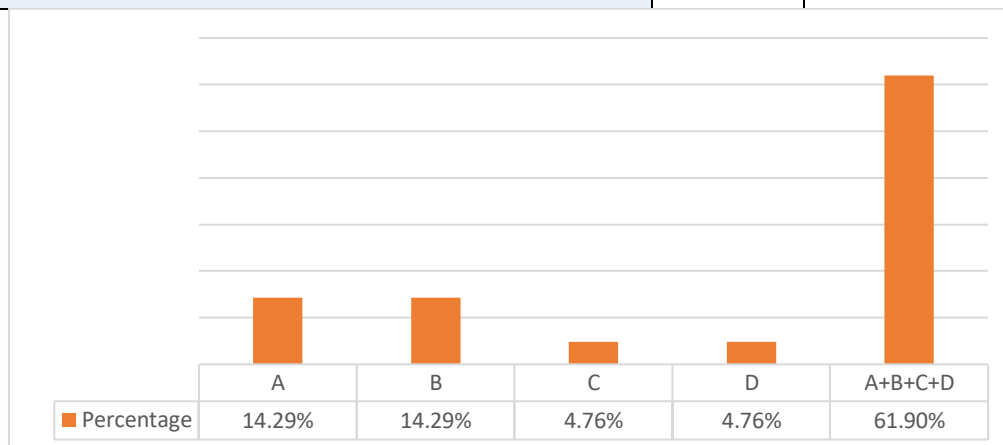


Figure 6.17. Students' Specification of the areas Developed through the Use of BAWE

This question complements the previous one in which students are asked to specify the areas they believe they have developed through the use of the corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE). The results indicated that (61.90 %) of the respondents ticked all the options arguing that such a corpus helped them develop their grammatical competence, expand their vocabulary, improve their skills of collocation, and raised their motivation. The researcher intentionally limited this question to the four previously mentioned aspects as they are at the heart of the research at hand and the basics of the treatment the experimental group has been exposed to during the instructional period. It is noteworthy that the findings of this question do concur with the researcher's expectation owing to the fact that the BAWE was initially implemented with the primordial aim of developing these areas of interest.

Q.19- Did the concordance software of BAWE corpus help you develop your collocation skills?

Table 6.18.

Contribution of BAWE in Improving Collocation Skills

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	19	63.33 %
No	11	36.67 %
Total	30	100.00 %

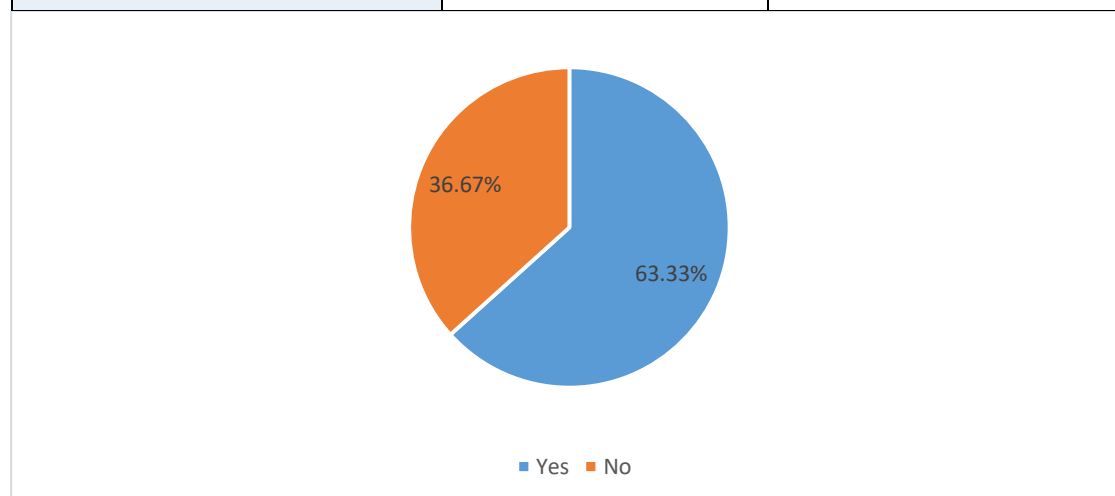


Figure 6.18. Contribution of BAWE in Improving Collocation Skills

After checking the contribution of BAWE in developing the participants' grammatical skills, the researcher went further to check such a corpus' efficiency in developing other areas of competences scrutinized in the current research. As far as collocation is concerned, 19 (63.33 %) of the participants reported their satisfaction with the results of BAWE in developing their collocation skills. Indeed, the instructional treatment has proved the corpora efficiency in equipping learners with mechanisms that fasten and broaden the students' familiarisation with how words and phrases collocate together to build meaningful and communicative written products.

Q.20- Did the corpus software of British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you overcome the cohesion difficulties?

Table 6.19.

Contribution of BAWE in Overcoming the Students' Cohesion Difficulties

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	19	63.33 %
No	11	36.67 %
Total	30	100.00 %

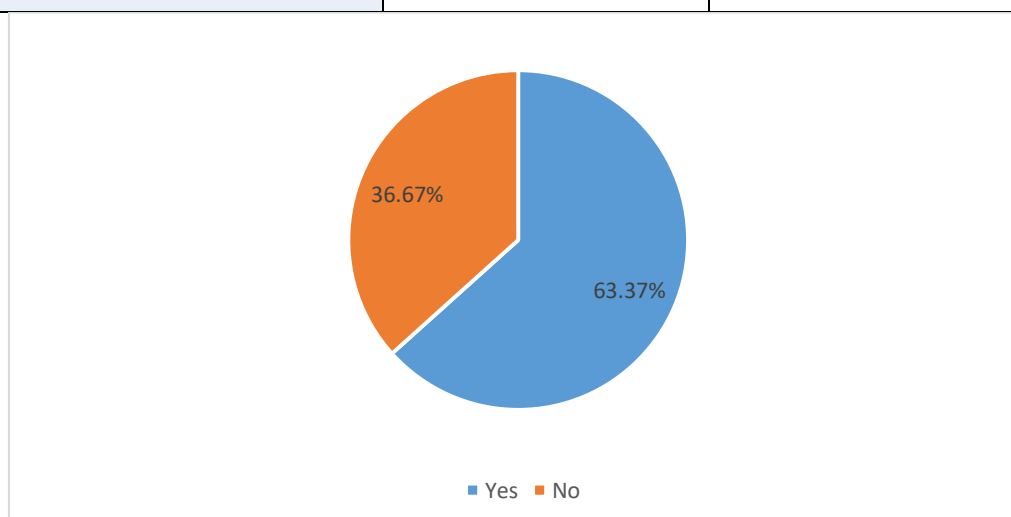


Figure 6.19 Contribution of BAWE in Overcoming the Students' Cohesion Difficulties

Cohesion is another element tackled by the corpus software and referred to in the treatment of the experimental group. It received extra attention as it plays a major role in ascertaining cohesive, purposeful, and well organized essays. As such, the researcher focused more on cohesion while teaching the experimental group through the corpus software. The latter has been reported to be highly effective in developing the students' abilities to produce cohesive pieces of writing as it provided insights and exposed learners to authentic and representative data available in the corpus of BAWE.

Q.21- Did the corpus software of British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you overcome coherence difficulties?

Table 6.20.

Contribution of BAWE in Overcoming the Students' Coherence Difficulties

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	18	60.00 %
No	12	40.00 %
Total	30	100.00 %

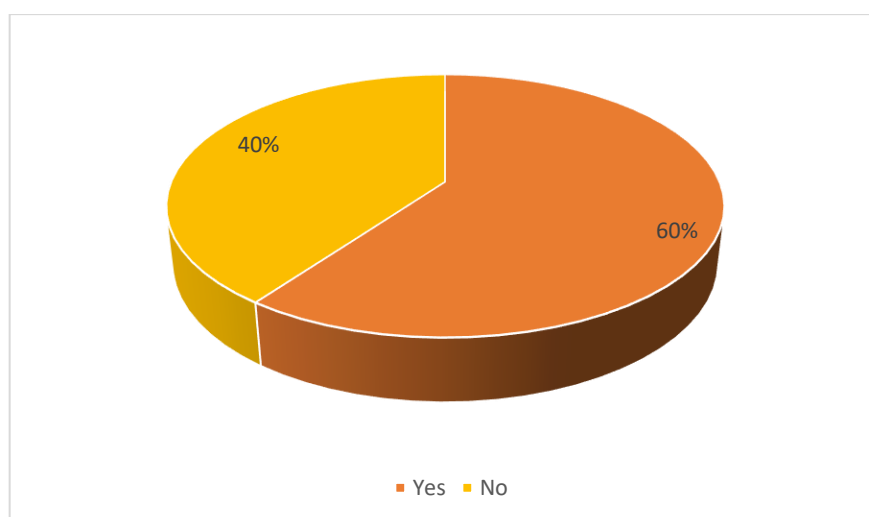


Figure 6.20. Contribution of BAWE in Overcoming the Students' Coherence Difficulties

Q.22- If your answer is yes, what percentage does best reflect the difficulties you have overcome?

Table 6.21.

Students' Rate of the Difficulties they Have Overcome

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- 20%	05	27.78 %
B- 50%	09	50 %
C- 80%	04	22.22 %
Total	18	100.00 %

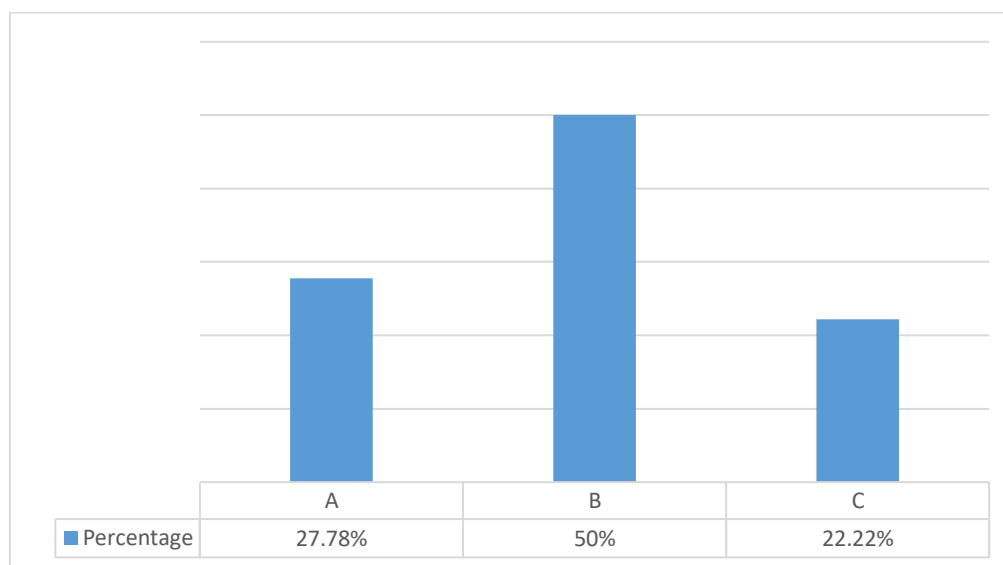


Figure 6.21. Students' Rate of the Difficulties they Have Overcome

Questions 21 and 22 were administered to gauge the students' attitudes towards the efficiency of the corpus of BAWE in developing their coherence skills. the results indicated that more than half of the participants reported the corpus expediency with a percentage of 50% to reflect the development they believe they made. These findings are quite satisfying actually as the researcher gave the participants the chance not only to reflect upon the efficiency of the implemented corpus but also a chance to determine in percentage the change they think they achieved.

Q.23- Have you experienced any difficulties during the composition course while relying on the corpus of British Academic Written English?

Table 6.22.

Difficulties Faced while Using the BAWE in Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	19	63.33 %
No	11	36.67 %
Total	30	100.00 %

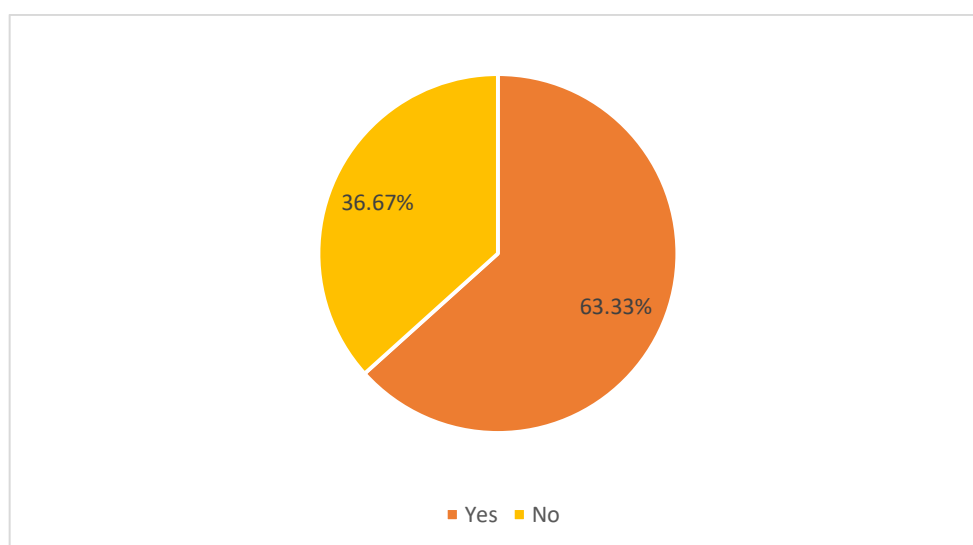


Figure 6.22 Difficulties Faced while Using the BAWE in Writing

This question seeks primarily to denote whether or not students faced any sort of difficulty while using the BAWE. The results showed that 19 (63.33 %) of the participants answered “yes” while 11 (36.67 %) opted for “no”. The researcher argues that the results of this question are highly expected and legitimate as the participants were exposed to an instruction that they are not familiar with. An instructional practice that used computers, software, and concordances would certainly cause learners to encounter some difficulties to gain full mastery over the various corpora.

Q.24- If “Yes”, please, mention these difficulties.

Those who reported that the implementation of the corpus software was moderately problematic were invited to mention to what they attribute the encountered difficulties. On 19 students, 70% of them ticked all the options rooting the difficulty in gaining access to the corpus, using the corpus, time constraints, and lack of guidance. The most selected difficulty elaborated by learners is “getting access to the corpus” which is solely recorded by 25% of the participants. These difficulties were accounted for by the researcher and the students have more mastery when using the corpus in the accomplishment of their tasks.

Section four: Students' Opinions about Using Corpus of Academic Written English in Writing**Q.25- After being introduced to the Corpus-Based Approach, how difficult are the following aspects to you while writing an essay?****Table 6.23.**

The Way Students Regard Writing Difficulties after the Exposure to BAWE

Items	Very difficult		Difficult		Neither difficult nor easy		Easy		Very easy	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A	04	13.33%	05	16.67%	17	56.67%	04	13.33%	/	/
B	04	13.33%	05	16.67%	14	46.67%	04	13.33%	03	10%
C	03	10%	04	13.33%	13	43.33%	05	16.67%	05	16.67%
D	02	6.67%	04	13.33%	17	56.67%	07	23.33%	/	/
E	02	6.67%	03	10%	20	66.67%	05	16.67%	/	/
F	04	13.33%	05	16.67%	19	63.33%	02	6.67%	/	/
G	03	10%	06	20%	19	63.33%	02	6.67%	/	/
H	06	20%	06	20%	14	46.67%	04	13.33%	/	/

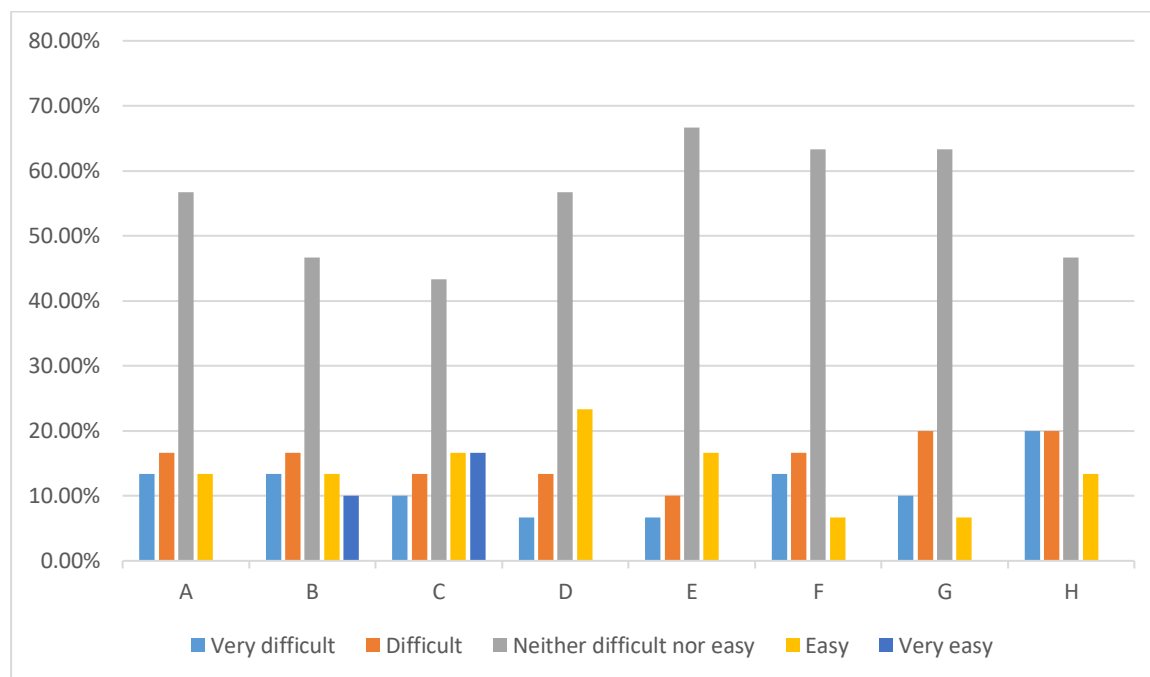


Figure 6.23. The Way Students Regard Writing Difficulties after the Exposure to BAWE

Item 25 is the most important question in the whole student questionnaire; it is at the heart of the research at hand. The researcher included it to unveil data about aspects that are highly pertinent to the realm of lexico-grammar investigated in this study. It encompasses all the areas of concern that the researcher referred to in the theoretical chapters and investigated in the practical ones. As such this question revealed data about the efficiency of CBA in dispelling some of the difficulties the participants tended to manifest in the pre-test before being exposed to the treatment in the instructional period. The elements of concern are grammar, vocabulary, register, punctuation, cohesion, coherence, and collocation.

The results indicated that, in global, 55.42 % of the participants regarded the aforementioned aspects to be manageable by ticking 'neither easy nor difficult' and "easy". while the remaining 44.58 % distrusted their answers over "very difficult, difficult, easy and very easy" options. One available interpretation that could be elaborated here is that the treatment that took place during the instructional period yielded a mastery of grammar, vocabulary, register, punctuation, cohesion, coherence, and collocation. The researcher argues that the implementation of CBA helped the students gain the necessary skills to gain mastery over these aspects, then facilitate and simplify the writing tasks for them, and ultimately, produce high-quality composition.

It is noteworthy, thus, that the findings of this question do support the results of the test in which the experimental group's post-test had proved their superiority over the control group when it comes to dealing with the areas and aspects referred to earlier. In this case, the findings of this question do support the findings of the test and add more validity and reliability to the results obtained.

Q.26- In your opinion, was the Corpus-Based Approach beneficial in elaborating all the above-mentioned aspects equally and explicitly?

Table 6.24.

Students' Attitudes towards the Benefits of the Corpus-Based Approach

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	24	80 %
No	06	20 %
Total	30	100 %

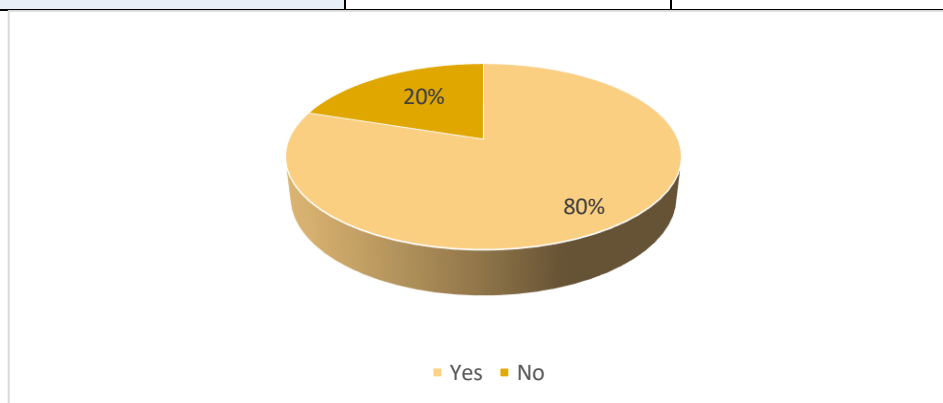


Figure 6.24. Students' Attitudes towards the Benefits of the Corpus-Based Approach

The utmost aim of this question was to complete and support the finding of the previous one. Unsurprisingly, 24 (80%) of the participants showed their agreement with the suggestion that grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, and collocation must be taught explicitly with equal time allocation and attention in the writing classroom. The researcher speculates that this huge percentage and approximate unanimous accord is rooted in the

participants' own experience during the experiment. Before the treatment, both experimental and control groups elaborated issues and difficulties when dealing with the previously mentioned aspects of writing. After exposing the experimental group to CBA, the students came to acquire a holistic vision about these elements. One which stresses the necessity of combining these aspects together, simplifying and presenting them through authentic and representative instruction that characterises CBA. This holistic treatment of these aspects also created a room for self-motivation and actualisation that generates ambition and inner conviction within the learners that if he/she would be able to deal with one difficulty, he/she is probably able to deal with all the others.

Q.27- Whatever your answer is, please say why?

Out of the six students who responded negatively, only two clarified that learning the above aspects equally and explicitly confused them. It was only six respondents who had negative attitudes. Otherwise, part of the hypothesis would not be confirmed at least from the students' standpoints. As for the remaining students who replied positively, their justifications were classified according to their sameness and tabulated as follows:

Table 6.25.

Students' Clarifications about the Benefits of the Corpus-Based Approach

Options	Subjects	%
Their writing gets more accurate grammatically	09	37.50%
The Corpus-Based Approach ensures an appropriate input of register and vocabulary which conforms with the communicative purpose and context.	05	20.83%
All the selected aspects are necessary in writing and therefore should be introduced equally.	03	12.50%
Cohesion and coherence are more smooth and easily presented	02	08.33%
Collocation is simplified and intensively accounted for	04	16.67%
No answer	01	04.17%
Total	24	100.00%

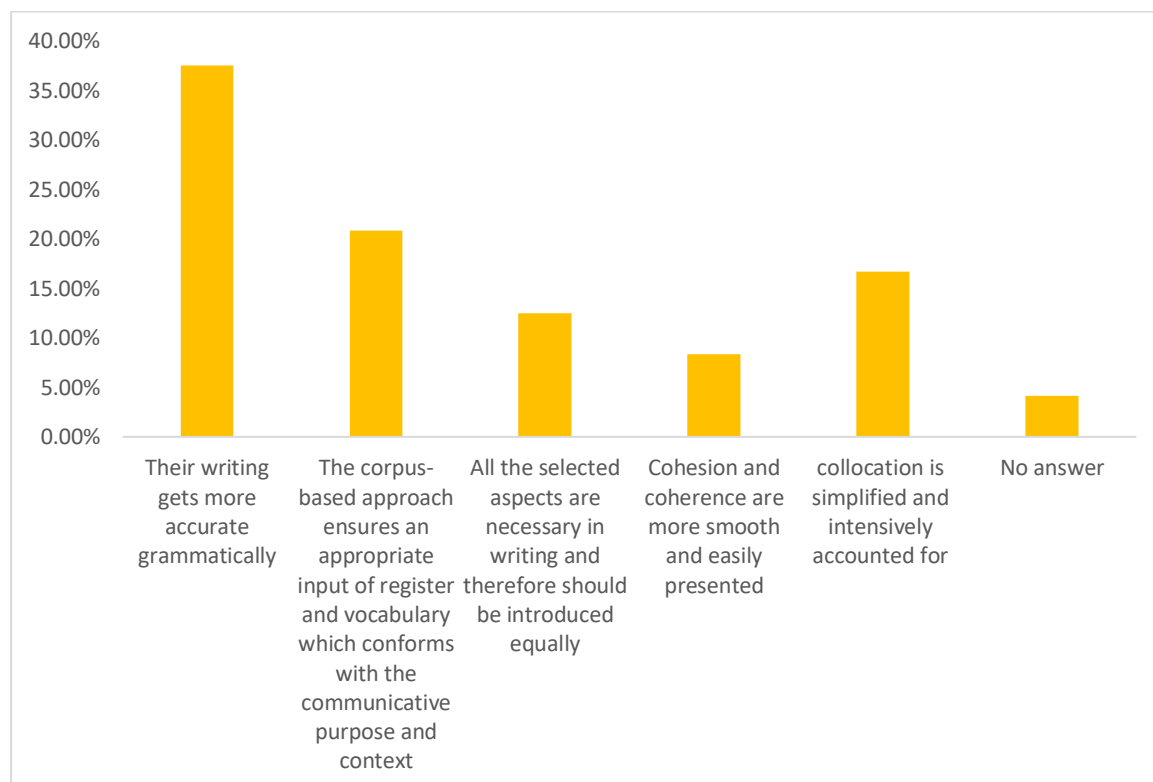


Figure 6.25. Students' Clarifications about the Benefits of the Corpus-Based Approach

Reconsidering the majority of positive standpoints, around (38.46%) of the participants who are in favour of learning all the selected aspects equally and explicitly consented that their writing got more accurate grammatically. Accordingly, one can confirm that explicit and equal teaching of all the selected aspects could be really helpful to the students. Moreover, (19.23 %) of them believed that explicit teaching equips them with an effective linguistic repertoire which accounts for register, audience, and the context of their writing. One participant explained this point saying “If the teacher does not explain these aspects and makes us read to understand or infer them alone from the text, this will lead us to understand them the way we want”. Other participants (11.54 %) thought of the selected aspects as all necessary in writing. That is why, in their opinion, they should be taught equally. Finally, (26.93 %) of the participants offered the reason that being exposed to many aspects equally helped them gain mastery over cohesion, coherence, and collocation.

Section Five: Further Suggestions

Q.28- Please, feel free to add any suggestion(s) you see relevant to the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach to FL writing instruction and its effects on the writing performance.

Out of 30 experimental group respondents, 14 provided the subsequent suggestions as grouped below:

- The Corpus-Based Approach is contributive to the betterment of writing.
- The use of computers created a great pleasant atmosphere that triggered the students' motivation to perform better.
- Concordances reinforce the students' written cognitive knowledge.
- The corpus of British Academic Written English develops the students' grammar, expands their vocabulary, and improves their skills of collocation.
- The implementation of BAWE was contributive in developing the students' cohesion and coherence skills
- The use of the BAWE hinders the students' stress and anxiety and provides access to original, authentic, and representative language as used by native speakers.

As stated in the last section, the experimental group respondents revealed some comments that have been predicted by the researcher and that were useful for the aim of the current study. Simply put, the students' suggestions confirmed that the implementation of CBA in the teaching of FL writing made their writing more accurate than before.

6.3. Discussion of the Results

The students' questionnaire aims at determining the experimental group participants' opinions and attitudes about the significance CBA does have in the process of their written composition development. It also purports at finding out whether, or not, the students under investigation gained profit from the instructions delivered by the researcher during the treatment of the experiment. It is noteworthy that the students' questionnaire is composed of five pertinent sections.

The first section comprises seven questions. These questions were designed to determine the students' perceptions, abilities, opinions, and difficulties of the writing skill after being taught writing using CBA. The findings in section one denote that the majority of students consider writing as a difficult skill they need to master compared to other skills. According to Jafarpour, Hashemian, and Alipour (2013, p. 52), writing has always been demanding and difficult for FL learners. Moreover, writing is perceived as a skill which is out of reach even for skilled FL learners (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000, p. 141). The results, also, revealed that the most frequent sources of difficulty for students whenever involved in writing are the lack of lexico-grammatical competence as well as the inefficiency of FL instruction. Poor grammar, scanty vocabulary repertoire, lack of collocation mechanisms, cohesion, and coherence are the most salient difficulties and issues associated in the act of writing. These findings are in accordance with several studies (Paker & Özcan, 2017; Balunda, 2009; Hill, 2000; Le, 2010; Liu & Jiang, 2009; Mounya, 2010). The emerging issue, thus, illuminates the need for a teaching philosophy that recognises these difficulties; then, goes further in adopting new approaches, methods, and activities in the teaching of FL writing along with adapting the classroom practice with the modern understanding of writing as a process.

The second section consists also of seven questions. It encompasses the students' view point and attitudes towards the significance and efficiency of CBA and its contribution to the betterment of their writing skills. The findings obtained from questions eight and nine indicate that a great majority of students favour the use of computers in the teaching of FL writing. The informants believe that these technological means may play a major contribution in the promotion of their writing skills. Computer technologies are said to exhibit discrepant forms of computer programs that can be used either asynchronously or synchronously in order to foster the students' writing skills (Ferris, 2002). Furthermore, the obtained findings are in accordance with a study conducted by Cunningham (2000). In his study, Cunningham reported that his students reported positive attitudes towards the implementation of computers in their writing instruction. Cunningham (2000) adds that this effect is rooted in the fact that computers increased the students' motivation to write, revise, and share their ideas with their classmates which equipped learners with the necessary tips and strategies needed to accomplish the writing tasks.

In the same vein, Warschauer and Healey (1998) note that students consider computers beneficial because they help them focus on the mechanics of their writing texts.

In question 10 and 11, the students were asked about the frequency of using CBA in their writing tasks before and after the treatment. The big majority of the respondents indicated that CBA in terms of concordance software was never used before the treatment. Students claim that they were not given an opportunity to consider the importance of such a software and tended to neglect its effective contribution. It is only after the experiment that most of them come to be familiarized with the expediency of incorporating such an approach. Some of the respondents, however, stated that they rarely opt for CBA whenever engaged in their writing tasks. This is probably due to the high complex nature of such a software and its lack of disposal, especially, in the foreign language context in addition to the need for a special tutoring that must be provided by the teacher.

To further detect the participants' opinions about the frequency in addition to the necessity of using CBA in different language courses and modules, questions 12, 13, and 14 were administered. In spite of the beneficial expediency CBA can bring to both teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, the results indicate that such a paradigm is not opted for when teaching the different English language modules. This might be linked to the expensive nature of equipping the university with digital laboratories and computers, the absence of access to the internet in the classrooms, and the high training requirements needed for teachers if they are to master the competence of the corpus-based software.

According to Granath (2000, cited in Bernardini, 2004), corpus based philosophy can be used in grammar and some other aspects of language. Tribble and Jones (1990) argued that concordancing shows authentic examples of different parts of a language and helps EFL learners to discover different meanings, usages, and collocations of different words. Such a claim has led educators to adopt corpus-based learning to boost inductive, discovery-oriented learning opportunities whereby students themselves conduct a corpus-based analysis and, therefore, engage in active and autonomous learning (Chambers, 2010; Boulton, 2009, 2010; Braun, 2007). As a result, the students are aware of the major role CBA plays in dispelling the difficulties and dilemmas associated with the learning process and creating a pleasant learning atmosphere.

The third section consists of 10 questions that are concerned with the significance of CBA in improving the students' lexico-grammatical competence in Writing. It purports at unveiling the experimental group's assimilation and perception of the corpus instruction provided by the researcher in the instructional period as well as their attitudes toward the feasibility, effectiveness, and the efficiency of CBA in developing their lexico-grammatical skills in terms of grammar, vocabulary, collocation, cohesion, and coherence. In question 15 the students were asked to report their attitudes about teaching writing using CBA. The results showed that 60% of the participants have indicated their agreement to use CBA as source of their written instruction. This approval stems from the participants' own experience when dealing with the writing process. Question 16 results also denote that a vast majority of the respondents consider the use of corpora in their composition courses to be useful and beneficial. This benefit stems from the enhanced language awareness and improved command of lexico-grammatical rules and patterns on the part of the students. In fact, several researchers stressed the advantages of corpora since the latter proved to be useful for error correction in foreign language writing (Bernardini 2004; Chambers 2005; Gaskell & Cobb, 2004; Gray, 2005). These resulting advantages, established by the corpora software, have triggered the students' inner will and eager desire to gain profit and work better on their composition tasks.

Questions 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 were administered to shed light on the participants' reflection to the choice of corpus of BAWE to be the source of the instruction in the writing classroom. The students denoted that they favour the use of such a corpus software because of its representativeness, validity, and availability on line. Furthermore, the participants noted the corpus' efficiency in developing their grammatical skills and elevating their written products' accuracy and correctness. such a corpus helped them develop their grammatical competence, expand their vocabulary, improve their skills of collocation, and raised their motivation. Cohesion and coherence are other elements tackled by the corpus software and referred to in the treatment of the experimental group. The expediency of the corpus of BAWE is rooted in the latter's efficiency in developing the students' abilities to produce cohesive pieces of writing as it provided insights and exposed learners to authentic and representative data available in this corpus.

According to Nesi (2011), the BAWE corpus is said to be a very rich resource that provides EFL learners with a currently unique opportunity to dig deeper into thousands of organised, and purposeful academic texts. Corpus software if implemented adequately are said to develop and boost the students' lexico-grammatical competence. Yoon (2008) run a study with six FL learners to investigate the effect of concordancing on FL learners' writings. He reached to the conclusion that concordancing could increase the knowledge of collocations of FL learners and also concordancing helped them solve their writing problems. The results of this section are also in accordance with Liu and Jiang (2009) study about "Using a Corpus-Based Lexico-grammatical Approach to Grammar Instruction in EFL/ESL Contexts". The results of this study showed that the students under investigation, who were 236 in total, raised their language awareness and better control of the lexico-grammatical rules and patterns. The results further revealed a great appreciation among the students for the use of corpus software in their instruction. This corpus based instruction increased their critical understanding of grammar, promoted discovery learning, and made learning more pleasant and effective.

The last questions 23, and 24 in third section were exclusively devoted to denote if there was any sort of difficulty among students while using the corpus of British Academic Written English. The majority of the respondents attributed mainly the encountered difficulties to analysing and successfully using corpus data, being overwhelmed by the large quantity of data presented by a corpus, and time constraints. These findings do concorde with Liu and Jiang (2009) results. Such difficulties may seem less challenging when students are trained on how to use concordance software. Also, a deductive use of the corpus would easily dispel the aforementioned difficulties (Liu & Jiang, 2009).

As for the fourth section, the students were asked to state their standpoints about the way they regard writing difficulties after being introduced to the various lexico-grammatical features through the use of CBA. The results indicate that more than half of the respondents consider the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, register, punctuation, cohesion, and collocation to be manageable. The students argue that the implementation of CBA in their writing instruction helped them acquire the necessary skills to gain mastery over these aspects, then simplify the writing tasks for them, and ultimately, produce high-quality composition. Liu (2011), in his study about "Making Grammar Instruction More Empowering: An Exploratory Case Study of Corpus Use in the Learning/Teaching of

Grammar”, note that the students under investigation developed a critical understanding about lexico-grammatical features, an awareness of the dynamic nature of language, an appreciation for the context/register-appropriate use of lexico-grammar, and grasping of the nuances of lexico-grammatical usages.

Furthermore, the students' majority showed their agreement with the suggestion that grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, and collocation must be taught explicitly with equal time allocation and attention in the writing classroom. After exposing the experimental group to CBA, the students came to acquire a holistic vision about these elements. One which stresses the necessity of combining these aspects together, simplifying and presenting them through authentic and representative instruction that characterize CBA. The students argue that their writing gets more accurate grammatically. Additionally, appropriate input of register and vocabulary which conforms with the communicative purpose and context are ensured through the use of CBA. Collocation is simplified and intensively accounted for, which makes cohesion and coherence are more smooth and easily presented.

The last section of the students' questionnaire was administered to give students some space to state further suggestions they see relevant to the to the implementation of CBA to FL writing instruction and its effects on the writing performance. Globally, the students highlighted their satisfaction with the incorporation of such an approach in their writing classroom. This satisfaction stems from the ability of CBA to provide the writing instruction with a pleasant atmosphere that triggers the students' motivation to perform better. It hinders their stress and anxiety and provides access to original, authentic, and representative language as used by native speakers. As a result, this would develop their grammar, increase their lexical repertoire, and improve their collocation skills.

6.4. Summary of the Students' Questionnaire Main Findings

Based on the previous discussion, the main findings of this questionnaire can be summarised as under:

- Lack of exposure to authentic and representative data in the teaching materials constitutes the main source of EFL writing difficulty.
- The most important aspects that constitute the focus of the students' writing are grammar and vocabulary.

- The implementation of the corpus of British Academic Written English has developed the students' coherence, cohesion, and collocation skills.
- The use of the concordances software has yielded authentic income that equipped learners with accurate register that accounts for formality, reference, audience, and context when using vocabulary in composition
- The implementation of the corpus of BAWE has provided a pleasant atmosphere in which motivation is triggered and stress is hindered.
- A significant majority of the participants confirmed the test findings since their writing organization has been improved.
- Many participants have changed their writing quality and habits due to the experiment they have been exposed to.
- Computers are rarely used in the different language courses.
- Most participants are in favour of generalising the Corpus-Based Approach to the different language courses.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter we conclude, the researcher attempted to analyse, discuss, and summarise the findings gathered through the students' questionnaire. On the basis of the results obtained, the students have positive attitudes towards the incorporation of CBA in the teaching and learning of FL writing. Though the students' answers confirmed that corpora and CBA are not frequently accounted for in the department of English at Hadj Lakhdar University as it is rarely assigned, they asserted that its incorporation as a means of teaching and learning is of a paramount importance. The students reported that CBA represents the authentic input that reinforces and facilitates learning, creates a pleasant atmosphere, increases their critical thinking and attention, and inspires them. More importantly, the surveyed students asserted that the suggested instructional practice was helpful in developing their writing skills in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and collocation mechanisms. The remarkable improvement achieved by the students after the experiment leaves no room for doubt that CBA can be a gradual (step by step) instructional practice which establishes a more accurate practice of teaching writing.

Chapter

Seven

Chapter Seven: The Teachers' Questionnaire

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Chapter Seven**The Teachers' Questionnaire****7.1. Introduction**

Chapter seven is considered to be the last chapter of this thesis. It is devoted to the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire. The main objective behind the administration of such a questionnaire is to probe their students' level in writing, and how teachers perceive the implementation of CBA in their writing instructions. The questionnaire is divided into four main entitled parts. The first section includes questions about the participants' professional status, and their years of experience in the teaching of written expression. The second section seeks to reveal the teachers' opinion about their students' written performance, the difficulties that may arise whenever teaching/learning writing. The third section of this questionnaire is devoted to determine the teachers' attitudes towards the currently adopted philosophies of teaching FL writing in addition to their opinions about the implementation of CBA in writing. As for the last section, it is specified for the participants' suggestions they believe relevant to the subject matter. Then, the remaining of the chapter is dedicated to some pedagogical implications. The latter are deductions, academic issues, and suggestions that were elaborated in the field of inquiry and that the current research could suggest in the field of teaching FL writing which may make teachers able to use as the source of their instructions.

7.2. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: General Information

Q.1- Degree held

Table 7.1

Teachers' Degree Held

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
PhD holder	06	25.00 %
Magister class	08	33.33 %
Adjunct teacher	10	41.67 %
Total	24	100.00 %

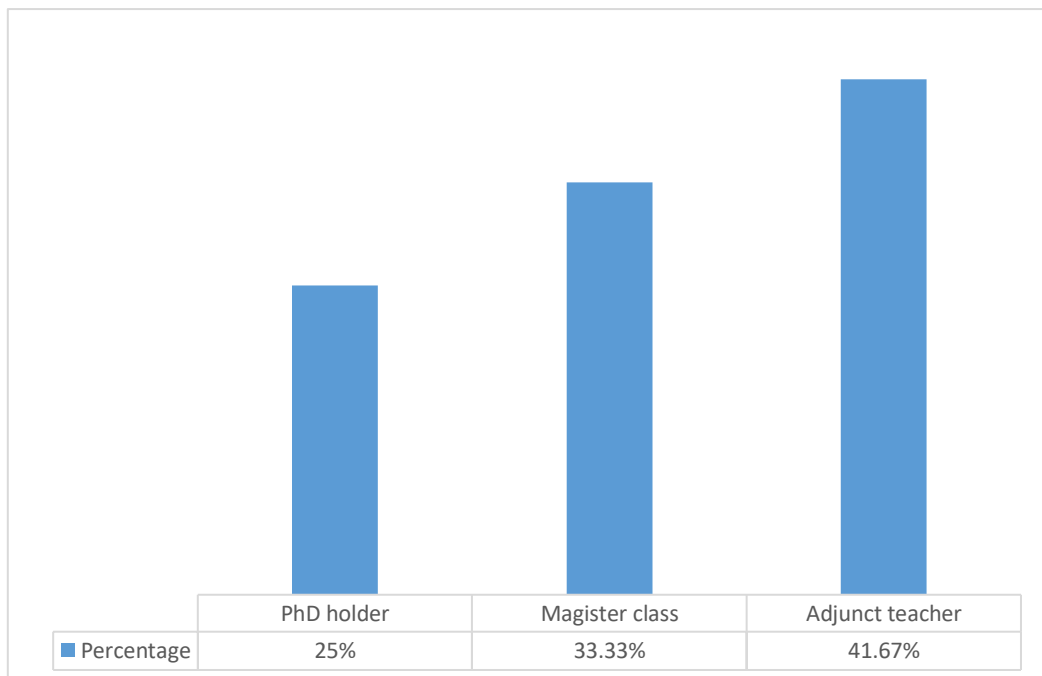


Figure 7.1 Teachers' Degree Held

The opening section seeks to state the status of teachers as a primary identification. The results revealed that among the 24 teachers questioned, many of them are “Adjunct teachers”; 10 they represent (41.67 %). The majority of them are involved in Doctorate research theses, some of them are beginners in teaching at the English Department, University of Batna 2; yet, all of them were allotted in teaching different modules for at least six hours a week.

As for “Magister” category, it represents a percentage of 33.33 %; their contribution in teaching writing is of a great importance since they are experienced in the field of writing. Concerning the “PhD Holders” category, it represents 25%, teachers who belong to this category can be identified easily because some of them contributed to teaching writing as well as some other modules for many years. Therefore, their participation would certainly be significantly beneficial for this study.

Q.2- How long have you been teaching written expression?

Table 7.2

Amount of Time Spent in Teaching Written Expression

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
01 - 05 years	10	41.67 %
05 - 10 years	04	16.67 %
10 - 15 years	03	12.50 %
15 - 20 years	06	25.00 %
More than 20 years	01	04.16 %
Total	24	100.00 %

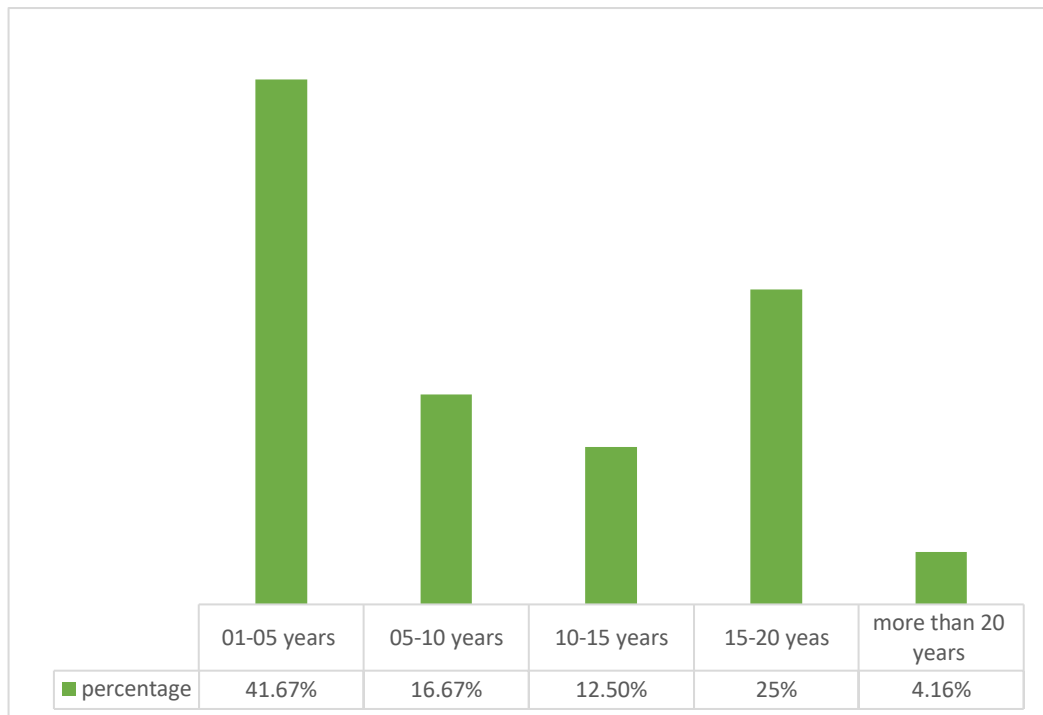


Figure 7.2 Amount of Time Spent in Teaching Written Expression

In this question, the teachers are asked about the span of years they spent in teaching written expression. In the table and the graph, it is portrayed that 10 teachers, making up (41,67%), have taught this subject for a period between one to five years, while four teachers, making up (16,67%), have taught this subject for a period between five to 10 years. The results mentioned in the table below also reveal that only three teachers making up (12,50%) have taught the module of written expression for a period between 10 to 15 years, and six teachers making up (25%) have taught this subject for a period between 15 years to 20 years. Only one teacher making up (04,16%) have taught the same module for more than 20 years.

Q.3- Which level(s) have you been mainly teaching?

Table 7.3

Levels' Taught in Written Expression

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
1 st Year	01	04.16 %
2 nd Year	05	20.83 %
3 rd Year	03	12.50 %
1 st + 2 nd	07	29.17 %
2 nd + 3 rd	04	16.67 %
1 st + 2 nd + 3 rd	04	16.67 %
Total	24	100.00

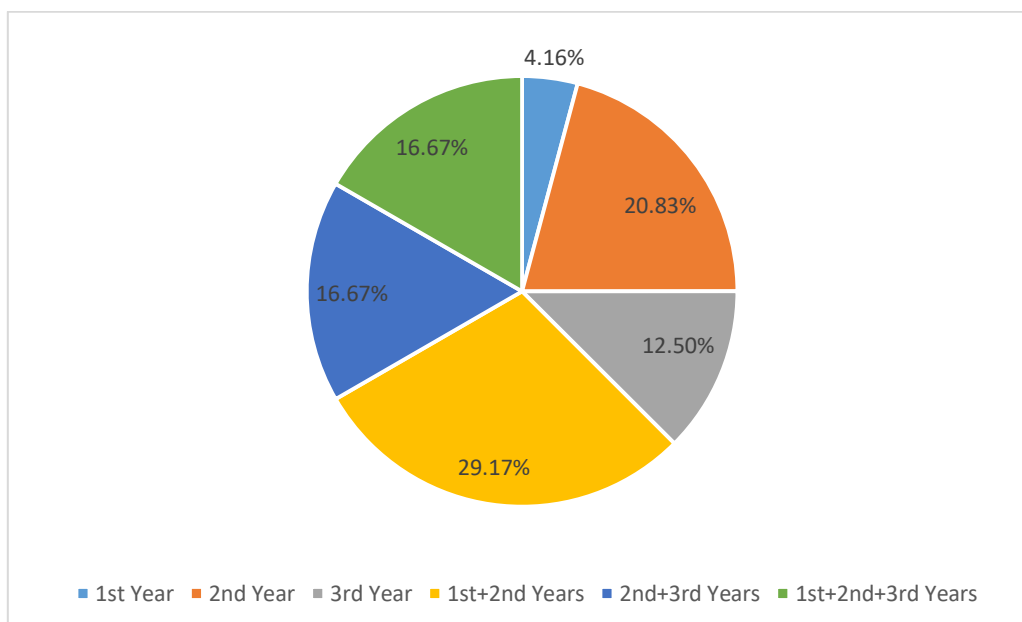


Figure 7.3 Levels' Taught in Written Expression

The table and the graph indicate that only one teacher taught 1st year, while five taught 2nd year and three of them taught 3rd year. The other teachers have taught this module to more than one level: seven of them taught 1st and 2nd levels, while four taught 2nd and 3rd, and four remaining teachers taught the three levels (1st, 2nd, 3rd).

Section Two: Teaching Writing Organisation

Recently, teachers have been complaining about the students' writing in all the disciplines and at all educational levels. Teaching writing is not an easy task because it is mainly concerned with evaluating numerous stages in the writing process. The second section of this questionnaire aims at determining the teachers' attitudes towards their students' written performances. Another aim is to detect the students' weaknesses in writing and to classify them in order of importance so that teachers can find out the appropriate techniques to help students produce high quality compositions.

Q.4- How do you evaluate your students' level in writing?

Table 7.4

Students' Level in Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Good	/	/
Average	08	33.33 %
Poor	16	66.67 %
Total	24	100.00 %

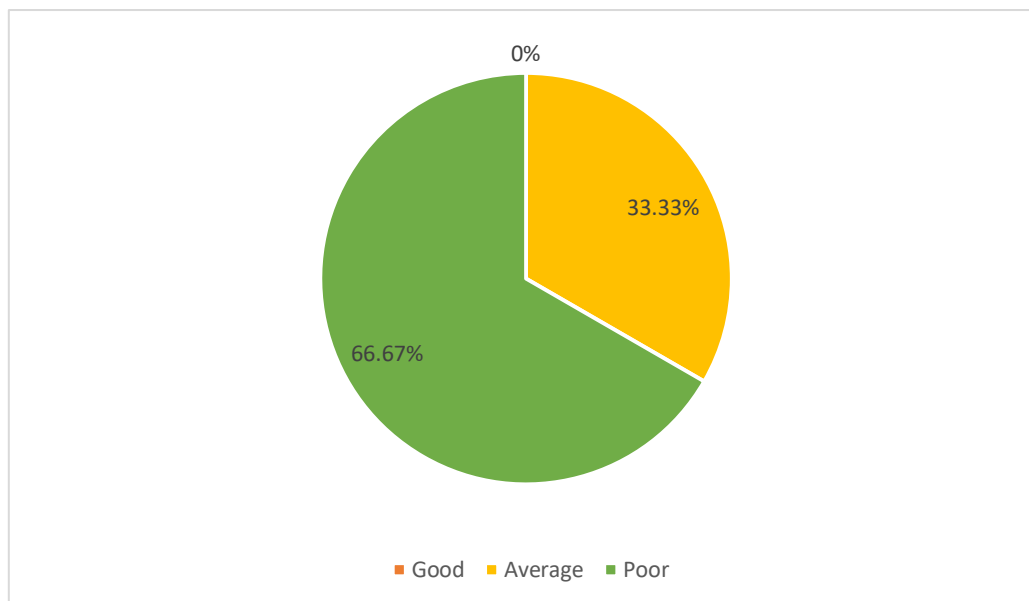


Figure 7.4 Students' Level in Writing

The foremost aim of this question is to find out the teachers' opinions about their students' level in writing. The results indicate that 16 (66.67 %) respondents consider their students as poor writers, eight making up (33.33 %) regard their students' writing level as 'Average', and none of the teachers opted for 'Good'. The immediate comment on the findings stated above is that a huge majority of teachers consider the level of their students in writing weak and poor because of many reasons that would be mentioned in the answers of the following question.

Q.5- When you ask your students to write an assignment, they are:

Table 7.5

Students' Interest about Writing an Assignment

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Highly interested	/	/
B- Interested	09	37.50 %
C- Not interested	15	62.50 %
Total	24	100.00 %

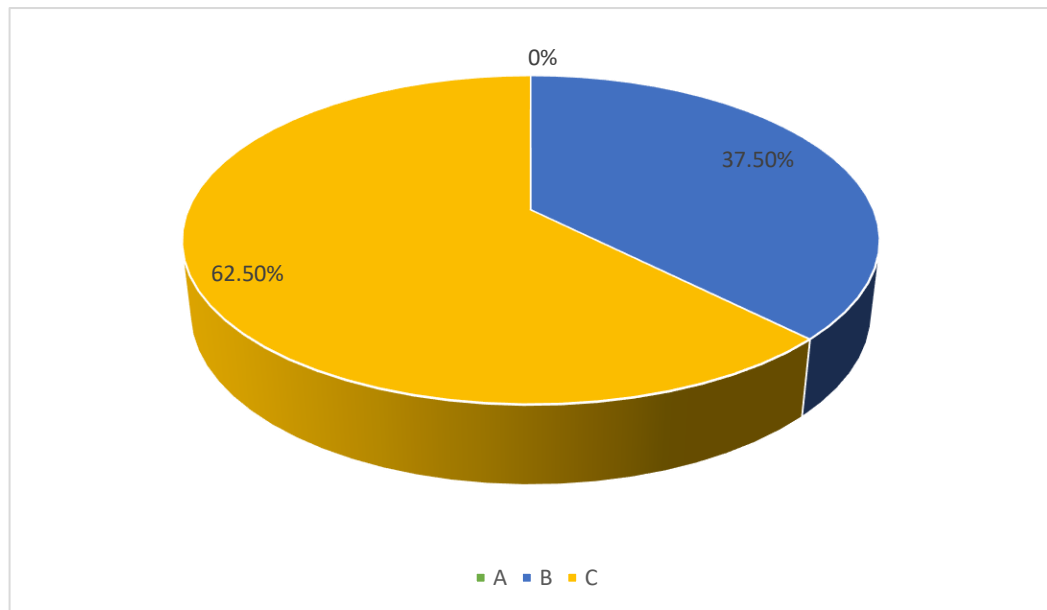


Figure 7.5 Students' Interest about Writing an Assignment

The results indicate that 15 (62.5%) of teachers reported that their students are not interested in accomplishing the writing tasks. Nine teachers making up (37,5%) believe that their students feel interested when asked to write. While none of the participants believe that their students are highly interested when it comes to composition. The results shed light on the fact that second year LMD students do regard writing as a thorny task. Such a fact might be rooted in the various difficulties that students may confront whenever involved in the act of composition. One available way to tackle the underlined complexity of writing is to urge teachers and researchers to dig into the dynamics of the writing process as an attempt to come out with data that would yield manageable solutions that would further be adopted in the classroom.

Q.6- In your opinion, what weakness is most elaborated in your students' writing performances?

Table 7.6

Classification of the Students' Weaknesses in Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Grammar	06	25.00 %
Vocabulary	04	16.67 %
Punctuation	02	08.33 %
Spelling	03	12.50 %
Cohesion	05	20.84 %
Collocation	02	08.33 %
All the options	02	08.33 %
Total	24	100.00 %

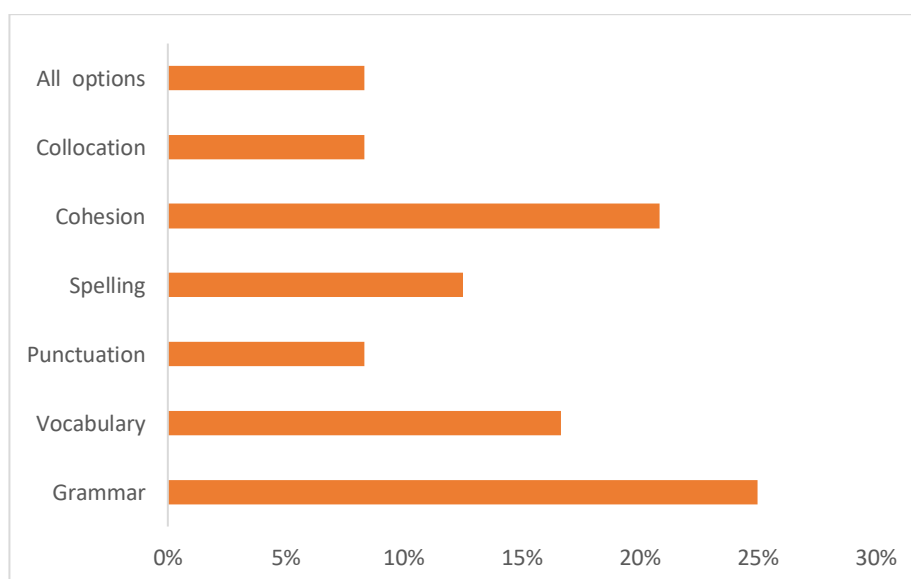


Figure 7.6 Classification of the Students' Weaknesses in Writing

The results indicate 45.84 % of the participants opted for poor grammar and cohesion. While 37.5 % of the participants reported that the lack of vocabulary, spelling skills and punctuation are the most common students' weaknesses. In addition, 08.33% of the participants chose the unawareness of the collocation mechanisms to be the main difficulty associated with the writing process. Last but not least, 08.33 % of the participants have opted for all the given difficulties.

Having in mind that writing is a complex process under the auspices of which various competencies should be initially accounted for and then mastered. As such, the researcher upholds the view that all the above mentioned intricacies are intertwined in which one difficulty leads to the emergence of another one whenever involved in high quality compositions. It is then legitimate to support the teachers' minority that reported the existence of all these difficulties in their students' writing. Grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, collocation, spelling, and so on must be combined within the spectrum of proficient writing. The emerging issue, thus, illuminates the need for a teaching philosophy that recognises these difficulties; then, goes further in adopting new approaches, methods, and activities in the teaching of FL writing along with adapting the classroom practice with the modern understanding of writing as a process.

Q.7- In your opinion, what is (are) the source(s) of EFL writing difficulties for 2nd Year Students?

Table 7.7

Teachers' Opinions about the Sources of Difficulties in Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Insufficient English language proficiency	10	41.67 %
B- Lack of interest and motivation	08	33.33 %
C- Time constraint	04	16.67 %
D- Lack of reading and practice	02	08.33 %
Total	24	100.00 %

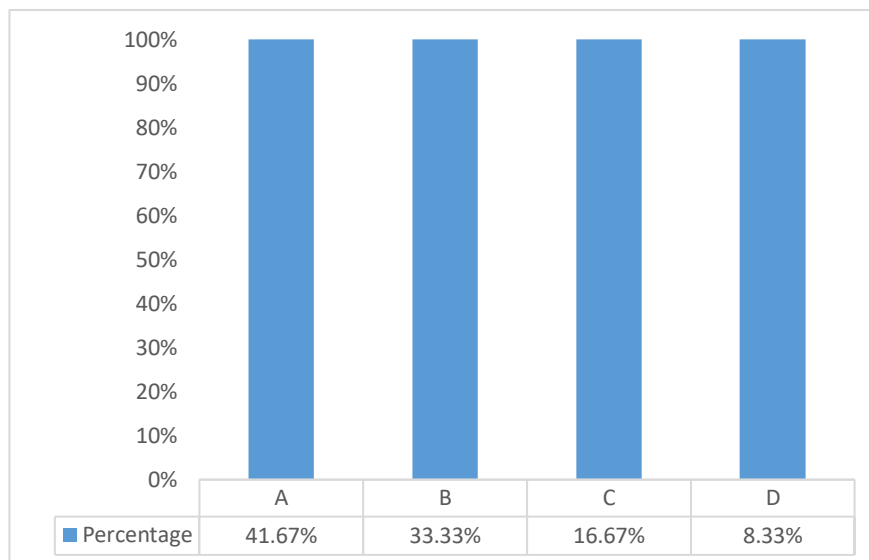


Figure 7.7 Teachers' Opinions about the Sources of Difficulties in Writing

The findings denote that 10 making up (41.66%) of the respondents replied “lack of English proficiency”, eight making up (33.33%) opted for “lack of interest and motivation”. While four making up (16.66%) of teachers reported “poor guidance”, only two making up (8.33%) participants have opted for “time constraints”. The results imply that the lack of interest and motivation and poor proficiency are the most common causes of the students' poor writing performance. It is noteworthy that the great minority of teachers disregarded the factor of “inefficient instruction” to be potentially contributive in creating a room for students' inability to write. By inefficient instruction, the researcher means the instructional practice adopted in the classroom through the various approaches, methods, and activities to teaching FL writing. It is legitimate to argue that W.E. teachers might have disregarded certain dynamics associated with an adequate implementation of the various FL teaching approaches.

The fact that teachers do not account for the potential existence of a gap between their instruction and their students' needs and goals, draw the researcher's attention to emphasize this dilemma. We went further and propose that the current teaching practice has got certain shortcomings and, thus, exerting a negative influence on the students' written outcomes. This hypothetical motion is at the heart of the research at hand, thus, it comes to receive the lion's share in this questionnaire. To confirm, or disconfirm, such a speculation, the researcher devoted the whole following section.

Q.8- Classify the following aspects in order of importance while teaching writing (From the most important to the least important).

Table 7.8

Teachers' Classification of the Writing Aspects in Order of Importance

Options	1 st position		2 nd position		3 rd position		4 th position		5 th position	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grammar	13	54.16%	06	25.00%	03	12.50%	02	08.33%	/	/
Vocabulary	08	33.33%	09	37.50%	04	16.67%	03	12.50%	/	/
Cohesion	06	25.00%	11	41.67%	03	12.50%	02	08.33%	02	08.33%
Coherence	05	20.83%	05	20.83%	10	45.83%	02	08.33%	01	04.16%
Collocation	03	12.50%	02	08.33%	03	12.50%	14	58.33%	02	08.33%

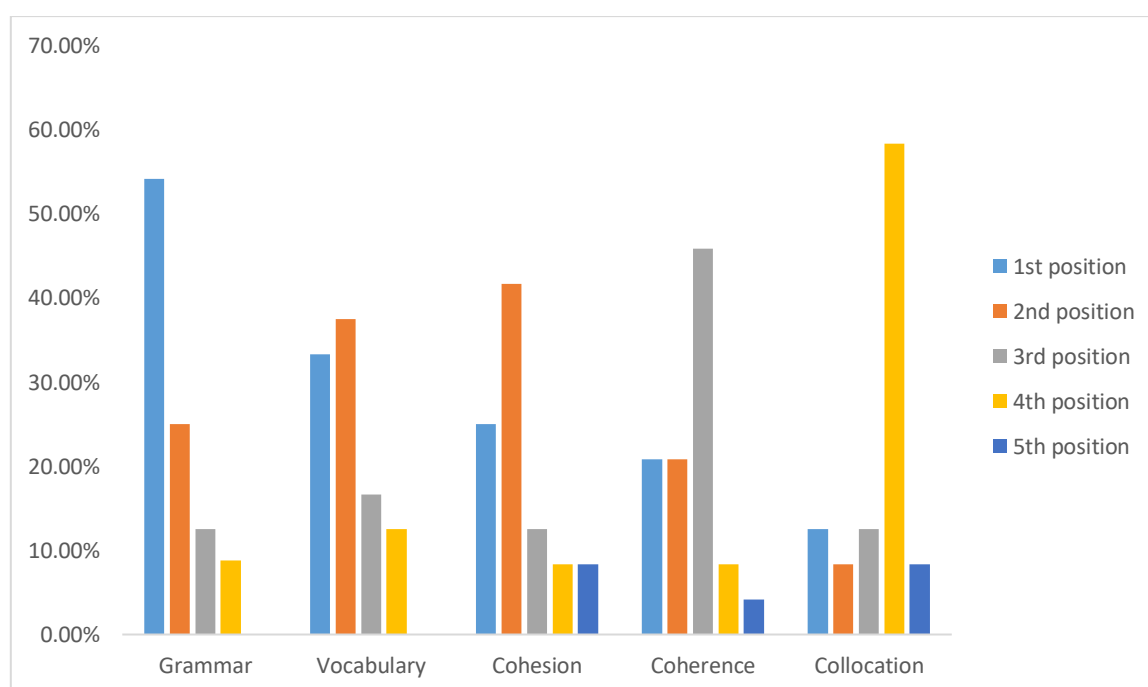


Figure 7.8 Teachers' Classification of the Writing Aspects in Order of Importance

Having a look on table (7.8), one can notice that the most important aspect of writing is grammar and cohesion as selected by the teachers. It was the most frequently cited first by respondents, followed by coherence and collocation. The researcher expected the teachers to attach great importance to grammar and cohesion because second year students are supposed to acquire the basic lexico-grammatical skills at that level.

Q.9- Of the preceding aspects, which one engenders the greatest difficulty to students while writing?

Table 7.9

Teachers' Perception of the Difficulty of Aspects of Writing for Students

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Grammar	12	50.00 %
Cohesion	06	25.00 %
Vocabulary	03	12.50 %
Coherence	03	12.50 %
Collocation	/	/
Total	24	100.00 %

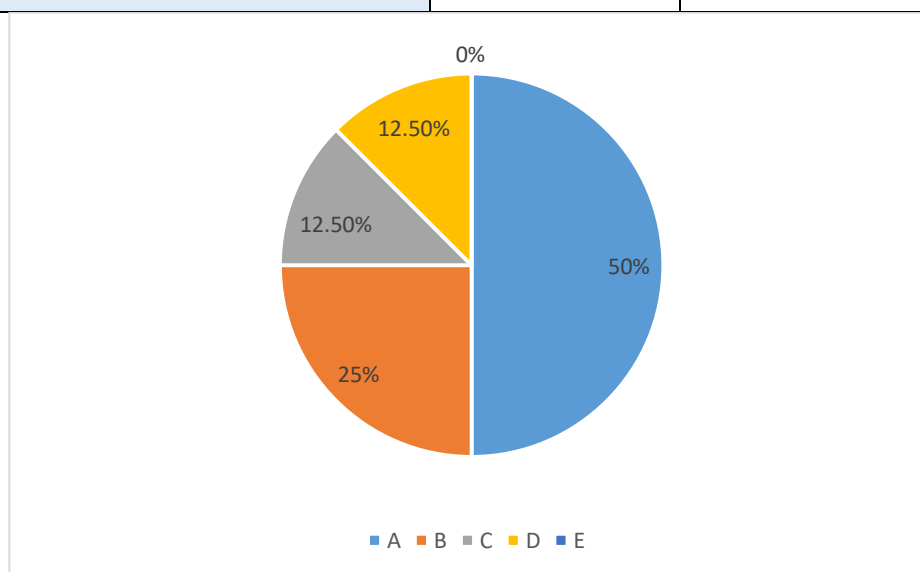


Figure 7.9 Teachers' Perception of the Difficulty of Aspects of Writing for Students

It is evident from table (7.9) that grammar is the aspect which engenders the greatest difficulty to students with a rate of (50%). In the next position comes cohesion with (25%). In the last position comes vocabulary and coherence both with (12.5%).

Q.10- In terms of grammar, how would you characterize your students' essays?

Table 7.10

Teachers' Classification of the Students' Essays Organization

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Poor	02	08.33 %
Average	10	41.67 %
Fair	12	50.00 %
Good	/	/
Excellent	/	/
Total	24	100.00 %

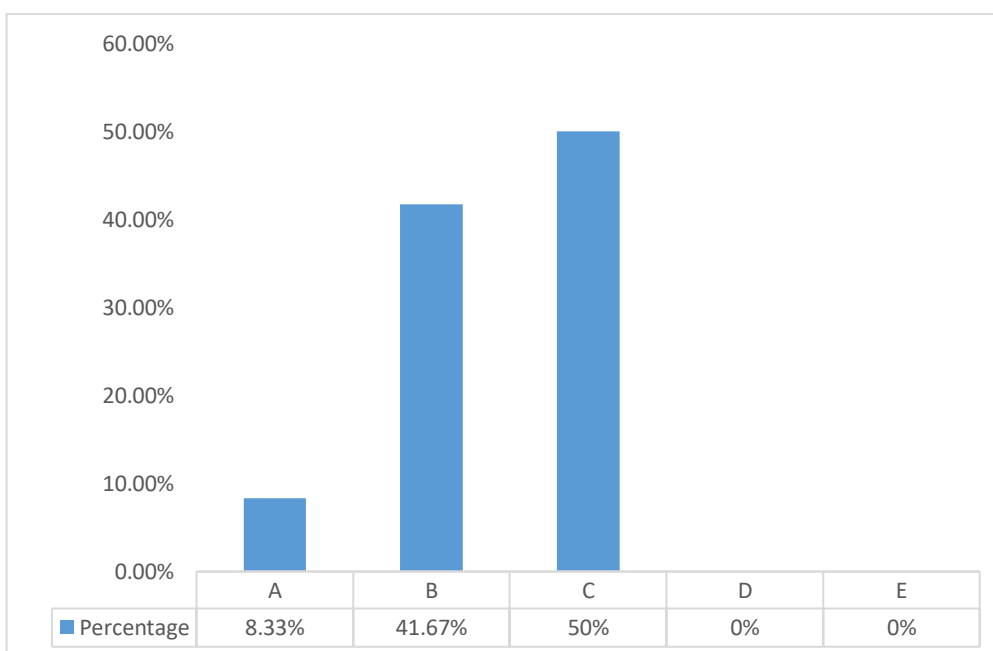


Figure 7.10 Teachers' Classification of the Students' Essays Organisation

The table and the graph show that the teachers' classification of the students' grammatical abilities was arranged between "average" with (41.67 %) and "fair" with (50%). This is a sign that grammar is usually problematic in the students' papers.

Q.11- How much emphasis do you place on the aforementioned aspects to check the students' progress in writing organised essays?

Table 7.11

The Degree of Emphasis Teachers Account for when Writing Essays

Options	Major emphasis		Moderate emphasis		Minor emphasis		No emphasis	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grammar	15	62.50%	07	29.17%	02	8.33%	/	/
Vocabulary	10	41.67%	08	33.33%	05	20.83%	01	4.17%
Cohesive items	12	50.00%	07	29.17%	05	20.83%	/	/
Coherence relations	08	33.33%	10	41.67%	06	25.00%	/	/
Collocation mechanisms	/	/	07	29.17%	14	58.33%	03	12.50%

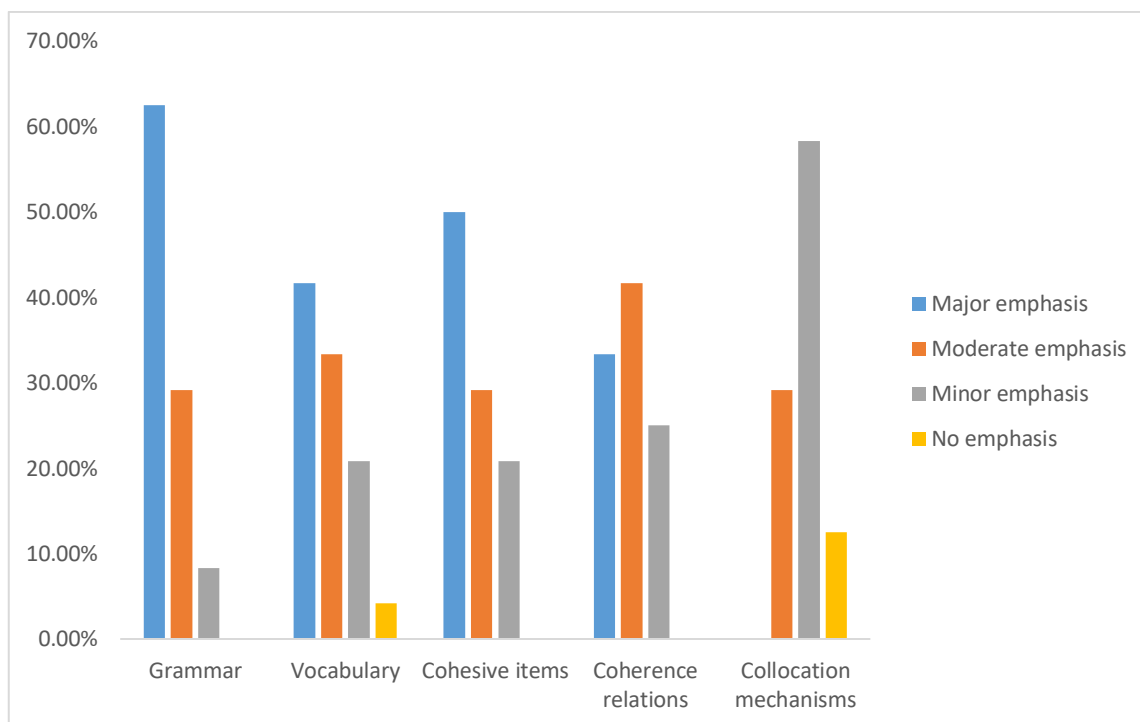


Figure 7.11 The Degree of Emphasis Teachers Account for when Writing Essays

Item 11 was administered to gauge the teachers' standpoints about the aspects they account for in the evaluation of their students' progress in writing. To the researcher's surprise, the great majority of the respondents selected grammar and cohesive items to be the most salient aspects that indicate the learners' mastery of high quality compositions. These results are not in tandem with the approach they claim to adopt (the Process Approach) owing to the fact that the latter is never meant to develop grammar and cohesion. The Process Approach is implemented for the sake of developing the students' cognitive processes underwent whenever involved in the act of writing. It is thus a discrepancy to incorporate an approach which advances fluency over accuracy, and in return evaluate, stress, and emphasise accuracy when it comes to the evaluation of the students' written products.

Q.12- In your opinion, could teaching all the above aspects equally and explicitly be helpful to second year students to write more organized essays?

Table 7.12

Teachers' Opinions about Teaching all the Selected Aspects of Discourse Structure Equally and Explicitly

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Yes	20	83.33%
B- No	/	/
C- I do not know	04	16.67%
Total	24	100.00%

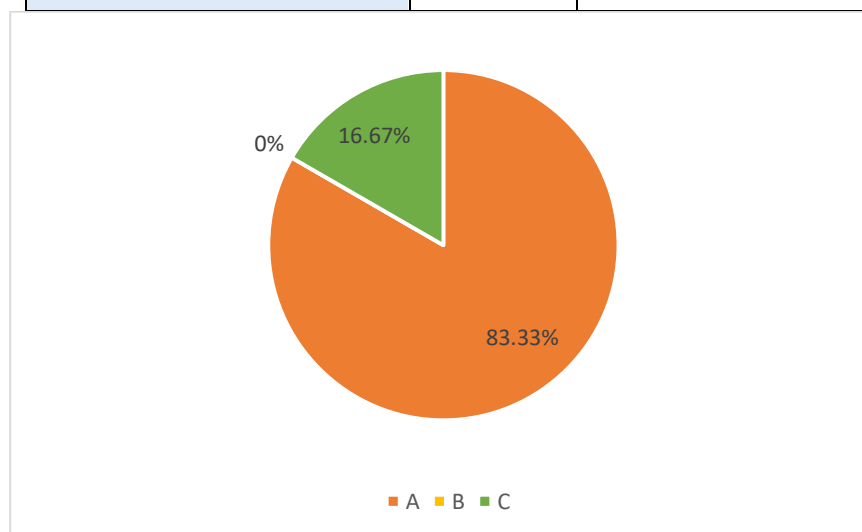


Figure 7.12 Teachers' Opinions about Teaching all the Selected Aspects of Discourse Structure Equally and Explicitly

The table and the graph display that the majority of the respondents are in favour of the idea that teaching all the selected aspects of writing equally and explicitly could be helpful to second year students. Meanwhile, there were four teachers who stated that they do not know. Actually, it would be of great interest for the final outcome of this research that most teachers adopt similar position on the effectiveness of teaching explicitly these areas through CBA.

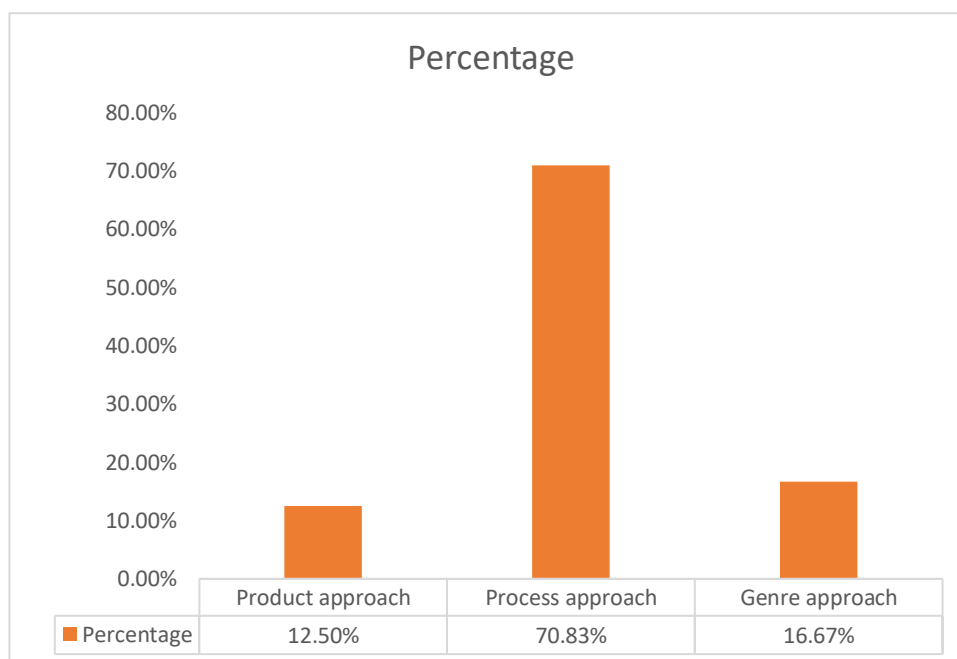
Q.13- If “No”, please say why.

As no respondent opted for “no” option, no clarification is reported.

Section Three: Teachers' Opinions about the Corpus-Based Approach in the Composition Course**Q.14- Among the following, which approach of teaching writing do you use in your instructional practice?****Table 7.13**

The Approach Teachers Use when Teaching Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Product Approach	03	12.50 %
Process Approach	17	70.83 %
Genre Approach	04	16.67 %
Total	24	100.00 %

**Figure 7.13** The Approach Teachers Use when Teaching Writing

The results indicate that 17 making up (70.83 %) of teachers adhere to the Process Approach philosophy. Three making up (12.5 %) of the participants opted for the Product Approach. While four making up (16.67 %) reported the use of the Genre Approach.

It is, then, crystal clear that the vast majority of teachers implement the Process Approach in the teaching of FL writing. Such a paradigm has a distinctive nature that differs from the other trends. To achieve the desired outcomes, teachers must be fully aware of the Process Approach's nature, its characteristics, advantages, drawbacks, and the way it should be implemented to best fit the students' needs. One of the most substantial objectives of this questionnaire is to determine whether or not teachers do have the necessary conditions and tools of implementing such an approach. An attempt to work such an objective out will take place in the coming questions.

Q.15- Would you please explain, why?

There are three teachers who follow solely the product approach without combination of any other approach. They elucidated that:

- “Students like to study model essays before engaged in writing. It gives them an image to what they are required to do.”
- “To encourage learners to be more productive by giving them some freedom.”

For those who believe that writing is realised through steps and selected the Process Approach justified their choice as follows.”

- “It is necessary for students to explore the process of writing from the first phase till the last.”
- “At first stage, the Process Approach is more suitable; it helps them see how writing works in English.”
- “Students need to understand and complete writing tasks by following different stage of the Process Approach.”
- “Whenever I find time, I try to adopt the Process Approach because I like to follow my students in each writing phase so that I give them feedback on every detail. For example, feedback is very useful in drafting.”
- “I like to get my students think how to approach a topic through steps instead of merely receiving their production at the end of the session.”

- “Writing is a continuous process, and the students go through different stages to produce the final product. Students should not think of producing an ideal piece of writing right from the beginning (Product Approach).”
- “The teacher’s presence during the process of writing provides students with appropriate guidance as she/he directs the process from brainstorming till editing in order to come to a well product.”
- “Whatever is the Product Approach, I consider the Process Approach as essential. One cannot go without the other particularly in our case.”
- “The Process Approach is very beneficial, it helps students to go step by step until they arrive to produce a coherent and unified piece of writing.”
- “It is important to teach them how to go through an organized process to write a successful essay.”
- “The Process Approach guides the students in their writing from selecting the topic to the final coherent and unified draft.”

Q.16- To what extent do you think the approach being adopted, in your instruction, is efficient in dispelling the difficulties associated with writing referred to earlier?

Table 7.14

Efficiency of the Approaches Adopted when Teaching Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Very efficient	04	16.67 %
Moderately efficient	14	58.33 %
Deficient	06	25.00 %
Total	24	100.00 %

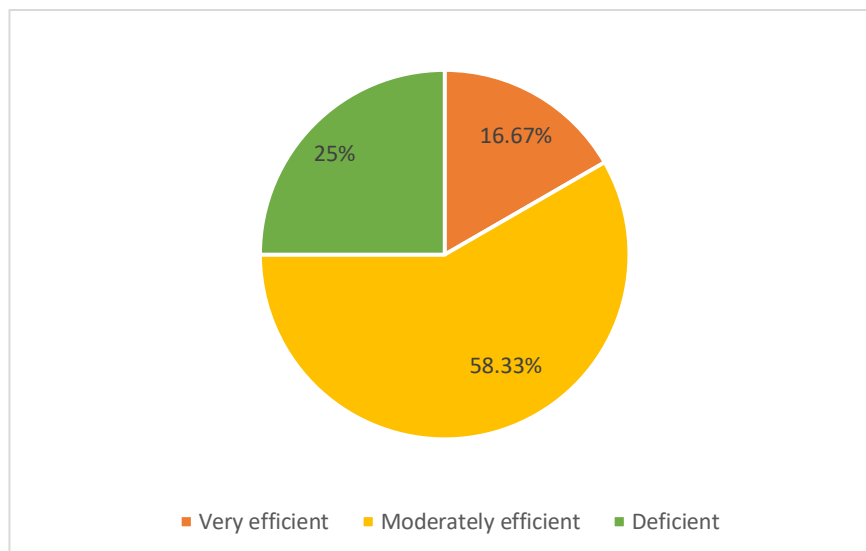


Figure 7.14 Efficiency of the Approaches Adopted when Teaching Writing

The foremost aim of this question is to figure out the efficiency of the approaches adopted in the writing classrooms. Almost (60%) of teachers who reported the use of the Process Approach showed their dissatisfaction with the latter's results being indicating that it moderately meets the needs of their students. All the participants who reported the exclusive use of the Product Approach also reported the inefficiency of instruction solely based on the Product Approach. The results imply that teachers do acknowledge either the complexity of implementing the Process Approach as well as the inefficiency of relying exclusively on the product and the genre paradigm.

Q.17- If your answer is the Process Approach, to what, then, do you attribute the deficiency in developing the students' composition?

This question was intentionally designed to be an open-ended question to gain access into as much difficulties as possible confronted by learners while producing high-quality compositions. Various shortcomings reside in the complexity of implementing such an approach. The participants reported that high teachers training, time consuming, difficulty of evaluating each cognitive process associated with the process trend, the difficulty of ascertaining a smooth movement from one cognitive process to another by students when composing, and most importantly, the approach inefficiency in developing the students' grammatical skills needed, especially, in foreign language teaching context, to be the most salient shortcomings of the process instruction.

Q.18- Do you account for the recently predominating field of Applied Linguistics, known as Corpus linguistics, in your writing instruction?

Table 7.15

Teachers' Incorporation of Corpus Linguistics in their Writing Instruction

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	14	58.33 %
No	10	41.67 %
Total	24	100.00 %

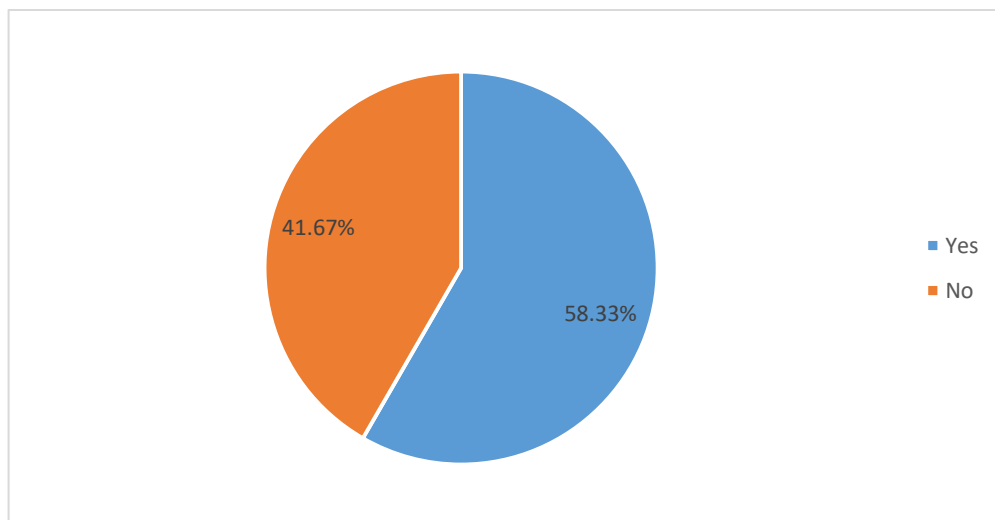


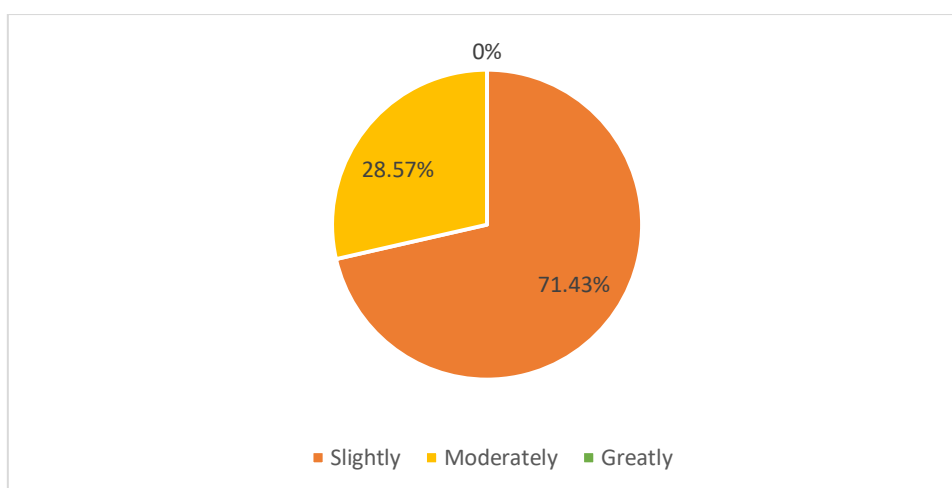
Figure 7.15 Teachers' Incorporation of Corpus Linguistics in their Writing Instruction

19. If “yes”, to what extent?

Table 7.16

The Extent of Corpus Linguistics Use in the Writing Instruction

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Slightly	10	71.43 %
Moderately	04	28.57 %
Greatly	/	/
Total	14	100.00 %

**Figure 7.16** The Extent of Corpus Linguistics Use in the Writing Instruction

Questions 18 and 19 were administered to identify the teachers' standpoints about the recently emerging field of inquiry known as Corpus Linguistics. The results indicate that more than half of the participants 58.33% reported that they account for such a trend, while 41.67% of the respondents note that they do not take corpus linguistics into consideration in the writing classroom. When asked about the frequency of their reference to such a trend, 71.43% of the 14 participants (who use Corpus Linguistics) pointed out to their “Slight” implementation of such a realm of inquiry in their instructions.

It is noteworthy that teachers, here, document a superficial reference to Corpus Linguistics. One which may take place in the writing classroom by simply asking their students to use computers, check online dictionaries, look for the frequency of occurrence of a given word or phrase, check out collocation, without digging insightfully into the dynamics of corpora by making it the source of their instruction. This is why they reported their slight adherence to such a field which is far away from being enough, fruitful, and structured.

Q.20- Have you ever used corpora software in the teaching of FL writing?

Table 7.17

Teachers' Use of Corpora Software when Teaching Writing

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Yes	04	16.67 %
No	20	83.33 %
Total	24	100.00 %

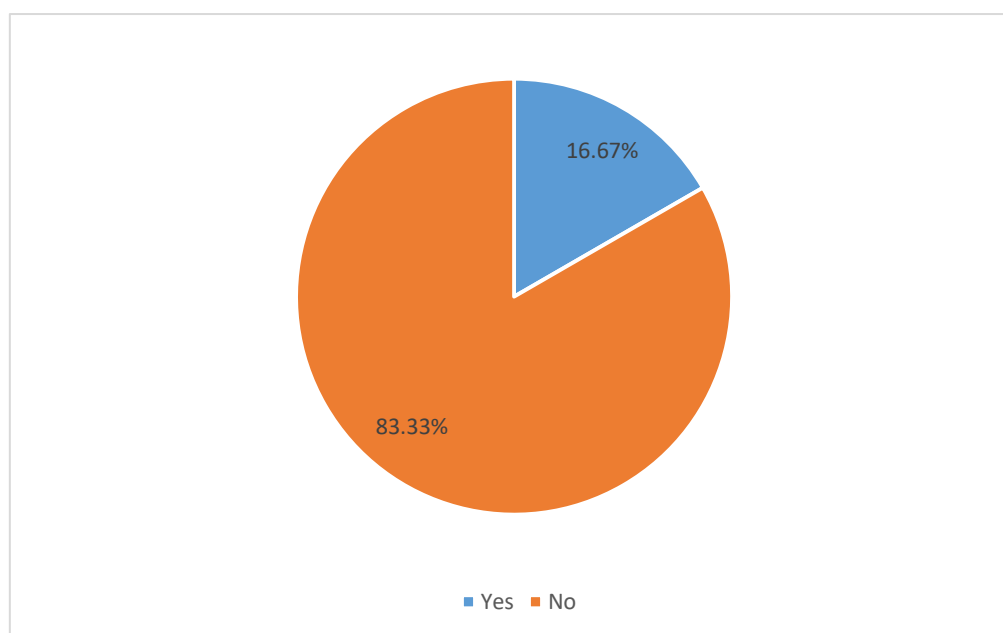


Figure 7.17 Teachers' Use of Corpora Software when Teaching Writing

Q.21- If yes, what type of corpora did you use? (you may have more than one corpus)

The reason behind including questions 20 and 21 is to determine whether or not the participants use corpora in the teaching of their FL writing. The results indicate that the vast majority 83%. 33 of the participants have never used corpora in their instructions. While only 16.67% reported “yes”. When asked about what type of corpora do they use, teachers cited “general and comparative corpora”. The researcher argues that these types of corpora are used informally in the classroom especially with first and second year students. Teachers use these corpora to translate, explain first language interference, language transfer, compare the grammar of the target language with the native one. Once again, this use of corpora is casual and informal; it takes place as a mere teaching strategy to solve some difficulties encountered in the classroom, but not a holistic and homogenous method that govern the instructional practice.

Q.22- Based on your long experience and previous feedback, to what extent do you believe using computers, corpora, and concordances software is contributive in the betterment of the writing skill?**Table 7.18**

The Benefit of Teaching Written Expression through Corpora

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
Slightly	/	/
Moderately	06	25.00 %
Greatly	18	75.00 %
Total	24	100.00 %

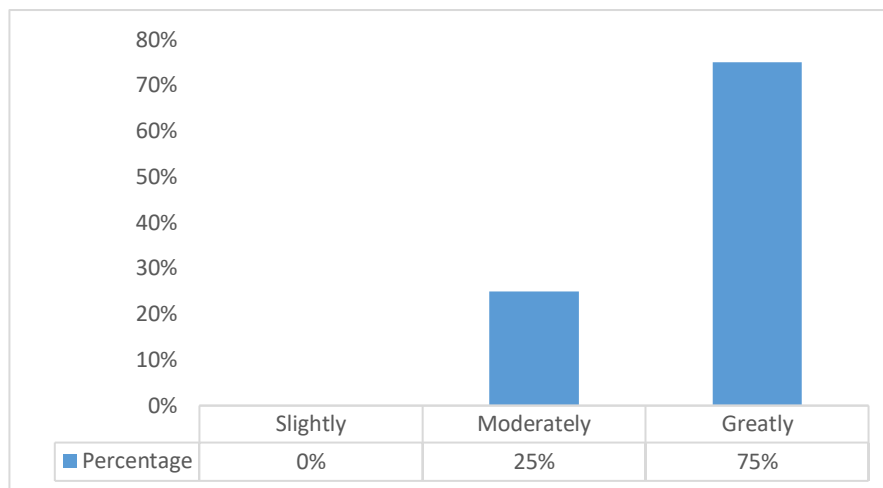


Figure 7.18 The Benefit of Teaching Written Expression through Corpora

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of teachers 75% reported that these elements are greatly contributive to the betterment of the students writing skills. One possible interpretation that arises here is that EFL teachers are highly aware of the role computers and corpora play in the contemporary educational enterprises. The respondents are also aware of the magnificent, authentic, and representative feedback computers and corpora may provide for learners. This realisation shaped the participants' certainty that these elements, if implemented wisely, might revolutionise the teaching of FL writing.

Q.23- To what extent do you believe that the Corpus-Based Approach is contributive to the betterment of the writing skill?

Table 7.19

The Benefit of Teaching Written Expression through the Corpus-Based Approach

Options	Subjects	Percentage %
A- Highly contributive	15	62.50 %
B- Moderately contributive	06	25.00 %
C- Not contributive	03	12.50 %
Total	24	100.00 %

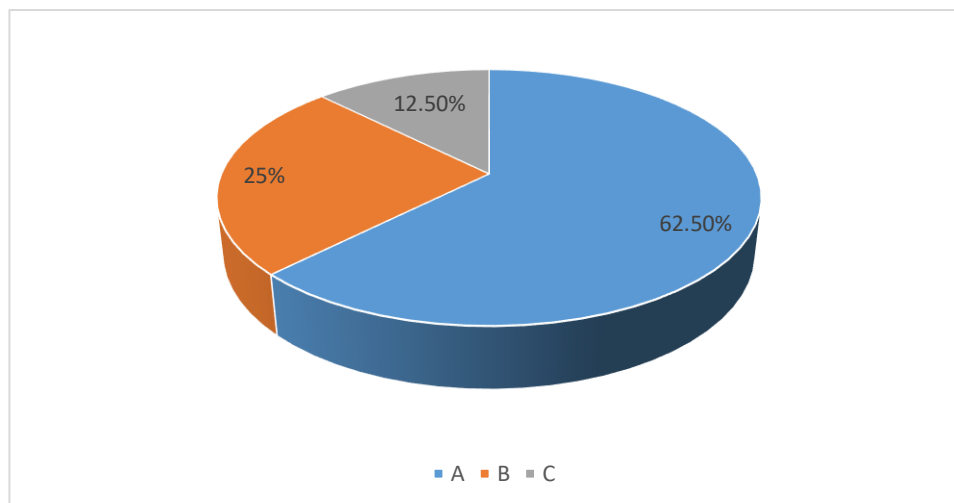


Figure 7.19 The Benefit of Teaching Written Expression through the Corpus-Based Approach

After identifying the participants' opinions about corpora and computers, this question went further and more specific to shed light on the use of a special type of instructional practice. That is the use of CBA, which functions within the auspices of Corpus Linguistics, as the source of teaching FL writing. The results show that more than half of the respondents 62.5% reported that the use of such an approach is highly contributive to the betterment of the writing skills. while 25%, 12.5% respectively ticked "moderately and not contributive".

Q.24- If your answer is "highly contributive", what difficulties would such an approach be helpful in overcoming? (you may choose more than one answer)

Out of the 15 teachers who noted that CBA is highly contributive to the betterment of the students writing skills, only 10 answered this question. What is fascinating, though, is that 66.67 % of them ticked all the choices. This means that they believe that this approach is helpful in dispelling the difficulties of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, cohesion, coherence, and collocation. The remaining 33.33 % limited their answers to grammar and vocabulary to be the most salient developed areas in the corpus-based instructional practice. Indeed, these results are in tandem with the test results in which the post-test proved the experimental group's superiority over the control group in dealing with the aforementioned aspects whenever involved in the process of writing. This superiority took place through exposing exclusively the experimental group to CBA during the treatment.

Q.25- Have you ever used or come across the Corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE) in fulfilling your academic requirements?

Table 7.20

Teachers' Use of the BAWE to Fulfill their Academic Requirements

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	14	58.33%
No	10	41.67%
Total	24	100.00%

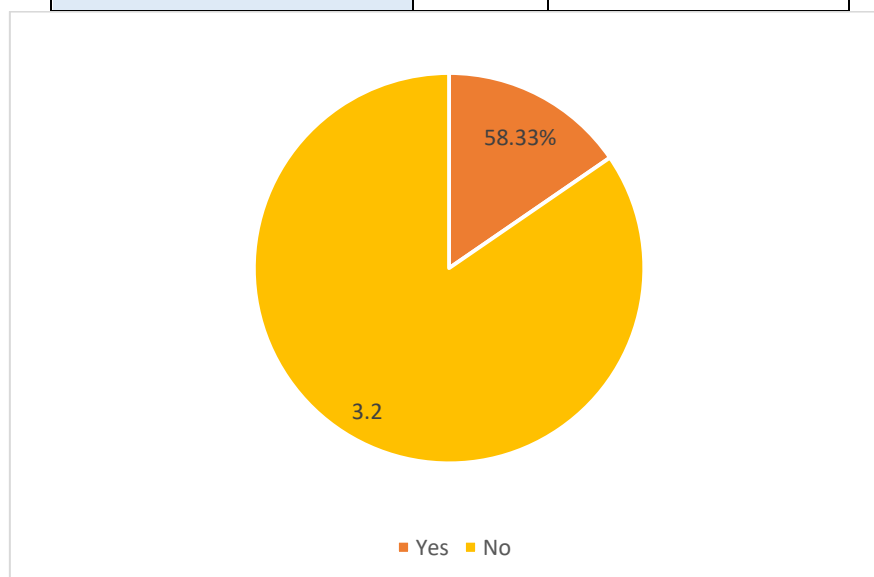


Figure 7.20 Teachers' Use of the BAWE to Fulfill their Academic Requirements

This question digs more profoundly to the dynamics of CBA by referring to the specific types of corpus the researcher used in the current study. This corpus is known as the BAWE which is proved by practitioners and applied linguists to be the most accurate and widely used the corpus of BAWE. The results indicate that 58.33% of teachers used this corpus or any other British academic corpus of written English during their long teaching experiences. The researcher's personal belief is that this high percentage of using this corpus stems from the fact that they incorporate it in the accomplishment of post-graduation degrees as it facilitates the search for information and the documentation of data into their theses or articles.

Q.26- As a result, do you believe it would facilitate the development of the students writing abilities?

Out of the 24 teachers asked about their use of the BAWE, 14 reported that they use it. When asked about whether or not they believe that such a corpus might develop the learners' composition abilities if implemented in teaching FL writing, all the participants reported their approval by ticking the "Yes" option. One possible interpretation would be that the source of teachers' consensus about the expediency of the BAWE is rooted in its efficiency in facilitating the teachers' own tasks. That is why they dare generalize it to be a potential effective instructional practice in the writing classrooms.

Section Four: Further Suggestions**Q.27- Please, add any suggestion(s) you see relevant to the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach to teaching FL writing.**

Among the 24 respondents, 15 of them provided some comments which are grouped according to their sameness as follows:

- Six teachers have stressed the idea that Corpus Linguistics is an important field of inquiry in SLA context and that the implementation of CBA might be a good start.
- Four teachers have largely expressed their dissatisfaction of the currently adopted approaches to teaching FL writing.
- Three teachers pointed out the significance of computers and corpora in hindering the students stress and anxiety while raising their motivation and interest.
- Two teachers appreciated the idea of teaching explicitly grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and collocation in writing.

7.3. Discussion of the Results

The teachers' questionnaire is conducted to gauge the teachers' viewpoints and attitudes towards their students' written performances, the difficulties that may arise whenever involved in the teaching of writing, and the implementation of CBA in their writing instruction; it is noteworthy that the questionnaire includes four basic sections. Each of which is intended to reveal data that are pertinent to the research at hand.

The first section comprises three questions. These questions were designed to determine the participants' professional status, how long have they been teaching writing, and the level they have instructed. The results indicate that 60% of the participants are "permanent teachers" with either PhD or Magister degree. They have been teaching writing for a period that dangles between 10 to 30 years. These findings may create a room for validity and reliability of the gathered information as they represent data that is based on a considerable experience of teaching the targeted level used as the sample in the current investigation (2nd year LMD students).

The second section consists of ten questions. It seeks to reveal the teachers' opinions about their students' written performance, their interest in such a skill, the difficulties that may arise whenever teaching/learning writing. At the end of this section, teachers were kindly asked to note some suggestions to the previously referred issues that are omnipresent in the writing classroom. The findings obtained from questions four, five, and six indicate that a great majority of teachers displayed their thorough dissatisfaction with their students' performance in writing. They believed that their learners are poor writers. In the same vein, the findings revealed that writing is the least pleasant skill that rarely triggers the students' interest as noted by the informants. Poor grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, cohesion, and coherence are the most salient difficulties of writing as manifested in the students' compositions. Byrne (1988) holds the view that the aforementioned difficulties are among the problems EFL students face whenever they are engaged in the act of writing. Furthermore, the obtained findings are in accordance with a study conducted by El-Khairy (2013). In his study, El-Khairy reported that his students showed great deficiencies in terms of grammatical errors, misspellings, weakness or lack of punctuation, inappropriate choice of vocabulary, incorrect use of irregular verbs, articles, prepositions, and question words.

Questions seven and eight implied that the lack of interest, motivation, and poor proficiency are the most common causes of the students' poor writing performance. It is noteworthy that the great majority of teachers disregarded the factor of inefficient instruction to be potentially contributive in creating a room for students' inability to write. Chou (2011) stresses that the ambiguity and inefficiency of FL writing instructions from professors is one of the causes which could lead to the problems and difficulties in writing.

The fact that teachers do not account for the potential existence of a gap between their instruction and their students' needs and goals, draw the researcher's attention to emphasize this dilemma. We went further and propose that the current teaching practice has got certain shortcomings and, thus, exerting a negative influence on the students' written outcomes. This hypothetical motion is at the heart of the research at hand, thus, it comes to receive a considerable share in this questionnaire.

As for questions nine and 10, the aspect that engenders the greatest difficulty to the students when writing, teachers selected grammar to be the most problematic aspect for students with a rate of (50%). This shows that grammar is considered as the most important element without which students are unable to produce good pieces of writing. Bastone (1994) claims that language that lacks grammar is to be considered chaotic. To support such a belief, Azar (2007) conducted a study of generation university students in the United States. According to the findings of her study, the students who manifested scanty grammatical knowledge and competence had difficulties and problems in their academic writing.

In questions 11,12,13 the teachers were asked to state their standpoints about the aspects they account for in the evaluation of their students' progress in writing. The participants noted that they place major focus on grammar, and cohesive items while teaching writing as well as evaluating their students' papers. According to the teachers, the previously mentioned aspects are the most salient elements that indicate the learners' mastery of high quality compositions. Such a stand does concord with Radford's statement. According to him (2004), the incorporation of grammar in the writing process should be emphasized because of the importance it brings to students. Crystal (1998) also stresses that grammar is not just important in the writing process but it is what gives and adds sense to language. Furthermore, the teachers noted that they are in favour of the idea that teaching grammar, vocabulary, cohesive items, coherence relations, and collocation mechanisms equally and explicitly because this could be helpful to second year EFL students.

The third section of this questionnaire consists of 13 questions that are devoted to determine the teachers' attitudes towards the currently adopted philosophies of teaching FL writing. In question 14 and 15 the teachers were asked to state which approach they use and opt for whenever they teach writing. The results showed that the great majority (70%) of teachers use the Process Approach as the source of their instruction.

The complexity of implementing such a paradigm is well documented in the research literature. However, teachers should be fully aware of its nature, characteristics, advantages, shortcomings, and the ways it should be implemented to best fit the students' needs. When asked if the Process Approach does fulfill their instructional goals, questions' 16 and 17 results showed that the big majority of the participants (66%) displayed their dissatisfaction with the outcomes of such an approach and efficiency. High teachers' training, inefficiency in developing the learners' accuracy and grammatical competence, time consuming, the difficulty of evaluating each cognitive process associated with the act of writing, and the difficulty to ascertain a smooth movement from cognitive process to another by students when composing are the most noted shortcomings manifested in the process approach (Raimes, 1993; Badger and White, 2000; White and Arndt, 1991).

As far as the field of Corpus Linguistics is concerned, questions 18,19, 20, and 21 were administered to identify the teachers' standpoints about the recently emerging field of inquiry. The results indicated that more than half of the participants reported that they account for such a trend. When asked about the frequency of their reference to such a trend, 71.43% of the 14 participants pointed out to their slight implementation of such a realm of inquiry in their instructions. As such, corpora have never been used by 85% of the participants in the writing classroom. When asked about what type of corpora did they use, the teachers' minority cited general and comparative corpora. Teachers use these corpora to translate, explain first language interference, language transfer, compare the grammar of the target language with the native one. Once again, this use of corpora is casual and informal; it takes place as a mere teaching strategy to solve some difficulties encountered in the classroom, but not a holistic and homogenous method that govern the instructional practice.

To further detect the participants' opinions about the role computers, corpora, and concordances software play in developing their students' writing skill, question 22 was administered. The results indicated that the majority of teachers reported that these elements are greatly contributive to the betterment of the students' writing skills. This shows that EFL teachers are aware of the role computers and corpora play in the contemporary educational enterprises. Several researchers support this view due to the advantages of the previously mentioned elements in the improvement of the students' compositions (Bernardini 2004; Chambers 2005; Gaskell & Cobb, 2004; Gray, 2005).

Computer technologies exhibit various forms of computer programs that can be used either asynchronously or synchronously in order to promote the students' writing abilities and skills (Ferris, 2002). As for concordances software, Tribble and Jones (1990) argued that concordancing shows authentic examples of different parts of a language and helps EFL learners to discover different meanings, usages, and collocations of different words. Such a claim has led educators to adopt corpus-based learning to boost inductive, discovery-oriented learning opportunities whereby students themselves conduct a corpus-based analysis and, therefore, engage in active and autonomous learning (Chambers, 2010; Boulton, 2009, 2010; Braun, 2007).

After identifying the participants' opinions about corpora and computers, questions 23 and 24 went further and more specific to shed light on the use of a special type of instructional practice. That is the use of CBA, which functions within the auspices of Corpus Linguistics, as the source of teaching FL writing. The obtained results showed that more than half of the respondents reported that the use of such an approach is of a paramount importance to the betterment of the students' compositions. Grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation are the most salient aspects that could be subject to development under the corpus-based philosophy, as reported by teachers. According to Granath (2000, cited in Bernardini, 2004), corpus based philosophy can be used in grammar and other aspects of language. Tribble and Jones (1990) argued that concordancing shows authentic examples of different parts of language and helps EFL learners to discover different meanings, usages, and collocations of different words. Such a claim has led educators to adopt corpus-based learning to boost inductive, discovery-oriented learning opportunities whereby teachers help students conduct a corpus-based analysis themselves and, therefore, engage in active and autonomous learning (Chambers, 2010; Boulton, 2009, 2010; Braun, 2007).

The two last questions in the third section of this questionnaire were intended to gain more insights about to the dynamics of CBA by referring to the specific types of corpus the researcher used in the current study. This corpus is known as the corpus of British Academic Written English. The results indicated that 66.33% of teachers used this corpus or any other British academic corpus of written English during their long teaching experiences. When asked about whether or not they believe that such a corpus might develop the learners' composition abilities if implemented in teaching FL writing, all the participants reported their approval. One possible interpretation would be that the source of teachers' consensus

about the expediency of BAWE is rooted in the latter's efficiency in facilitating the teachers' own tasks, developing the students' abilities to produce cohesive pieces of writing as it provided insights and exposed learners to authentic and representative data. According to Nesi (2011), the BAWE corpus is said to be a very rich resource that provides EFL learners with a currently unique opportunity to dig deeper into thousands of organised, and purposeful academic texts. Corpus software if implemented adequately are said to develop and boost the students' lexico-grammatical competence. That is why the respondents dare generalise it to be a potential effective instructional practice in the writing classrooms.

As for the last section of the teachers' questionnaire, it was administered to give teachers space to state some further suggestions they see relevant to the subject matter. Globally, they highlighted their dissatisfaction with the currently adopted instructional practices' results. They, also, referred to an urgent call for considering this issue by encouraging researchers to scrutinize the current dilemmas that emerge while dealing with the writing skills, and that CBA may have the potential to bring about new visions that would establish diversified and insightful methods, activities, and strategies teachers may use to help their learners overcome the previously mentioned difficulties.

7.4. Summary of the Teachers' Questionnaire Main Findings

Based on the previous discussion, the main findings of this questionnaire can be summarised as under:

- The teachers consider the majority of their students as poor writers due to various difficulties their students confront whenever involved in the act of writing.
- Grammar and cohesive items are the most salient aspects teachers account for in the evaluation of their students' progress in writing.
- The majority of teachers implement the Process Approach in the teaching of FL writing.
- The process approach is implemented for the sake of developing the students' cognitive processes underwent whenever involved in the act of writing.
- It is a discrepancy to incorporate an approach which advances fluency over accuracy, and in return evaluate, stress, and emphasise accuracy when it comes to the evaluation of the students' written products.

- Corpora is used superficially in the classroom simply to translate, explain first language interference, language transfer, compare the grammar of the target language with the native one.
- The implementation of the corpus of BAWE has developed the students' coherence, cohesion, and collocation skills.
- The implementation of the corpus of BAWE may provide a pleasant atmosphere in which motivation is triggered and stress is hindered.
- CBA is greatly contributive to dispel the difficulties encountered by students in terms of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, cohesion, coherence, and collocation.
- Most participants are in favour of implementing CBA to the teaching of FL writing.

7.5. Some Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

The main objective behind the conduction of this research seeks to enhance EFL students' writing skills as well as to diminish the lacuna between the instruction and evaluation through the implementation of CBA. This is only to meet with the students' needs and the teachers' expectations in the production of high quality compositions. In lights of the findings this research draws on, some instructional actions need to be undertaken in this or similar teaching contexts.

7.5.1. Implications for Teaching Writing

In this research, writing is viewed as a complex difficult skill second year EFL students struggle to master. When trying to shed light on the underlined complexity and its causes, the researcher found out a mysterious gap between the way writing is taught and the expected compositional outcomes. Most of the teachers' instruction places a major focus on the steps and the processes students tend to go through whenever involved in the act of writing such as planning, monitoring, and revising with little, or no reference, to accuracy. However, they account for grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, cohesion, coherence whenever they evaluate their students' papers. It is well within the teachers' rights to remain conservative about correctness and accuracy; nevertheless, it is also well within their duties to approach an instruction that best fits their expectations.

To create such a balance, the researcher suggests replacing the currently implemented process paradigm with CBA to the teaching of FL writing. Such an approach, if implemented adequately, can bring about ground-breaking insights in the field of language teaching and learning in general. In particular, through this study, it can be recommended as an effective instructional practice to second year students in the field of EFL writing. Students should be exposed and sufficiently trained to produce high-quality compositions in their writing because it is during this year that they start to deal with the basic writing skills. At this stage, the corpus-based practice may yield greater writing versatility as the students will acquire a variety of corpus strategies they can adapt to their own writing.

According to the research findings, the teacher is an active participant in the classroom. Such a teacher-centred approach makes students passive learners who lack interest, motivation, and even undermines their ability to improve a sustained writing proficiency. Moreover, a teacher-centred learning environment does by definition neither facilitate nor empower a learner's autonomous study-skills and subsequently lifelong learning skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

In the corpus based philosophy, the teacher would act as a research facilitator rather than the more traditional gate of knowledge. The benefit of such student-centred discovery learning is that the students are given access to the facts of authentic language use, which comes from real contexts rather than being constructed for pedagogical purposes, and are challenged to construct generalizations and note patterns of language behaviour. CBA can make students more aware of the actual language use. Such an instructional practice allows learners to be able to:

- Acquire useful phrases and typical collocations they might use themselves.
- Assimilate the structure and nature of both written and spoken discourse.
- Be aware that certain language features are more typical of some kinds of text than others.
- Compare language use student/native speaker, standard English/scientific English, written/spoken.
- Analyse the language in books, readers, and course books.

- Generate exercises and students' activities.
- Analyse usage, when is it appropriate to use obtain rather than get?
- Examine word order.

7.5.2. Implications for Course Designers

The instructional practice of writing lacks analysis and investigation of the language patterns in the Department of Letters and English Language at the University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna 2 as proved in the practical part of the current study. In this respect, the researcher may argue that this shortcoming of teaching is rooted not only in teachers training limitations, but also in the issue of the adaptation skills needed to keep pace with the evolutions unfolding to the arena of writing instruction. In other words, the era we live in entails the implementation of computers and technology which characterise the university of the 21st Century.

The pedagogical implication would be that if we are to reconcile with the contemporary regulations of the educational enterprise, CBA is one available, highly, and efficient instructional practice. It ensures a more objective view of language than that of introspection, intuition, and anecdotes. It can investigate almost any language patterns--lexical, structural, lexico-grammatical, discourse, phonological, morphological--often with very specific agendas such as discovering the use of preposition in the argumentative type of essay development. With the proper analytical tools, the teacher can discover not only the patterns of language use, but the extent to which they are used, and the contextual factors that influence variability. For example, one could examine the past perfect to see how often it is used in speaking versus writing or newspapers versus fiction. Or, the teacher might want to investigate the use of synonyms like begin and start or big/large/great to determine their contextual preferences and frequency distribution. Consequently, when teaching writing, teachers are recommended to account for such an approach to help learners develop their grammatical competence, acquire authentic vocabulary, and reach the needed syntactic maturity as well as the semantic prosody their teachers account for primarily while evaluating their papers.

Furthermore, as elaborated in both theoretical and practical parts of the current research, one of the most frequently neglected aspects of language use is register. The latter encompasses varieties of language which are used for different situations. In this respect, teachers must first be aware, and then, raise their students' awareness about the fact that writing can be divided into many registers, which range from the general to the highly specific, depending upon the degree of specificity that is sought. A general register could include fiction, academic prose, newspapers, or casual compositions, whereas a specific register would be sub-registers within academic prose, such as scientific texts, literary criticism, and linguistics studies, each with their own field specific characteristics.

Therefore, the researcher recommends the implementation of CBA since it is one available tool of analysis and instruction which reveals that writing often behaves differently according to the register, each with some unique patterns and rules. It is, thus, unimaginable to expect the learners writing to be developed without making reference to the issue of reference and how could words vary in use depending on the context, the audience, and the objective of composition. To add some practicality to what is being said, teachers of writing might conduct a corpus-based analysis, available in the corpus of British Academic Written English, which would yield data that brings to light how students choose their vocabulary and at the same time account for the appropriateness issue dictated by the factors stated previously.

7.5.3. Implications for Classroom Materials and Activities

As for the classroom materials and activities, the development of materials and activities often relies on the teacher's intuitive sense of what students need to learn. With the help of a corpus, teachers could create exercises based on real examples which provide students with an opportunity to discover features of language use. The corpus-based practice, here, may include student-conducted language analyses in which the students use a concordancing program and a deliberately chosen corpus to make their own discoveries about language use in general, and predetermined aspects of writing, more particularly. The teacher can guide a planned investigation which will lead to predictable results or can have the students do it on their own, leading to less predictable findings. This exemplifies data driven learning, which encourages learner autonomy by training students to draw their own conclusions about how native speakers compose written products with respect to diversified contexts, audiences, and registers.

However, teachers should be provided with a special training on how to appropriately and adequately use CBA with the necessary tools and equipment in order to meet with their students' needs and reach their expectations.

For further researches, CBA is considered as a revolutionary, fruitful and useful resource that can be carried out as to measure its impact on various language fields and domains such as; grammar, vocabulary, pragmatics, and translation studies. Another suggestion, that would be of a paramount importance to the betterment of teaching EFL writing in the Algerian education context, is to conduct a longitudinal research. This would serve the purpose to obtain more representative and reliable data that can give a clearer image of how the corpus-based materials have a positive impact to produce high quality compositions.

7.6. Conclusion

The chapter we conclude was devoted mainly to the analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire. Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which the corpus-based paradigm is contributive to the betterment of the students' writing proficiency in the Department of Letters and English Language at Hadj Lakhdar University. Throughout this chapter, the findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire answers indicated clearly that the respondents hold the view that CBA, in particular, and corpora in general are tremendous available facets that could govern the writing instruction and that should be highly integrated in writing, though this integration is rarely practised in their written expression sessions. Moreover, all teachers were in favour of the idea that corpus-based paradigm, if implemented accurately, could be effective in developing the students' grammatical, cohesive, and lexical abilities. It may also provide new insights which help EFL writing teachers to diagnose the students' writing failure; and therefore, endeavour the best instructional methods.

Furthermore, through this chapter we attempted to make a modest contribution to the field of education in the Algerian context by suggesting a plethora of pedagogical implications mainly drawn from the study's findings. Moreover, this chapter has provided new insights which help EFL writing teachers to diagnose the students' writing failure; and therefore, endeavour the best instructional methods.

General Conclusion

The present research, we conclude, is a humble contribution to the betterment of the writing skills' instruction in the field of EFL teaching and learning. It primordially purported at establishing an EFL writing teaching methodology that installs in students the ability to express themselves accurately and proficiently. It has the hypothetical statement which posits that students who use the corpus-based strategies and materials manifest a better writing outcome. The current study, further, suggests that if teachers implement the Corpus-Based Approach, they would dispel some of the difficulties encountered in composition, thus, facilitate the students' engagement in the writing process. This thesis is consisted of seven chapters delineated into two main parts; theoretical and empirical.

The initial part of the thesis focused on the literature foundations that comprise the bedrock of this investigation. The first chapter addressed several issues pertinent to the research with rapport to the skills of writing. It focused on its nature, use, and design. It further attempted to shed light on the various philosophies and approaches that have long governed the teaching of writing in the course of history. Then, it shed light on how writing pertains to other language skills such as speaking and reading. Finally, the chapter tackled some of the discrepant difficulties EFL learners may encounter whenever involved in the process of writing.

The second chapter tackled highlights the literary review on Corpus Linguistics. It elaborated its history of development, definitions, and how Corpus Linguistics may serve as a tool for linguistic analysis. It, further, addressed the various types of corpora and their most salient characteristics. This chapter ended with a description of the various approaches to corpus linguistics with a special account to the Corpus-Based Approach since it represents the independent variable of the investigation at hand. As for the third chapter, was meant to establish a theoretical bridge between the two variable of the research at hand namely writing and the Corpus-Based Approach. The theoretical foundation included a detailed elaboration of Corpus Linguistics as a field of inquiry with a particular reference to the Corpus-Based Approach as well as the latter's implementation to the field of teaching writing.

The objective to be reached behind the theoretical account has been to lay some background information pertinent to the experimental part. The latter was administered by means of three data collection instruments in terms of the writing test, the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' questionnaire.

As for the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters, they are practical in nature. The fourth chapter emphasized the methodological design, data collection tools, data analysis procedures, and evaluations used in the study. It, also, stressed the limitations of the study. To bring about the research aims, answer the research questions and verify the set hypotheses, methodology decisions were made in light of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A quasi-experimental design in terms of a pre-test post-test control experimental design using t-test for independent groups was selected to be the first research tool. Then, two questionnaires were designed and distributed to 24 teachers of written expression and 30 students representing the experimental group of the chosen sample.

The practical investigation, therefore, has undergone various phases. At the very beginning, both the experimental and the control group were exposed to the pre-test at the same time. The foremost objective was to analyse the students' essays with a particular account to the use of corpus-based paradigm as well as the accuracy of their lexicogrammatical competence. Next, both groups have been provided with different treatments. While the experimental group has received explicit and equal training, the control group treatment emphasis has been to have the students write many essays in order to receive feedback about aspects of writing in general. Immediately, once the treatment was over, a post-test has been administered to both groups under similar environmental conditions as have been available for the pre-test. Additionally, the experimental group's students have been given a questionnaire to corroborate some of the test findings and mainly to collect information about their attitudes towards incorporating the Corpus-Based Approach in teaching writing. Lastly, the teachers have been also granted a questionnaire to elicit their attitudes about the same subject as well as to find out about their writing teaching practices and the approaches they use in teaching FL writing.

Chapters five, six, and seven dealt with the exposition of the obtained results through all the tools used in this study. Chapter five was exclusively dedicated to the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data gauged from the writing pre and post-tests. These data served the purpose to identify to what extent both the experimental as well

as the control groups were effective in using aspects of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation in the writing process. As for the sixth chapter, it was concerned with the students' questionnaire; its analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the gathered data. Chapter seven, on the other hand, was concerned with the teachers' questionnaire; its analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the obtained results. The results, obtained from the research tools, served the purpose of answering the three research questions. The first question looked for the effect(s) of the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach on the development of second year EFL students' lexical repertoire as well as their collocation mechanism's mastery; the second question was about checking the representativeness and authenticity of income second year EFL students at Hadj Lakhdar University are exposed to when relying on the Corpus-Based Approach as a source of instruction; the third question was to identify the extent to which the lexico-grammatical competence is contributive to a better writing performance.

Accordingly, it was hypothesised that if Written Expression teachers do incorporate Corpus-Based Approach in their second year L.M.D classes at University of Hadj Lakhdar, this would enhance their students' vocabulary and collocational competence. Moreover, adopting the Corpus-Based Approach in the writing instruction may provide second year students at Hadj Lakhdar University with representative and authentic input. Finally, if students, under study, acquire a lexico-grammatical competence, this would foster their writing proficiency.

In light of the quasi-experiment's findings and part of the students' questionnaire, the first and third hypotheses were found to be in reconciliation with the statement that posits that the experimental group students who received instruction about using the corpus-based materials denoted a better level of lexico-grammar than the control group students. Statistically speaking, the mathematical consistency has proved that the experimental group was significantly superior than the control group in all the selected aspects of writing, namely grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and collocation. Additionally, students revealed that the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach helped them develop their grammatical competence, expand their vocabulary, improve their skills of collocation, and raised their motivation. The teachers, on their parts, sustained that teaching writing through the Corpus-Based Approach could be more helpful to second year L.M.D students to write more accurate pieces of writing. This teachers' high positive agreement stems from their unwavering

confidence in the simplicity of this paradigm as well as its high quality in developing the students' lexico-grammatical skills. As for the second hypothesis, it was confirmed through the data gathered by means of the students' and teachers' questionnaires. As such, students and teachers showed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the teaching of EFL writing. This was due to the realistic expediency of such an approach. The latter has yielded authentic income that equipped learners with accurate register that accounts for formality, reference, audience, and appropriate context.

Eventually, as the focus of this research is on the teaching of EFL writing, the researcher recommends the integration of a corpus-based dimension in the EFL writing instruction. It contributes in discovering the behaviour of various lexical and grammatical features. It further boosts inductive language learning through an intensive exposure to a bundle of authentic language use data. As a matter of fact, this would encourage students to be autonomous learners by training them to draw their own conclusions about how native speakers compose written products with respect to diversified contexts, audiences, and registers. In this respect, teachers are recommended to account for such an approach to help learners develop their grammatical competence, acquire authentic vocabulary, and reach the needed syntactic maturity as well as the semantic prosody their teachers account for primarily while evaluating their papers. However, EFL teachers should be provided with a special training on how to appropriately and adequately use the Corpus-Based Approach with the necessary tools and equipment in order to meet with their students' needs and reach their expectations.

For further researches, the Corpus-Based Approach is considered as a revolutionary, fruitful and useful resource that can be carried out as to measure its impact on various language fields and domains such as; grammar, vocabulary, pragmatics, and translation studies. Another area that can be investigated is the incorporation of the Corpus-Based Approach in the teaching of speaking. Another suggestion, that would be of a paramount importance to the betterment of teaching EFL writing in the Algerian education context, is to conduct a longitudinal research. This would serve the purpose to obtain more representative and reliable data that can give a clearer image of how the corpus-based materials have a positive impact to produce high quality compositions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes toward incorporating the Corpus-Based Approach as a means of teaching writing for second year L.M.D students. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research work. As such, your help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for the thought, time, and efforts you will devote.

Section One: General Information

1. Degree held

- a- PhD holder
- b- Magister class
- c- Adjunct teacher

2. How long have you been teaching written expression?

- 01 - 05 years
- 05 - 10 years
- 10 - 15 years
- 15 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

3. Which level(s) have you been mainly teaching?

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Section Two: Teaching Writing Organisation

4. How do you evaluate your students' level in writing?

- a - Good
- b - Average
- c - Poor

5. When you ask your students to write an assignment, they are:

- a- Highly interested
- b- Interested
- c- Not interested

6. In your opinion, what weakness is most elaborated in your students' writing performances?

- a- Grammar
- b- Vocabulary
- c- Punctuation
- d- Spelling
- e- Cohesion
- f- Collocation

7. In your opinion, what is (are) the source(s) of EFL writing difficulties for 2nd year students?

- a -Insufficient English language proficiency
- b -Lack of interest and motivation
- c -Time constraint
- d -lack of reading and practice

e-Others: Please specify

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8. Classify the following aspects in order of importance while teaching writing (From the most important to the least important).

- a- Grammar
- b- Vocabulary
- c- Cohesion
- d- Coherence
- e- Collocation

9. Of the preceding aspects, which one engenders the greatest difficulty to students while writing?

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10. In terms of grammar, how would you characterise your students' essays?

- a- Poor
- b- Fair
- c- Average
- d- Good
- e- Excellent

11. How much EMPHASIS do you place on the aforementioned aspects to check the students' progress in writing organized essays?

Aspects	Major emphasis	moderate emphasis	Little Emphasis	No Emphasis
Grammar				
Vocabulary				
Cohesive items				
Coherence relations				
Collocation mechanisms				

12. In your opinion, could teaching all the above aspects equally and explicitly be helpful to second year students to write more organised essays?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

13. If "No", please say why.

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Section Three: Teachers' Opinions about the Corpus-Based Approach in the Composition Course

14. Among the following, which approach of teaching writing do you use in your instructional practice?

- Product Approach
- Process Approach
- Genre Approach
- Others.....
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15. Would you, please, explain why?

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16. To what extent do you think the approach being adopted, in your instruction, is efficient in dispelling the difficulties associated with writing referred to earlier?

- Very efficient
- Moderately efficient
- Deficient

17. If your answer is the Process Approach, to what, then, do you attribute the deficiency in developing the students' composition?

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18. Do you account for the recently predominating field of Applied Linguistics, known as Corpus linguistics, in your writing instruction?

- Yes
- No

19. If “yes”, to what extent?

- Slightly
- Moderately
- Greatly

20. Have you ever used corpora software in the teaching of FL writing?

- Yes
- No

21. If “yes”, what type of corpora did you use? (you may have more than one corpus)

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22. Based on your long experience and previous feedback, to what extent do you believe using computers, corpora, and concordances software is contributive in the betterment of the writing skill?

- Slightly
- Moderately
- Greatly

23. To what extent do you believe that the Corpus-Based Approach is contributive to the betterment of the writing skill?

- a- Highly contributive
- b- Moderately contributive
- c- Not contributive

24. If your answer is “highly contributive”, what difficulties would such an approach be helpful in overcoming? (you may choose more than one answer)

- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Vocabulary
- Organisation
- Cohesion
- Coherence
- Collocation

25. Have you ever used or come across the Corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE) in fulfilling your academic requirements?

- Yes
- No

26. As a result, do you believe it would facilitate the development of the students’ writing abilities?

- Yes
- No

Section Four: Further Suggestions

27. Please, add any suggestion(s) you see relevant to the implementation of the Corpus-Based Approach to teaching FL writing.

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Best Regards

Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your opinions and attitudes about learning writing, and using the Corpus-Based Approach as a method of teaching FL writing.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Section One: Students' Attitudes toward Learning Writing

1. Is EFL writing more difficult to practice than the other language skills?

a- Yes

b- No

2. What are the sources of EFL writing difficulties?

a- Insufficient English language proficiency

b- Lack of Lexico-grammatical competence

c- Inefficiency of FL instructions

d- Lack of interest and motivation

e- Inefficiency of the teaching materials

3. Are you satisfied with your level of writing?

a- Yes

b- No

c- I cannot decide

4. If “no”, please, say why.

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5. Which aspect does always cause you the greatest difficulty while writing? (You may choose up more than one)

A- Cohesion

b- Coherence

c- Grammar

d- Vocabulary

e- Collocation

6. Classify the above aspects according to the importance you give them in writing (from the most important to the least important)

- Cohesion

- Coherence

- Grammar

- Vocabulary

- Collocation

**7. Of the preceding aspects, which one do you feel you have improved most this year?
(You may choose up more than one)**

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Section Two: Students' Attitudes toward the Significance of the Corpus-Based Approach

8. Do you think that the implementation of computers is contributive in developing the writing skills?

a- Yes

b- No

9. Do you like using computers in the accomplishment of your writing tasks?

a- Yes

b- No

10. Before the experiment you took and the instruction you have been exposed to, how often do you incorporate the corpus-based software when involved in writing tasks?

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

d- Never

11. After the experiment, how often do you use corpus-based software in your writing assignments?

- a- Always
- b- Sometimes
- c- Rarely
- d- Never

12. In the different language courses (grammar, linguistics, written expression ...etc.), how often do teachers use corpus-based software while teaching?

- A- Always
- B - Sometimes
- c- Rarely
- d- Never

13. In your opinion, is the corpus-based software necessary for these language courses?

- a- Yes
- b- No
- d- I cannot decide

14. Whatever your answer is, please say why.

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Section Three: The Significance of Corpus-Based Approach in Improving Lexico-grammatical Competence in Writing

15. Bringing a corpus-based dimension to the teaching of FL writing seems to be a better instructional practice than that of the traditional process approach.

- a- Agree
- b- Disagree
- c- I do not know

16. What do you think of using corpora software in the composition course?

- Beneficial
- Not beneficial
- I cannot decide

17. Did the Corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you develop your grammatical skills?

- a – Yes
- b- No

18. If “yes”, how do you think it helped you?

- a- Develop your grammatical competence
- b- Expanded your vocabulary
- c- Improved your skills of collocation
- d- Raised your motivation
- e- Others
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19. Did the concordance software of British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus help you develop your collocation skills?

- a- Yes
- b- No

20. Did the corpus software of British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you overcome the cohesion difficulties?

- a- Yes
- b- No

21. Did the corpus software of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) help you overcome coherence difficulties?

- a- Yes
- b- No

22. If your answer is yes, what percentage does best reflect the difficulties you have overcome?

- a. 20%
- b. 50%
- c. 80%

23. Have you experienced any difficulties during the composition course while relying on the corpus of British Academic Written English (BAWE)?

- a- Yes
- b- No

24. If “Yes”, please, mention these difficulties.

- Difficulty of gaining access to the corpus
- Difficulty in manipulating and using the corpus
- Time constraints
- Lack of guidance while using
- Others

Section Four: Students' Opinions about Using BAWE in Writing

25. After being introduced to various lexico-grammatical features through the use of the Corpus-Based Approach, how difficult are the following aspects to you while writing an essay?

	Item	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
A	Produce accurate grammar and punctuation					
B	Use an appropriate register of words that fit the communicative context					
C	Linking the sentences with appropriate cohesive devices					
D	Using reference ties					
E	Using substitution and ellipsis					
F	Using conjunctions					

Appendix C

The Students' Pre- and Post-tests Scores

Students	Experimental Group X_1	Control Group X_2	X_1^2	X_2^2
1	08	09	64	81
2	09	09.5	81	90.25
3	09	08	81	64
4	07	05	49	25
5	05	07.5	25	56.25
6	11	11	121	121
7	09	09	81	81
8	07.5	08	56.25	64
9	11	07	121	49
10	07	05.5	49	30.25
11	05.5	11	30.25	121
12	10	07	100	49
13	07	07	49	49
14	07	08	49	64
15	08	12	64	144
16	11	08	121	64

17	12	06	144	36
18	08	10	64	100
19	06	13	36	169
20	10	05	100	25
21	07	06.5	49	42.25
22	13	11	169	121
23	12	14	144	196
24	10.5	07	110.25	49
25	05	11	25	121
26	06.5	11	42.25	121
27	11	12	121	144
28	14	13	196	169
29	05.5	11	30.25	121
30	13	05.5	169	30.25
$N_1=N_2= 30$	$\Sigma X_1= 265.5$	$\Sigma X_2= 268.5$	$X_1^2= 2541.25$	$\Sigma X_2^2= 2597.25$

Students	Experimental Group X_1	Control Group X_2	X_1^2	X_2^2
1	11	09	121	81
2	10	11	100	121
3	09.5	08	90.25	64
4	08	07	64	49
5	11.5	10	132.25	100
6	11	11	121	121
7	10.5	09	110.25	81
8	08.5	10.5	72.25	110.25
9	12.5	07	156.25	49
10	07	06.5	49	42.25
11	10	11.5	100	132.25
12	11	07	121	49
13	10	07	100	49
14	15	10	225	100
15	09	12	81	144
16	12	08.5	144	72.25

17	14	08	196	64
18	10	10	100	100
19	15	13	225	169
20	16	05	256	25
21	08	06.5	64	42.25
22	14.5	11	210.25	121
23	13.5	14	182.25	196
24	10.5	07	110.25	49
25	15	10	225	100
26	11	10.5	121	110.25
27	15.5	12	240.25	144
28	15	13	225	169
29	09.5	11	90.25	121
30	14	05.5	196	30.25
$N_1=N_2= 30$	$\Sigma X_1= 348$	$\Sigma X_2= 281.5$	$X_1^2= 4274.5$	$\Sigma X_2^2= 2851.25$

Summary

Writing is a substantial skill in the realm of foreign language learning. Achieving a high level in such a skill is a complex undertaking. This complexity stems from the high standardised and conventionalised nature of writing, which entails awareness and mastery of the cognitive, linguistic, and psychological factors associated with such a process. Therefore, the present study sets out to scrutinize the extent to which the incorporation of the corpus-based approach in the teaching of writing would enhance EFL students' writing proficiency at the University of Hadj Lakhdar, Batna2. Relying on such an approach, as the suitable and fruitful strategy teachers can use as a panacea for their learners writing lacunas and deficiencies, is the objective of this thesis. For this end, two questionnaires and a quasi-experimental design in terms of t-test for independent groups were opted for to the current investigation. The findings reveal that the adequate implementation of a corpus oriented paradigm in the teaching of writing serve the purpose of establishing common grounds between writing instruction and evaluation. It helps teachers keep their interest on accuracy by accounting for the students' lexico-grammatical competence and answer the communicative needs of writing by equipping them skills to develop adequate written products.

Key Words: Writing, Corpus-based Approach, Lexico-grammatical Competence, Writing Proficiency, Hadj Lakhdar University.

Résumé

L'écriture est une compétence fondamentale dans le domaine de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères. Atteindre un niveau élevé dans une telle compétence est une tâche complexe. Cette complexité découle du caractère hautement conventionnel de l'écriture, qui implique une maîtrise des facteurs cognitifs, linguistiques et psychologiques associés à un tel processus. Par conséquent, la présente étude vise à examiner dans quelle mesure l'intégration de l'approche fondée sur le corpus dans l'enseignement de l'écriture améliore la maîtrise de l'écriture des étudiants de l'Université Hadj Lakhdar, Batna2. Se fonder sur une telle approche, comme une stratégie appropriée et fructueuse que les enseignants peuvent utiliser comme un remède pour les lacunes et carences d'écriture de leurs apprenants, tel est l'objectif de cette thèse. Pour cela, deux questionnaires et une quasi-expérience en termes de t-test ont été choisis pour effectuer la présente recherche. Les résultats obtenus révèlent que la mise en œuvre adéquate d'une approche basée sur le corpus dans l'enseignement de l'écriture sert à établir des bases communes entre l'enseignement de l'écriture et l'évaluation. Elle aide les enseignants à maintenir leur intérêt pour la précision et l'exactitude en tenant compte des compétences lexico-grammaticales des étudiants et à répondre aux besoins communicatif de l'écriture en leur donnant les compétences nécessaires pour développer des produits écrits adéquats.

Mots clés: écriture, approche basée sur le corpus, compétence lexico-grammaticale, maîtrise de l'écriture, université Hadj Lakhdar.

ملخص

الكتابة مهارة أساسية في مجال تعلم اللغات الأجنبية. يعد بلوغ مستوى عالٍ في مثل هذه المهارة مهمة معقدة. ينبع هذا التعقيد من الطبيعة التقليدية للغاية للكتابة، والتي تتضمن إتقاننا للعوامل المعرفية واللغوية والنفسية المرتبطة بهذه العملية. لذلك، يهدف البحث الحالي إلى دراسة مدى إمكانية دمج المنهج القائم على المدونة في تدريس الكتابة من أجل تحسين الكفاءة الكتابية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الحاج لخضر، باتنة 2. الهدف من هذه الأطروحة هو الاعتماد على هذا المنهج، حيث يعد الاستراتيجية المناسبة والناجحة التي يمكن للمدرسين استخدامها كحل من شأنه علاج ثغرات الكتابة وأوجه القصور لدى المتعلمين. لهذا، تم اختيار استبيانين وشبه تجربة لإجراء البحث الحالي. تظهر النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن التنفيذ السليم للمنهج القائم على المدونة في تدريس الكتابة يعمل على إنشاء أرضية مشتركة بين تدريس الكتابة والتقييم. بحيث يساعد المعلمين على المحافظة على الاهتمام بالدقة والصحة من خلال أخذ المهارات اللغوية المعجمية للطلاب بعين الاعتبار وتلبية احتياجات التواصل للكتابة من خلال منحهم المهارات اللازمة لإنتاج كتابات منمقة ومناسبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكتابة، المنهج القائم على المدونة، الكفاءة المعجمية النحوية، الكفاءة الكتابية، جامعة الحاج لخضر.