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Developing Students' Writing Skill through the Teaching of Formulaic Sequences

The Case of Second-Year Students of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Candidacy for the Degree of LMD Doctorate in Applied Linguistics

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Dedication

To my family

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, my sincere gratitude goes to Allah for enlightening my path and showering me with his endless blessings.

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Abstract

After being relegated to the periphery, formulaic sequences (FSs henceforth) have recently moved into the centre stage of applied linguistics research as it becomes ever more evident that such sequences pervade language use and have a direct impact on language development and production, and thus play a vital role in improving foreign language learners' writing proficiency. Therefore, the present research attempts to probe into the effects of FSs instruction on sophomore EFL students' abilities to produce FSs in controlled (C-test) and uncontrolled situations (essays) and to produce better quality writing. Another equally important aspect of this study is to raise teachers' as well as students' awareness of the significance of these sequences in writing. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that if sophomore students at the department of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University are taught FSs, their productive knowledge of these sequences as well as their overall writing quality would improve. It is also assumed that students would show positive attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs in writing classrooms. To address the objectives above, three questionnaires, two C-tests, and two writing tests were used as data collection tools within a quasi-experimental design. Analysis of the pre-experiment questionnaires showed that the students are unaware of FSs and their importance in writing. Also, though the teachers were positive towards the incorporation of these sequences in their writing classrooms, their teaching was not really part of their teaching agenda. The results also revealed that FSs instruction has a positive effect on students' productive knowledge of these sequences. However, no noticeable effect on students' abilities to produce better quality essays was found. Additionally, findings from the post-questionnaire demonstrated that the students expressed positive attitudes towards FSs instruction and emphasized the need for a future systematic learning of FSs for the purposes of writing.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFL: Academic Formulas List

BNC: British National Corpus

COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FSs: Formulaic Sequences

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LSWE: Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus

NCW: National Commission on Writing

OHPC: Oxford Hector Pilot Corpus

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

In an age of information, writing is viewed as a life skill. It is the basis upon which social, professional, and academic life is built. Accordingly, it is axiomatic that students especially foreign language learners need to develop an appropriate level of competence in this skill. Research, however, has shown that writing is the most arduous and complex skill for most English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. As a result, their writing seems not to meet the basic standards. The frustration of reading a student's paper and thinking "I know what you mean, but that's not the way to say it" (Lewis, 1997, p. 259) is experienced by nearly all EFL teachers. Nevertheless, we think that the dissatisfaction teachers express in response to their students' failure to communicate their ideas in writing is a natural result of their own practices. The traditional grammar-lexis dichotomy is still the prevailing approach to language study. In other words, teachers have instilled in their students' minds the idea that mastery of the grammar system with a good repertoire of words is all what a learner needs to communicate effectively. Besides, vocabulary is given less importance compared to grammar and when dealt with, single words are treated as the basic units of meaning. In fact, this practice where students tend to structure words together using grammar rules affects negatively their writing performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, complexity and naturalness. These notions of not sounding accurate, fluent and natural have recently been linked to the insufficient use of formulaic sequences (FSs). These are conventionalized multi-word units which are stored and retrieved as whole from memory, and are widely used by native speakers.

Recently, there has been an increased interest in this important part of language use. Research is increasingly showing the significant role of FSs in language acquisition and production (Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2000; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt, 2004; Wood,

2002, 2010; Wray, 2002 etc). It is widely acknowledged that the use of these sequences contributes to fluent, natural, and appropriate language use. In this regard, formulaic expressions are of particular importance to foreign language learners especially with respect to their written production. FSs help students express complex ideas in an economical and effective way. Instead of formulating each sentence word by word, resorting to ready- made chunks makes the students' task easier as they become part of their repertoire due to their frequent recurrences. Moreover, due to their frequent use, FSs become markers of fluent writing. They are important for the development of the writing skill as they facilitate idiomatic production which, in turn, makes the writer sound as a native in a given discourse community. Additionally, the appropriate use of these sequences helps learners achieve accuracy. Since they are retrieved from memory as whole chunks, FSs are more likely to reduce grammar errors and wrong word combinations (Boers et al., 2006; Coxhead & Byrd, 2007). Therefore, as FSs help student writers sound accurate, fluent, natural and idiomatic and therefore come across as proficient writers, we think that these sequences deserve a place in our writing classes. We also believe that students at this stage (beginning level) need to master these sequences so that they can pay attention to other aspects in higher levels.

2. Aims of the Study

The main aim of the present study is to investigate the effects of FSs instruction on EFL students' writing performance at the department of Letters and English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum EL Bouaghi. More specifically, this research work seeks to examine whether the explicit teaching of FSs would have a positive effect on EFL students' abilities to produce FSs in controlled (C-test) and uncontrolled situations (essays) and more importantly to produce better quality writing. Another aim of this work is to glean insights into teachers' attitudes and practices regarding the inclusion of these sequences in their writing classrooms. Students' awareness of these sequences and their importance in improving writing are also

investigated. After receiving the treatment, the study intends also to find out students' attitudes towards the inclusion of FSs in writing.

3. Research Questions

In light of the aforementioned aims, the following research questions are formulated**:**

1. Are the students and the Written Expression teachers at the department of English at Oum EL Bouaghi University aware of FSs and their importance in improving writing?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes and practices regarding the integration of FSs in their writing classrooms?
3. Does the explicit teaching of FSs improve students' productive knowledge of these sequences as measured by a C-test?
4. Does the teaching of FSs improve students' production of these sequences in their essays?
5. Do the students who receive FSs instruction write better quality essays than the students who do not?
6. What are the students' attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs in writing classrooms?

4. Research Hypotheses

On the basis of the above questions, the following assumptions and hypotheses are put forward:

1. Teachers as well as students would show a lack of awareness of FSs and their importance in writing.

2. Though teachers would show positive attitudes towards the integration of FSs in their writing classrooms, they would not make the teaching of these sequences part of their teaching agenda.

3. Students who are taught FSs would improve their productive knowledge of FSs as measured by a C-test and a writing test.

4. FSs instruction would improve students' overall writing quality.

5. The integration of FSs in writing classrooms would bring about positive attitudes among students.

5. Means of Research

In order to answer the questions stated above, a C-test, a writing test, two students' questionnaires and a teachers' questionnaire are used. The aim of the C-test is to assess students' productive knowledge of FSs before and after the treatment. The format of the C-test is similar to that used in Jones and Haywood (2004), like "… might encourage the immune system to stop **t__ deve_____ o__** the *embryo*" (p. 279). The writing test seeks to measure students' production of FSs in their essays as well as their overall writing performance. The students' pre-questionnaire attempts to check the students' awareness of FSs and their importance in writing. The post-questionnaire will be administered only to the students who received the treatment to enquire about their attitudes towards the integration of FSs in the writing courses they received. The teachers' questionnaire, which is intended for teachers of Written Expression at the department of Letters and English at Oum El Bouaghi University, aims at investigating their awareness, attitudes, and practices regarding the incorporation of FSs in their writing classrooms.

6. Structure of the Study

Apart from the first part which is devoted to introducing the present study, this research work consists of two parts which are further divided into seven chapters. The first part comprises three theoretical chapters. Chapter one offers an overview of the writing skill, its definition and nature, its importance, approaches to its teaching, its assessment, the factors that affect students' writing and its relation with reading and vocabulary. Chapter two provides a deeper view into FSs by first highlighting their theoretical basis and then their historical development. The chapter then moves onto the definition of FSs, their different categorizations, their functions, and the way they are acquired and taught. Chapter three discusses the relationship between FSs and writing proficiency. First, light is cast on the prevalence of these sequences in written discourse, their significance in writing, their use by native and non-native writers, and finally the recent studies on their explicit teaching in writing classrooms. The second part which is devoted to the fieldwork consists of four chapters. Chapter four is devoted to the analysis of teachers' and students' pre-questionnaires. Chapter five presents the implementation of the experiment with all its phases. More specifically, it entails a description of the sample, research procedures, instruments and the treatment. Detailed presentation of data analysis and the results obtained from the analysis are also set out in this chapter. Chapter six examines the students' attitudes questionnaire. Finally, chapter seven summarizes the main findings of the study and provides pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

Chapter One

The Writing Skill

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Chapter One: The Writing Skill

Introduction

It is a known fact that language learning involves mastery of the four basic language skills. Writing is one of these skills and is generally deemed the last one to be acquired, yet the most important and complex one. Writing is increasingly becoming a prerequisite to taking part in today's literate society. In fact, it is the fulcrum on which learning, intellect, professional and academic life depend. It follows thus that writing, particularly in an EFL setting, is a significant skill students need to develop. Promoting students' ability to write hinges upon a sound understanding of the nature of this skill. In this chapter, writing will be defined first by highlighting its distinct features as opposed to speaking and then by examining how different researchers look at it. The chapter then moves onto exploring its importance in addition to the four major approaches to writing instruction along with the advantages and weaknesses of each. Besides, as students' writing ability cannot improve without their writings being evaluated, part of this chapter will be devoted to assessment. A definition of writing assessment will be provided together with the two major scoring procedures. Next, some of the major factors that affect EFL students' writing performance will be explored. The chapter ends by shedding some light on the reading-writing connection and the necessity of integrating vocabulary instruction into writing classrooms as this helps in improving students' writing.

1.1.The Meaning and Nature of Writing

In its most basic definition, writing is a system of signs and symbols. Byrne (1988) stated that writing is "making marks on a flat surface of any kind" (p. 1). Similarly, Hyland (2003) regarded it as "marks on a page or a screen" (p. 3). In agreement with this view, Coulmas (1999) maintained that writing is "a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in systematic way" (p. 560). In addition to being a system of signs, writing

was also seen as "a system for representing utterances of a spoken language" (Sampson, 1985, p. 26). However, this simplistic view which depicts written language as speech put into written form is now no longer held to be true.

Though writing and speaking share some common features, they are fundamentally as different "as swimming is from walking" (Brown, 2001, p. 335). First, unlike speech which is face to face interaction, writing does not involve direct contact with the addressee. Writers are usually detached from their readers in terms of space and time. Therefore, they do not have the opportunity to receive immediate feedback so that they can clarify any misunderstanding, elaborate or amend their message. Writers should foresee their readers' knowledge, needs, interpretations and expectations and compose their texts accordingly (Nunan, 1991). Additionally, writers do not have such assets such as pitch, tone, stress, facial expressions and body movements which are available only to speakers. Instead, they have to atone for all these disadvantages in writing (Hedge, 2005). This idea of the involvement of the hearer and reader is echoed by Gibbs (1999):

> Writing and speaking differ in the burden placed on readers and listeners. In spoken discourse, the burden of organizing the discourse is shared between speaker and listener. Writers, by contrast, work independently of their eventual readers and must assume a greater burden for structuring their texts. (p. 178)

This clearly shows that writing is much more difficult than speaking. The fact that writers should place themselves in the shoes of their readers exerts a higher cognitive burden on them. In this regard, Pea and Kurland (1987) argued that "writing is a complex cognitive task in which many demands impinge on the writer at the same time" (p. 288).

Writing is neither easy nor spontaneous (Byrne, 1988). While speech requires less planning and allows the speaker to engage in the act of speaking automatically and unconsciously, writing imposes on the writer to be more conscious of what he is doing and be

mentally- present all throughout the process of composing (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001). In their turn, Brookes and Grundy (1998) pointed out that "writing is more 'attended to' than speech" (p. 1) in that the writer is highly sensible to the act of composing and is paying full attention to accuracy of every kind, knowing that once his writing reaches its destined audience, it can never be rectified or refined (Brookes & Grundy, 1998). Writing, thus, is a complex skill which requires conscious mental efforts on the part of the writer or as Bell and Burnaby (1984 as cited in Nunan, 1991) put it:

> The writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include 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. (p. 36)

As writing is a highly complex activity, it then follows that it is not a natural skill that can be picked up through exposure. In support of this view, Cremin and Myhill (2012) averred that unlike speech which all people learn naturally at home without formal instruction, writing is neither an inborn nor a natural skill. Rather, it needs to be taught and learned. According to Nunan (1989), writing is the most intricate skill for all language learners irrespective of their language, be it first, second or a foreign language. While all normal children learn to speak their mother language, few learn to read, and even fewer learn to write adequately. Writing in one's native language is a challenging task since it requires the manipulation of a combination of many interrelated linguistic and metacognitive capacities. However, the task is even more challenging for second or foreign language learners whose capacities are not as fully developed as those of natives (Schoonen et al., 2003).

Describing writing as a cognitive task suggests a thinking process which is another way of defining it. Gaith (2002) postulated that "writing is a complex process that allows

writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete". In addition to being a representation of thoughts, writing makes thoughts flow easily and even helps in creating and shaping new ideas. Often times, writers start writing with only the dimmest idea of what they are going to say. As writers jot down their ideas, they start seeing things they had not anticipated before engaging in the act of composing. Thus, ideas are developed, changed and improved while others are discovered as writers write and rewrite (Nunan, 1989). This, according to Widdowson (1983), accounts for the fact that "one so frequently arrives at a destination not originally envisaged, by a route not planned for in the original itinerary" (p. 41). Taylor (1981) went in the same vein when he defined writing as "a creative discovery procedure characterized by the dynamic interplay of content and language: the use of language to explore beyond the known content" (p. 6). This view which considers writing as a set of thinking skills is the keystone of the process approach that directed attention towards the processes writers go through when they are engaged in the act of composing. Under this approach, writing is defined as "a recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of replanning in between" (Smith, 1982, p. 117).

Writing in a foreign language is seen as the production of well-structured sentences and that it can be developed only through the mastery of grammar and lexis. Hyland (2003) maintained that writing in a second or a foreign language "mainly involves linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts" (p. 3).

The array of definitions stated above proves the difficulty of coming by a single definition of writing that covers all its aspects. Each definition seems to illuminate a perspective of this concept. Thus, rather than viewing these definitions in stark opposition, it would be more useful if they are seen as complementary; each compensates for the demerits

of the other. The following definition by Hyland (2003) was an attempt to offer a synthesis of the different definitions given to writing. According to him, "writing is a sociocognitive activity which involves skills in planning and drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts, and audiences" (p. 23).

1.2. The Importance of Writing

That writing is part and parcel of our everyday life is a fact that no one can deny especially in today's global world. This skill has permeated both public and private human activities in all fields of life such as government, economy, politics, culture, religion, science, education etc. Even the number of electronic-based communication users is on the rise as tens of sites are created daily and all of these certainly call for writing which is intelligible to its readers. Indeed, "almost everyone today in the developed world is to some degree a pencil pusher or a computer nerd," echoed Bazerman (2008, p. 1).

Writing enables one to record knowledge, to express feelings and share thoughts and ideas with others not only in day-to-day life but also across time and space. Writing sharpens one's thinking and enables the individuals to explore thoughts, reflect upon them and even invent new ones. Research even proved that writing about one's feelings and difficult experiences may improve physical and mental health (Singer & Singer, 2008). In short, " through writing we entertain and are entertained, instruct and are instructed, remind and are reminded, inform and are informed…and persuade and are persuaded" (Templeton, 1997 as cited in Suleiman, 2000, p. 2).

Writing is the benchmark against which academic as well as professional success is measured. Students with poor writing abilities experience many hardships at school since writing is the major means of evaluation for teachers (Graham & Perin, 2007). Similarly,

according to a report by the National Commission on Writing (NCW) (2004), writing is the ticket to employment and promotion. People who cannot write have little chance to get hired.

From a historical point of view and in the context of language learning and teaching, writing was given a backseat in comparison with the other skills. In the 1950's and due to the dominance of the audiolingual method, speech was given primacy and writing was seen as secondary and not a goal of language learning in itself. However, in the 1960's as a turning point and due to the urgent need to meet the needs of ESL learners who flocked to American universities, writing gained momentum and became the focus of study for many researchers (Hirano, 2010).

The importance of writing in the ESL/ EFL setting is now widely recognized. "Any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development", commented Suleiman (2000, p. 3). Writing in a foreign language encourages thinking, makes students focused and promotes their ideas organization, summarizing, analyzing and criticizing capacities. Besides, it strengthens their reflecting on, learning and thinking in the English language (Rao, 2007). In her turn, Raimes (1983) argued that writing brings about many benefits to second language learners. First, it helps them review and consolidate already acquired grammar, vocabulary and idioms. Second, it encourages them to take risks and be more willing to go beyond the language they were instructed to use. Third, when students write, "they necessarily become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning" (Raimes, 1983, p. 3).

Graham and Perin (2007) expanded on this when they pointed out that writing plays two different yet closely related roles. On the one hand, writing is a skill which requires many

other subskills such as knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, word usage, punctuation, and spelling as well as strategies like planning, revising and evaluating which are all essential in the creation of a coherent essay with well-developed ideas, supporting examples and suitable details. This role is referred to as 'learning to write'. On the other hand, writing is used for expanding and deepening students' knowledge. Writing here is a vehicle for learning and this role is called 'writing to learn'.

In the EFL university setting, students are required to write many essays throughout their academic career. According to Curry and Lillis (2003), writing in higher education occupies a centre stage position and its purpose varies depending on the context in which it appears. These purposes are highlighted below; however, they are adapted here to fit in the context of EFL.

1. Assessment: students are required in exams to produce essays to test their writing as an independent subject or their content knowledge in other subjects like civilization, literature, linguistics etc. In both cases, success depends on the quality of the content and the form of their essays.

2. Learning: it entails both acquiring the writing skill in itself and writing to learn other subjects.

3. Entering particular disciplinary communities: students who have the chance to follow postgraduate studies are expected to produce texts that abide by the conventions of their chosen disciplines (e.g., applied linguistics, literature, civilization).

Having said that, it becomes clear that writing is an indispensable skill students have to master. However, to help them learn how to write, teachers need to decide on the best approach to the teaching of this skill.

1. 3. Approaches to Teaching Writing

The rise and fall of different approaches has been a distinguishing feature that marked the history of ESL / EFL writing instruction, noting that none of these approaches had disappeared completely. The main approaches that affected the teaching of writing are: the controlled composition approach, the paragraph- pattern approach, the process approach, and the genre approach.

1.3.1. The Controlled Composition Approach

Controlled composition, or guided composition, had its genesis in Fries's oral approach which developed later on into the audiolingual method of second language teaching. This approach is guided by structural linguistics which views language as speech and behaviourist psychology which posits that learning is habit formation (Silva, 1990). From these perspectives, speech was given primacy while "writing served a subservient role: to reinforce oral patterns of the language" (Raimes, 1991, p. 408).

In controlled composition, writing was "used as a production mode for learning, reinforcing, or testing grammatical concepts" (Brown, 2001, p. 344). Writers were discouraged from engaging in free composition lest they would commit errors assumed to be caused by L1 interference. Instead, they were presented with paragraphs in which they have to change certain structures like altering present tense verbs into past tense, active into passive voice, questions to statements and so on. Thus, through such exercises, the risk of erring is eliminated and accuracy and correctness are achieved as learners' writing is rigidly controlled (Brown, 2001). Writing was then viewed as habit formation, a practice of already learned linguistic patterns. Rather than being concerned with ideas, style, or organization, students are encouraged to imitate and manipulate model passages created specifically for grammar and

vocabulary patterns. This manipulation takes the form of substitutions, transformations, expansions or completions (Silva, 1990).

Furthermore, the audience in controlled composition is the teacher who is just an editor or a proofreader and whose main concern is linguistic features rather than ideas or content organization. The context is the ESL/ EFL classroom, implying that the audience and the purpose of the text are overlooked (Silva, 1990). Commenting on this focus on grammar, Raimes (1983) said:

> Feeling slightly uneasy about this emphasis, we disguise it by the language we use: we say we assign guided or controlled compositions. These, however, have more to do with control than composition. Students are copying, substituting, transforming, and manipulating prose written by someone else. They are not composing. But we like to think they are. (259)

Hence, the weakness of this approach soon became obvious as sentence-level exercises did not help students write sentences creatively nor produce longer stretches of discourse.

1.3.2. The Paragraph - Pattern Approach

Dissatisfaction with controlled composition which failed to meet ESL students' need to produce larger stretches of discourse led to the introduction of the paragraph-pattern approach, also referred to by Silva (1990) as the current-traditional rhetoric. This approach lays emphasis on paragraph and essay organization instead of accuracy or fluency. As such, it draws on Kaplan's theory of 'contrastive rhetoric' which suggests that writers' different linguistic and cultural backgrounds affect the way they construct and organize their writing in a second or a foreign language.

This approach, according to Silva (1990), is about "the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms" (p. 14). This entails an emphasis on the paragraph as made

up of a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence as well as its modes of development (illustration, comparison and contrast, classification); and a focus on the essay as organized into an introduction, a body and a conclusion according to certain organizational patterns such as narration, exposition, description, and argumentation.

Under this approach, the main focus in teaching writing is form. Students in the classroom deal with different exercises; for example, they may be asked to order jumbled sentences to form a coherent paragraph, identify general statements, sort out or write topic sentences (Raimes, 1983), read and analyze a model paragraph or essay and write an original piece of writing of their own using the acquired knowledge from the analysis, and at an advanced level, develop topic and supporting sentences from a provided text, then prepare an outline to write their own essays (Silva, 1990). In connection with this, Silva (1990) commented, "indeed… the current-traditional approach is still dominant in ESL writing materials and classroom practices today" (p. 15).

The paragraph-pattern approach was criticized basically for its prescriptive orientation. Writing is viewed as combining sentences into prescribed patterns where there is no room for creative thinking and writing. "The writer fills in a preexisting form with provided or self-generated content" (Silva, 1990, p. 14). Another limitation of this approach is that it views writing as a linear process wherein students are asked to select a topic, write a thesis statement then topic sentences, prepare an outline then start writing in this sequential straightforward process.

1.3.3. The Process Approach

In the 1970's, a growing recognition of the ineffectiveness of teaching sentence-level structures in the controlled composition approach and discourse-level structure in current-traditional rhetoric revolutionized the teaching of writing and paved the way for the process

approach (Silva, 1990). In addition to being a hurdle to writers' creative thinking and writing, these approaches' focus on surface features of texts obscured the process underlying their production. Thus, attention shifted from the text as a final product to the writing process itself.

Zamel (1976) was the first to introduce the concept of writing as a process to L2 writing studies. According to her, advanced L2 writers resemble L1 writers in their composing strategies and could thus receive the same instruction focusing on the process of writing. As such, instead of regarding writing instruction as copying already acquired sentence and discourse structures, the process approach stresses the notion of writing not only as a process of promoting organization but also meaning (Matsuda, 2003).

Process writing, as the name suggests, emphasizes the process writers go through when composing. It is mainly concerned with "what writers do" (Zamel, 1982, p. 196) in order to create a piece of writing. This entails going through different activities or stages like planning, drafting, revising and editing which interact together in a non-linear fashion. In other words, rather than being a straightforward plan-write-revise process, writing is "a recursive, exploratory and generative process wherein ideas were discovered and meaning made" (Matsuda & Silva, 2010, p. 240). Writers can thus go back and forth to any of the stages at any time. For example, they may check for more information from outside sources, revise after receiving feedback, or even go back to their plan to develop new ideas.

In the process approach, students need to understand that rarely writers can come up with a finished perfect piece of writing in one draft. They should realize that what they first put down on paper is just a beginning, a first draft that needs to be polished into subsequent drafts. Students are not expected to write within a limited time and submit their papers to be corrected. Rather, they should be given enough time so that they can probe into the writing topic, generate ideas, write a first draft, receive feedback, and then rewrite before getting a satisfactory piece of writing. Thus, if provided with sufficient time and suitable intervening

feedback either from the teacher or their peers, student writers will discover new ideas, new words and new sentences as they write and rewrite (Raimes, 1983). In this way, writing becomes an act of discovery, a continuing attempt to find out what one wants to say.

Moreover, the acquisition of the writing skill in this approach is very much student-centered. The L2 writer is regarded as an active participant in the writing process rather than a passive recipient or an empty vessel that waits to be filled or taught in predetermined patterns or grammar rules. Students are encouraged to write on topics of interest to them, to write from their personal experiences and opinions, to find their own voices to write more fluently (Hyland, 2003a). Under this approach, students are regarded as authors and their writings are appreciated as creative and meaningful. The hardships they experience are dealt with as that of normal writers. For example, instead of being punished by the teacher's correction pen, students are given time to work on their errors as would professional writers do. In short, students are given greater responsibility over their writing, including decisions about revisions, corrections and presentation (Bunting, 2010).

Being at the heart of the learning process does not mean that writing is a solitary activity, since writers can collaborate with their peers or their teachers all throughout the writing process. Hence, classrooms become writing workshops in which students share their writings with one another, and teachers provide regular intervening feedback as students draft and redraft. The teacher's role in the workshop is that of a guide and a facilitator (Williams, 2003). Teachers should give their students the chance to create their own meanings in a cooperative and positive environment. They are not supposed to impose their opinions, provide models or answers to topics in advance. Rather, they should stimulate their ideas through prewriting activities like journal writing (Hyland, 2003a). Corroborating this view, Silva (1990) stated that "this approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal

interference, can work through their composing processes" (p. 15). Teachers are also urged not to focus on form so as to aid their students develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining their ideas (Hyland, 2003a).

Despite offering new insights into the teaching of writing, the process-oriented approach was not flawless at all. One obvious limitation is that it is too much time consuming. It is not possible for students to engage in the different activities of brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing nor for the teacher, who is constrained by a curriculum, to conference with each student, who may have his own unique problems, in two or three sessions which is usually the time allocated for writing instruction per week. Besides, shifting the focus of classroom activities from the teacher to the students will "disempower teachers and cast them in the role of well-meaning bystanders" (Hyland, 2003b, p. 19). Horowitz (1986) also added that "overuse of peer evaluation may leave students with an unrealistic view of their abilities; that trying to make over bad writers in the image of good ones may be of questionable efficacy" (p. 446).

Another limitation of the process approach is that it pays little attention to the final product and downplays the importance of grammar. Proponents of the process approach just give lip service to accuracy, while delaying grammar to the end of the writing process (editing). The assumption is that "content would determine form" (Matsuda & Silva, 2010, p. 240), implying that accuracy will take care of itself. In line with this, Ferris (2011) argued that "since both teachers and students found it more stimulating and less tedious to focus on ideas than on accuracy, composition instruction entered a period of "benign neglect" of errors and grammar teaching" (p. 8). It is known that the lexical and grammatical systems of second and foreign language learners are not fully developed; therefore, teachers are required to focus more on accuracy in their intervention. Both accuracy and fluency are fundamental in the

production of a good piece of writing and favouring one to the exclusion of the other would not serve the learners' purpose.

The most critical weakness of the process approach was pointed out by proponents of the genre approach. According to Badger and White (2000), the process of writing is viewed as the same for all writers irrespective of content, audience or purpose. For instance, though the amount of prewriting in producing a post-card to a friend is not the same as that in writing an academic essay, this is not manifested in the process approach. It is assumed that all types of writing are produced by the same strategies. In his turn, Hyland (2003 b) pointed out that the process approach depicts writing "as a decontextualized skill by foregrounding the writer as an isolated individual struggling to express personal meanings" (p. 18). He further clarified that while this line of thought highlights the cognitive aspect of writing and reveals how a writer works actively in processing information, it fails to show how language is used in different contexts. Questioning the adequacy of the process approach in preparing students to write in academic contexts, Horowitz (1986) argued that this approach creates a classroom situation that is different from the situations in which students usually write, making them unready to write the different texts required by the university especially exams, and giving them "a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated" (p. 143). In a nutshell, overemphasis on the cognitive processes in the process approach has overshadowed the socio-cultural dimension of writing, which is a distinct feature of the genre approach.

1.3.4. The Genre Approach

The main premise of this approach is that writing changes according to the social context in which it is produced. The genre approach stresses the link between the social context in which a piece of writing is produced and the linguistic choices made by writers to achieve social purposes (Badger and White, 2000). Hyland (2003a) defined genre as "socially

recognized ways of using language for particular purposes" (p. 18). Hence, members of the same community are able to identify common features of the texts they deal with frequently and can thus understand, read and write them with ease based on their previous experience with such texts. This is partly because writing is an act that is contingent upon expectations. That is, readers can recognize the writer's purpose if writers construct their texts by anticipating what readers, who have already dealt with the same kind of texts, expect from them (Hyland, 2007).

The key aspect of the genre approach is the communicative purpose which distinguishes one genre from another. Hyland (2003 b) argued, "we don't just write, we write *something* to achieve some *purpose:* it is a way of getting something done" (p. 18). For instance, letters of apology, recipes or law reports are different genres that are used to achieve different purposes. Generally, when a group of texts share a common purpose, they will often have similar structure, and hence belong to the same genre. Other factors may influence genres such as the subject matter, the writer-reader relationship and the pattern of organization (Badger & White, 2000).

In a typical genre classroom, the teaching of writing goes through three different stages: modelling, joint construction and finally independent construction (Hyland, 2003b). In the modelling stage, the teacher provides students with a model text and discusses all its aspects including the social context, the lexical and grammatical features. Students, then, jointly with the teacher construct an example of the genre. Finally, students draft independently their own piece of writing in that genre (Drury, 2004). Badger and White (2000) summarized the genre approach pedagogy saying that it stresses writing in terms of linguistic knowledge and social purpose.

The genre approach brought several benefits to ESL/EFL learners. First, it helps them in their daily life as it provides them with the necessary skills that will prepare them to deal

with authentic real world writing tasks adequately. Such tasks may take the form of shopping lists, job applications and so on. Furthermore, the genre approach increases students awareness of the rhetorical organization as well as the linguistic properties related to a particular genre (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). Backing up this idea, Hyland (2007) argued that this approach "offers students an explicit understanding of how target texts are structured and why they are written in the ways they are" (p. 151). Building confidence is another benefit that students can reap from this approach as it provides them with models to emulate.

Like other approaches, the genre-based approach did not escape criticism. First, concerns were raised about its prescriptive nature. That is, the explicit teaching of genres in which students imitate model texts restrains their creativity. In this way, genres are just like "moulds into which content is poured, rather than as ways of making meanings" (Hyland, 2003b, p. 26). Besides, this approach was also criticized for making passive students, in addition to underestimating the skills required for learners to produce texts (Badger & White, 2000).

The above review illustrates that each approach addresses a certain aspect of writing (e.g. text, writer, reader). Nevertheless, it would be wrong to perceive them as dichotomies or in opposition as this "gives students a limited, unbalanced and […] inaccurate view of how writing works" (George, 2001, p. 666). Teachers rarely make use of one single approach in the classroom. A teacher using a process approach will still employ techniques drawn from other approaches like sentence exercises, model paragraphs or controlled compositions (Raimes, 1983). Therefore, it is evident that no approach is superior to the other or as Grabe (2001) put it: " There is no single grand theory of L2 writing, nor could there probably ever be one, because of the competing and conflicting demands, contexts, and interests the theory would have to satisfy" (as cited in Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008, pp. 72-73). Finally, it is

important to note that selecting an appropriate approach to the teaching of writing might not help students with their writing unless it is accompanied with assessment.

1.4. Assessing ESL/ EFL Writing

1.4.1. Definition of Writing Assessment

Despite being an onerous task, assessing students' writing is fundamental to the work of all writing teachers. Writing assessment refers to the process of gathering information about students' writing ability and achievement. This information may be collected through timed class tests, short essays, term assignments, project reports or portfolios. Assessment is an inherent part of the teaching-learning enterprise and of students' progress towards increasing mastery of their writing. Teachers are constantly engaged in the practice of writing assessment. They try to track their students' progress and pinpoint areas of their strength and weakness. Teachers themselves benefit from assessment as it informs their teaching and helps them see the efficiency of their methods and materials. Thus, writing assessment has both a teaching and a testing role. In other words, assessment may serve a formative or a summative function (Hyland, 2004).

Formative assessment is the process of providing ongoing feedback on students' writing. It seeks to enhance students' writing, inform instruction and evaluate achievement or completion of courses or programs (Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008). This type of assessment is usually referred to as assessment for learning since the results of this assessment are employed to inform and adjust teaching procedures according to students' learning needs (Calfee & Miller, 2007).

Summative assessment, on the other hand, is identified as assessment of learning. It sumps up what students have learned at the end of an instructional phase, be it a lesson or a course (Hyland, 2004). This type of assessment aims to give an overall picture of the quality

of students' work as a grade or a mark. Summative assessment can be used for promotion, certification or for entry into higher levels of education (Looney, 2011).

Though teachers are likely to use purely formative or summative assessment, both types can be combined. That is, a piece of writing can get feedback and receive a mark at the same time. Formative assessment can also be used for the first draft of an essay prior to producing a final draft for summative assessment (Goodman & Swann, 2003). In sum, though used for different purposes, both formative and summative assessment are vital for the teaching/ learning process as they not only inform and measure learning, but also promote it.

1.4.2. Scoring Procedures for Assessing Writing

Before engaging in the process of writing assessment, teachers need to determine the criteria against which student' writing performance will be judged. Such criteria comprise what is referred to as scoring rubrics or rating scales. According to Ekbatani (2011), "adequately designed rubrics promote and encourage reliability, consistency, and accuracy in assessing writing performance" (p. 68). The scoring rubric a teacher adopts reflects the theoretical background which underlies the test. In other words, it shows the rater's assumptions of what aspects will be gauged by the test (Weigle, 2002).

Having determined the scoring rubric and descriptors for each rubric level, another decision to be made is selecting the type of scoring procedure to be used. Generally, most rating scales can be categorized as either holistic or analytic.

1.4.2.1. Holistic Scoring

Holistic scoring involves assigning a single, integrated score based on a global judgment of the quality of a piece of writing (Hyland, 2003b). This means that the rater reads quickly through the script then evaluates it against a rating scale or a scoring rubric which outlines the main scoring criteria (Weigle, 2002).

Holistic scoring has many advantages. First, it is believed to be more suitable for classroom essays and large-scale assessments because of its perceived efficiency (Bacha, 2001). More specifically, holistic scoring is faster to use since the rater reads a paper once instead of many times to evaluate each aspect of writing separately (Weigle, 2002). Besides, in this approach raters focus on the strengths of the paper rather than dwell on its deficiencies. So, writers are unlikely to be punished for poor performance in one aspect, such as grammatical accuracy or organization (Knoch, 2009).

Despite its advantages, the holistic approach has its limitations. It was argued that a single score offers little information about the aspects which are most responsible for students' writing ability, whether it is grammatical accuracy, rhetorical organization, adequate choice of vocabulary, or appropriate content (Llach, 2011). Obviously, a single score cannot inform teachers nor writers since the aspects of writing are lumped together. Moreover, even if raters apply a single rubric strictly, they may assign different papers the same score for different reasons. Holistic scoring is also said to reduce reliability though this problem can be solved when two or more raters score the same paper (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

1.4.2.2. Analytic Scoring

Analytic scoring involves gauging a script against a set of criteria, viewed as components of good writing, each of which is to be scored separately (Hyland, 2004). A piece of writing can be rated on such traits, like grammar, vocabulary, coherence, content or mechanics which vary according to the purpose of the writing task (Weigle, 2002). Within this approach, the different aspects of writing are weighted differently each according to its importance. For instance, content or organization may receive a higher score than spelling or punctuation (Kennedy, 2006). Clearly, this would help students identify areas of their writing ability which require further improvement.

Analytic scoring is seen as the key to the major deficiencies associated with holistic scoring, in which a single score is given. To begin with, as various elements of the writing ability are graded separately, analytic scoring can yield useful diagnostic information particularly for ESL students who are more likely to show varying competency levels in different aspects of writing (Weigle, 2002). Therefore, assigning multiple scores helps students determine the strong and weak aspects in their writing performance, and aid teachers to tailor instruction to their students' needs. Furthermore, analytic scoring is assumed to improve reliability. The use of explicit descriptors for each subscale with corresponding, well-defined mastery levels (e.g. very good, good etc) increases consistency and reliability of judgment (Llach, 2011). Finally, analytic scoring is beneficial for novice raters who can easily fathom and apply the criteria in separate scales (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

However, analytic scoring is not without deficiencies. One major drawback is that it views writing as the sum of its individual parts giving a false impression that writing can be perceived and evaluated by analyzing separate text components (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Knoch (2009) warned also against the halo effect, whereby judgment of one rated feature affects judgment of other features either positively or negatively. Breaking down a text into separate units may also distract attention from the overall effect of the text. In addition, some analytic scoring scales, like the ESL Composition Profile designed by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormouth, Hartfiel & Hughey (1981), offer one composite score resulting from adding up separate subscores which jeopardises the diagnostic value of analytic scoring (Llach, 2011; Weigle, 2002). Last but not least, analytic rating takes too much time and effort as it requires raters to examine each component several times (Knoch, 2009).

The choice regarding the use of holistic or analytic scoring depends partly on the purpose of assessment. If diagnostic information is needed, an analytic approach is more desirable; on the other hand, if the aim is students' final achievement, then holistic scoring

would be more appropriate. Other factors include time constraints, the nature of the writing task and the specific performance criteria being observed. In sum, assessment brings about many benefits to the teaching and learning of writing, and most importantly it enables teachers to have a clear view of the challenges that their students face when writing.

1.5. Factors Affecting ESL/ EFL Writing Performance

Writing in a foreign language is an acknowledged hardship for most EFL learners regardless of their level. With the intention of helping students enhance their writing abilities, several studies investigated the factors that affect EFL students' writing performance. The most frequently explored ones are: strategy use, L1 writing ability, English language proficiency and psychological factors.

1.5.1. Strategy Use

Strategy use is one major factor that influences the quality of writing. Studies showed that skilled writers use skills, bahaviours and procedures dissimilar to unskilled writers. For instance, Sasaki (2004) found that proficient writers spend more time planning global organization and revising at the discourse level, and tend to focus on content and the flow of ideas. Less proficient writers, on the other hand, devote little time to planning and revise more at the word and phrase level. Pae (2008) added that irrespective of their target language, proficient writers make use of different strategies. For example, they depend on experiences from previous writing lessons, search for models, deal effectively with time constraints and make good use of the feedback from teachers or other students. Furthermore, it is argued that since these strategies are used by all proficient writers whether the language they are writing in is their first or second language, some researchers posited that there is a 'composing competence' that goes beyond the differences that exist between L1 and L2 (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). The existence of such a composing competence implies a strong correlation between

the quality of L1 and L2 writing. Therefore, L1 writing ability is explored as another factor that affects writing performance.

1.5.2. L1 Writing Ability

An increasing interest in the relationship between L1 and L2 writing performance prompted a number of investigations. Yet, the results of these investigations were inconsistent. While some researchers argued for the positive role of L1 writing, others suggested that it affects L2 writing negatively.

The claim that L1 writing influences positively L2 writing has been supported empirically by many studies. For example, Schoonen (2003) indicated that L1 (Dutch) writing ability contributes to the prediction of L2 (English) writing proficiency. Ito's (2004) examination of Japanese-speaking students also revealed that students' essays in L1 and L2 tend to be similar in quality. In other words, students with good writing abilities in L1 tend to carry their writing proficiency over to L2 writing. However, in contrast to these studies, some others did not support the L1-L2 writing positive relationship. In contrastive studies, it is commonly agreed that first language and culture are the main barriers to foreign language writing. For instance, when the disparity between the first language and the target language is very large, students' L1 is assumed to have a negative impact on their target language writing. Students tend to translate from their L1 into the target language which makes some of the features of their L1 appear in their writing and though they may produce well-structured sentences with appropriate content, a lot of their sentences may sound odd to native ears (Bennui, 2008). Bhela (1999) analysed the writing tasks of four second language learners with different native languages, namely Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. The results demonstrated that these learners depended on their native language structures to produce texts resulting in a high frequency of errors in the target language, thus affecting negatively their

L2 writing products. Similarly, in an examination of Thai students' paragraph writing, Bennui (2008) found that their written products were negatively influenced by Thai grammatical structures, vocabulary use and discourse. As has been argued before, investigating L1 impact on L2 writing remains a contentious issue that requires further investigation.

1.5.3. English Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is another factor that exerts a great impact on student's writing ability. According to Cumming (1989), "as people gain proficiency in their second language, they become better able to perform in writing in their second language, producing more effective texts, attending more fully to aspects of their writing" (p. 121). Furthermore, Kubota (1998) proposed that English proficiency can improve the quality of ESL essays in terms of language use and organization. He found that due to students' limited language skills such as grammar and vocabulary knowledge, they tend to pay little attention to organization, produce simple text structures, rarely use effective coherence devices or misinterpret the prompt. Besides, while some students were struggling to find correct words and resorted often times to the dictionary, some others were just stringing words together, one after the other being concerned mainly with filling in the page. Conversely, students with good language skills obtained high scores on ESL organization and their language skills correlated with the quality of their essays. Sasaki (2000) also asserted that L2 proficiency accounts for a substantial part of L2 writing competence. He observed that the lack of language proficiency prevented novice writers from writing faster and longer. These writers tended to stop and think about translation so often which affected their writing fluency. Thus, the results of the above studies leave no doubt that language proficiency is a key factor that contributes to ESL/EFL writing proficiency.

1.5.4. Psychological Factors

Writing is a cognitive as well as an affective activity (Cheng, 2002). Accordingly, affective or psychological factors have been found to largely influence students' writing behaviours. The most influential factors are motivation, self-efficacy and anxiety.

Motivation is one of the main factors that affect language learning, including writing success. It is assumed that without enough motivation even learners with the most notable capacities cannot achieve long-term goals. Even suitable curricula or good teaching might not be enough to guarantee students' academic success (Dornyei, 2005). To produce good quality essays, learners need to have a drive to write. This shows that motivation is a significant concept related to students' writing. Hashemian and Heidari (2013) noticed that learners with positive attitudes towards writing tended to write too often and exerted too much effort on writing tasks than those with negative attitudes. Besides, students who had positive attitudes produced well-written essays than did those with negative attitudes. Writing motivation is the responsibility of the teachers since it is not sufficient for them to just help learners learn how to write, but also learn how to want to write (Spaulding, 1992 as cited in Brunning & Horn, 2000). Developing positive beliefs about writing, fostering students' engagement through authentic goals and contexts, and providing a supporting and positive environment are some of the ways teachers can use to motivate their students (Brunning & Horn, 2000).

When students are highly motivated, it follows that they have higher self-efficacy beliefs. Previous research showed that the belief in one's ability to complete tasks and achieve goals might influence efforts and performance. According to Bandura (1997), people who trust their abilities grapple with complex tasks as challenges to be overcome rather than risks to be shunned. They ascribe their failure to insufficient efforts and try to intensify them. Their self-efficacy helps in improving their performance and reducing stress. By the same token,

people who lack confidence in their capacities shy away from difficult tasks. They attribute their failure to personal deficiencies or the complexity of tasks and give up easily in the face of difficulties; consequently, they fail to perform well. Hence, students who lack self-efficacy are less likely to write well and are more prone to anxiety, which is another affective variable.

Usually, students get anxious when asked to write an English composition in class because they are afraid of writing tests, making mistakes, getting negative evaluation from teachers or because they lack self-confidence (Shang, 2013). Evidence showed that anxiety leads to poor writing performance. Hassan's (2001) study demonstrated that low apprehension students performed better than high apprehensives. That is, writing anxiety negatively affected students' writing quality. Therefore, it is highly recommended to create a low-anxiety writing atmosphere to foster students' willingness and self-efficacy in writing. Now that the factors that affect students' writing performance have been spotlighted, the next section deals with the reading-writing connection and the necessity of integrating vocabulary in writing classrooms.

1.6. Writing and Other Language Skills and Sub-Skills

1.6.1. The Reading-Writing Connection

Reading has traditionally been taught separately from writing. This segregation may be due to several factors, such as greater value placed on one skill rather than the other, the division between reading and writing, educators and professionals who develop separate curricula, teaching materials and assessments paying no heed to the existence of any relationship between the two skills, in addition to pedagogical, cognitive and developmental theories that treat reading and writing as discrete subjects (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). A concrete example of this disconnect was offered by Nelson and Calfee (1998 as cited in Jackson, 2008) who explained that a "teacher might teach students about 'main idea' when

teaching reading and about 'topic sentence' when teaching writing- without pointing out any overlap" (p. 145).

Researchers, however, have recently recognized the connection between reading and writing, identifying them as complementary processes which support each other (e.g. Heller, 1999; Hirvela, 2014). Research and practical experience showed that one cannot attain writing proficiency unless one masters a host of literacy skills, including the capacity to understand written texts effectively (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). "Readings serve as models of good writing, and even more important, serve as sources of information and ideas that stimulate thinking, discussion and responses, all of which are essential foundations of writing" (Vandrick, 2003, p. 264). By the same token, writing influences reading. It is well established that writing fosters students' comprehension. Flynn (1983), among others, supported that saying:

> Through writing, students gain a fuller understanding of their reading … . In all forms, writing forces readers to define ideas clearly and so results in fuller comprehension. Writing necessitates rereading and rethinking. Material is not simply ingested; it is digested. (p. 149)

Thus, if instruction is to be effective, reading and writing should be considered together.

The existence of many similarities between reading and writing is one major reason that accounts for their close connection. According to Tierney and Pearson (1983), reading and writing are both acts of composing involving common cognitive strategies. They argue that readers construct meaning in much the same way writers do. That is, readers and writers go through similar processes in that they both plan, draft, align, revise and monitor as they read and write. Of course, these processes are not sequential but recursive in that readers and writers go forward and backward between them. Furthermore, readers and writers use parallel

types of knowledge: knowledge about language, knowledge about content, knowledge about genre conventions, knowledge about organization and structure, knowledge of pragmatics and knowledge about interaction (Langer & Flihan, 2000). In a similar manner, Rubin and Hansen (1984) suggested that readers and writers share five common types of knowledge when they construct meaning. These are information knowledge, structural knowledge, transactional knowledge, aesthetic knowledge and process knowledge. Even more important, the writer's task is more than composing texts as the reader's task is more than interpreting these texts. Reading and writing are communicative processes wherein readers and writers interact with one another. From this perspective, some researchers (e.g. Griffith, 2010; Smith, 1983) talked of the reader as the writer and the writer as the reader. When reading like a writer, the reader makes meaning of texts, and most importantly, learns from the writer's skills, strategies and use of conventions to incorporate them later on in his writing. Ray (1999) supported the idea that reading shapes the way writers construct their texts claiming that "when we write we are not doing something that has not been done before. Everything we do as writers, we have known in some fashions as readers first" (p. 18).

It is generally agreed that reading leads to increased ability in writing, and that good readers often tend to be good writers. According to Hyland (2003a), in addition to providing students with new knowledge in a subject area, reading furnishes them with necessary rhetorical and structural knowledge required for activating, developing, and modifying schemata which are valuable when writing. More precisely, reading helps students acquire knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, organizational patterns, interactional devices etc. Furthermore, reading gives insights into how writers craft their texts since reading passages serve as models for students to imitate or borrow different writing styles, rhetorical conventions, and so on. Brown (2001) backed up this view stating that "by reading and studying a variety of relevant types of texts, students can gain important insights both about

how they should write and about subject matter that may become the topic of their writing" (p. 347).

Many studies reported that reading is related to better writing skills. For example, Stotsky's (1983) review of several studies on the influence of reading upon writing revealed that reading was efficient in enhancing writing more than grammar study or additional writing practice. She further noted 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. 636). Similarly, Mason (2004) investigated the role of extensive reading supplemented with additional writing in enhancing writing accuracy. He compared three groups who all did extensive reading, but with different supplementary tasks: Japanese summary, English summary and English summary plus teacher's correction. The results demonstrated that all three groups significantly improved their writing accuracy, but there were no significant differences among the groups' gains which showed that the supplementary activities were inefficient. Thus, he concluded that extensive reading is more beneficial than additional writing practice in enhancing students' writing ability. Moreover, in their one-year study of the effect of extensive reading on the writing abilities of a group of EFL students, Lee and Hsu (2009) found significant gains in all aspects: fluency, content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Given these connections between reading and writing, it is no surprise that many educational researchers opposed their separation. However, it is not sufficient to just inform students of the positive effects reading would bring about on their writing development. Teachers are required to make these connections explicit. "When the connections between reading and writing are made explicit during instruction, a more integrated system of literacy skills develops and learning is facilitated" (National Research Council, 2012, p. 53). Thus, teachers should integrate reading in their writing classrooms since not doing so or a lack

thereof would stunt students' reading abilities which would in turn limit their development as writers. Another drawback of neglecting the inclusion of reading is the inhibition of vocabulary development, another major component of the writing process, which can therefore negatively impact students' writing performance.

1.6. 2. Vocabulary and Writing

If the teaching of reading is neglected in writing classrooms, vocabulary is a second fiddle. According to Shaughnessy (1977), vocabulary "is probably the least cultivated field in all of the composition research, badly, barrenly treated in texts and not infrequently abandoned between the desks of reading teachers and writing teachers" (p. 320). This lack of attention to vocabulary is all the more striking in that learners identify it as the major source of their difficulties (Meara, 1980).

It is widely acknowledged that knowledge and use of vocabulary are indispensable to successful writing. With a good mastery of English words, learners can express their ideas and thoughts clearly. Also, it will be easier for them to use words correctly. This is not to say that to write well one has to infuse their texts with arcane and complicated words. Rather, it is much more effective to use words correctly and appropriately, albeit their simplicity. Fletcher (1993 as cited in Olinghouse & Leaird, 2008) emphasized the significance of word choice pointing out that:

> "… Words remain the most important tool the writer has to work with… A rich vocabulary allows a writer to get a richness of thought onto paper. However, the writer's real pleasure comes not from using an exotic word but from using the right word". (pp. 546-547)

In an academic university setting, having a rich vocabulary enables learners to understand information in the sources to cite, summarize or paraphrase, communicate complex ideas

employing abstract language, and produce comprehensible and coherent texts that meet the expectations of readers in academia (Čolović-Marković, 2012).

Empirical evidence showed that vocabulary is a major contributor to the overall quality of ESL/ EFL students' writing. Engber (1995) investigated the relationship between a number of measures of lexical richness and the overall quality of timed essays written by ESL students. The results revealed that readers gave higher scores to writers who used diverse vocabulary and used it correctly. Engber, therefore, concluded that holistic scores significantly correlated with error-free lexical variation though the raters were not asked to assess vocabulary per se. Similarly, Gonzalez (2013) also examined the extent to which vocabulary size and lexical diversity contribute to native and non-native speaking university students' academic writing proficiency. One of his conclusions was that lexical diversity has a greater impact on writing score than vocabulary size.

Thus, the integration of vocabulary in writing should be emphasized since failure to do so would lead to writing difficulties especially for EFL learners where the problem of vocabulary is more obvious than in native speakers. It is commonly known that EFL learners learn to write while they continue to learn the language. They have poor vocabulary and barely master that vocabulary. Consequently, they make poor lexical choices or lexical errors which are, according to Santos (1988), the most serious type of errors in students' compositions. To put it in his words: "It is precisely with this type of error that language impinges directly on content; when the wrong word is used, the meaning is very likely to be obscured" (p. 84).

Not only does vocabulary affect the quality of writing, but it is also often included as a component in the rubrics used to assess students' writing. For instance, it is part of the widely used rubric ESL Composition Profile developed by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and

Hughey (1981). This 100-point rubric contains five categories each contributing to the final score as follows: content 30, organization 20, vocabulary 20, language use 25, and mechanics 5 points. According to Folse (2008), though vocabulary is assigned only 20 points, a careful examination of the rubrics reveals that it influences other areas of writing. A case in point is organization which requires students to use connectors, cohesive devices and so on. Investigating the ESL Composition Profile and the proportion of variance contributed by each feature to the total writing score, Astika (1993) also found that vocabulary was the best predictor of students' writing ability, accounting for nearly 84% of the total score variance. This shows that vocabulary was influencing all other writing components well beyond its assigned 20 points.

Students also are aware of the substantial role vocabulary plays in writing. Leki and Carson (1994) surveyed 128 non-native students on the effectiveness of the writing lessons they received in an EAP writing course. In an open-ended question, the students were asked about what they had felt lacking in their writing course. The results showed that most students expressed a desire for more language skills, reporting vocabulary in particular as the most needed one. Coxhead (2012) also conducted a study on vocabulary and writing from the perspective of 14 EAP students from different subject areas and who study at a New Zealand university. The participants took an integrated reading-writing task and then took part in an interview. The results indicated that the students expressed a need for more academic or professional words to communicate their ideas in writing. The students paid higher attention to their use of academic vocabulary, omitting and changing words to better meet the expectations of the academic audience.

In sum, the studies above attest to the significance of vocabulary as an important part of the writing process. Teachers should, therefore, make vocabulary a priority in their writing classrooms. Neverthless, to make the most of vocabulary instruction, it is not enough to teach

words in isolation or just point out their syntactic properties. Teachers are required to draw their students' attention to the ways words co-occur together. This will be addressed in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Writing is undoubtedly a vital skill that students need to develop. However, the ability to write is by no means an easy endeavour that is why it requires formal instruction and thorough practice on the part of learners. Accordingly, teachers have to consider the best teaching method that suits their students' needs/ level. They should combine elements drawn from different approaches since students are required to acquire the writing skills of planning, drafting and revising and possess an adequate linguistic knowledge in relation to various contexts. Furthermore, for writing instruction to be more effective, teachers have to accompany their teaching with assessment as this latter can help teachers, among other things, to understand the factors that interfere with their students' ability to write. Being aware of how other skills and subskills affect and improve writing is not of less importance. Writing cannot be taught separately from reading as doing so will not only bring students' writing progress to a halt but also thwart their vocabulary development, which is another major contributor to successful writing. The next chapter will examine the co-occurrence of words, commonly referred to as formulaic sequences, as a newly investigated phenomenon in lexical studies and which is claimed to help in improving students' writing skills.

Chapter Two

Formulaic Sequences

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Chapter Two: Formulaic Sequences

Introduction

After being relegated to the periphery, vocabulary started to gain momentum in the last decades and with it the phenomenon of formulaicity came to the fore. Corpus evidence left no room for doubt that vocabulary entails not only single words but also multi-word units, commonly referred to as 'formulaic sequences'. These sequences are currently receiving an increased interest in second language learning research. Their prevalence in native speakers' discourse and the host of benefits they bestow upon language learners prompted many researchers to dig deeper to understand their nature and role in language use and development. Thus, in this chapter light will first be cast on the theoretical basis upon which FSs rest, namely the 'the dual-processing systems' and then a historical overview of formulaic language scholarship will be provided. Next, the chapter will discuss the conceptualization of formulaicity, the different definitions and terms used to refer to FSs by different researchers depending on their research goals together with their classification. The importance of FSs in language use and the mechanics of their acquisition by first and second language learners will also be highlighted. Finally, the necessity of the explicit teaching of FSs in second/foreign language classrooms is illustrated and some classroom activities for helping learners commit them to memory are suggested.

2.1. Theoretical Basis for Formulaic Sequences

For a long time, language has been perceived as a rule-based system. Learning a language requires good mastery of grammar rules with a rich repertoire of vocabulary words. In other words, stitching words together using a system of rules is all what a learner needs to be a competent user of the language. This view of language has its genesis in theories like structuralism and transformational generative grammar. Under the influence of the Chomskyan view, which holds that language undergoes a process in which morphemes are

combined to form words, words to construct phrases and phrases are strung together to produce meaningful sentences, and during all this process, grammar rules are strictly obeyed, many linguists are wedded to the idea that language is an analytic, rule-based system. Besides, these linguists suggested that this system of rules enables language users to produce an infinite set of utterances that have never been met before (Wray, 2002) or as Pinker (1995) put it, "virtually every sentence that a person utters or understands is a brand-new combination of words, appearing for the first time in the history of the universe" (p. 22). Therefore, from this perspective, language is characterized by its potential for creativity in that it furnishes the means for expressing countless ideas and thoughts and for reacting to them in countless various new contexts.

However, though these observations about people's ability to generate and comprehend utterances that have never been met before are undeniable, this capacity has been over-exaggerated especially when the actual use of language is considered. Pawley and Syder (1983) doubted that native speakers rely mainly on the creative power of grammar since if they do so, they would not be considered to have native-like control of the language. They further argued that not all grammatical sentences occur with the same frequency and only a limited number of them are accepted by native speakers as natural and idiomatic, while the others which though grammatical are judged to be odd and unidiomatic or as they labelled them "foreignisms" (p. 193). For example, when a lover expresses his wishes, he will say 'I want to marry you' instead of 'I wish to be wedded to you', 'I desire you to become married to me', 'my becoming your spouse is desired by me', 'I want marriage with you' (p. 196). The latter four expressions are grammatically correct but never used by native speakers in such a circumstance. Thus, it seems clear that native speakers favour certain expressions to fulfill a social function without recourse to syntactic rules.

Moreover, the above view of language which segments language into basic components is incapable of providing a satisfactory explanation for many phrases and word strings. Wray (2002) expounded that decomposing phrases or sentences into their basic constituents results, often times, into two layers of meaning. That is, when a phrase is broken down, it gives a meaning and when treated as a whole, it gives a meaning completely different from its constituent parts. For instance, the idiom *'to bite the bullet'* has a literal, unlikely meaning, which involves a bullet and the action of biting. However, when treated as a whole, it has the meaning of 'accepting something difficult or unpleasant'.

Similarly, Wong (2012, pp. 1-2) also questioned the ability of grammar to explain the structure of many expressions. According to him, what grammar rules govern 'of course', 'by and by' and 'by and large' and how their whole meaning is derived from their constituents? Why do we say 'if I were you' and not 'if I am you' or 'if I was you'? How can we explain the fact that when people greet you with 'how do you do?' they do not expect an answer from you except for your replying back with 'how do you do?' though it is a question from a grammatical point of view? All these linguistic phenomena have, recently, caught the attention of many linguists who suggested that this type of word strings should be classified as a separate linguistic type (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002). These word strings which seem to be treated as wholes without recourse to their constituent parts are referred to as formulaic sequences.

Formulaic sequences rest basically on the theory of dual system. Skehan (1998) proposed a dual mode of language learning and processing. According to him, language is both 'rule-based' and 'exemplar-based'. The rule-based system is generative. It entails filling out slots with words using syntactic rules. This system places grammar at the centre of language use. It has the advantage of enabling maximum creativity and relieving memory from the storage burden. The exemplar-based system, on the other hand, depends primarily on

memory. It involves the extraction of ready-made expressions, which are stored in memory beforehand, when the need calls. This system has the merit of reducing the processing burden which leads to accuracy, fluency and idiomaticity. Skehan (1998) commented that both systems have their disadvantages in that the rule-based system exaggerates human processing ability, while the exemplar-based system is less effective in incorporating changes to the underlying system.

Many linguists expressed the same idea though in different terms. For example, Sinclair (1991) saw language in terms of two principles namely 'the open choice principle' and 'the idiom principle'. The open choice principle is identical to the Chomskyan view in that it stresses the creative power of syntactic rules. It is also called the 'slot and filler model'. Sinclair (1991) maintained that this principle is

> a way of seeing language text as the result of a very large number of complex choices. At each point where a unit is completed (a word or a phrase or a clause), a large range of choice opens up and the only restraint is grammaticalness. (p. 109)

Thus, under this principle, language is seen as a string of slots which can be filled by any lexical item as long as it does conform to grammar rules regardless of formulaicity or restrictions on lexical items. In contrast, the idiom principle entails the idea that "a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments" (Sinclair, 1991, p. 110). Sinclair commented that the two models are sharply different from each other. He then concluded that the idiom principle represents the first choice when interpreting texts. The interpretive process switches to the open choice principle only when unexpected lexical choices are encountered, then it switches back to the idiom principle.

In a likewise manner, Wray (2002) proposed 'analytic' and 'holistic processing' as the two structuring principles that underlie language use. Analytic processing involves the combination of morphemes and words to produce novel linguistic materials. Holistic processing, on the other hand, depends on the extraction of prefabricated patterns stored in memory. She further added that both systems are complementary and the adoption of one of them relies on the communicative situation. However, a balance between the two modes can account for both novelty and idiomaticity.

The above discussion highlights the fact that irrespective of the different terminology used to describe the nature of language processing, all versions agree with each other in explaining it. The two systems are interrelated. "Neither a grammar only nor a formula only model can accommodate both the linguistic competence … and the idiomaticity associated with a preference for some grammatical strings over others" (Wray, 2002, p. 15). The former leads to the over-generation of grammatically acceptable linguistic units, while the latter provides only a limited set of forms and meanings which are of little use when dealing with something new (Wray, 2002).

This dual-nature view of language system is in sharp contrast with the traditional approach which places grammar at the very heart of language processing, relegating, thus, formulaic language to the periphery. It is true that language is rule-based, which allows for the production of novel utterances and the interpretation of even unexpected language input, but it is also exemplar-based which furnishes language users with ready-made language, hence reducing the processing effort. In confirmation of this view, Bolinger (1979) stated that "speakers do at least as much remembering as they do putting together" (p. 97). Therefore, it should be restated that the balance between the rule-based system and the formulaic-system is the cornerstone of the idiomatic use of any language.

2.2. A Historical Overview of Formulaic Language Scholarship During 1970

2.2.1. Research Studies on Formulaic Language before 1970s

Formulaic language had been studied mostly within the framework of phraseology. The latter, according to Weinreich (1969) and Cowie (1998), had been a salient field of linguistics in Eastern Europe particularly Russia. The situation in West European linguistics was rather different as phraseology suffered neglect and received virtually no attention until the 1970s. According to Pawley (2007), the date 1970 is cited as boundary since it was during that period that some structural linguists began to take interest in this language phenomenon.

By 1970, formulaic language had attracted the attention of many researchers of different disciplines- literary studies, folklore studies, social anthropology, neurology, experimental psychology, educational psychology etc. - who had done research on one or another aspect of this language phenomenon. Formulaic language had also captured the attention of many influential linguists from early to mid 20th century. For instance, Jespersen (1924/1977) differentiated between 'formulas' and 'free expressions'. He suggested that in any language there are things of the block-like character in which we cannot change anything in them. For example, 'How do you do?' is an expression that nothing can be changed in it even its stress. Though it is possible to decompose it into several words, still it is treated as a single unit. He further argued that "a language would be a difficult thing to handle, if its speakers had the burden imposed on them of remembering every little item separately" (p. 21). Similarly, Bloomfield (1933) found that there are 'forms' lying "between words and phrases" (p. 181). Firth (1964 as cited in Wray 2002) also noted that we speak using whole sentences or holophrases. Likewise, in his seminal essay on the ethnography of speaking, Hymes (1968) proposed that patterns could be recognized by examining the way people actually use language and not by merely looking at words. He acknowledged that "a vast

portion of verbal behaviour in fact consists of recurrent patterns, of linguistic routines" (p. 126).

However, despite the interest several linguists showed to formulaic language before the 1970s, it was largely marginalized as they were working in a period in which formulaic language research was not welcomed. A number of factors contributed to that state of affairs. For Wray (2002), the major reason behind the neglect of formulaicity is the Chomskyan revolution which proposed a one-sided grammatically-based processing system. In this approach, the power to produce and understand sentences that have never been met before is overemphasized. Another cause was the tendency to divide language into vocabulary and grammar while overlooking the prefabricated patterns in between (Lewis, 2008), and the avoidance by theoretical linguists of all expressions that do not suit their monolithic model. The idea that formulaic language forms only a small part of language was another factor that came into play since it directed all attention towards the productive power of grammar to make an unlimited number of sentences (Pawley, 2007). Last but not least, the plethora of terms used for this phenomenon by scholars of different disciplines dispersed research across various fields and lead to prefabricated patterns being unaware of in the field of applied linguistics (Schmitt, 2004). All these factors and some others prevented formulaic language research to come to the fore and made the observations of some eminent linguists of little or no effect at all.

2.2.2. Research Studies on Formulaic Language since 1970s

With the 1970s as a turning point, formulaic language has taken centre stage in linguistic fields (Pawley, 2007). After being confined to Eastern Europe academic circles, formulaic research has been growing steadily for over three decades in Anglophone research literature (Schmitt et al, 2004) especially when a course was presented by Charles Fillmore and Lily Wong Fillmore for the first time in 1977 at the Linguistic Institute sponsored by the

Linguistic Society of America in addition to some analytic papers (e.g. Ferguson 1976) and doctoral theses discussing different issues (Pawley, 2007).

During this period of time, dramatic changes have taken place. First and foremost, after being the Cinderella of language aspects, vocabulary has been accorded a central position. Wilkins (1972) was the first to suggest a prominent role for lexis. According to him, "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (as cited in Choudhury, 2010, p. 307). Additionally, the view which holds that the word is the basic unit of meaning has been challenged. Meaning is not necessarily inherent in individual words, but rather in the words surrounding them (Gerard, 2007), as Sinclair (2004) put it, "the word is not the best starting-point for a description of meaning, because meaning arises from words in particular combinations" (p. 148). Therefore, when using the language, it is multi-word sequences and not single words that are recalled.

Second, as a natural result of the higher status vocabulary has gained, grammar has been dethroned. Lewis (1993) confirmed that the misapprehension that grammar lies at the heart of language use and that mastering it is the key to effective communication has long been and is still widely spread. He further commented that it is this practice that makes learners prone to grammar mistakes because they are using it for its unmeant purpose. "Grammar enables us to construct language when we are unable to find what we want ready-made in our mental lexicons" (Lewis, 2000, p. 15). It is also argued that in the acquisition process we make use of prefabricated patterns before grammar rules. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) maintained that in the early stages language users make use of unanalyzed, prefabricated patterns in different expected situations, and then at a later stage they decompose these patterns, the process which helps them to understand grammatical structures. Krashen and Terrell (1988) sustained that view by arguing that "the popular belief is that one uses form and grammar to understand meaning, the truth is probably closer to the

opposite: we acquire morphology and syntax because we understand the meaning of utterances" (p. 155). In his turn, Mackenzie (2000) added that "rather than being the product of rules, most language is acquired lexically and then broken down and re-assembled in new combinations" (p. 174). Therefore, it is through formulaic language that grammar rules are mastered.

In a nutshell, the prevalence of slot and filler approaches to language seem to cut no ice with present linguists and researchers as formulaic language research is growing considerably particularly with the advances made in corpus linguistics. The latter left no room for doubting the formulaicity of language.

2.3. Definition and Characterization of Formulaic Sequences

FSs have different forms and functions inasmuch as it is difficult to reach a consensus on their definition (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). They are even labelled differently by different researchers. Wray (2002) found over fifty terms for this language phenomenon. These include chunks, fixed expressions, recurring utterances, amalgams, prefabricated routines, idioms, lexical phrases, holophrases, routine formulae to name just a few. Weinert (1995) observed that "while labels vary, it seems that researchers have very much the same phenomenon in mind" (p. 182). However, Wray (2002) expressed doubt about this claim and argued that "some of the terms shared across different fields do not mean entirely the same thing in all instances" (p. 8). She further explained that these terms are not dissimilar to each other in terms of kind, but the difference is just of degree. Each term covers one aspect of this language phenomenon and none captures the whole picture.

Due to the fuzzy nature of FSs, researchers from different fields emphasized their most prominent characteristics while trying to define them. Some focused on aspects of form like length, fixedness, grammaticality etc. For example, in their definition of what they

termed '*sentence stems'*, Pawley and Syder (1983) emphasized features like length and fixedness. According to them, "A lexicalized sentence stem is a unit of clause length or larger whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed; its fixed elements form a standard label for a culturally recognized concept" (p. 191). This definition entails also the concepts of *lexicalization* and *institutionalization*. The former implies the holistic treatment of multi-word strings as if they were one lexical unit, while the latter means that they are widely known and accepted in the community.

Another criterion that is often reflected in the definitions of FSs is frequency of occurrence, a concept inherent in corpus linguistics. Schmitt and Carter (2004) argued that "if a sequence is frequent in corpus, this indicates that it is conventionalized by the speech community" (p. 2). In their definition of what they referred to as '*lexical bundles'*, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) stressed the notion of frequency. For them, lexical bundles are multi-word strings which are used repeatedly that they become prefabricated. It becomes easier, thus, for language users to extract them from memory as whole blocks. Biber, Conrad and Cortes (2004) defined them as "the most frequent recurring lexical sequences in a register" (p. 376). Altenberg (1998) expressed the same idea though in different terms. He gave the name *'recurrent word combination'* to "any string of words occurring more than once in identical form" (p. 101). However, Wray (2002) argued that not all frequent expressions are formulaic nor all that is formulaic is frequent. For example, the phrase *'the king is dead, long live the king'* (p. 30) is a formulaic sequence but it does not appear even in the largest corpora. Dörnyei (2009) supported this view stating that "not every frequently co-occurring string of words forms a chunked whole on the one hand, and not every formulaic sequence is all that frequent on the other" (p. 297).

The function of FSs is also emphasized in some definitions. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) used the term *'lexical phrases'* to denote the relationship between multi-word units

and functional language use. According to them, lexical phrases are "conventionalized form/function composites that occur more frequently and have more idiomatically determined meaning than language that is put together each time" (p. 10). According to this definition, lexical phrases as form/ function pairings differ from language that is generated from scratch, in that they are tightly linked to discourse functions. Each phrase, irrespective of its fixedness, expresses certain function. For example, the relatively fixed phrase '*a----ago'* expresses time relationships such as (a *month* ago, a *long time* ago etc). Another example, is the phrase "*I'm (really) (very) sorry to hear that X*" (X here can be an entire clause, like you flunked the test, you lost your job etc."), which expresses sympathy (Larsen-Freeman & DeCarrico, 2010).

Other linguistic criteria include non-compositionality which concerns the internal structure of sequences. This notion implies that FSs do not follow grammatical or semantic norms. It is common for FSs to show semantic or syntactic irregularities (Wray, 2002). Semantic irregularity implies that these sequences are not constructed semantically, but are holistic units, such as idioms and metaphors. The expression '*to come a cropper'* is an example of syntactic irregularity, where a direct object occurs with an intransitive verb. '*By and large'* is another example where dissimilar items appear together; in this context two adverbs are joined together (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Many researchers (e.g., Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Sinclair, 1991; Wray, 2002) asserted that formulaic language is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but it is psycholinguistic as well. Holistic storage and processing efficiency are the main features characterizing this approach. FSs are processed and stored as one entity. This is more evident in opaque expressions namely idioms whose meaning cannot be derived from their constituent parts (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Phonological coherence is another proof that attests to the holistic treatment of these sequences. FSs are pronounced more fluently, in a single tone and often without pauses or hesitations than non-formulaic ones (Peters, 1983). Furthermore, formulaic language is

processed more quickly and easily than language that is generated from scratch (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Therefore, both linguistic and psycholinguistic criteria are indispensable for the definition of FSs. Neither linguistic criteria only nor psychological ones can account for this language phenomenon separately.

Wray (2002) offered what comes to be known as the most comprehensive definition. She introduced the term *'formulaic sequence'* which many researchers (e.g. Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers & Demecheleer 2006; Schmitt, 2004; Wood, 2002, 2010) agreed on as a coverall term for the multi-word units that appear in language in an effort to give some consistency to the field. According to Wray (2002), the term '*formulaic sequence'* is introduced to substitute all other terms "which have something useful to say, but none of which seems fully to capture the essence of the wider whole" (p. 8). "The word *formulaic* carries with it some associations of 'unity' and of 'custom' and 'habit', while *sequence* indicates that there is more than one discernible internal unit, of whatever kind" (Wray, 2002, p. 9). According to her, a formulaic sequence is

> A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated; that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (Wray, 2002, p. 9)

This definition is meant to be an all-encompassing one as it covers "any material that appears to be prefabricated, not just that which is" (Wray, 2008, p. 95). FSs subsume a wide range of linguistic units found at both ends on the cline of fixedness and opaqueness. They entail, on the one hand, idiomatic and totally fixed sequences, like *'by and large'*, '*trip the light fantastic'* which are semantically opaque and syntactically irregular (Wray & Perkins, 2000); on the other hand, they include transparent and flexible strings with slots, such as '*a ---ago'*, to be filled with suitable words or word strings, such as '*a year ago'*, '*a short while ago'* etc.

Moreover, this definition puts emphasis on the notion of holistic storage and retrieval of word strings from memory which gives it a psycholinguistic flavour. Thus, it is obvious that this definition draws on both linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives.

In general, though the lack of clarity regarding the definition of FSs remains an unsolved problem, the existence of these sequences is widely accepted. Thus, after trying to come up with an agreed upon definition of FSs, the next section will deal with the more challenging task of classifying them.

2.4. Classification of Formulaic Sequences

As providing an agreed upon definition for FSs proved to be notoriously difficult, the task of grouping them into categories seems rather a mission impossible. Koprowski (2005) asserted that the classification of FSs is not "a quick and tidy procedure" (p. 323) as disagreement among scholars and subjective judgments are unavoidable. Many attempts have, yet, been made in this regard. Researchers divided FSs into categories according to properties they have, i.e., form, function, meaning, provenance etc. (Wray, 2002). However, most taxonomies are not consistent by using, for example, a form-based only or function-based only features. Some taxonomies may adopt form, function and meaning criteria in combination. Besides, some multi-word units are not included in any of the categories while others are placed in more than one of them. In line with this, Hudson (1998) confirmed that "an inherent shortcoming of these typologies is that the categories are neither discrete nor comprehensive" (p. 13).

Among the numerous classifications of FSs, Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992) is the most cited one. They proposed that four structural criteria should be taken into account when classifying FSs. First, the length and grammatical status of the sequence (the grammatical level i.e. word or sentence level). The second criterion relates to whether the sequence is

canonical or non-canonical i.e. whether it conforms to the grammatical rules of the language. Variability is the third one and has to do with whether the phrase is fixed or is subject to a number of alternatives. The fourth one is continuity where discontinuous sequences permit insertions. So, according to these criteria, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) classified FSs into four groups:

1. Polywords: They are short, invariable and continuous phrases operating as single words. They can be both canonical (*e.g., by the way, you know, in a nutshell*) and non-canonical (*e.g., as it were, by and large, so far so good*). They perform multiple functions such as summarizing (*e.g., in essence, once and for all*), relating (*e.g., nevertheless, for that matter*), topic shifting (*e.g., by the way*) etc. Phrases like '*moreover*', '*however*', '*notwithstanding*' and other linking devices were polywords but over time of use they became individual words which proves that formulaicity is a continuing phenomenon.

2. Institutionalized Expressions: They are fixed phrases of sentence-length, usually functioning as separate utterances. They are mostly canonical (*e.g., the public seldom forgives twice*), but some are non-canonical (*e.g., long time no see*). They are continuous but at times discontinuous pairs used for framing entire texts (*e.g., once upon a time……. and they lived happily ever after*). Proverbs, aphorisms and other phrases, that speakers like to memorize and use holistically for social interactions, form part of institutionalized expressions.

3. Phrasal Constraints: They are short to medium length phrases. They can be canonical (*e.g., as I was ----, with the possible variations as I was saying/ as I was mentioning*) or non-canonical (*e.g., the ----er the ----er* with the possible variations *the sooner the better or the busier the happier*). They are variable as they permit paradigmatic substitution and most of them are continuous.

4. Sentence Builders: They are chunks that provide framework for whole sentences. They are highly variable as they allow arguments for expressing entire ideas to be inserted. They can be canonical (*e.g., I think [that])* or non-canonical (*e.g., the ----er X, the -----er Y* as in *the sooner all this work is finished, the sooner we will all be able to go home*).

As Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) defined FSs as form/ function composites, the above categorization is still incomplete without including the functional aspect. Thus, they assigned the above-mentioned FSs into three functional categories namely social interactions, necessary topics and discourse devices.

1. Social Interactions: This category covers sequences that describe social relations. It consists of two other subcategories:

- **Conversational Maintenance:** It entails functions that describe the proceedings of conversational interactions: how they start, continue and end. Examples include summoning (*e.g., excuse me/ pardon me*), nominating a topic (*e.g., have you heard about X*) etc.
- **Conversational Purpose:** It includes FSs which are meant to describe the aim behind conversations. This category covers the different types of speech acts. For instance, '*of course not'*, '*no way'*, '*I'm sorry but'* are all expressions used to express refusal.

2. Necessary Topics: Lexical phrases under this category are used to talk about topics that learners are often asked about or ones that are frequently used in everyday conversations. These include topics like: time, weather, quantity, likes, dislikes, to name just a few.

3. Discourse Devices: This category incorporates phrases that connect the meaning and structure of discourse. Logical connectors (e*.g., as a result, nevertheless*), exemplifiers (*e.g., in other words, for example*), evaluators (*e.g., as far as I know/ can tell, I guess*) are all examples of discourse devices.

It is clear from the above that the two first groups are typical of spoken discourse, while the latter i.e., discourse devices is characteristic of written discourse. Moreover, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) maintained that all forms of lexical phrases can be assigned into these three functional groups. The table below shows the combinations of the different forms of FSs with their functions. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) suggested that the four formal categories may be reduced to three groups with institutionalized expressions being incorporated into polywords as both of them are invariable and continuous.

Table 1

Categorization of FSs by Form and Function Adopted from Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, pp.65-66)

	Social Interactions	**Necessary Topics**	**Discourse Devices**
Polywords	• By the way (shifting a topic) • All right? (checking comprehension)	• A great deal (quantity) • Too expensive (shopping)	• In other words (exemplifier) • At any rate (fluency device)
Phrasal Constraints	• -------me? (clarifying: audience) • See you ----- (parting)	• I'm from ------- (autobiography) • How much is ----? (quantity)	• As far as I ----- (evaluator) • As a result of --- (logical connector)
Sentence Builders	• What I mean is X (clarifying: speakers) • Do you know Y? (nominating a topic)	• What do you like to X? (likes) • What time X? (time)	• There is no doubt X (evaluator) • My point here is X (summarizer)

Though the categorization offered by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) seems neat and comprehensive, it is not free from weaknesses. First, the linguistic criteria (e.g., length, fixedness) used in the form-based taxonomy are not clearly defined. Using ambiguous terms such as short, medium or long to describe an utterance length, or 'relatively fixed', 'highly variable' to describe its variability is confusing for teachers and students alike and is not free

from subjectivity (Hudson, 1998). Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) themselves are well-aware of the weaknesses of their form-based categorization. They admitted that "there is no sharp boundary separating these categories, but that the differences among them are frequently ones of degree rather than kind" (p. 46). For example, the form '*the ----er the ----er'* is a phrasal constraint when adjectives are inserted in the gaps as in the '*the sooner the better*'; however, when it is enlarged to include the arguments X and Y (*the ----er X, the ----er Y*), it becomes a sentence builder (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Another limitation is their view that not all collocations and syntactic structures make part of lexical phrases. Only collocations such as '*how do you do?*' or '*for example*' are considered lexical phrases because they have pragmatic functions.

Basing on Nattinger and DeCarrico's classification, Lewis (1997) offered his. Though he used different terms, his categorization is very much like theirs. In his classification, he added individual words to polywords. Another striking difference was his incorporation of collocations regardless of whether they have pragmatic function or not. Thus, he grouped FSs (or as he named them '*lexical items*') into the following four types: (1) words and polywords, (2) collocations, (3) institutionalized utterances, and (4) sentence frames and heads.

Yorio (1980) proposed a two-way categorization of FSs which is basically function-based. According to him, the two basic types are idioms and routine formulas. Idioms are expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from their component parts. Routine formulas are highly conventionalized prefabricated patterns whose use is linked to certain communication situations. He further divided these formulas into five subcategories namely situation formulas, stylistic formulas, ceremonial formulas, gambits, and euphemisms. Situation formulas are expressions employed in particular situations. For example, '*you had to be there*' which is used when someone fails to retell a story. Stylistic formulas are conventions that are characteristic of a certain register or style (*e.g., ladies and gentlemen*)

which is used only in public speaking. Ceremonial formulas are expressions whose use is guided by rules of rituals such as religious formulas. Gambits are formulas for organizing discourse. Euphemisms are patterns used instead of others which are unpleasant or offensive (*e.g., he passed away*). Yorio (1980) further classified these formulas from a semantic point of view. These are transparent, semi-transparent, opaque, situationally ambiguous, and ambiguous with respect to the intention of the speaker.

The above classifications indicate that coming by a comprehensive classification is by no means easy and this is proved by the absence of an agreed-upon framework. Different researchers set up their own criteria for the categorization depending on their research aims. However, though scholars have identified different types of FSs, tight categorizations are lacking as overlappings between these types are unavoidable. Consequently, some researchers postulated that instead of trying to establish clear-cut categories, FSs can best be described as lying along a continuum. For example, Howarth (1998) contended that "it is essential to see the categories as forming a continuum …, rather than discrete classes" (p. 35).

Similar to the above taxonomies, a continuum model is based on one or more features of FSs, i.e. form, function, meaning etc. Howarth (1998), for instance, emphasized variability. His model contains free combinations (*under the table*) on the left, followed by restricted collocations (*under attack*), then figurative idioms (*under the microscope*), and finally pure idioms (*under the weather*) on the right. Thus, the more we move to the right, the more fixed and obscure the meaning of the sequences becomes. Kecskes (2007) in his turn proposed a functional continuum in which grammatical units are placed on the left and pragmatic expressions on the right.

Table 2

Kecskes' Formulaic Continuum Adopted from Kecskes (2007, p. 193)

Grammatical units	Fixed semantic units	Phrasal verbs	Speech formulas	Situation-bound utterances	Idioms
Be going to	As a matter of fact	Put up with	Going shopping	Welcome aboard	Kick the bucket

As the table above shows, as FSs move to the right of the cline, they start to take on situational meaning. As Kecskes (2007) noted, "The more we move to the right on the functional continuum the wider the gap seems to become between compositional meaning and actual situational meaning" (p. 193). In fact, through this continuum, learners can understand FSs better when they realize that some of them are grammatically patterned while others are semantically patterned. For instance, in grammatical units, fixed semantic units and phrasal verbs the focus is on the order of the function words and which prepositions/ articles these patterns take. Nevertheless, the semantically patterned sequences focus on meaning as a whole.

To sum up, different categories have been suggested using different criteria. However, as drawing sharp boundaries between these categories is not always possible, researchers suggested that placing FSs on a cline would provide a better classification. It remains also to be said that despite the difficulty of classifying FSs, their benefits are widely recognized. This is dealt with in the next section.

2.5. Functions of Formulaic Sequences

Though was once on the back burner, the phenomenon of formulaicity holds now a central position in the linguistic field. Many researchers now recognize the importance of FSs as they play a significant role in language acquisition, processing and use. Wray and Perkins

(2000) observed that "formulaic sequences are more than simply a linguistic unit. . . . they are a tool that can be put to many uses" (p. 9). Therefore, several functions have been assigned to FSs. Some of them relate to the role they play in the acquisition process, while others have to do with language learning, processing and development.

It is widely agreed that the prime value of FSs lies in saving processing efforts. If FSs are stored and retrieved whole from memory when needed, then accessing these sequences from the language user's mental dictionary (mental lexicon) rather than constructing new ones from scratch would lighten the cognitive processing burden. According to Wei and Ying (2011), an examination of the human memory system reveals that long-term memory is characterized by an immense storage capacity. Short-term memory, on the other hand, is capable of processing only limited amounts of information. Thus, it is efficient for the brain to summon prefabricated patterns from long term memory than take the burden of generating sentences afresh each time. Schmitt (2000) expressed the same idea saying that "the mind makes use of a relatively abundant resource (long-term memory) to compensate for a relative lack in another (processing capacity)" (p. 101). Hence, the recall of FSs from the long term memory obviates the need to construct novel expressions which frees up the working memory and gives it time to attend to other tasks like generating non-formulaic speech, linking FSs or planning ahead for ideas to be put into use later on (Wray, 2002). Skehan (1998) buttressed this view stating that " we rely on such chunks to ease processing problems, using them to 'buy' processing time while other computation proceeds, enabling us to plan ahead for the content of what we are going to say" (p. 40).

Wray and Perkins (2000) offered a two-way division of the functions of FSs, namely psycholinguistic functions and socio-interactional ones. Psycholinguistic functions are further subdivided into three types which are short-cut in processing, time-buying and manipulation of information.

First, shortcut in processing, as discussed above, relates to the use of FSs to alleviate the cognitive burden and shorten the processing time. Its function is mainly to increase production speed and fluency. Becker (1975) asserted that FSs are employed to confine mental processing only to strings which have to be novel. Hence, it makes little sense to construct anew sentences which are frequently used. Wray and Perkins (2000) further added that "once the brain is familiar with a linguistic-task, it is able to by-pass the processing route that was used to learn it" (p. 16). In this way, the brain saves time and attention is paid to other tasks. "Such savings in processing seem to be valuable, particularly during concurrent tasks" (Wray, 2000, p. 473). This applies not only to continuous sequences, it holds true also for discontinuous ones. For example, the expression '*I'm sorry to keep you waiting'* can give something like '*Mr. Smith will be sorry to have kept you waiting*' or any other possible ones. Though such discontinuous expressions demand some analytic processing, reflected in the slotting of certain lexical items into a basic frame, it is not as effortful as generating novel constructions from scratch (Wray, 2000).

The second type, i.e., time-buying concerns sequences that offer speakers time for planning ahead while maintaining their turn in conversation. Fillers (*e.g., if you want my opinion*), turn-holders (*e.g., and let me just say…*), discourse shape markers (*e.g., there are three points I want to make. Firstly… Secondly… Thirdly/Lastly*) and repetitions of preceding input are all instances of time-buyers that promote fluency (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Manipulation of information is the third category underlying psycholinguistic functions. It lowers strain on memory by embedding information that is difficult to recall inside FSs, so that it becomes easily retrievable when called for. Mnemonics (*e.g., Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain* used to help language users remember the colours of the rainbow), lengthy texts deliberately memorized, and rehearsals all aid speakers get back information easily (Wray, 2000).

In addition to psycholinguistic functions, FSs have also socio-interactional ones. Manipulation of others, asserting separate identity and asserting group identity are all socio-interactional functions that can be achieved through the use of FSs.

Manipulation of others refers to the speakers' engagement of others to satisfy certain needs that surpass their abilities. Commands (*e.g., keep off the grass*), requests (*e.g., could you repeat that please?*), bargains (*e.g., I'll give you __ for it*), politeness markers (*e.g., I wonder if you'd mind*) are all used to meet the speakers' physical, cognitive and emotional needs through the action of others (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

The other two functions concern the personal and the group identity of the speaker. Asserting separate identity entails story-telling (*e.g., you're never to believe this, but …*), turn-claimers and holders (*e.g., yes, but the thing is …*), personal turns of the phrase (*e.g., you know what I mean, Harry*). These sequences enable speakers to be taken seriously and to separate themselves from others. However, asserting group identity involves signaling overall membership in a group through group chants (*e.g., we are the champions*), institutionalized forms (*e.g., happy birthday*), rituals, etc. or expressing one's place in hierarchy using threats (*e.g., I wouldn't do that if I were you*), quotations (*e.g., "I wouldn't want to belong to any club that would have me as a member*", forms of address, etc. Thus, it becomes clear that the above two functions are used by speakers to show their 'sameness' or their 'differentness' (Wray, 2000).

It is important to note that FSs benefit not only the speaker, but they are also of help to the hearer. Wray and Perkins (2000) suggested a way in which they accommodated the above two functions within a single framework. They maintained that when the speaker selects FSs for the purpose of minimizing processing load, the aim is to achieve fluency and availability of information when called for. However, when s/he chooses a sequence for socio-

interactional purposes, the aim is not fluency but influence on the hearer i.e. whether he/she reacts appropriately to the speaker's demand, be it a request, a threat or a command. In this way, just as processing short-cuts make production easier for the speaker, so socio-interactional sequences make comprehension easier for the hearer (Wray, 2000).

Moreover, formulaicity does not contribute to fluency only, but also aids in achieving language accuracy. Since FSs are acquired and stored as whole in the long-term memory, they are more likely to reduce learners' grammatical errors when using the language. Thus, errors will be restricted only to those parts which are novel, as Boers et al. (2006, p. 247) put it, " these prefabricated chunks constitute 'zones of safety' and appropriate use of them may thus confine the risk of 'erring' to the spaces in between the formulaic sequences in one's discourse".

Last but not least, the use of FSs reduces anxiety and increases motivation. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) argued that to compensate for their linguistic abilities that do not enable them yet to construct language creatively, language learners resort to FSs which are easily stored and retrieved whole from memory, "a fact which should ease frustration and, at the same time, promote motivation and fluency" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 114). Similarly, Hakuta (1976) observed that falling into the swamp of motivational hardships is inevitable if language learners have always to wait to learn rules for forming an utterance before using it. Accordingly, it is important for language learners to express a wide variety of functions -using FSs- from the outset as this raises their interest in the language and boosts their motivation as well.

In conclusion, as FSs decrease both processing load and time, both speakers' production and hearers' comprehension are facilitated. In addition, FSs help in indicating the

identity of the speaker as an individual or as a member of a group and, above all, contribute to the fluency and the accuracy of language use.

All the above functions prove the importance of FSs in language use. Nevertheless, bringing these functions to light is just part of the story which would not be complete without discussing the role of FSs in language acquisition. Schmitt and Carter (2004) noted that the increasing significance of these expressions makes "convincing explanation of the mechanics of their acquisition . . . an essential feature of any model of language acquisition" (p. 15). Therefore, the next section will deal with the part FSs play in the process of language acquisition.

2.6. Formulaic Sequences and Language Acquisition

2.6.1. Formulaic Sequences in First Language Acquisition

It is widely agreed that most children make use of FSs even before having command of their internal structure (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). In describing children's ability to remember and reproduce complex strings, Olson (1973) commented:

> Such utterances manifest structures that are non-productive in the child's language at that particular stage, but the utterances are used as a unit for some specific semantic or pragmatic purpose without the child's knowing in some sense the internal structure of the string. (p. 156)

Peters (1977) observed a fourteen months old child supposed to be at one-word stage. She concluded that in addition to using some traditional words like '*doggie*', '*kitty*' etc., the child was, surprisingly, using sentence-like utterances (*e.g., open the door, what's that, look at that, etc.*) as holistic units. More specifically, the child was approximating these utterances through their intonation contour. For example, each of the above phrases has its own distinctive melody which makes it easy to recognise even if it is badly mumbled by the child. Peters

(1983) further added that as the child has knowledge neither of the meaning nor of the structure of the adult speech he is exposed to, he applies a strategy in which he captures frequently recurring chunks; he determines their meaning and then retains them for future use.

In a likewise manner, Cruttenden (1981) noted that all children possess some adult-like phrases. He recorded some examples like '*here he comes'*, '*thank you'*, '*too hot'* etc. which are holistically learned or in his words 'item-learned'. According to him, an utterance is judged to be item-learned only if none of its constituents is used in other combinations, nor other similar structures are used by the child during the same period. Thus, a child who makes use of the utterance '*here he comes'* employs neither '*here*', '*he*' nor '*comes*' in any other utterances. Therefore, "that children do store and use complex strings before mastering their internal makeup is generally agreed" (Wray, 2000, p. 105). What is disputed, however, is the significance of these sequences in children's early linguistic production. Some researchers tended to look at FSs with a jaundiced eye. For example, Bates, Bretherton and Snyder (1988) suggested that using FSs in this phase hinders productive language use. They further maintained that such sequences can be useful only when the child's linguistic abilities are developed and s/he is able to apply grammatical rules.

Other researchers, on the other hand, suggested that FSs are useful in early language acquisition. As these sequences are first stored and reproduced as whole then later on they are segmented into their component parts, they enable learners to work out grammar rules (Peters, 1983). Similarly, Schmitt and Carter (2004) argued that "for L1 learners, it has been proposed that unanlysed sequences provide the raw material for language development, as they are segmented into smaller components and grammar" (p. 12). Hence, FSs lead to language development as they enable children to be more productive. For instance, the phrase '*I want to go'* which is used by the child as unanalysed string to fulfill the function of request is

broken down later on with the rules and parts retained and the context disassociated to produce phrases like '*I want my ball'*, '*I want a cookie'* etc. (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992).

Moreover, language learners differ in their learning styles. Nelson (1973) discussed referential vs. expressive learners. Peters (1983) used the terms analytic vs. gestalt. Though the terms differ, they refer to the same thing. Referential/analytic children refer to those who prefer single words in their early language production. Expressive/ gestalt refers to children who favour multi-word units. Nelson (1973) argued that children's preference of one or other style relies on their understanding of the purpose of language, that is, either naming things or engaging in social interactions. However, some children tend to use both analytic and gestalt styles in their speech. Peters (1977) noticed that her subject, Minh, was using both styles in his speech. She maintained that his choice of one style or the other depends on the function he intends to perform. In other words, the analytic style was used to refer to things like naming pictures in a book (*horsie, doggie*), labeling a quality (*hot, cool*), naming a desired object or action (*milk, cookie*). The gestalt style is used for conversational purposes (requesting, playing with his brother etc). Peters concluded that children differ in their early language production from those who are highly analytic from the outset through those who use both analytic and gestalt speech to those who use gestalt and then becomes more analytic.

Wray and Perkins (2000) suggested a four-phase development model depicting the different changes in proportions of holistic and analytic processing from birth to adulthood. In phase one (birth to 20 months), the child uses mainly imitated vocabulary, consisting of single words and sequences, with a preference for holistic language. The sequences acquired in this phase will activate analytic processing during phase two. In phase two, which lasts until about age 8, the child's grammar awareness begins and s/he starts to segment and recombine previously acquired sequences using grammar rules. Thus, this phase is highly analytic. However, as the child's overall language development quickens at that time, the amount of

FSs keep also increasing. During phase three, which goes until 18, the child's analytic grammar is fully established and formulaic language becomes again more prominent. By phase four, a balance between holistic and analytic language is achieved.

Overall, a growing body of research suggests that FSs are of paramount importance to first language learners, and that their role in developing grammar is undeniable. The next section will highlight their role in second language acquisition.

2.6.2. Formulaic Sequences in Second Language Acquisition

2.6.2.1. Formulaic Sequences in Child Second Language Acquisition

Similar to what has been suggested with regard to first language acquisition, many researchers proposed that FSs play the same role in early second language acquisition. One of the influential and most detailed studies that investigated the acquisition of L2 is that of Wong-Fillmore (1979). In a longitudinal study, Wong-Fillmore (1979) tracked the development of the English of five Spanish-speaking children aged between 5 to 7 years old over a period of one year in a naturalistic setting. She found that the children were able to get familiar easily with the new language and use it in appropriate social contexts long before they knew anything about its internal structure by relying on formulaic expressions. She further added that these formulas were important not only because they allowed learners to access the new language without prior knowledge of its internal makeup, but also because they gave them the raw material on which they began their analytical activities. For example, the formulaic question 'how do you do these?' in one of the subjects' speech illustrates how this formula developed gradually from a wholly fixed to a highly productive construction such as 'how do you make the flower?', 'How did you make it?', and 'how will you take off paste?' Therefore, regardless of the different contexts of acquisition, FSs seem to play a pivotal role in the early stages of language learning.

2.6.2.2. Formulaic Sequences in Adult Second Language Acquisition

The acquisition and use of FSs by second language learners is subject to many factors, one of which is the manner of acquisition that is, either in a natural or classroom setting. A number of studies were carried out to investigate the use and acquisition of FSs by naturalistic adult second language learners (e.g., Hanania & Gradman, 1977; Huebner, 1983; Schmidt, 1983; Schuman, 1978; Shapira, 1978). Of these studies, only that of Schmidt (1983) reported higher use of FSs, thus pointing to a tight link between these sequences and the need to interact and integrate, which in turn leads to higher communicative fluency though not necessarily accuracy. The other studies showed little use of FSs which in turn correlates with overall poor achievement (Wray, 2002). Hence, given the paucity of the studies which are concerned with naturalistic learners and their dissimilar results, there is no strong evidence of the importance of FSs in untutored learners. Therefore, attention should be paid to instructed second language learners which serves the purpose of the present study.

The course of development of FSs in adult second language learners is not easy to track. Usually after a silent period, second language learners start making use of FSs (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Wray (2002) argued that FSs are acquired with greater ease at the early stages of language learning. However, when learners attain an acceptable mastery of L2 lexicon and grammar, their FSs tend to linger behind.

Many studies cast light on the difficulties that challenge second language learners in their acquisition and use of FSs and the subsequent effect on their language production. While Bolander (1989) reported an overuse of FSs in his study, Foster (2001) found an underuse. Foster ascribed the underuse of FSs to the learners' reliance on rules. Classroom practices, which treasure accuracy at the expense of fluency, have encouraged learners to approach language analytically even if this would result in their being marked as slow and odd. Granger (1998) observed both an overuse and underuse of these sequences. When learners acquire

some FSs, they stick to them as they feel confident in using them which will make their language production sound odd and foreign. She further noted that the set of FSs that her subjects used had direct counterparts in their mother language (French). This means that L1 interference plays an important role (either positive or negative) in the use of FSs as Raupach (1983) put it, "many factors that constitute a learner's fluency in his L1 are liable to occur, in one form or another, in the learner's L2 performance" (p. 208). De Cock, Granger, Leech and McEnery (1998) found that adult second language learners used FSs even more than native speakers. Nevertheless, their sequences were dissimilar from that used by natives in that they "are not used with the same frequency, have different syntactic uses, and fulfill different pragmatic functions" (De Cock et al., 1998, p. 78). A major cause of difficulty for second language learners is the lack of awareness. The failure of learners to observe the holistic form of FSs prevents them from storing these word strings as single units. For learners to acquire these sequences, they have first to identify them (Bishop, 2004). Another source of difficulty is that some weak idiomatic sequences such a '*to have the last word'* or units that have a near equivalent in the learners' native language like '*to grease someone's palm/ 'graisser la patte à quelqu'un*' tend to pass unobserved by learners which thwart their acquisition. Besides, second language learners may outstrip native speakers in their knowledge of rare words, but they cannot achieve native-like proficiency with regard to FSs (Arnaud & Savignon, 1997). Foster (2001) summarized the problems second language learners may encounter by commenting that unlike first language learners, second language learners possess an explicit knowledge of grammar, either through classroom instruction or their own analysis, along with a limited set of expressions. This situation predisposes learners to generate language creatively relying on rules or make an excessive use of the memorized sequences.

Regarding the issue of whether FSs are segmented, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) suggested that adult second language learners do use FSs as input for the analysis of language.

In contrast, Granger (1998) argued that FSs in second language learners resist segmentation and never develop into creative language. She, thus, asserted that "it would . . . be a foolhardy gamble to believe that it is enough to expose L2 learners to prefabs and the grammar will take care of itself" (p. 158). However, Wray (2002) maintained that there are not many studies that addressed this issue except for that by Myles et al. (1998, 1999) and it is difficult to draw conclusions from it as the subjects under investigation received explicit analytic instruction on the forms they segmented. Nevertheless, despite the above conflicting views, attention should be drawn to the fact that if FSs are not broken down by second language learners, how errors appear in them later on. Wray (2002) explained that second language learners do segment FSs but not to derive grammatical rules, but lexical material which furnishes them with a huge store of words but without grammatical knowledge about how to reconstruct them. Hence, when recombining these words, interlanguage rules are relied upon which results in errors. Overall, the above studies make it clear that second language learners are poor users of FSs. Yet, it remains to be said that only future research will settle the dispute of whether second language learners are as able as first language learners to segment FSs and derive grammatical knowledge from them. Also, it is important to note that though most research studies on FSs were carried in a second language context, this does not mean that these sequences are of less importance to foreign language learners. In fact, what has been said above applies to a great extent to the foreign context. Granger (1998) observed that the role of FSs in the foreign language context needs to be overemphasized as most foreign language learners have very limited exposure to the target language. Besides, evidence from Granger's study shows that EFL learners' use of FSs is very restricted and often foreign-sounding.

In spite of the significance most researchers attribute to FSs, the Algerian universities are still overstressing the role of grammar in the learning and teaching process. The syllabus in all educational levels (middle, secondary and tertiary) still treats language as a composition

of lexis and grammar the thing which is reflected in the teachers' practices. Teachers have inculcated in the minds of their learners the idea that having a wide knowledge of grammar along with a huge store of vocabulary is the way to full mastery of the language. However, the reality belies this; most EFL learners in our universities end up being unable to hold a conversation of more than five minutes as they find themselves victims to overgeneration. This situation suggests that our learners are not even aware of the holistic nature of language except for some fixed expressions such as idioms. So, the inclusion of FSs in our language classrooms is of utmost importance if successful learning is to be achieved.

To sum up, evidence shows that FSs are used by children as a learning strategy. Children acquire FSs to later segment and analyse them so as to achieve language development. Besides, adults in a naturalistic setting seem to acquire and use FSs in the same way as children do. The picture is, yet, far more complex when it comes to instructed adult language learners. Their route of acquiring FSs is different from that of children and it is still unclear if they analyse and deduce rules from these sequences. However, an interesting fact remains that in the case of instructed language learners, the teaching and learning practices have the greatest effect on their acquisition and use of FSs. Therefore, an explicit approach to the teaching of these sequences was advocated. This will be addressed in the next section.

2.7. Teaching Formulaic Sequences

The importance of FSs in language acquisition and development shows that these sequences deserve a place in language classrooms. In this regard, Wood (2002) said:

> If formulaic sequences are a key element of natural language production, it would seem that a large amount of exposure to natural, native-like discourse, be it oral or written, would be an important part of a pedagogy designed to promote their acquisition". (p. 9)

Likewise, Martinez and Schmitt (2012) supported this claim maintaining that FSs should "have a prominent place in language teaching textbooks and materials, as well as tests of language achievement and proficiency" (p. 301). However, research on the teaching of FSs or the efficiency of the different teaching approaches and methods has been scarce. On the one hand, this is due to "the difficulty of defining and operationalizing this rather elusive language phenomenon at the level of precision that is required to serve as an effective theoretical foundation to build on" (Dornyei, 2009, p. 298). On the other hand, a word-centered perception of vocabulary knowledge implies that FSs are rarely taught in a systematic way or tested as part of vocabulary knowledge (Alali & Schmitt, 2012).

2.7.1. The Lexical Approach

Recently, the lexical approach started to attract attention as an alternative to the long-dominant grammar-based approach which posits that each time native speakers speak or write they start from scratch by combining single words according to grammar rules. This view which places grammar at the heart of language use was revolutionized by corpus evidence which showed that language is constructed through a chunking process. Accordingly, after being undervalued or at best taught incidentally, i.e., through the other skills, vocabulary began to gain much more importance in second/foreign language classrooms based on the assumption that prefabricated patterns or in Lewis's terms 'lexical phrases' are the fulcrum of communicative competence (Hill, 2000; Ramirez, 2012).

According to Lewis's (1993) lexical approach, lexis is the basis of language and not grammar or vocabulary. Different from vocabulary which is perceived as single words, lexis entails not only single words but also word combinations. Language in the lexical approach "consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (Lewis, 1993, p. 89). In other words, much language learning entails the ability to understand and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed units or chunks and "these chunks become the raw data by which the learner

begins to perceive patterns, morphology, and those other features of language traditionally thought of as 'grammar'" (Lewis, 1993, p. 100). In light of this view, lexis or formulaic language becomes a means of accessing grammar. It follows thus that rather than emphasizing novel language, teachers should instead direct their attention to FSs in their language classrooms.

Lewis (1993, 1997, 2000) put noticing at the centre of his lexical approach. This means that learners are encouraged to observe or notice recurrent word-sequences in the authentic input they are exposed to. According to Lewis (1997), "accurate noticing of lexical chunks … help[s] convert input into intake" (p. 35). Therefore, noticing is a necessary first step for internalization to take place. Consciousness or awareness is another contributor to noticing. Lewis (1993) posited that instead of devoting class time to the direct teaching of certain FSs, providing learners with activities that raise their awareness of the prevalence of these sequences can be a great source of help as this develops autonomous learning in that learners will develop the tendency to notice FSs on their own in the input they encounter outside the language classroom. Hence, under this approach, the teacher is seen as motivator and guide whose role is to encourage noticing by providing learners with techniques to use outside the classroom as well as suitable quality language. On the whole, the main purpose of Lewis's teaching activities is to raise learners' awareness of lexical chunks.

Though Lewis described how the lexical approach could be implemented in the language classroom and provided different activities in this regard, this approach was not immune to criticism. Several researchers (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Boers et al., 2006; White, 2008) asserted that awareness-raising, which is the heart of the lexical approach, is not sufficient to trigger the acquisition of FSs. For instance, before conducting their research on 'chunk-noticing', Boers et al., (2006) argued that there is no empirical evidence of the efficiency of noticing. Thus, with the aim of testing the effectiveness of chunk-noticing

with regard to students' speaking proficiency, Boers et al., (2006) conducted a small-scale experiment among 32 EFL students. The results showed that the experimental students whose attention was directed to FSs through a series of consciousness-raising activities used more FSs than the control students which was found, in turn, to correlate positively with their speaking proficiency. Yet, the researchers observed that the results suggested that though the experimental students' awareness was raised inasmuch as they were able to recognize FSs in new texts, there is no convincing evidence that these students accumulated a considerable stock of FSs for active use more than the control students. Therefore, the researchers concluded that "noticing may be a prerequisite for learning, but it does not necessarily guarantee the acquisition of every single element that gets noticed" (Boers et al., 2006, p. 257). White (2008) corroborated this finding asserting that "simply noticing the target form does not indicate that the form will go on to be processed further" (p. 90). Lewis (2000) himself acknowledged that noticing is an essential but not sufficient condition for input to become intake.

> The belief that deliberate noticing helps is by no means an established certainty; the current mainstream position is that it probably has at least a facilitative, helpful effect. Explicit noticing is probably a necessary, but not sufficient condition to ensure that input becomes intake. (p. 161)

Lewis (1997) suggested several activities and strategies with the aim of helping noticing and increasing the chance of converting input into intake. Nevertheless, many researchers doubted the ability of such strategies to trigger the acquisition of FSs. White (2008), for instance, found that "both frequency and visual enhancement may encourage noticing …, but again, this does not mean that just because learners notice the form they will acquire it" (pp. 45-46). Similarly, in a study of the impact of typographic salience on the noticing of FSs, Bishop (2004) found that FSs are not noticed by ESL readers and though making these sequences

typographically salient increased learners' look-ups, it does not seem to have durable beneficial effect with regard to their comprehension. Therefore, it is likely that more explicit and thorough classroom activities are needed if learners are to internalize these sequences.

2.7.2. Focused Instruction of Formulaic Sequences

Conscious of the inefficiency of awareness-raising and noticing activities, many researchers suggested that focused instruction is likely to foster deep processing of FSs. Stated simply, " the more one engages with a word (deep processing), the more likely the word will be remembered for later use" (Schmitt, 2000, p. 121). According to Boers and Lindstromberg (2009), unlike native speakers who can acquire FSs incidentally through exposure, learners cannot pick-up FSs even after taking part in suitable awareness-raising or noticing activities. This can be ascribed mainly to the complex nature of these sequences. That is, many FSs are transparent and thus they may go unnoticed by most language learners; others are highly opaque which exerts a cognitive burden on learners who will, in turn, try to ignore them. Thus, " it is part of a teacher's role to take steps in the classroom to help students not just to notice particular chunks in the course materials but also to commit these chunks to memory" (p. 68). Likewise, Lindstromberg and Boers (2008) explained that the usefulness of FSs is mostly felt when they are well embedded in memory that learners are able to recognize and understand them as well as produce them automatically, i.e., develop both receptive and productive knowledge of these sequences.

In their study, Wray and Fitzpatrick (2008) investigated the ability of language learners to enhance their performance through the memorization of native-like conversations expected to be needed in future real life interaction. The researchers found that memorization can be beneficial to both beginner and advanced learners. Besides, the participants reported that the use of memorized utterances increased their fluency, reduced

their anxiety and gave them more confidence about being understood and offered them linguistic material that can be used in other contexts. The researchers concluded that "memorization has a number of potential advantages in relation to learning and confidence building as well as proficiency evaluation (p. 143). In support of these findings, Boers and Lindstromberg (2009) argued that rote memorization of texts does not only foster the entrenchment of FSs in long-term memory, but leads also to the learning of new words within these sequences as well. Wood (2009) also found strong evidence that focused instruction of FSs facilitates the accumulation of an appropriate repertoire of FSs and helps with fluency in English. Accordingly, the studies above suggest that focused instruction of FSs may help learners increase their awareness of the prominence of these sequences and the different functions they perform in discourse and that devoting some classroom time to rehearsing and memorizing FSs is beneficial for learners.

2.7.3. Classroom Activities

There was relatively a paucity of research on how to integrate FSs in classroom contexts. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) observed that "although many have written about the expected benefits of teaching formulaic utterances, few have actually proposed how to accomplish this" (p. 342). However, recently some research studies on the most effective ways of teaching FSs came to the fore (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Lindstromberg & Boers, 2008; Nation, 2001; Wood, 2002).

To begin with, for FSs to be well entrenched in long-term memory, Nation (2001) suggested that three psychological conditions need to be fulfilled. These are noticing, retrieval and generation. First, noticing means that learners' attention should be drawn to FSs and they should be made aware of their usefulness. This can be achieved through providing learners with a reading text first. Then, after becoming familiar with the text, the

students read the text again but with FSs made salient (through underlining, highlighting etc.). After that, the learners are either asked to guess the meaning of the target FSs from context or receive an explanation from the teacher. Besides, as interest and engagement are prerequisites for noticing, the teacher should provide interesting input for the learners. Second, retrieval is the next process in which the learner retrieves the form or the meaning of a sequence from memory thus consolidating the memory of that sequence. For example, learners can be provided with a reading or a listening material and be asked to read the same passage or listen to the material many times in order to extract FSs. This is referred to as 'receptive retrieval' since learners come across the form of FSs and they are asked to retrieve their meanings. Productive retrieval, on the other hand, entails asking learners to use already taught or met FSs in their speaking or writing activities. A useful activity in this regard is the disappearing text, an oral activity whereby the teacher chooses a passage of 50 or 60 words with FSs embedded in it. The teacher writes the passage on the board, asks some learners to read it aloud, and then omits some FSs and asks another learner to read providing the missing sequences as s/he reads. Then, more FSs are omitted until nothing is left on the board and learners are retrieving the passage (including FSs) from their memory (Hatami, 2015). The third and most efficient process that may help with efficient vocabulary acquisition is generation. The latter "occurs when previously met words are subsequently met or used in ways that differ from the previous meeting with the word" (Nation, 2001, p. 105). For instance, a sequence is used generatively when its meaning is extended or when it is encountered or used in a different grammatical context or in different inflected or derived forms. For receptive generative use, learners could be asked to read or listen to longer passages as this allows for the same FSs to reappear in different contexts. Concordancing is another useful tool as corpus extracts enable learners

to study FSs in different contexts (Hatami, 2015). Paraphrasing and summarizing are techniques that can be used for productive generative use (Coxhead, 2008).

In their turn, Lindstromberg and Boers (2008) based their methodology on three steps or stages. According to them, learners should first be encouraged to notice FSs and appreciate their importance. They should then be helped with committing these sequences to memory. After that, they should be aided with consolidating their knowledge of FSs through reviewing activities.

Apart from the adopted methodology, several activities and techniques for speeding up the acquisition of FSs have been suggested. First, memorization is suggested as one of the best ways of acquiring FSs especially at the early stages of language learning. "There is nothing wrong with memorizing some essential chunks, especially at the beginning stages of language learning", echoed Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p. 116). It is suggested that learners can first start by memorizing fixed chunks to gain fluency and confidence provided that this memorization is not used to excess lest it would turn into a mindless exercise. The learners can then be helped with some substitution drills to train them to analyze the invariable chunks they met before. For example, it would be more useful to introduce learners to the flexible lexical phrase '*I'm (very) sorry (to hear about) X*' where all the phrases between brackets can be replaced by others phrases. As learners become more experienced with such phrases, the level of variation can be increased. Such segmentation and reconstruction should not be confined to the classroom environment as the major aim is to help learners apply it on new patterns of their own (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). "It is when students learn this that creative control of the new language begins" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 117).

In addition to memorization, different other strategies have been suggested so that the memory of FSs could be firmly established. One such strategy is mnemonics which can be

implemented in different ways. Teachers can, for example, introduce learners to FSs that have (semi-) cognates in their mother tongue and make comparisons to enhance the memorability of the target FSs. Teachers can also insert some FSs in an appealing narrative story. Phonological repetition especially alliteration is another mnemonic technique which can boost the memorization of FSs. In this technique, it might be helpful, for example, to introduce learners to the noun collocates of seek which strikingly are –S- words (*e.g., solace, solitude, asylum*), or to such chunks like '*time will tell'*, '*it takes two to tango'* etc. In addition to alliteration, there is also rhyming like *'high and dry'*, *'when the cat's away, the mice will play'* etc. (Nation, 2001).

Moreover, the internalization of FSs can also be achieved through such strategies like spaced repetition whereby the teacher spreads repetitions of target FSs across a long period of time. For example, instead of spending a continuous period of time, say 15 minutes, in the repetition of a certain chunk, distributing the repetitions across a long period of time would be more useful. That is, learners may study a sequence for three minutes now, another three minutes a few hours later, three minutes two days later, three minutes next week and three others the next fifteen days. It is believed that spaced repetition leads to durable learning and reduces the rate of forgetting which many studies proved that it occurs immediately after initial learning. Teachers can also engage learners in retelling activities by asking them, for instance, to read a text and retell it from memory. The teacher as a listener should design a set of guiding questions in such a way that ensures that the reteller will make use of the target FSs. This retelling allows learners to retrieve FSs and make generative use of them. Associating target FSs with mental images or with their original literal sense (especially idioms), organizing FSs according to topic, notion (apology), situation (administrative office), having learners practise FSs, especially those sequences which are common in oral interaction, through simulations and role plays (Nation, 2001), memorizing long texts, and

using translation activities and lexical notebooks may also enhance deep processing of FSs and lead to their retention (Lewis, 2000; Nation, 2001; Wray & Fitzpatrick, 2008).

Wood (2010) also suggested a number of strategies for the entrenchment of FSs in students' long-term memory. Among these strategies are shadowing and tracking, two imitation activities in which learners are provided with a transcript of a native speaker's speech, then are asked to follow with the script and shadow it. That is, speak along with the speaker and practise several times until they feel they mastered it. Tracking then follows in which learners repeat the talk without looking at the transcript while listening. The learners then record their best performance on the same tape and the teacher listens to it and provides feedback on problematic areas in their talk. After that, the learners can start again based on the provided feedback. It should be noted that the target chunks should be highlighted in the script along with features of fluency before learners start the activity. These two activities help with the internalization of FSs and fluency as well. In addition to shadowing and tracking, the teacher can engage learners in such communicative activities like the mingle jigsaw which is described by Wood (2010) as an information-sharing technique. More specifically, learners are provided with different pieces of information, one piece for each group. All students in the classroom mingle and deliver their assigned information and listen to other students delivering theirs. After a brief time, they go back to their seats, jot down some notes, and then they mingle again and continue sharing their information. This technique is based on the repetition of the same information several times which helps in increasing fluency and, of course, the consolidation of a large repertoire of FSs. As can be noticed, the key to the above strategies is repetition which is thought to foster automatization of language. Other activities involve providing learners with lists of FSs that serve certain contexts and functions and make them use these sequences in different tasks such as role plays. Learners should also be encouraged to list the chunks they encounter outside the

classroom, in the media for example, and observe how they are used. Learners might as well be encouraged to use context, phonetic cues or component analysis to identify the meaning, function or the structure of the encountered chunks. Examining the cultural concepts and metaphors that underlie the use and structure of certain FSs might be helpful in the processing and production of these sequences.

With regard to collocations, students' collocational knowledge can be developed through such activities like matching parts of collocations, picking out the wrong collocates, correcting mistakes, gap-filling and translation. The use of dictionaries is also a great source of help in different activities. Teachers can, for instance, provide learners with words that share similar meanings (near synonyms) and ask them to search for their collocates in a collocation dictionary (Lewis, 2000).

Overall, it is through focused instruction and thorough classroom activities that learners further the uptake of FSs in long-term memory. However, given the time constraints of classroom-based language learning and the sheer number of FSs that are worth teaching, teachers face tremendous difficulties with the teaching of these sequences. According to Boers and Lindstromberg (2009), the criterion upon which teachers should base their selection of the FSs that deserve teaching is usefulness. That is, those sequences which suit learners' proficiency level and are in accordance with the objectives of the course they are taking. Frequency of occurrence is another criterion that is commonly mentioned. One way of knowing the frequency of a certain chunk is through corpus or Google search. Some of the corpora that are well known in this regard are the British National Corpus (BNC), the Collins Cobuild Wordbanks, and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). These corpora are accessible online and require just a subscription (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Lindstromberg & Boers, 2008). Thus, considering these criteria, learners will be furnished

with sequences that are essential for effective communication, be it oral or written, in a myriad of contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an account of the phenomenon of formulaicity. It showed that FSs are particularly difficult to define and identify and hence to operationalize. Nevertheless, the agreement seems to be that they are multi-word units stored and retrieved as whole from long-term memory. Evidence shows that native speakers make use of FSs as much as they make use of single words. However, this is not the case with language learners who process- and often learn language on a word-by-word basis. Besides, as the use of FSs characterizes native speakers' discourse and contributes to fluent language production and overall language proficiency, it is natural to assume that language learners will reap these same benefits if they process language in chunks as native speakers do. Thus, making these sequences an integral part of any language classroom has become a necessity. Due to the complex nature of these sequences, many researchers recommended an explicit approach to their teaching. They also suggested some pedagogical techniques and activities to facilitate their acquisition and internalization in long-term memory.

Chapter Three

Formulaic Sequences and the Writing Skill

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Chapter Three: Formulaic Sequences and the Writing Skill

Introduction

Forming an indispensable part of language, FSs have been found to be central to the creation of natural, appropriate, and fluent language. As a result, mastering these sequences has become a prerequisite for any ESL/EFL learner who wants to be successful in writing. Therefore, this chapter aims at unraveling the relationship between FSs and the writing skill. With this goal as a guide, the chapter first starts by discussing the proportion of FSs in written language. It then focuses on the role FSs play in improving writing proficiency. Next, as FSs are present not only in native speakers discourse, but also in non-natives as well, the gap between native and non-native speakers use of FSs in writing is investigated. Finally, the importance of bringing these sequences to learners' attention explicitly and systematically is highlighted, followed by a review of some recent studies on the explicit teaching of FSs for the purposes of writing.

3.1. The Prevalence of Formulaic Sequences in Written Language

Many studies have attempted to determine the presence of FSs in English written discourse. However, the actual frequency of these sequences varies which is mainly due to the different definitions and identification techniques being adopted.

In their study, Biber et al. (1999) used the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus (LSWE), comprising over 40 million words. The corpus contains 37.244 texts and is divided into four registers (conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose) from British and American English. For the purposes of this section, focus will be only on written language.

The researchers used the term 'lexical bundles' to refer to those multi-word units of three or more words which occur at least ten times per million words. These occurrences must

appear at least in five separate texts. As five-word and six-word bundles are less common, the authors applied a lower frequency threshold of five times per million words.

Findings revealed that lexical bundles are prevalent in written discourse, with 21% of the words occurring in lexical bundles. Three-word bundles occurred over 60.000 times per million words and four-word bundles occurred over 5.000 times per million words. The most common three-word bundles, over 2000 occurrences, were *in order to, one of the, part of the, the number of, the presence of, the use of, the fact that, there is a, there is no*. The most common four-word bundles, over 100 occurrences, were *in the case of* and *on the other hand* (Biber et al., 1999, p. 994).

In a subsequent study, Biber, Conrad and Cortes (2004) compared the lexical bundles of classroom discourse and textbooks to those found in conversation and academic prose from the 1999 study. The researchers found that though the frequency of lexical bundles was high in both registers, it was higher in academic prose (3500 per million words) than in textbooks (2000 per million words). Moreover, Howarth's (1998) analysis of two small corpora of about a quarter of a million words showed that FSs covered 31% and 40% of their corpora.

Moon (1998), on the other hand, reported a low proportion of FSs in written discourse. She used the eighteen million-word Oxford Hector Pilot Corpus (OHPC) which contains a high proportion of journalistic texts (66%) and little spoken texts (3%). The researcher compared the corpus data against a set of pre-established list of 6.700 expressions or as she termed them 'phrasal lexemes' (idioms, proverbs, sayings, similes, metaphors, formulae, and other kinds of institutionalized collocations) derived from the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. Moon's results demonstrated that 70% of the phrases occurred less than once in a million words, while 40% did not occur at all. Moon found that only between 4% and 5% of the phrases have frequencies of five to ten occurrences per million words. These

results need to be treated with caution since the researcher did not actually check the corpus for naturally recurrent sequences, but rather searched for occurrences of a predetermined list of phrases within the corpus.

Recent studies have also tried to estimate the frequency of FSs. For example, Erman and Warren (2000) analysed nineteen extracts of 100-800 words and found that 52% of written discourse is composed of FSs. Similarly, Wei and Li (2013) estimated that FSs covered 58.75% of their corpus.

The studies above show a clear fluctuation in the occurrence of FSs which is ascribed, as stated earlier, to the different definitions and identification techniques used. However, the general tendency appears to be that the proportion of FSs in English written discourse has been established to be high. In this regard, Conklin and Schmitt (2012) suggested after reviewing a number of studies that "formulaic language makes up between one third and one half of discourse" (p.46).

The different estimates of the proportion of FSs in written discourse motivated researchers to investigate the gap between native and non-native speakers' use of FSs in writing. Nevertheless, before embarking on this discussion, the role FSs play in writing needs to be highlighted as statistical evidence above leaves no shred of doubt that these sequences are the cornerstone of language use.

3.2. The Role of Formulaic Sequences in Writing

Reference has already been made to the functions and benefits of FSs in language use and acquisition in the previous chapter; thus, this section is meant to shed light on the role of FSs in writing. As a matter of fact, most studies focused on the role of FSs in spoken language (e.g., Boers et al., 2006; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wood, 2002, 2010). Nevertheless, research is increasingly showing that these sequences are as important in written language as in spoken

language. In this respect, Cowie (1992) asserted that "it is impossible to perform at a level acceptable to native users, in writing or in speech, without controlling an appropriate range of multi-word units" (p.10).

One of the benefits FSs provide for student writers is that they promote writing fluency. Having a limited repertoire of FSs, learners have to construct sentences from scratch using grammar rules and single words. This will inevitably slow them down, give an unnatural feel to their writing and hamper the fluent expression of ideas. However, if learners possess an adequate knowledge of FSs, they will automatically summon these sequences when the need calls. This will give them time to attend to other aspects such as grammar, content and so on, which, in turn, ensures writing fluency. Coxhead and Byrd (2007) supported this view stating that

> the word sets are often repeated and become a part of the structural material used by advanced writers, making the students' task easier because they work with ready-made sets of words rather than having to create each sentence word by word; (b) as a result of their frequent use, such sets become defining markers of fluent writing and are important for the development of writing that fits the expectations of readers in academia. (pp. 134-135)

In addition to fluency, FSs contribute to writing idiomaticity. Generally, writing idiomatically is hard to attain for EFL learners, nearly all of whom possess a bookish knowledge of sentence construction rules. Though they generate sentences which are grammatically correct, they are judged as awkward and unnatural because they are never used by native speakers (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Lewis (1997) illustrated this problem noting that "the frustration of reading a student's essay and thinking 'I know what you mean, but that's not the way to say (=write) it', is most frequently caused by the student's failure to use this type of lexical item" (p. 259).

Besides making language sound odd and unnatural, the lack of FSs in students' essays and their overreliance on the creative power of grammar make them prone to grammar mistakes because they are using grammar to what it was never meant to do. "Grammar enables us to construct language when we are unable to find what we want ready-made in our mental lexicons" (Lewis, 2000, p. 15). Conversely, if students make use of FSs, their writing will be more accurate. Because of their holistic nature, FSs reduce grammar errors and odd word combinations in students' writing. Errors are, thus, limited only to the areas where students use generative language. Boers et al. (2006) supported this view, stating that "prefabricated chunks constitute 'zones of safety' and appropriate use of them may thus confine the risk of 'erring' to the spaces in between the formulaic sequences in one's discourse" (p. 247).

FSs are also pragmatically efficient in that they serve as "the primary markers which signal the direction of discourse, whether spoken or written" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 60). FSs are used as discourse devices which connect the meaning and structure of discourse. They also guide the overall direction of discourse and indicate the relationship between the parts of content. For example, they may be used to express exemplification *(in other words),* result (*as a result [of]),* addition (*another thing is x) etc*" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992).

In their account of the importance of FSs in academic writing, Li and Schmitt (2009) maintained that FSs are pervasive in academic discourse and are thus central to the creation of academic texts. They further noted that the absence of these sequences in one's discourse is a sign of lack of mastery of an apprentice writer in a specific discourse community. Therefore, students need to familiarize themselves with these sequences and their functions and apply them in their writing. In this way, ideas are clearly expressed, discourse is coherently and logically connected and writing efficiency is achieved.

The above arguments leave no room for doubt that FSs are central to writing. Many studies showed that the use of FSs has a positive effect on students' overall writing quality (e.g., Čolović-Marković, 2012; Dai & Ding, 2010; Ohlrogge, 2009). Research also proved that proficient writers use FSs more frequently than poor writers. For example, Chen and Baker (2010) found that "the number of recurrent word combinations increases with advancing writing proficiency" (p.43). In her turn, Cortes (2004) proved that the frequent use of FSs "seems to signal competent language use within a register to the point that learning conventions of register use may in part consist in learning how to use certain fixed phrases" (p.398). Similarly, Cortes (2006) argued that the frequent use of FSs reflects maturity in writing, while their absence or the lack thereof is a sign of a novice writer. That being said, the next section will shed light on the gap between native and non-native speakers' use of FSs in writing.

3.3. Native vs. Non-native Writers' Use of Formulaic Sequences

It has been established that FSs form a considerable part of written discourse. Interestingly, these sequences are not present only in the writing of native speakers, but also in the writing of non-natives. This fact prompted researchers to investigate the gap between native and non-native speakers' use of FSs in writing.

3.3.1. Non-native Writers' Use of Formulaic Sequences

The most common method of investigating non-native writers' use of FSs has been to compare FSs extracted from a written ESL/EFL learner corpus against those found in a native or expert writer reference corpus, with the purpose of gauging learners' use of these sequences quantitatively and qualitatively (accuracy and appropriateness).

Though studies on learners' use of FSs have yielded contrasting results, still they share some common ground. Research found that the most common problems students have with

FSs are overuse, underuse, or misuse of the target sequences. For example, Yorio (1989) investigated FSs in a corpus of writings by ESL students (between 5 and 7 years of residence in the USA) and native speaker students from the same college. The results showed that native speakers made more extensive use of FSs though they showed little control over the form of these sequences. Yorio suggested that there was a positive association between overall language proficiency and the use of FSs.

Howarth (1998) compared FSs, more specifically verb-noun collocations, in academic texts written by native speakers and non-native master students. He reported that non-native students employed nearly 50% fewer collocations than natives. He also found that 7% of the collocations produced by the students were erroneous (while lexical substitution errors represent 6% of the total number of erroneous collocations, grammatical errors represent 1%).

Likewise, Granger (1998) reported an underuse of FSs. In an investigation of the intensifier-adjective collocations and sentence builders (sequences which function as macro-organizers in the text) produced by native speakers and EFL learners, Granger found a significant underuse of collocations, both in terms of tokens and types. The researcher also noted an overuse of certain collocations which had direct translation equivalents in the students' L1 (French) (e.g., *closely linked*, *deeply rooted*); however, collocations non-congruent with the students' L1 were underused (e.g., combinations with the intensifier '*highly*' which is less frequent in French). As to the use of sentence builders, while EFL students made a similar use of passive structures, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as their native counterparts, they heavily overused active structures (e.g., *I think that*, *we can say that* etc.). The researcher attributed this overuse to the students' L1 which uses more phatic introductory phrases than English.

On the other hand, some other studies reported an overuse of FSs by non-native writers. For instance, exploration of four-word FSs found in expert writers' research articles, L2 doctoral theses, and L2 master students' dissertations by Hyland (2008) revealed that master students used more FSs (199) than doctoral students (95) and nearly twice more than expert writers (71). It was also found that many of the FSs most frequently used by expert writers were never, or scarcely, found in the master and doctoral students' texts. Furthermore, overuse of FSs due to the repetition of the same sequences in the same text was a problematic feature in students' texts.

Similar results were reported by Jukneviciene (2009) and Rica-Peromingo (2009). Jukneviciene (2009) analysed four-word lexical bundles extracted from essays written by EFL beginner learners, EFL advanced learners, and native speaker learners. The findings indicated that low-proficiency learners used much more FSs than proficient learners and natives. The researcher attributed the prevalence of FSs in beginner learners' essays to their repetition of the same FSs over and over again. She concluded that the less proficient learners are, the more limited their lexical repertoire is, which leads to more repetition. In addition, structural analysis demonstrated a preponderance of FSs which are typical of spoken language.

In a similar vein, Rica-Peromingo (2009) examined FSs found in English argumentative texts written by Spanish EFL learners and English native speakers. His study showed that non-native learners employed significantly more FSs than native writers did. EFL learners' writing was also characterized by the overuse and underuse of certain FSs which is, according to the researcher, due to the lack of systematic instruction of these sequences in the Spanish context and L1 influence.

A close examination of the methodologies adopted in the studies described above reveals that the reason for the inconsistent frequency results has to do with the approach used

to detect FSs. While the studies which pointed to the pattern of underuse used a corpus-based approach, in which a corpus is searched for pre-existing FSs (e.g., collocations, idioms, etc.), the studies which suggested the pattern of overuse adopted a corpus-driven approach, whereby a corpus serves as a basis from which frequently occurring FSs are extracted. Another related reason lies in the criteria set by researchers when identifying FSs. For example, a researcher might stipulate the length of the sequences (e.g., only two-word combinations), the nature of the combinations (e.g., only words adjacent to each other), or the frequency threshold (e.g., only sequences occurring at least ten times per million words). All such stipulations might prevent the inclusion of a wider range of relevant patterns. A case in point is Hyland's (2008) study where he analysed only four-word sequences to the exclusion of two, three or more than four-word sequences, which probably prevented a more comprehensive examination of the sequences. Thus, the identification method considerably influences the estimates of the amount of FSs identified, which in turn affects the gap between native and non-native writers.

Furthermore, while the studies above all point to learners' second/ foreign language background as a major reason for the problems they encounter in the use of FSs, research also suggests that the lack of experience in writing is another obstacle that impedes appropriate use of FSs, an obstacle that faces native novice writers the same as their non-native peers. In this regard, Chen and Baker (2010) compared the use of FSs, in terms of their structures and functions, in the academic writing of native experts, native students, and L2 students. The researchers found that native and L2 students' use of FSs was to a great extent alike, which sets them apart from native expert writers. More specifically, native and non-native students' texts contained a higher proportion of verbal phrases and discourse organizers than expert writing did, which is deemed as a sign of immature writing. Conversely, native experts used a wider range of prepositional and nominal phrases as well as referential expressions. The

researchers concluded that writing proficiency is what sets immature student writing apart from native expert prose.

In his turn, Neff van Aertselar (2008) conducted a contrastive study of interactional phrases, namely certainty and attitudinal markers as well as expressions used for impersonal presentation of arguments. The phrases were extracted from argumentative texts written by novice and expert writers of both Spanish and English. Results of the data analysis showed that Spanish EFL texts entail novice writer features, which resemble those of the American university writers, in that they used few hedging phrases and adverbs (e.g., *it is possible*/ *likely*/ *unlikely that*, *possibly*, *probably*), many strong evaluative adjectives and adverbs (e.g., *it is obvious that*, *obviously*) which gives their texts a less hypothetical tone and conveys the impression of wanting to force the reader to accept their opinion, in addition to impersonal passive constructions which are not possible in English.

To sum up, the research studies above have shown that non-native writers do differ from native experts in their use of FSs in writing both quantitatively and qualitatively; however, they share some common features with native novice writers. When non-native writers use FSs, they fail in several ways. For instance, they were found to underuse FSs which occur frequently in expert writers' texts and overuse those sequences which had direct equivalents in their L1. Also, the target FSs were non-conventional, non-native and were typical of spoken rather than written language. Findings also point to second/foreign language proficiency and writing experience as the two major keys to bridge the gap between native and non-native writers.

3.3.2. Native Writers' Use of Formulaic Sequences

Findings from different research studies indicated that native novice writers differ from native expert writers in terms of their use of FSs. For instance, in her study, Cortes

(2002) analysed a corpus of compositions produced by native freshman university students in order to find out the most frequent four-word lexical bundles and to compare them structurally and functionally with those commonly found in academic prose and conversation. She found out that most of the lexical bundles identified in the freshman composition corpus were structurally similar to those found in academic prose. However, in terms of function, they were different as they served as temporal and location markers.

In a subsequent study, Cortes (2004) compared the use of lexical bundles by native published authors in history and biology and by native students at three different levels in those disciplines. The researcher first identified and classified structurally and functionally the most common four-word lexical bundles in the corpus of published writing and then, as a second step, investigated students' use of those target bundles. The results revealed that many of the lexical bundles frequently used by published authors were rarely or never used by students at all levels in both disciplines. The repetitive use of bundles was also a characteristic feature of students' writing which made it redundant. In addition, when using certain target lexical bundles, students used them to convey functions different from those identified in published history and biology writing. The researcher ascribed the reason behind students' underuse of the target bundles and the misuse of certain ones to the insufficient exposure to the use of lexical bundles in academic writing in classrooms.

Similarly, in their contrastive study, Neff, Ballesteros, Dafouz, Martinez, and Rica (2004) examined the differences between EFL students, American university students, and native professional writers regarding their use of stance expressions in argumentative texts. The researchers found that while excessive writer visibility due to the overuse of stance devices occurred in native writers' texts, expert writers would use different rhetorical strategies to lower visibility in their texts. Besides, the expressions used by novice writers performed functions different from those conveyed by expert writers. For example, the

personal stance marker '*I think*' was used by novice writers to introduce a new topic, whereas expert writers would express their opinion without using an introductory phrase or employ an impersonal topic marker.

Neff Van Aertselar's study (2008), which has been reviewed above, also supports this viewpoint. The researcher found that native novice writers employed less hedging devices and adverbs and too many strong evaluative adjectives and adverbs which conveyed a feeling of forcing rather than persuading the reader.

As language learners struggle with the use of FSs in their writing, it follows that explicit and systematic exposure to these sequences is of utmost importance. Thus, the following section will focus on the necessity of following an explicit approach to the teaching of FSs. Some recent studies on the impact of explicit FSs instruction on students' writing will also be reviewed.

3.4. Recent Studies on the Explicit Instruction of FSs in Writing Classes

Given the importance of FSs and their relevance to the writing skill, a growing body of research studies has focused on the acquisition of these sequences by student writers and their development over time. In a longitudinal case study, Li and Schmitt (2009) investigated how the use of FSs by a Chinese MA student developed over the course of an academic year. The subject studied English for over 10 years and was enrolled in an MA English Language Teaching Program at Nottingham University. She was classified as an advanced non-native English speaker based on a score of (6.5) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The researcher analysed the subject's writing assignments (eight essays and one dissertation), collected over a period of 10 months, in terms of the number and the appropriateness of FSs employed. In addition, the participant was interviewed after each

writing assignment about the acquisition sources of the target FSs and the confidence level when using them.

The results showed that the participant managed to learn new FSs, nearly 50%, over the 10-month study period, and to improve the mastery of the sequences she already knew. A gradual increase in confidence of use of the sequences was also reported. Regarding the source of acquisition of the newly learned FSs, the participant reported that over 40% were acquired from the academic materials she was required to read, while nearly 31% were learned through the explicit instruction she received at the centre of Nottingham University. Interestingly, the most remarkable finding of this study was that the learning of FSs is incremental, the same as single words. This suggests that acquiring FSs is not a matter of jumping from inappropriate use directly to appropriate use; rather the process is gradual in which a sequence previously misused, then becomes used somewhat appropriately, and later on is used in a native-like manner.

Due to the incremental nature of FSs acquisition and the relative infancy of L_1 research on FSs acquisition for the purposes of writing, research has turned to the field of vocabulary acquisition for guidance on how to teach FSs for production. When it comes to vocabulary instruction, two major approaches are used: explicit and implicit. Explicit teaching refers to the direct instruction of the target words. On the other hand, implicit or incidental is defined as acquisition "through exposure when one's attention is focused on the use of language, rather than the learning itself" (Schmitt, 2000, p. 116). The focus in this approach is on guessing words from context. Yet, many learners do not benefit from this type of learning because of their limited vocabulary knowledge. To be able to guess the meaning of words from context "at least 95% of the running words need to be already familiar to the learners [...]" (Nation, 2001, p. 233). Also, learners must regularly be exposed to many contextualized texts which are comprehensible to them. According to Nation (2001), relying on incidental

learning only is not sufficient as there is a need for "judicious attention to decontextualized learning to supplement and be supplemented by learning from context. Direct vocabulary learning and incidental learning are complementary activities" (p. 23).

Many researchers (e.g., Hulstijin, 2005; Hunt & Buglar, 2005; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000) recognize the importance of both explicit and implicit instruction, but recommend the use of the explicit approach to guarantee learners' knowledge of important words like high frequency words and academic vocabulary (Nation, 2001). Besides, learners need more than a superficial understanding of words. They need to be equipped with a deep knowledge about important words, such as learning the different ways a word can be used, the appropriateness of a word for a particular context and so on (Nagy & Herman, 1987). Nation (2001) recommended explicit teaching because it is more efficient with regard to the time and effort spent, and it gives learners control over which aspects of the target words to focus on, in addition to permitting the learner to control processing of the new words and the amount of repetitions.

That being said of individual words, in the case of FSs it becomes even more challenging. Learners are required not to learn FSs well enough just to recognize them, but to quickly remember them and make use of them in their production when the need arises. Many researchers agreed that it is quite difficult for learners to acquire FSs incidentally from context. For instance, Lindstromberg and Boers (2008) contended that incidental acquisition of words and chunks is a very slow process because they need to be encountered many times within a relatively short span of time before they leave any trace in memory. However, only high frequency words/ chunks can occur regularly, a fact which does not apply to most words and chunks. Another reason is that when learners process language for content, they tend to focus on the meaning of messages rather than the exact wording and they are even less likely to pay attention to more complex patterns of co-occurrence of words. For example, if both of

the keywords that make up a strong collocation (e.g., *make an effort*) are quite familiar to learners, and if the meaning is perfectly clear, few learners are likely to pay heed to it as to memorize it as a chunk. So, this is why many learners resort to their L1 to produce patterns like '*do an effort*', '*do a mistake*' etc. Moreover, contexts are not informative enough as to enable learners to guess the meaning of words correctly. Thus, a small number of learners who use dictionaries regularly will resort to them, but as it is known, most of them use dictionaries ineffectively. Consequently, when learners check a word in a dictionary, they are less likely to pay attention to let alone remember information about how that word combines with other words. Furthermore, a long word is generally more difficult to be remembered than a short word. By the same token, a chunk is hard to learn as it is relatively long. Briefly, there is no guarantee that learners will acquire chunks while learning the language even if the language they are exposed to is extensive, authentic and comprehensible to them. Therefore, it is only through bringing these sequences to learners' attention explicitly and systematically in class that they will learn and remember them.

Though examining the effect of explicit instruction of FSs in second and foreign language classrooms has recently attracted increased attention, few studies have been conducted to investigate the facilitative effects of explicit teaching of FSs on students' ability to produce them in their written productions and on their overall writing quality. Schmitt, Dornyei, Adolphs and Durow (2004) investigated the receptive and productive knowledge of 20 selected FSs of a group of EAP students. The participants, a total of 94 attending courses at the university of Nottingham in an EAP program, enrolled in either a two-month (n=62) or three-month (n=32) pre-sessional EAP course. The researcher first selected a large set of possible FSs from reference books, textbooks used by the subjects of the study, and a book on L_2 teaching methodology, before whittling them down to 20 FSs using frequency and pedagogic value as selection criteria. The participants were exposed to the target FSs as part

of their EAP instruction. As the students were distributed across a number of class groups, both the type of instruction and the amount of exposure were not controlled. Nevertheless, it was ensured that the participants were exposed at least once to each FS during the course. The students' improvement was measured using a receptive and a productive pre and post-test. The receptive test was in a multiple-choice format, attached to a reading passage with the target FSs deleted. The productive test was a combination of close and C-test techniques in which FSs are embedded in short contexts and all the content words in each FS are omitted with only the initial letters provided.

The results revealed that the participants had already a wide knowledge of the target FSs before receiving any treatment and they improved this knowledge, both receptive and productive, during the course; however, the greatest improvement was in productive knowledge. Of course, these results need to be treated cautiously because the study did not use a control group, so it cannot be determined that the improvement in students' receptive and productive knowledge of FSs was indeed caused by the treatment rather than the designed EAP program or any other variable. In addition, though the students' ability to complete the productive test reflects some degree of productive knowledge, still this does not prove their ability to use FSs freely in writing.

Jones and Haywood (2004) conducted an exploratory study with intermediate ESL students in the course of a ten-week intensive, pre-sessional EAP course to investigate whether explicit FSs instruction would raise learners' awareness of FSs and increase accurate and appropriate production of the sequences in controlled situations (C-tests) and free production (essays). The participants (n=21) belonged to two-intact classes. The experimental group (n=10) received FSs instruction, while the control group (n=11) did not.74 FSs were selected from Biber et al.'s (1999) study. The instruction was in the form of reading classes and writing classes. The reading classes were devoted to raising students' awareness of the

importance of FSs in academic texts in addition to studying and practising the usage of a chosen few in depth. During these classes, the students were engaged in activities like: reading texts, noticing, classifying FSs according to their structure, concordance lines, corpus extracts etc. As for the writing classes, the participants would review the awareness-raising activities and were encouraged to incorporate FSs in their writing through activities like revising FSs suitable for a particular essay, classifying FSs according to their lexico-grammatical patterns, analyzing the functions of FSs in context, and gap-filling exercises.

The results showed an increase in students' awareness as the majority identified more FSs in the reading posttest than in the pretest. However, the participants made a slight improvement in the production of FSs in a controlled situation as measured by a C-test and no visible improvement in the use of FSs in their essays. Several factors, as the researchers themselves noted, contributed to these results. First, the time span for the study, 10 weeks and within that period only one or two hours were devoted to the teaching of FSs, was not enough for evidence of improvement to be seen. Also, the pre C-test differed from the post C-test in terms of FSs items, which made the results not directly comparable. The small number of participants who attended the pretest and posttest (7 out of 10) may also have made the results non-generalizable. Moreover, the groups of study received slightly different materials and teaching styles as they were taught by two different teachers. Furthermore, little time, only a gap of 2 weeks, was allowed between the two essays add to that the fact that the participants in essay 1 were provided with textual support, while in essay 2 there was little support and thus they produced few FSs.

In a recent study, Colovic- Marcovic (2012) examined the effects of explicit teaching of FSs, academic and topic-induced, on students' abilities to produce the target FSs in controlled (C-test) and uncontrolled (essays) situations, and to produce better quality writing. The study was based on that of Jones and Haywood (2004), with an attempt to correct some

of the limitations their study suffered from. Participants were 44 ESL students from five high-intermediate writing classes in American university Intensive English Program. The target FSs used in the study were taken from two sources: the Academic Formulas List (AFL) (Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010) and the reading materials used in preparation for writing. Two main criteria were taken into consideration when selecting the sequences: usefulness to students and relevance to academic discourse and the topics dealt with in class. Employing a quasi-experimental design, the participants were divided into an experimental group (n=27) who received explicit instruction on the target FSs over an academic term or 8 weeks and a control group (n=17) who did not, but rather was exposed to FSs only through reading and class discussions. Both groups were taught by the same teacher, followed the same syllabus and dealt with the same materials.

The teaching of FSs was integrated into the writing classes and was provided according to the order in which the reading topics were dealt with. The instruction was aligned with Nation's three principles of successful vocabulary learning (noticing, retrieval, and production) and focused on the development of the receptive knowledge and then on the productive knowledge of the target FSs. Also, the researcher dealt with each type of FSs (academic and topic-induced) separately either in teaching or assessment. As for the teaching of academic FSs, the participants were first provided with the reading texts with the target FSs highlighted so as to encourage noticing. After that, they were engaged in activities like: classifying FSs according to their functions, gap-filling, C-test exercises, dictogloss, identifying FSs in passages and using them in oral presentations, and examining their own essays for FSs use. The teaching of topic-induced FSs, which started midterm, followed the same order. That is, students completed activities that focused on the production of FSs in controlled situations (matching, close-type activities, gap-filling, jeopardy game) and then

activities that aimed at the production of FSs in their writing (build an argument and examining their essays for FSs use).

The results indicated that the experimental group performed better than the control group in the production of academic FSs in a controlled situation (C-test) and the production of topic-induced FSs in a controlled situation (C-test) and uncontrolled situation (essay). Nevertheless, no statistical difference was found between the two groups in terms of the production of academic FSs in an uncontrolled situation (essay) and the overall quality of writing. However, the above results on topic-induced FSs need to be treated with caution. First, there was no pre C-test on topic-induced FSs, so it is difficult to ascertain whether any group differences were due to treatment. Also, when writing the essays, the students had access to reading materials which contained topic-induced FSs, and thus it cannot be claimed that the target FSs were recalled from memory.

In her interpretation of the students' low performance in the production of academic FSs in essays, the researcher ascribed it the decrease in students' motivation as they submitted their posttest essays after the last day of instruction. So, they felt that instruction was over and their grades had already been determined. The researcher, thus, assumed that the use of only topic-induced FSs did not seem to affect the students' overall writing quality. Finally, the researcher concluded that though there was no statistically significant effect of explicit teaching on students' overall writing quality, descriptive statistics showed that the instruction was useful to both high and low performing students, and it was low performing students who benefited the most.

The present study represents a departure from both Jones and Haywood's (2004) and Colovic-Marcovic's (2012) study. It is designed as an attempt to overcome the flaws of their studies. Briefly, participants will be pretested on all measures and no access to materials will

be allowed when taking the pre and posttest essays to ensure that the acquisition of FSs is really taking place and that students are recalling them from memory. Also, instruction will be planned in a way that balances between activities that promote receptive knowledge and activities that aim at productive knowledge.

Moreover, the study is dissimilar to the two previous studies in many ways. First, unlike the two studies whose participants were non-English majors, but attended EAP courses to prepare them from university in different specialities, participants of the present study are EFL students majoring in English. Besides, the target FSs are different from those selected by Jones and Haywood (Biber et al., 1999) and Colovic-Marcovic (Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010). Finally, when assessing the posttest essays in terms of FSs use, not only the selected FSs will be taken into account in the identification process, but also new FSs students acquired on their own.

Conclusion

Though results of different studies showed a fluctuation in the proportion of FSs in written discourse, the general tendency is that they are pervasive, making up between one third and one half. These sequences are important not only because they are omnipresent in language, but also because their use serve as a marker of writing proficiency. Likewise, their absence or lack may mark a piece of writing as poor and inappropriate. Unfortunately, ESL/EFL learners differ from native-speakers in their use of FSs. For instance, they tend to underuse FSs which are frequent in native speakers' texts, overuse those sequences they know very well or that have direct equivalents in their L_1, and misuse some others. Facing such challenges in using FSs, learners should be exposed explicitly and systematically to these sequences in their writing classrooms. The next chapter will furnish an in-depth look at the teaching and learning situation of FSs in the EFL Algerian writing classrooms.

Chapter Four

Teachers and Students Questionnaire

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Chapter Four: Teachers and Students Questionnaire

Introduction

Since more and more researchers are ascribing writing proficiency to FSs, the incorporation of these sequences in any writing classroom has become a must. Accordingly, the present chapter seeks to investigate the place FSs hold in our writing classrooms. As the learning process is a shared responsibility among teachers and students, two questionnaires are designed. The teachers questionnaire aims at finding out teachers' awareness of FSs, as well as their attitudes and practices regarding the incorporation of these sequences in their writing classrooms. The students questionnaire endeavours to investigate students' awareness of FSs and their role in improving the writing skill. In addition to serving as a starting point for the fieldwork, findings obtained from the two questionnaires would also help us check our research assumptions:

1. Teachers as well as students would show a lack of awareness of FSs and their importance in writing.

2. Though teachers would show positive attitudes towards the integration of FSs in their writing classrooms, they would not make the teaching of these sequences part of their teaching agenda.

4.1. Teachers Questionnaire

4.1.1. The Pilot Questionnaire

After constructing the questionnaire, it was pre-tested on four teachers out of the twelve who eventually completed it. The purpose of piloting the questionnaire was to ensure that it works in actual practice and to identify any potential problems with the organization, wording, comprehensibility or the relevance of the questions.

The pilot questionnaire originally contained a total of 21 questions and statements increased later on to 24. As a result of analyzing the pilot questionnaire, three questions were added (Q 10, Q 19, Q 23) since they were found necessary for furthering the aims set for the questionnaire. Another change that was made was reversing the order of questions 6 and 7. It seemed logical that question 7 'Do you think that your students fail to write appropriately mostly because…' should come directly after question 5 'How would you rate your students' level in writing?' since if teachers are not satisfied with their students' level of writing, it follows logically that the reason behind their dissatisfaction should follow. Besides, the item 'They have the words, but they do not know how to put them together' in question 6 was misunderstood by some of the informants. The teachers interpreted it as the stringing of words together using grammar rules. Therefore, to ensure that the question would be understood in the same way by all the informants, it was clarified as follows: 'they have the words, but they do not know how to put them together in combinations or chunks (e.g., instead of saying: '*to make a mistake'*, many students say '*to do a mistake*''.

4.1.2. Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

With the aim of uncovering teachers' beliefs, opinions and awareness of FSs, their attitudes as well as practices regarding the incorporation of these sequences in their writing classrooms, a questionnaire of 24 closed and open-ended questions was constructed. The questionnaire was handed out to 12 teachers of Written Expression at the department of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi. Since we assumed that the term FSs might not be familiar to many teachers, a brief definition was provided in a footnote in the questionnaire to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding.

As shown in Appendix 1, the questions were arranged into four sections:

Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q4)

The main concern of this first section was to gain information about the participants' academic background: their qualifications, their experience teaching at the university as well as teaching Written Expression, in addition to the level they were assigned to teach.

Section Two: The Writing Skill (Q 5-Q 12)

This section sought to glean insights into the practices of Written Expression teachers. More specifically, the aim was to investigate their attitudes towards the writing skill in general and to see if they had multi-word units (FSs) in mind when dealing with writing. Thus, the teachers were first asked to evaluate their students' writing level (Q5) and point out the major cause behind their inappropriate writing (Q6). The section aimed also to find out how teachers perceive writing proficiency (Q7), which aspects they target during feedback provision (Q8) and which language aspects they consider most important for improving the writing skill (Q9). Besides, given that FSs form a major part of vocabulary the same as single words, teachers were asked about their perception of vocabulary (Q10), whether they focus on it during their writing lessons (Q11) and if they do not, what the reason is (Q12).

Section Three: Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Practices Regarding Formulaic Sequences (Q13-Q23)

The aim of this section was to investigate teachers' awareness of the formulaic nature of language, their attitudes and practices regarding the inclusion of FSs in writing classrooms. First, as practices usually reflect one's held beliefs, teachers were asked if they teach FSs along with single words when dealing with vocabulary (Q13, Q14, Q15). Answers to these questions would allow us to ensure if our informants held a word-centered view of vocabulary or not. Then, to get an idea about whether teachers teach FSs in their writing classrooms, questions 16, 17 and 18 were put. Further, to see if teachers understand how FSs should be

dealt with in the writing classroom, they were asked about the types of FSs they regularly draw their students' attention to (Q19) and what criteria they use to select FSs for classroom instruction (Q20). Question items 21 and 22 were put to enquire about the participants' attitudes towards the teaching of FSs and to see if they really understand their role in improving the writing skill. This section ended by enquiring about the teachers' willingness to incorporate FSs in their writing classrooms (Q23).

Section Four: Further Suggestions and Comments (Q24)

This is the last section and it comprises only one question item which granted teachers space to provide any suggestions or comments related to the aim of the questionnaire.

4.1.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Section One: Background Information

Question 1: Degree held:

a. License (BA)

b. Master

c. Magister

d. Doctorate (PhD)

Table 3

Teachers' Qualifications

Options	N	%
a	00	00
b	00	00
c	09	75
d	03	25
Total	**12**	**100**

As the table shows, most teachers (N=9) were magister holders, while the remaining three teachers had PhD (doctorate) degree, with one of them indicating that s/he had an LMD doctorate degree.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching at the university?

Table 4

Years of Teaching at the University

Years	**N**	**%**
3-5	03	25
6-9	06	50
21-35	03	25
Total	**12**	**100**

As table 4 indicates, half of the respondents (N=6) have been teaching at the university for 6 to 9 years; three (25%) have been teaching for 3 to 5 years, while the remaining three teachers (25%) have a teaching experience that ranges from 21 to 35 years.

Question 3: How long have you been teaching 'Written Expression'?

Table 5

Years of Teaching 'Written Expression'

Years	**N**	**%**
One semester- 5 years	10	83.33
23-25	02	16.66
Total	**12**	**100**

Table 5 shows that most teachers (83.33%) have been teaching 'Written Expression' for one semester to 5 years, whereas only two teachers (16.66%) have been teaching it for 23 and 25 years respectively. Comparing teachers' writing experience level to their general teaching experience level, it can easily be noticed that the former is much lower than the

latter. This can be ascribed to the fact that teachers are not always assigned the module of 'Written Expression', which negatively impacts students' achievement. Teachers need to have enough experience with the teaching of 'Written Expression' to be able to lay firm foundation for the development of students' writing skill.

Question 4: Which level?

a. First year

b. Second year

c. Third year

d. Master one

Table 6

The Level(s) Teachers are Assigned

Options	**N**	**%**
a	04	33.33
b	06	50
c	01	08.33
d	01	08.33
Total	**12**	**100**

Half of the participants (N=6) were assigned second year students; 4 teachers (33.33%) first years and one teacher (8.33%) third years while the remaining teacher (8.33%) master one students. It seems clear that nearly all teachers (N= 10) were assigned first and second year students which is thought to suit the purposes of the present study. At such beginning levels, writing teachers can find it easy to raise students' awareness of the importance of FSs in writing.

Section Two: The Writing Skill

Question 5: How would you rate your students' level in writing?

a. Very good

b. Good

c. Average

d. Weak

Table 7

Teachers' Evaluation of their Students' Writing Level

options	N	%
a	00	00
b	00	00
c	06	50
d	06	50
Total	**12**	**100**

As table 7 demonstrates, the teachers' opinions were equally divided between those who consider their students' level in writing as average and those who regard it as weak. This is a clear indication that teachers were not really satisfied with their students' writing level.

Question 6: Do you think that your students fail to write appropriately mostly because:

a. They lack grammatical knowledge

b. They do not have the words

c. They have the words, but they do not know how to put them together in combinations or chunks (e.g., instead of saying: '<u>to make</u> a mistake', many students say '<u>to do</u> a mistake')

Table 8

The Main Reason behind Students' Failure to Write Appropriately from the Teachers' Point of View

Options	N	%
a	03	25
b	02	16.66
c	05	41.66
a + c	02	16.66
Total	**12**	**100**

Most teachers (41.66%) said that their students fail to write appropriately mostly because they do not know how to put words together in chunks though they know the words that make up these chunks, while only 25% (N=3) said it is because they lack grammar knowledge. The remaining four teachers were evenly divided between those who thought that students' poor repertoire of words is the reason behind their inappropriate writing (16.66%) and those who said it is because of both students' inadequate grammar knowledge and their inability to combine words together in chunks (16.66%). The obtained results were surprisingly unexpected since we assumed that the highest percentage would go to lack of grammar knowledge followed by the poor repertoire of words respectively. This assumption was based on our experience as a student who had been immersed in a parade of grammar-based classrooms from middle school all the way up into university and where teachers had a knack for zeroing in on grammatical explanation, practice and correction.

Question 7: According to you, the student who writes proficiently is:

a. The one who uses well chosen words

b. The one who generates sentences from scratch using accurate grammar rules

c. The one who knows how to put words together in chunks or formulaic sequences

d. Other, please specify

Table 9

A Proficient Writer from the Teachers' Point of View

Options	N	%
a	02	16.66
b	06	50
c	05	41.66
d	07	58.33

As shown in table 9 above, the highest percentage of the teachers (50%) linked writing proficiency to the use of accurate grammar rules to generate sentences from scratch. This may suggest that the teachers are still wedded to the rule-based view of language which accords grammar a centre stage position in the process of language teaching/learning. It is worth noting, here, that while the role grammar contributes to effective writing is undeniable, overexaggerating this role can be counterproductive. As we mentioned previously in the literature review, over-reliance on the creative power of grammar makes learners fall victims to overgeneration particularly if we consider the actual use of language. Put differently, learners will develop the tendency to construct sentences which, though grammatically correct, are unnatural and dissimilar to those used by native speakers. Besides, though grammar instruction is highly valued and is taught as a separate module, which is the case in our English departments, students fail to transfer their knowledge of grammar rules to their writing, add to this their repetition of the same mistakes despite teachers' continuous efforts to correct them.

Moreover, 41.66% (N=5) said that a good writer is the one who knows how to put words together in chunks. This result may imply that these teachers are aware of the

importance of FSs to students' writing. Thus, they should direct their efforts to this essential aspect of language and not only focus on grammar.

In addition, only two teachers (16.66%) described proficient writing as the use of well-chosen words. This very low percentage came as no surprise knowing that vocabulary has always been the Cinderella of foreign language teaching. Needless to say that vocabulary is an indispensable component of writing. It is a tool through which we communicate our ideas and without it there is no language. It is through accurate and precise word choice that writers convey meaning efficiently, move the reader and breathe life into their writing. Also, the structures and functions students know become useless if they have no vocabulary to use them for communication, as Wilkins (1972 as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1994, p. 69) put it:

> There is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say…while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.

Therefore, teachers should make vocabulary a top priority in their writing classrooms.

Further, 6 out of the 7 teachers who suggested other qualities of a proficient writer unanimously agreed that the use of good and well-organized ideas is what makes proficient writing. Undoubtedly, ideas are an important, if not the most important, component of writing. They are the reason writers write. In fact, without ideas writing is unthinkable. Accordingly, students should take care to include clear, relevant and catchy ideas if they are to be marked as good writers. However, having ideas without knowing how to structure them into a coherent essay is of no value. This point had been mostly stressed by our participants whose comments overwhelmingly centered around organization. Some of their answers are as follow:

- "*The one who writes good topic sentences and thesis statements. In addition, he is the one who chooses the best ideas to be written in a coherent and unified way*".
- "*The one who selects relevant ideas (content) and includes them in a coherent piece of writing*".
- "*The one who organizes his/her ideas in a coherent and accurate piece of writing*".

The reason that nearly all the respondents (6 out of 7) stressed organization becomes obvious when we know that five of them were second year teachers. At this level, the Written Expression programme focuses mainly on essay organization and students are trained to develop essays by making visible to them the elements writers usually include (introduction, thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting ideas and the conclusion) and the transitions they use to lead the reader through the text.

Overall, it seems that teachers had different views about what makes writing proficiency. The obtained results also reveal that grammar and organization were identified as the most essential components of proficient writing, a view we think is shaped by the content of the curriculum teachers follow. It is important to understand here that writing proficiency cannot be achieved through one of the above elements to the exclusion of the others. Rather, it is a multi-faceted concept in which all the mentioned elements are intertwined.

Question 8: When providing feedback on students' writing, do you focus on

a. grammar errors?

b. wrong word choice?

c. miscombination of words (wrong chunking)?

d. Other, please specify

Table 10

The Aspects Teachers Focus on when Providing Feedback on Students' Writing

Options	N	%
a	01	08.33
b	00	00
c	01	08.33
a+b+c	08	66.66
a+c	02	16.66
Total	**12**	**100**

As the table illustrates, the vast majority of the teachers (66.66%) claimed that they focus on all the mentioned aspects, namely grammar errors, wrong word choice and miscombination of words (wrong chunking). Besides, 5 of them added that in addition to these aspects, they also provide feedback on ideas, coherence, unity, organization and mechanics. Clearly, this indicates that most of the teachers were aware, at least theoretically, that form and content feedback are both necessary for the improvement of students' writing.

Question 9: Do you think that writing proficiency can be improved through

a. the teaching of grammar?

b. the teaching of vocabulary?

c. Both

d. Other, please specify

Table 11

The Way to Improve Writing Proficiency

Options	N	%
a	01	08.33
b	00	00
c	10	83.33
d	06	50

As indicated in table 11 above, nearly all the teachers (83.33%) asserted that the way to improve writing proficiency is through the teaching of both grammar and vocabulary. So, the teachers knew that both aspects are indispensable for enhancing the writing skill and that student writers cannot do without one of them. However, it should be emphasized here that grammar and vocabulary should not be treated as two separate divisions. The traditional belief has always been that grammar is a set of sentence frames into which lexical items are slotted. According to Lewis (1993, p. 8), "it is precisely the binary kind of oppositional thought encouraged by this terminology which has inhibited the development and role of lexis in syllabus design". Vocabulary and grammar represent a continuum rather than a dichotomy. Most English words whether lexical or grammatical cannot stand alone or convey meaning in themselves. Rather, they tend to combine with other surrounding words (Lewis, 1993). Clear, Fox, Francis, Krishnamurthy, and Moon (1996) expressed this same idea as follows:

> Particular grammatical patterns tend to co-occur with particular lexical items, and -the other side of the coin- lexical items seem to occur in only a limited range of patterns. The interdependence of grammar and lexis is such that they are ultimately inseparable, working together in the making of meaning. (p. 313)

Therefore, teachers should treat grammar and vocabulary as one inseparable entity if their students are to achieve writing proficiency.

In addition to teaching grammar and vocabulary, five teachers added other suggestions on how to improve writing proficiency. Three comments are worth mentioning. These are teaching the writing process, assigning reading tasks and teaching thinking skills. As stated earlier in the literature review, teaching the process of writing involves guiding students through the stages of writing, namely pre-writing, drafting, revising and rewriting before they produce their finished product. This approach helps learners communicate their ideas more effectively since they know that what they put down can be altered, deleted, restructured or

reorganized. Concerning the second comment, providing reading materials is undoubtedly of utmost importance to student writers as writing is unthinkable without reading. Accordingly, it is recommended that reading should be intertwined with writing instruction. As for teaching the thinking skills, indeed, students should be helped to develop their thinking skills. Students who are able to understand arguments, analyze and judge information, and make inferences are most likely to show a deep level of reflection in their ideas and attention to logical details. Conversely, students with low thinking skills often find it difficult to develop ideas in writing. Thus, writing instruction should entail the development of students' thinking skills to help them come up with creative and interesting writing.

One teacher (8.33%) did not choose any of the suggested options, but instead commented as follows:

-"*As teachers, we should go far beyond language skills and aspects. Writing proficiency is good transfer of ideas through appropriate vocabulary, grammar, mechanics etc."*

It seems clear here that the teacher is stressing the idea of moving away from the linguistic skills to give primacy to ideas. However, our assumption is that students especially at the beginning level are unlikely to pay attention to ideas or the process of writing if they have difficulties with the linguistic skills (vocabulary, grammar etc). Usually, the major concern of most EFL students is to produce an accurate piece of writing in the target language.

Question 10: What is your understanding of vocabulary?

As it was expected, nearly all the teachers (N=11) thought of vocabulary as the stock of single words that make up the language against only 1 respondent who defined it as both single words and multi-word combinations. Below are some of their suggested definitions:

- "*The word that reflects the idea in mind*."

- "*Words of a language in one's repertoire and which a learner uses to communicate his ideas either in writing or speaking."*
- "*A repertoire of words that enables language users to understand and communicate in a language."*

Thus, it seems that teachers still hold the view that the word is the basic unit of meaning. Nevertheless, vocabulary is "*the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do*" (Lessard-Clouston, 2013, p. 2).

Question 11: In your writing classrooms, do you focus on vocabulary?

a. Yes

b. No

Table 12

Teachers' Emphasis on Vocabulary in their Writing Classrooms

Options	N	%
a	11	91.66
b	01	08.33
Total	**12**	**100**

Nearly all the teachers (91.66%) said that they focus on vocabulary in their writing classrooms. This implies that they knew the significance of this linguistic aspect in the writing process.

Question 12: If you answer 'no', would you please say what prevents you from doing so?

This question required the subjects who answered negatively (N=1) in the previous question to justify their answer. The teacher stipulated that s/he did not focus on vocabulary because s/he was constrained by a programme. In this respect, it should be noted that Written

Expression is a complex skill that requires enough time so that teachers are able to cover the programme without haste and work on all aspects that can be of help to their students to build their writing skill. Besides, having a programme to follow does not justify the total neglect of an important aspect of writing like vocabulary. Given that teachers find enough time to draw their learners' attention to grammar points or grammar mistakes during their writing courses, they can also find the time to call their attention to vocabulary.

Section Three: Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Practices Regarding Formulaic Sequences

Question 13: When you deal with vocabulary, do you focus on

a. individual words?

b. formulaic sequences?

c. Both

Table 13

Teachers' Area of Focus when Dealing with Vocabulary

Options	N	%
a	03	25
b	00	00
c	09	75
Total	**12**	**100**

The overwhelming majority of the teachers (75%) said that they focus both on single words and FSs when they deal with vocabulary, while the remaining three teachers (25%) asserted that they emphasize individual words only. The obtained results did not seem to correlate with that of *question 10* where almost all the teachers (N=11) equated vocabulary

with single words. To shed more light on these contradictory answers, the next question will be analyzed.

Question 14: Do you teach new words

a. in isolation?

b. with the words surrounding them?

c. in context?

Table 14

Ways of Teaching New Words

Options	N	%
a	00	00
b	00	00
c	10	83.33
b+c	02	16.66
Total	**12**	**100**

This question was another way of finding out about the participants' perception of the concept of vocabulary and their practices regarding its instruction. As the tabulated answers show, almost all the teachers (83.33%) confirmed that they teach new words in context, whereas only two teachers (16.66%) maintained that they teach new words both in context and with the words surrounding them. Though most teachers knew that words can be learned effectively when presented in context, they seemed to misunderstand the notion of contextualization. "Contextualization means noting the situation in which the word may occur, but most importantly noticing the co-text with which it can regularly occur" (Lewis, 1993, p. 103). Hence, noticing the situation in which the word occurs is not sufficient for the efficient learning of that word if it is not accompanied by the surrounding words with which the word regularly occurs. Moreover, it can be easily noticed that these results are in stark

contrast with those of question 13 where most teachers (N=9) claimed that they focus both on single words and FSs when dealing with vocabulary. These results also came to confirm teachers' perception of vocabulary as single words. Overall, these results leave no room for doubt that the discrepancies in the participants' answers were due to their unawareness of the formulaic nature of language despite claiming the opposite.

Question 15: When dealing with reading materials, do you encourage your students

a. to read by words?

b. to read by chunks?

c. I do not care how they read.

Table 15

How Teachers Train Students to Read

Options	N	%
a	01	08.33
b	07	58.33
c	04	33.33
Total	**12**	**100**

Most teachers (N=7) reported that they encourage their students to read by chunks when dealing with reading materials; one teacher (8.33%) said that s/he encourages them to read by words, whereas four teachers (33.33%) said that they do not care how their students read. This last result could be accounted for by the teachers' assumption that reading is not their major concern in a writing course so it does not matter how students read. Nevertheless, since the word is not the basic unit of meaning, teachers are required to encourage their learners to read by chunks as this helps them not only to decode the meaning of texts but also raise their awareness of the formulaic nature of language.

Question 16: Do you draw your students' attention to formulaic sequences (language chunks) during your writing lessons?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Rarely

e. Never

Table 16

Teachers' Focus on FSs during Writing Lessons

Options	N	%
a	03	25
b	03	25
c	03	25
d	03	25
e	00	00
Total	**12**	**100**

As the table above indicates, the percentages were distributed equally among the first four options. 25% of the teachers claimed that they always draw their students' attention to FSs during their writing lessons, 25% of them said often, another 25% stated that they sometimes do and the remaining 25% said they rarely do. These results show that drawing students' attention to FSs is a frequent practice among half of the teachers while it is not for the other half.

Question 17: If your answer is 'sometimes', 'rarely', or 'never', what is the main reason for doing so?

a. I do not have the time

b. I do not think it is useful

c. I do not know how

d. Other, please specify

Table 17

Obstacles Preventing Teachers from Drawing Students' Attention to FSs Frequently during their Writing Lessons

Options	N	%
a	04	66.66
b	00	00
c	00	00
d	03	50

4 out of the 6 teachers who said that they draw their students' attention to FSs during writing lessons only sometimes or rarely maintained that the main reason for doing so is the lack of time. Besides, 3 teachers (50%) gave the following reasons:

- "*Since vocabulary is not taught as a separate module, I have neither the time nor the intention to teach formulaic sequences. I just teach some words in isolation or in context whenever it is possible*."
- *"The nature of the modules I teach does not give me the chance to do so."*
- *"I draw their attention to formulaic sequences only when necessary, i.e., when I think they are really new for them."*

As stated earlier, the module of 'Written Expression' should fit the needs of both teachers and students in terms of its content and the time devoted to its teaching. Writing teachers should be given enough time so that they can be flexible with the content of the course and hence incorporate any aspects or skills that are of help in promoting students' writing skills, without feeling time-constrained or pressured to complete a set programme. However, scapegoating time or the already low status of vocabulary is not always acceptable to justify the neglect of FSs teaching during writing lessons. If teachers manage to find time

to teach individual words now and then, as the teacher stated above, they can do the same with FSs.

Question 18: How often do you help your students memorize useful chunks through different activities to use them in their writing?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Rarely

e. Never

Table 18

The Frequency of Helping Students Memorize FSs through Different Activities

Options	N	%
a	02	25
b	02	16.66
c	03	25
d	02	8.33
e	03	25
Total	**12**	**100**

The results in table 18 demonstrate that most teachers did not systematically help their students memorize FSs (3 said sometimes, 02 rarely and 3 others said they never do). Of course, drawing students' attention to FSs is an important first step but it is not sufficient for the efficient acquisition of these sequences. Teachers need to help their students commit FSs to long term memory so that they are able to use them effectively in production when needed.

Question 19: Which type(s) of formulaic sequences do you regularly draw your students' attention to?

a. Idioms

b. Phrasal verbs

c. Collocations

d. Discourse devices

e. Sentences frames (e.g., not only X but also Y)

f. Frequent expressions (e.g., I think that, it is likely that)

g. Other, please specify.

Table 19

Types of FSs Teachers Regularly Focus on

Options	N	%
a	08	66.66
b	08	66.66
c	04	33.33
d	04	33.33
e	05	41.66
f	05	41.66
g	00	00

According to table 19, both idioms and phrasal verbs were the most targeted types of FSs by 66.66% of the teachers, followed by sentence frames and frequent expressions (41.66%). Surprisingly, despite the vital importance of collocations and discourse devices in written discourse, they were the least targeted types of FSs. The obtained results could be attributed to the teachers' perception of FSs as mainly those fixed opaque expressions.

Question 20: How do you know that a formulaic sequence is useful and deserves to be brought to students' attention?

11 out of the 12 participants provided the following criteria for selecting FSs which merit attention:

a- Frequency of Occurrence (04 Teachers)

- *"I know that a sequence is useful based on its frequency in language use especially in formal academic contexts."*
- *"When it is widely encountered or used."*

b- The Writing Genre (02 Teachers)

- *"It depends on what I am teaching at the moment in terms of the type of the essay. For instance, with expository essays I provide students with sentence frames and other formulaic expressions that express addition."*
- *"When the students need the sequence for certain types of writing."*

c- Ambiguity (01 Teachers)

- *"If I find that it contributes greatly to the overall meaning of what they will be asked to read or it will create a kind of misunderstanding."*

d- Proficiency Level (01 Teacher)

- *"It depends on the students' level and whether they need it or not in their learning process."*

In addition to the above suggested criteria, one teacher said that s/he selects FSs which contribute to the beauty of writing, an answer which we assume stems from the teacher's perception of FSs as those fixed expressions that make the beauty of texts like idioms, phrasal verbs, proverbs, etc. FSs are, in fact, not limited to these fixed, opaque_expressions nor do they serve only as embellishments. FSs entail collocations, discourse devices, sentence-frames, lexical bundles and many other expressions that are retrieved as wholes from memory and which make writing native-like regardless of their function, fixedness or ambiguity.

Moreover, another teacher said that s/he does not evaluate the usefulness of FSs; s/he just teaches the ones encountered in classroom materials. This answer was a little bit surprising and reflects the respondent's misunderstanding of the formulaic nature of language. Given the sheer number of FSs and the time-constraints of writing classrooms, teachers need to be selective about the sequences that merit their attention.

On the whole, the issue of which sequences to target in the classroom is a thorny one. While frequency of occurrence is cited as the most common criterion for selection, some researchers (e.g., Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009) contended that the vast majority of FSs falls within the middle or rare range. Besides, frequent sequences stand the best chance of being noticed and acquired by learners through repeated exposure so they do not need to be taught at all. Thus, as using frequency of occurrence as the sole criterion may be problematic, other selection criteria need to be considered like fixedness, memorability etc. In sum, regardless of the applied criteria, teachers first need to consider their students' level, needs, and the objectives of the course as Boers and Lindstromberg (2009) put it, "which chunks are particularly useful for a given group of students depends ultimately on their level of proficiency and on the objectives of the course they are taking" (p. 55).

Question 21: Do you think that mastering formulaic sequences helps learners improve their writing proficiency?

a. Yes **b.** No

Table 20

Teachers' Attitudes towards the Importance of FSs in Writing Proficiency

Option	N	%
a	12	100
b	00	00
Total	**12**	**100**

As the table shows, there was complete unanimity among the teachers. They all agreed that mastering FSs helps learners improve their writing proficiency. This clearly shows that they were aware of the important role these sequences play in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. However, the fact that all the teachers believed in the existence of a positive relationship between FSs use and writing proficiency is just an indication that they had a positive opinion about FSs and does not necessarily mean that they did teach these sequences systematically in their classrooms. Evidence for such an interpretation is found in the participants' answer to *question 16*, in which 25% of them said that they draw their students' attention to FSs during writing lessons only sometimes while another 25% said they rarely do. A further proof for our interpretation is the teachers' answer to *question 18*, in which 66.66% asserted that helping students internalize FSs is not a common practice among them (3 teachers said sometimes, 02 rarely and 3 others said they never do). Thus, it is evident that there is a gap between the teachers' beliefs and their everyday practices.

Question 22: If 'Yes', in what ways do they do so?

The aim behind this question was to dig deeper into the teachers' understanding of FSs and to see if they really knew how they affect the writing skill. Some answers worth mentioning are as follows:

- "*Native speakers prefer to use formulaic sequences because they are more expressive. Using formulaic sequences makes the students' written papers look more native-like. Using the right ones is better than using some expressions which are mere translation of colloquial or standard Arabic."*
- *"Formulaic sequences help with clarity and precision in writing and most importantly authenticity."*

- *"They decorate the text and reflect a good mastery of the language. Only high academic level writers use formulaic expressions very often."*
- *"They help students express themselves accurately."*
- *"They help students achieve coherence and native-like proficiency."*
- *"They enhance and improve students' writing style."*
- *"Mastering such sequences would help students produce comprehensible and effective papers."*
- *"I think they are effective in improving students' writing style."*

It is interesting to note that the teachers' answers touched upon the major benefits FSs contribute to students' writing like accuracy, comprehensibility, clarity, precision, native-likeness, coherence and beauty etc. However, it seems that these comments lack details on how FSs improve the writing style or make writing more effective.

Question 23: Are you interested in incorporating formulaic sequences in your writing classrooms to help students write proficiently?

a. Yes

b. No

Table 21

Teachers' Attitudes towards the Incorporation of FSs in their Writing Classrooms

Options	N	%
a	10	83.33
b	02	16.66
Total	**12**	**100**

Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of the teachers (83.33%) showed interest in incorporating FSs in their writing classrooms to help their students produce better quality

essays. These results are encouraging since they clearly indicate the teachers' willingness to incorporate FSs in their classrooms as long as they believe they contribute to the betterment of their students' writing skill. Their readiness to teach these sequences shows that they are not resistant to change which is a basic first step towards the promotion of lexis in syllabus design.

Section Four: Further Suggestions and Comments

Item 24: Please feel free to add any other comments or suggestions that are related to the subject.

6 out of the 12 participants offered some suggestions and comments. Half of these suggestions (N=3) centered around the necessity of reconsidering the status of vocabulary in our English departments. While one teacher called for the incorporation of vocabulary in all subjects, two others indicated that it should be treated as a separate subject. "*Vocabulary should be taught as a separate module to give students as well as teachers sufficient time to learn/teach*", contended one of the teachers. Although integrating vocabulary within the other subjects is beneficial, it is not sufficient to ensure retention let alone the carry-over to productive use. Vocabulary acquisition is a complicated and incremental process, requiring sufficient time to give learners the opportunity for efficient acquisition.

Another interesting suggestion by one of the teachers related to the role of reading. According to him/her, "*one aspect to be considered is the reading skill which is essential to improve writing*". Like vocabulary, reading is also marginalized in our language classrooms. Undoubtedly, reading is essential to both vocabulary and writing development; therefore, it is only natural that it deserves pride of place in our curriculum.

Moreover, though one of the informants showed a positive attitude towards FSs, s/he expressed reservations about their teaching. His/her comment runs as follows: "*Formulaic*

expressions make the piece of writing more pleasant and reflect the writer's feelings. However, as a teacher of writing, I consider that my students must prioritize other rules till they acquire the essentials of the paragraph and the essay before extending to the use of formulaic expressions". Although there is some truth in this opinion, we still think that learners especially at the beginning levels are in the process of building their linguistic knowledge; so, they need to acquire the necessary linguistic skills before embarking on the writing journey. Besides, linguistic knowledge cannot be put on hold until students grasp the fundamentals of paragraph and essay writing (e.g., the thesis statement, the topic sentence, coherence, organization etc). Thus, in addition to teaching the essentials of writing, teachers should also consider teaching FSs. Besides, a careful examination of the above comment reveals that the concept of FSs was misunderstood by some of the teachers. The informant's description of the role of FSs as tools that make writing more pleasant and mirror the writer's feelings reveals that the respondent perceived FSs as those fixed opaque expressions like idioms, phrasal verbs etc. Further evidence of this interpretation is found in the participant's answer to *question 21* where s/he maintained that FSs "*decorate the text*". A further proof is a comment made by another teacher in which s/he explained that FSs are dealt with in our language classrooms in two lessons: a lesson about phrasal verbs in Grammar and another about idioms in Oral Expression. To put it in his/her words: "*Formulaic sequences are an important aspect of the language. They are dealt with in some subjects; for example, phrasal verbs in Grammar and idioms in Oral Expression. Besides, they are sometimes dealt with in an indirect way when teachers come across them while dealing with reading and listening materials*".

Considering the above comments, it can be said that though the importance of FSs was acknowledged, they were not really given the attention they deserve in language classrooms.

4.1.4. Summary of the Main Findings

Based on the above discussion, the following findings are obtained:

- Teachers think that proficient writing is the use of accurate grammar rules along with good organization.

- Vocabulary is perceived as single words which form the basic unit of meaning, a view that can be attributed to the teachers' perception of language as a composition of grammar and vocabulary items.

- Though nearly all teachers claimed that they focus on both single words and multi-word units (FSs), their contradictory views, such as their answer to *question 10* where nearly all of them equated vocabulary with individual words and *question 14* in which they asserted that they teach single words in context without considering the co-text or the other words with which the words regularly co-occur, left no shred of doubt that the teachers did not have these sequences in mind only when explicitly asked about them. Thus, it can be safely said that teachers were not really aware of the formulaic nature of language.

- The concept of FSs was misunderstood by some teachers who limited them to only those fixed opaque expressions like idioms.

- Though teachers found FSs of paramount importance for the improvement of students' writing and expressed positive attitudes towards their incorporation in their writing classrooms, they were not really teaching these sequences systematically.

- An encouraging finding was that teachers expressed their willingness to teach FSs as long as they consider them beneficial for their students' writing.

- Teachers believe that vocabulary is neglected within the syllabus and thus its status needs to be reconsidered.

- The role of reading was acknowledged in writing classrooms.

4.2. Students Questionnaire

4.2.1. The Pilot Questionnaire

Before administering the final version of the questionnaire to the study participants, it was piloted with a group of 20 second year students of the target population. In addition to answering the questions, the participants were also asked to spot any unclear questions or ambiguous wording. After the analysis of the pilot questionnaire, some changes were made. First, the number of questions was reduced from 21 to 18. 3 questions were deleted since they were either irrelevant to the aim of the questionnaire or repetitious. Besides, the order of question 6 "How often do you read to improve your writing skill?" was changed to become the last one in the section, 'question 6' in the main questionnaire. Also, the item "when you have the words, but you do not know how to put them together?" in question 3 was misunderstood by some respondents. They interpreted it as the combination of words according to grammar rules. So, it was clarified as follows: "when you have the words, but you do not know how to put them together in chunks (e.g., instead of saying: 'to make a mistake', many students say 'to do a mistake')?" Further, question 7 "Does vocabulary include single words, formulaic sequences (multi-word units), or both?" was inappropriate because it was a leading question in that it shows the answer the researcher expected. Hence, it was reworded as follows: "What is your understanding of vocabulary?"

4.2.2. Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

At the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016, a questionnaire, which was designed mainly to investigate students' awareness of FSs and their role in honing the writing skill, was administered to 40 second year students who represent our study participants. The questionnaire comprised 18 closed and open-ended questions. Before administering the questionnaire, the concept of FSs was explained and illustrated with some examples because we assumed that it was unknown to students.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: (see Appendix 2)

Section One: The Writing Skill (Q1-Q6)

The aim behind this section was to probe into students' attitudes towards the writing skill in general. More specifically, it sought to obtain information on how students perceive and judge the difficulty of writing in comparison with the other skills (Q1), how they evaluate their level in writing (Q2), and the reason(s) for their writing difficulties (Q3). This section aimed also to find out the strategy students use to produce language (Q4), which language aspect(s) they think can improve their writing (Q5) and how often they read to improve their writing skill (Q6).

Section Two: Formulaic Sequences (Q7-Q17)

The major concern of this section was to investigate students' awareness of FSs as reflected in their language learning practices. First, it aimed to know whether students are aware that FSs or multi-word units form a major part of vocabulary the same as single words (Q7), what strategy students use when reading (Q8) and whether they can guess the words that co-occur with certain words when reading (Q9). The students were also asked how they learn new words (Q10), whether they try to find FSs when reading (Q11), and if they do, whether they memorize them to use them later on in their writing (Q12). Further, to get an idea about writing teachers' practices regarding the teaching of FSs from the perspective of students, the students were asked whether their teachers draw their attention to these sequences (Q13). Questions 14 and 15 were put to see if students understand the role of FSs in improving writing. Finally, the section ended by enquiring about the students' attitudes towards the teaching of vocabulary as a separate skill (Q16) and asked them to justify their choice (Q17).

Section Three: Further Suggestions and Comments (Q18)

This last section gave students the opportunity to offer comments or suggestions related to the subject.

4.2.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Section One: The Writing Skill

Question 01: How would you rate the language skills in terms of their difficulty for you? (Please rank your choices in order of difficulty, from the least difficult to the most difficult 1-4).

a. Listening

b. Speaking

c. Reading

d. Writing

Table 22

Students' Classification of the Language Skills in terms of their Difficulty

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	03	15	03	16.66
b	04	20	05	27.77
c	00	00	00	00
d	13	65	10	55.55
Total	**20**	**100**	**18**	**100**

The results in table 22 demonstrate that writing was deemed the most difficult skill for all students in both the experimental and the control groups (65% and 55.55%), followed by speaking (20% and 27%) and listening (15% and 16.66%). Reading was considered the least difficult skill by all the students (0%). These results indicate that students recognize the difficulty of the writing skill. Writing is, indeed, challenging even for native speakers since it

involves many component skills. Thus, enough time and appropriate teaching should be provided to help students write adequately.

Question 02: How would you rate your level in writing?

a. Very good

b. Good

c. Average

d. Weak

Table 23

Students' Evaluation of their Level in Writing

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	00	00	01	05
b	01	05	04	20
c	11	55	08	40
d	08	40	07	35
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Table 23 above shows that nearly all students in both groups described their level in writing as average (55% and 40%) or weak (40% and 35%). Besides, while only one student (05%) in the experimental group said s/he had a good writing level, four students (20%) in the control group said so in addition to another one (05%) who claimed that s/he had a very good writing level. These results clearly indicate the students' dissatisfaction with their writing level. This view corresponds with that of the teachers in the teachers' questionnaire *(question 5)* in that they were equally divided between those who saw their students' writing level as average and those who described it as weak. Students' weakness in writing attests to the

complexity of the writing skill. Therefore, the onus is on teachers to help their students overcome their writing difficulties.

Question 03: When writing, do you find it difficult to express your ideas

a. when you do not have the words?

b. when you have the words, but you do not know how to put them together in chunks (e.g., instead of saying: 'to make a mistake', many students say 'to do a mistake')?

c. when you do not know how to put words together using grammar rules?

Table 24

The Difficulties Students Face when Writing

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	03	15	03	15
b	02	10	01	05
c	05	25	06	30
a+b	03	15	04	20
b+c	02	10	02	10
a+c	05	25	01	05
a+b+c	/	/	03	15
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Having expressed their dissatisfaction with their writing level, this question required the students to state their writing problems. According to table 22 above, most students in both groups (65% in the experimental group and 50% in the control group) ascribed their writing difficulties to their lack of grammar knowledge (25% and 30%), their poor repertoire of words (15% in both groups) or both of them (25% and 05%). In addition, while 15% (N= 03) in the experimental group and 20% (N=04) in the control group said that they could not express their ideas because they neither had the words nor knew how to combine the words

they had in chunks, 10% (N=02) in both groups maintained that their problem lies in their inability to chunk words together as well as their inadequate grammar knowledge. 3 students in the control group said that they had problems with all the mentioned aspects.

The higher percentage for grammar and vocabulary words was expected knowing that the students' choice was largely affected by the teaching practices which overexaggerate the role of grammar and vocabulary. Many of students' writing difficulties stem from their inadequate knowledge of how to put words together in chunks. For example, it is not uncommon for writing teachers to come across expressions like 'in one hand' or 'to do a mistake' when reading or correcting students' papers. Hence, if students are instructed not to rely only on the creative power of grammar, their linguistic problems will be diminished. Learning multi-word units does not only enrich students' vocabulary but also reduces their grammar mistakes.

Question 04: When writing your paragraphs/ essays do you

a. generate sentences by putting words together using grammar rules?

b. combine words together in chunks or formulaic sequences?

c. Both

Table 25

Students' Strategy for Producing Language

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	07	35	06	30
b	05	25	04	20
c	08	40	10	50
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Most students in both groups (40% in the experimental group and 50% in the control group) said that they both combine words together according to grammar rules and use chunks when writing. This may suggest that students are aware that language use entails both an analytical processing system whereby words are combined together according to grammar rules to produce novel linguistic material, and a holistic processing system in which multi-word units are retrieved from long term-memory as wholes.

Question 05: Which of these, do you think, can improve your writing?

a. Grammar

b. Vocabulary

c. Both

Table 26

The Most Important Aspect for the Improvement of Writing for Students

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	01	05	00	00
b	01	05	01	05
c	18	90	19	95
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Nearly all students in both groups (90% and 95%) said that both grammar and vocabulary are indispensable for the improvement of the writing skill. This means that students know that writing is unthinkable without one of these aspects. However, as previously stated in the teachers' questionnaire, grammar and vocabulary should not be treated as two separate entities as this separation overshadows the role of the multi-word units in between.

Question 06: How often do you read to improve your writing skill?

a. Often

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

Table 27

Students' Reading Frequency

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	00	00	02	10
b	09	45	08	40
c	07	35	10	50
d	04	20	00	00
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

As illustrated in table 27, 45% of the students in the experimental group said that they read sometimes, while 35% said they rarely read in addition to the remaining 20% who confirmed that they never do. None of the students declared that they read often. As for the control group, half of the respondents (50%) asserted that they rarely read. 40% said that they read only sometimes, against only 2 students (10%) who said that they read often times. The obtained results clearly show that reading is not a habit among the students. As mentioned before, there is no better way to improve the writing skill than by reading. Reading improves students' grammar, sentence structure, lexis, spelling, style, all of which can help students write effectively. Through reading, students broaden their knowledge, pick new ideas, sharpen their analytical skills and thus gain the ability to write lucidly, logically, persuasively and creatively. So, teachers should encourage their students to read both inside and outside the classroom to help them become effective writers.

Section Two: Formulaic Sequences

Question 07: What is your understanding of vocabulary?

All students in both groups defined vocabulary as the individual words that make up a language. So, as it was expected, having the same perception as teachers, students also perceive the word as the basic unit of meaning. As said before, this view has its genesis in the traditional teaching practices which treat grammar and vocabulary as two separate components of language. New linguistic research studies proved that vocabulary is not restricted only to single words; it also includes multi-word units which are prevalent in, and significant to, human communication. Accordingly, teachers should embrace this view of language and try to inculcate it in their students through their classroom practices.

Question 08: When you read, do you do so

a. word by word?

b. chunk by chunk?

Table 28

The Strategy Students Use when Reading

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	09	45	11	55
b	11	55	09	45
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

As the table shows, a large proportion of students in both groups (55% and 45%) claimed that they read by chunks. The obtained results were unexpected given that all the students defined vocabulary in terms of one word items.

Question 09: When you read, can you infer which word or phrase might follow at the sight of certain words?

a. Yes **b.** No

Table 29

Students' Ability to Guess Words or Phrases Co-occurring with Certain Words

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	10	50	11	55
b	10	50	09	45
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

50% of the students in the experimental group and 55% in the control group said that they could guess the words or phrases that co-occur with certain words. This would further be checked through a C-test in the next chapter.

Question 10: Do you learn new words

a. in isolation?

b. in chunks?

c. in context?

Table 30

The Way Students Learn New Words

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	00	00	00	00
b	05	25	04	20
b+c	/	/	01	05
c	15	75	15	75
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Most students in both groups (75% in both groups) said that they learn new words in context. Only 1 student in the control group (5%) said that s/he learns new words both in context and in chunks. The obtained results were expected as most teachers (83.33%) in the teachers' questionnaire (*question 14*) confirmed that they teach new words in context without considering the surrounding words. Besides, these results came to confirm that the contradictions in students' answers, where they defined vocabulary in terms of single words *(question 7)* and claimed that they read by chunks *(question 8)*, are proof of their unawareness of the syntagmatic behaviour of words or the formulaicity of language. Besides, another evidence for this interpretation is found in *question 9* where nearly half of the respondents (50% and 55%) said they know how to chunk words together and *question 4* where most students (40% and 50%) reported that they produce language by both combining words according to grammar rules and by using chunks. If students learn new words focusing mainly on their context without paying heed to the words that regularly co-occur with them, how can they guess the words that co-occur with the other words when reading or use multi-word units in their language production?

Question 11: When dealing with reading materials in English (newspapers, novels, etc), do you try to find chunks or formulaic sequences like 'on the other hand', 'when it comes to', 'put up with' etc?

a. Yes **b.** No

Table 31

Students' Practices Regarding FSs when Dealing with English Reading Materials

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	08	40	08	40
b	12	60	12	60
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

60% of the students in both groups reported that they do not try to find FSs when dealing with reading materials. This further confirms that most students are not aware of these sequences. As such, it is the teachers' responsibility to encourage students to notice these sequences in authentic input. If conscious noticing of language features is not encouraged in the classroom, learners will not be able to learn those features.

Question 12: If 'yes', do you memorize these sequences to use them in your writing?

a. Yes

b. No

Table 32

Students' Practices Regarding the Memorization of the Searched FSs

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	08	100	08	100
b	00	00	00	00
Total	**08**	**100**	**08**	**100**

This question required the students who answered positively to the previous question (N= 08 in both groups) to state whether they memorize the sequences they search in reading materials to use them in their writing. As the table above indicates, all students in both groups asserted that they memorize the FSs they meet in reading materials to use them in their writing. This may suggest that these students are aware of the role these sequences play in the improvement of their writing.

Question 13: How often does your teacher draw your attention to language chunks (formulaic sequences) in the writing classroom?

a. Often

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

Table 33

Teachers' Focus on FSs in the Writing Classroom from the Students' Point of View

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	04	20	02	10
b	05	25	06	30
c	03	15	05	25
d	08	40	07	35
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Most students in both groups (40% and 35%) said that their teachers never draw their attention to FSs during writing lessons. Only 4 students in the experimental group and 2 in the control group reported that their teachers draw their attention to language chunks often times. These results seem to contradict those obtained in the teachers' questionnaire *(question 16),* where half of the teachers (50%) said that they draw their students' attention to FSs frequently (25% said always and another 25% said often). Also, these results account for the students' unawareness of FSs.

Question 14: Do you think that formulaic sequences can help you improve your writing?

a. Yes

b. No

Table 34

Students' Attitudes towards the Importance of FSs in Writing Proficiency

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	19	95	19	95
b	00	00	00	00
No answer	01	05	01	05
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

One student (05%) in both groups left the question unanswered. The remaining students (N=19, 95% in both groups) all agreed that FSs can help them improve their writing skill. This shows that the students have positive attitudes towards FSs.

Question 15: Whatever your answer, please justify your choice.

This question aimed to see if students really understand the role of FSs in enhancing the writing skill. A cursory look at students' answers to this question revealed that most of them (13 out of 19 in the experimental group and 11 out of 19 in the control group) have no idea how FSs improve writing proficiency. They merely pointed out in their answers that FSs improve writing without giving any other details on how they improve it. This clearly shows that these students are not familiar with the notion of chunks nor are they aware of the role they play in enhancing the writing skill.

Some of the suggested answers of the remaining students were as follows:

The Experimental Group:

- *"Using formulaic sequences helps us avoid redundancy, makes writing coherent and beautiful."*
- *"When we use formulaic sequences, we make fewer mistakes."*

- *"Formulaic sequences help me learn new words and enrich my vocabulary."*
- *"When writing I do not know how to link words together; I think formulaic sequences can solve this problem."*
- *"They make our writing more organized."*

The Control Group:

- "*Formulaic sequences enable us avoid thinking in Arabic."*
- *"They make the writing style better."*
- *"They attract the reader."*
- *"They make writing easier and are good for the flow of ideas."*
- *"Formulaic sequences enrich my vocabulary which enables me to write better."*
- *'They make my writing more convincing."*

As can be seen above, though the answers of the few remaining students were not detailed enough, they touched upon some of the major benefits FSs offer for student writers, such as accuracy, organization, coherence, beauty, rhetoric etc.

Question 16: In your opinion, should vocabulary be taught as a separate module like grammar?

a. Yes

b. No

Table 35

Students' Opinion about the Teaching of Vocabulary as a Separate Module

	Experimental Group		**Control Group**	
Options	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
a	16	80	18	90
b	04	20	02	10
Total	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**

Nearly all students in both groups (80% and 90%) were of the opinion that vocabulary should be taught as a separate module like grammar. However, 04 students in the experimental group (20%) and 02 students in the control group (10%) said that vocabulary should not be taught as separate module. As for the reasons for the position each group adopted, they will be discussed in the next question.

Question 17: Whatever your answer, please justify your choice.

According to the provided answers, most students were unanimous in their view that vocabulary should be taught as a separate module mainly because they thought it is of vital importance to the development of their writing skill (9 students out of 16 in the experimental group and 7 out of 18 in the control group), add to that their belief that their vocabulary knowledge was poor (4 students in the experimental group and 6 in the control group). The remaining students gave different reasons like the difficulty of acquiring vocabulary on one's own (3 students in the experimental group and 2 in the control group), achieving good mastery of vocabulary (2 students in the control group), and lack of exposure to vocabulary outside language classrooms (1 student in the control group).

As for the students who answered negatively (4 students in the experimental group and 2 in the control group), they all maintained that vocabulary should not be taught at all because learners can learn it by themselves through reading or listening or through the other modules.

It is commonly agreed that vocabulary can be learned naturally without any pedagogical intervention. However, there are some elements that learners cannot even notice (for whatever reason) let alone acquire on their own. Besides, though some vocabulary words and expressions can be picked through incidental learning, they cannot be deeply processed and retained over time, thus leading to ineffective learning. Therefore, the most effective way for learners to acquire vocabulary is through explicit instruction.

Section Three: Further Suggestions and Comments

Item 18: Please feel free to add any other comments or suggestions that are related to the subject.

13 students out of 20 in the experimental group and 10 out of 20 in the control group offered comments/suggestions which could be summarized in the following points:

- The necessity of teaching vocabulary as a separate module (6 students in the experimental group and 7 in the control group).
- Reading is important for improving the writing skill (2 students in the experimental group and 2 in the control group)
- The notion of FSs is new to all students and they seem to be useful for the improvement of the writing skill. So, writing teachers should introduce their students to these sequences (8 students in the experimental group and 1 in the control group).

Below are some of the comments of each group:

The Experimental Group:

- "*If we want to improve our writing, we must learn vocabulary as a separate module. Reading is also important"*
- *"We must learn formulaic sequences in the classroom and learn vocabulary as a separate module because we are still weak in writing."*
- *"I guess formulaic sequences will help us express our ideas when writing and will improve our language. I really wish we had a module that teaches us these expressions."*
- *"I just heard of formulaic sequences today and I think it is very necessary for teachers to draw our attention to these expressions."*

- *"I think that formulaic sequences are very important to learn. Teachers should draw students' attention to their use instead of just focusing on single words. Each formulaic sequence is ready made to use in its appropriate context."*

The Control Group:

- *"I think vocabulary should be taught as a separate module."*
- *"Reading affects the writing level and improves our vocabulary."*
- *"We need to know more about vocabulary. Teachers must teach us about formulaic sequences because, honestly, it is the first time I hear about them."*

4.2.4. Summary of the Main Findings

The analysis of the above questionnaire revealed the following findings:

- Writing is the most difficult skill for students. This justifies the fact that nearly all of them described their writing level as average or weak.
- Most students attributed their writing difficulties to their inadequate grammar knowledge and their poor repertoire of words which reinforces the assumption that language is perceived as a composite of grammar rules and single vocabulary items.
- Reading is not a habit among the students.
- Vocabulary is limited only to single words.
- Despite claiming that they produce language by both combining words according to grammar rules (analytic approach) and by using multi-word units (FSs) (holistic approach) and that they read by chunks, these same students reported that they do not try to find FSs when dealing with reading materials nor do they pay attention to the surrounding words when learning new words. Hence, these contradictory answers lead us to say that students are not aware of FSs.
- Teachers do not draw their students' attention to FSs systematically.

- Though nearly all students thought that FSs improve their writing, they had no idea how they can do so.
- The importance of reading in writing is acknowledged.
- Vocabulary should be taught as a separate module.
- Students expressed their eagerness to know more about FSs to improve their writing skill.

Conclusion

Findings yielded from the teachers and the students questionnaires reveal that students are not aware of FSs chiefly because their teachers do not draw their attention to them in their writing classrooms. Regarding teachers' attitudes, they all expressed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs in their writing classrooms and showed willingness to teach them. These results came to confirm our research assumptions stating that students are not aware of FSs and their importance in improving the writing skill and that teachers at the department of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University also lack cognizance of the formulaic nature of language and though they hold positive attitudes towards the incorporation of these sequences in their writing classrooms, they do not really teach these sequences during their writing lessons. Therefore, these results set the scene for the fieldwork which consists in the explicit instruction of FSs for the improvement of students' writing skill.

Chapter Five

The Fieldwork

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Chapter Five: The Fieldwork

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the effects of explicit FSs instruction on students' abilities to produce FSs in controlled (C-test) and uncontrolled (essays) situations and to produce better quality writing. Thus, this chapter offers a full account of the methodology used in arriving at the final results. It starts with a description of the sample, including the reasons behind the selection of the target population. Then, it provides an overview of the research design, research procedures, and the treatment delivered to each group. The chapter then moves on to the analysis and discussion of the results, and finally presents the results of the hypotheses tests.

5.1. The Sample

The sample of the present study was drawn from a population of 206 second year LMD students at the department of Letters and English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University of Oum El Bouaghi, during the academic year 2015-2016. Selecting sophomores as the target population is based on the assumption that students at this level are required to produce longer pieces of writing which would allow the researcher to track their use of FSs. Another reason is that language learners are supposed to acquire FSs at the beginning stages of language learning as this would instill in them the idea that multi-word units form part of language the same as single words and that vocabulary and grammar are one inseparable entity. Finally, by acquiring FSs at an earlier stage of learning to write, students can focus, unburdened by the linguistic skills, on other more difficult aspects at advanced levels.

The students who took part in this study were the same students who filled out the questionnaire; that is, 40 second year students constituting two groups as assigned by the administration. They were randomly assigned into experimental group and control group.

There were 34 females and 6 males, who ranged in age from 18 to 23. They share the same linguistic and educational background and they studied English for at least 7 years at middle and secondary schools. Hence, the groups were to some extent homogeneous. Both groups were taught by the same teacher researcher and received the same writing lessons; however, the difference was in FSs instruction. That is to say, contrary to the control group who was exposed to FSs only through reading texts, the experimental group's attention was explicitly drawn to FSs through activities during writing lessons. Finally, to avoid biasing research results, the students were not told they were part of an experimental study. Instead, they were told that they would be taught some useful multi-word units that would help them improve their writing.

5.2. Research Design

The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design in order to investigate the effects of the explicit teaching of FSs on EFL students' writing performance. The main factor that prompted the choice of this design was the lack of randomization; that is to say, it was impossible to assign participants to groups or classes. The participants were already organized into classes by the administration at the beginning of the year.

Like true experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs also involve the manipulation of an independent variable to investigate its effect on a dependent variable. Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, Razavieh (2009) maintained that "quasi-experimental designs are similar to randomized experimental designs in that they involve manipulation of an independent variable but differ in that subjects are not randomly assigned to treatment groups" (p. 316). In this study, the independent variable is FSs instruction and the dependent variable is students' performance in a C-test and a writing test.

In accordance with the selected design, a pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design was used. This design is one of the most widely used designs in educational research. It is similar to the experimental pretest-posttest control group design except that the participants are not randomly assigned to groups. Thus, the term 'non-equivalent' means the assignment to groups is not random. Using this design, both the experimental and control groups are pretested. The treatment is then administered only to the experimental group, and then both groups are post-tested. The key feature of this design is the 'pre-test' since it helps the researcher establish equivalence between the groups and hence solve the problem of assignment bias which can seriously threaten the internal validity of the design (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). In this regard, Ary et al. (2009) stated:

> The pretest enables you to check on the equivalence of the groups on the dependent variable before the experiment begins. If there are no significant differences on the pretest, you can discount selection bias as a serious threat to internal validity and proceed with the study. If there are some differences, the investigator can use ANCOVA to statistically adjust the posttest scores for the pretest differences. (p. 317)

As the figure below illustrates, both groups were pretested through a C-test and a writing test. The experimental group received explicit instruction of FSs during writing classes over one academic term or 8 weeks, while the control group was taught writing in the traditional way, that is, by reading model texts and then writing essays. After the treatment, both groups were post-tested again.

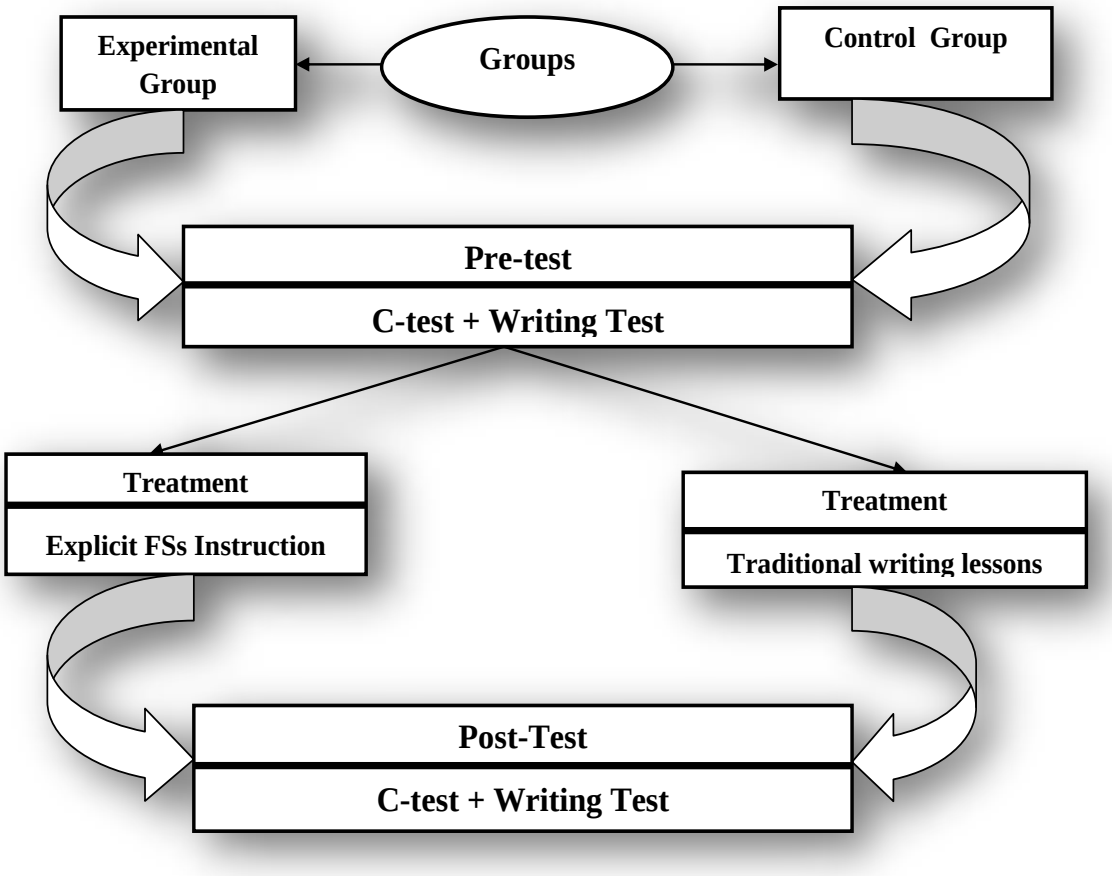

***Figure 1*: A Graphic Representation of the Research Design**

5.3. Research Procedures and Instruments

5.3.1. Selection and Identification of the Target FSs

Primarily, the researcher needed to select which FSs would be used in the study. In addition to the FSs embedded in the reading texts, which included model essays in the target genres as well as background readings on topics similar to those the students would write about, a set of FSs was extracted from different materials that dealt with or listed FSs. Various types of FSs (collocations, idioms, lexical bundles, discourse markers) were extracted from (Lewis, 1997; Lindstromberg & Boers, 2008; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2008; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010). Four criteria were taken into consideration when compiling the final list of FSs which occurred in these materials. First, the sequences

should suit students' proficiency level. They should also be useful to them and worthwhile to teach/learn. This was decided upon by the researcher and another rater, a Written Expression teacher from the same department, who judged the suitability and usefulness of the candidate sequences based on their intuition. The final, and most important, criterion was that the target FSs should be relevant to the target genre and the reading texts students would discuss and emulate in their essays. For instance, if students were introduced to the argumentative essay and discussed '*capital punishmen*t' as a topic, they would be exposed to FSs like: *on the other hand*, *sit on the fence*, *be in agreement*, *put to death* etc.

Regarding the identification of FSs embedded in the reading texts, two approaches were used: intuition and corpus reference. First, since it was not possible to get a panel of independent judges, two raters, the researcher and a Written Expression teacher from the same department, examined the reading texts for the use of FSs. The researcher gave the rater a short description of the study and its aims and briefed her about the notion of FSs. As for the criteria of the identification process, the first decision to make was the length of the sequences. Since we assumed that the students were not familiar with FSs, the researcher included word sequences of all lengths even two-word sequences which are commonly known to be highly frequent. The aim was to draw students' attention to the formulaicity of language and that words tend to collocate with other surrounding words. However, not all sequences were brought to students' attention. Only the sequences which were pedagogically useful to students were selected. Hence, with these criteria in mind, the two raters examined the reading texts and identified possible FSs based on their intuition. After the identification process, the raters compared their judgments and resolved any disagreements by discussion. The sequences which were agreed upon by both raters were noted for further investigation.

Since "approaches which use intuition have weaknesses since they are subjective" (Namba, 2010, p.133), the researcher employed corpus reference as a second step in the

identification process. The researcher first considered the use of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) to check the status of the candidate FSs given that it is the largest dynamic corpus of English- 520 million words. However, as soon as the researcher began the identification process, it quickly became apparent that the corpus was futile. More specifically, the COCA corpus failed to provide adequate instances of many two word and three word sequences despite their formulaicity and abundance among native speakers. For instance, the collocation '*make a mistake*' occurred only 1.39 per million words. More importantly, the corpus could not deal with word strings larger than three words especially those which were topic-related and those with transparent meanings. Therefore, to atone for data scarcity in the COCA corpus, the researcher employed the web plus the search engine Google as a corpus. Many researchers advocated the use of Google-based corpus for the identification of FSs. For example, Shei (2008) argued that: "with its powerful engine and the gigantic web-based corpus, Google can offer solutions to many of the research questions in phraseology which even a billion-word corpus can hardly handle" (p. 70). Similarly, in her study, Sha (2010) compared Google with the British National Corpus (BNC), a static corpus of 100 million words, in terms of their efficacy in identifying collocates or expressions in students' writing. She found that

> Google yields far more results either in number or in comprehensiveness than the BNC. Data scarcity in the BNC seems to be amplified by frequent searches of long strings. Google is more prolific for long strings and constantly replenishes its capacity. (p.319)

Seen as one of the top search engines, Google furnishes its users with an easy-to-use interface as well as a high search speed. Besides, it is dynamic in that internet resources are added or deleted constantly. The most distinguishing feature of this corpus is its ability to search even a 32 word string as one search item. Also, the search can be limited to certain domains, such as

web, news, scholar, blog and to certain countries like Britain or the USA if the user is interested in the varieties of the English language. To retrieve target sequences, the user can either enclose them in double quotation marks and enter them in the search box of the search engine or use the Advanced Search feature and enter the sequences in the "exact phrase" line (Sha, 2010). For the present study, the first method was used to check the frequency of the candidate FSs and only those sequences which occurred more than 100 times in Google books corpus were accepted as FSs.

5.3.2. Description of the Test (Pre and Post-test)

A test consisting of two parts was employed in the pretest and posttest to elicit students' productive knowledge of FSs in controlled and uncontrolled situations before and after instruction. The first part was a C-test, while the second part was a writing test.

5.3.2.1. The C-test

A C-test is a measuring instrument in which the second half of certain words is deleted in some sentences of several short texts (Chapelle, 1994). The aim behind using a C-test was to measure students' ability to produce FSs in a controlled situation. As the study's main concern was with the writing skill, we chose to focus on FSs productive knowledge instead of the receptive one since it is productive knowledge that helps students communicate meaning.

The C-test was constructed by using authentic texts extracted from the COCA corpus. The reason for choosing this corpus was that it is the largest corpus of English and hence could furnish an array of contexts in which FSs were embedded. Besides, this corpus allows for the easy retrieval of multi-word units and is free of charge. However, when the researcher could not find appropriate passages in this corpus, she would resort to Google corpus.

COCA is composed of more than 520 million words (1920-2015) and is equally divided between five genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic

journals. The most distinguishing feature of this corpus is that it is dynamic in that new texts are added regularly (20 million words each year). The last update was in December 2015, the time when the present study was conducted. The COCA interface permits users to search for words, phrases, parts of speech, collocations, and surrounding words. With COCA, users can also define their searches by genre or time and see the frequency of target items in each genre or in the whole corpus over time which allows the user to compare frequencies between different periods (Davies, 2008, 2010). Figure 3 below shows a screenshot of the corpus interface.

Figure 2: **A Screenshot of the COCA Interface (Davies, 2008)**

To develop the C-test, the researcher selected a subset of 30 FSs of different types. The selected FSs were then entered into the search box of the COCA corpus one at a time, and then a list of example sentences for each target sequence was displayed (see Figure 4 for

an illustration). The researcher examined the displayed example sentences in all genres except for the spoken genre and accessed the wider context of only those example sentences that dealt with topics which were of interest to the students. After that, the researcher read the passages and simplified them by reducing their length and omitting difficult words. Therefore, 30 short texts with one formulaic sequence partially deleted for each text, a total of 30 partially deleted FSs, made up our C-test. The sequences were arranged from easy to difficult. The format of the C-test was as follows:

> A quality program of reading instruction stresses selected factors. **Fi---- of a---,** it encourages reading of diverse kinds of genre. **Answer:** [First of all]

***Figure 03*: A Screenshot of the Formulaic Sequence '*First of all*' in Context Display**

In order to see whether the C-test functioned appropriately, it was piloted twice. In the first pilot study, three doctoral students of English from the University of Constantine 1 who were also part-time teachers took the test. The teachers' performance on the test as well as their comments suggested that they consider it as difficult. All of them could not guess many

of the deleted FSs. Therefore, based on this pilot test, the following changes were made. First, the meaning of the target FSs was provided between brackets at the end of each passage. Second, target FSs with idiomatic meaning were made less challenging by providing whole content words. Finally, more function words were provided in some FSs. The second draft of the C-test was piloted with a group of second year students who formed part of our target population. The students completed the C-test within 30 minutes. They commented that the C-test was easy to understand and that the passages were of appropriate length. Also, the students' performance on the C-test revealed that it was appropriately challenging, neither too easy nor too difficult.

Students of both groups took the pre- C-test (see Appendix 3). The reason for the employment of the pre- C-test was to test students' prior productive knowledge of FSs and to ensure the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups prior to the treatment administration. The pre- C-test was administered in the first session of the first week of instruction. Initially, the notion of FSs was explained and illustrated by examples. The students were then fully briefed on how to answer the C-test and they practised with the researcher a small sample C-test to familiarize them with it. When the students finished the test, which took them about 20 to 25 minutes, the researcher collected the test papers for assessment and scoring. Students' names were replaced by code numbers so as to keep their identities anonymous.

After the one-semester (8 weeks) treatment period, the post-C-test was given to the participants to check whether their knowledge of FSs had developed. The same steps followed in the pre-C-test were used in the post- C-test. However, the only difference between the two tests was in the target FSs; that is, the participants were tested on different FSs. Most of the target FSs used in the post-C-test were different from those used in the pre-C-test except for four sequences (see Appendix 4).

5.3.2.2. Assessing the C-test

To measure students' production of FSs in the C-test, a three-point scale adapted from Jones and Haywood (2004) and Čolović-Marković (2012) was used. The scale is shown in table 36.

Table 36

Scoring Rubric for Measuring the Production of FSs on a C-test

3 = Correct FS; there may be problems with spelling but they do not interfere with derivational or inflectional affixation

2 = Correct FS but problems with inflectional morphology (e.g., in other word instead of in other words)

1 = Incorrect FS but there is an attempt of producing a correct FS. This entails the following cases:

- Problems with derivational morphology (e.g., to relief the pain instead of to relieve the pain)
- Substitution of a preposition (e.g. bear *on* mind instead of bear *in* mind)
- Omission of a function word (e.g. on other hand instead of on the other hand)
- Substitution of ***one*** word within a FS with another word of the same word category that is similar in meaning, spelling and/or pronunciation) (e.g. to effect instead of to affect)
- Omission of a content word providing that the student is able to guess two or more other words within the sequence (e.g., two sides of the same --- instead of two sides of the same coin)

0 = No attempt to produce the FS

5.3.2.3. The Writing Test

Following the pre-C-test, the students were given the pre-writing test. It was completed in the second session of the experiment. After giving students a theoretical account on essay

development, they were asked to write an essay about either life at the university campus or the best teacher they had ever met. The rationale for topic choice was to give students a chance to choose a topic that interested them so that they would not stumble upon the difficulty of ideas generation. Besides, only topics were given instead of statements limiting the scope of the essay. This was to make the students organize their essays in a general way , each according to his/her interpretation as they were not yet introduced to the different patterns of essay organization. The students were allowed 90 minutes to finish the essays. During the writing process, the students were not allowed to use the dictionary or any other outside sources. The results of this test would determine students' use of FSs in an uncontrolled situation, i.e., their own writing as well as their overall writing quality before the treatment. The aim was most essentially to ascertain the homogeneity of the experimental and control group students. Once the students finished writing their essays, their copies were collected for analysis, assessment, and scoring. The students' names were replaced by the same code numbers used in the C-test papers. That is to say, the same student got the same code number for their C-test and writing test.

As for the post-writing test, it was administered after the treatment period and upon the completion of the post-C-test. The students were given two statements on two different topics and were asked to write an argumentative essay on one of them. They were as follows:

Topic 1: Life was better when technology was less and more simple.

Topic 2: Exams should be abolished.

The post-writing test was conducted under the same conditions used in the pre-writing test. Its purpose was to check whether students' production of FSs as well as their overall writing quality had developed due to FSs instruction.

5.3.2.4. Assessing the Writing Test

Before scoring students' essays, the researcher first examined them for the use of FSs. The identification process of FSs was similar to that used in identifying the sequences in the reading texts used in the treatment period in terms of the methods used: intuition and corpus reference. However, the only difference was in the length of the sequences. The search was limited to three or more word sequences. Two-word sequences were excluded since considering them would increase the number of searchable sequences in students' essays which would, in turn, make the identification process extremely difficult to carry out. First, the researcher and the same Written Expression teacher read the essays and spotted possible FSs based on their intuition. Then, the candidate sequences were looked up in the Google corpus for frequency and only those that occurred more than 100 times were accepted as FSs. Accordingly, the judges highlighted all the target sequences without judging their accuracy or appropriacy. Following that, the number of FSs in each essay was counted and then each FS was examined separately for accuracy and assigned a score using the same scoring rubric used in the C-test. After that, FSs in each essay were rated for appropriacy. Each appropriate sequence was assigned one point, whereas inappropriate sequences were given zero point.

It is noteworthy that both the pre and post-writing tests were assessed using the same procedures, with the sole difference that before going through the identification process of FSs in the post-writing test, the researcher first read the essays and manually examined them for the sequences already encountered in the treatment period and then highlighted them, if any.

To measure students' writing skill, the pre and post-writing tests were scored analytically using the ESL Composition Profile developed by Jacobs et al. (1981). The profile is divided into five separate aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics, each of which has four rating levels: excellent to very good, good to average, fair

to poor, and very poor, with descriptors for each aspect and level. Each aspect is weighted differently according to its importance: content (30 points), language use (25 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), and mechanics (5 points). The scores are reported either separately or in combination (see Appendix 5). The reason for choosing this rubric over other holistic rubrics was to avoid obscuring details. As the study's main concern was with FSs which entail elements of both lexical and syntactic systems (Wray, 2002), valuable information could be yielded from a rubric with separate scales for vocabulary, language use, and organization. The essays were scored by two raters, the researcher and the same Written Expression teacher. If the obtained scores were close, they were averaged. However, in case of discrepancies, the raters discussed the reasons for disagreement until they agreed on a given score.

5.4. The Treatment

5.4.1. Teaching the Experimental Group

Following the pretest, the experimental group participants received 16 sessions over an eight week period on a basis of two sessions per week. The first session lasted one hour and half, while the second session was a block of three hours. Besides the treatment sessions, four 90 minute sessions were devoted to the pretest, the posttest, the pre-questionnaires and the experimental group attitudes questionnaire. This means that the total number of sessions was 20 sessions spread over 10 weeks. The treatment consisted of explicit FSs instruction as part of the regular writing lessons and it was meant to raise students' awareness of FSs and to encourage the use of these sequences in their written productions.

As indicated by many researchers (e.g., Alali & Schmitt, 2012; Granger, 1998; Jones & Haywood, 2004; Wray, 2002), there has been a lack of research on how to teach FSs. Therefore, the methodologies used for teaching general vocabulary (single words) are applied

in teaching FSs. Thus, similar to Jones and Haywood's study (2004), the design of the activities for the present study was based on Nation's (2001) three psychological processes for successful vocabulary acquisition: noticing, retrieval, and generation. Noticing involves giving attention to a lexical item and being aware of its usefulness. Noticing takes place when learners listen or read and have their attention called to certain items through highlighting or underlining, negotiate the meaning of an item with their peers or with the teacher, have an item explained by giving a definition, a synonym or translation. Retrieval is the second process that comes after noticing. It means encountering a target lexical item repeatedly which strengthens its memory. Retrieval can be either receptive or productive. Receptive retrieval involves perceiving a lexical item in listening or reading and having to remember its meaning. Productive retrieval refers to communicating the meaning of a lexical item by recalling the form corresponding to that meaning. Generation or creative use is the third process and involves encountering or using items that were previously met in new contexts. Generation can also be receptive when a lexical item is encountered in a new listening or reading context or productive when a met item is used in a new different way (Nation, 2001).

In addition, the activities were designed in a way that promotes students' receptive and then their productive knowledge of FSs. Moreover, many were constructed based on the activities suggested by prominent scholars in the field (e.g., Boers and Lindstromberg, 2009; Lewis, 2008; Lindstromberg and Boers, 2008 and Nation, 2001). Attention was also paid not to repeat the same types of activities over and over again in all lessons to avoid students being bored. Some examples of the receptive activities students completed included highlighting in which the students were provided with a text with the target FSs highlighted. The purpose of this activity was to augment students' cognizance of the formulaicity of language and to encourage them to notice the syntagmatic behaviour of words. Besides, the omnipresence of FSs in each text would draw students' attention to their significance in natural discourse.

Another form of this activity was text chunking which involved asking students to underline or highlight expressions in authentic texts that they considered FSs. The students' selections were then compared with those of their peers and then checked against those of the teacher. This activity was intended to encourage independent learning as students would develop the tendency to notice FSs in materials they deal with outside the language classroom. Other activities entailed matching where students were required to match halves of FSs with their corresponding halves and then match the obtained sequences with their appropriate meanings; error correction which consisted of asking the students to identify and correct the mistakes in the target FSs which were embedded in short sentences; multiple choice where students were given short authentic passages with deleted FSs and were asked to choose the suitable FS from three or four options suggested for each deleted sequence. The distractors were written to be as similar as possible to the target FSs in terms of form and length which would make random guessing difficult unless the student knows about the correct form of the target sequence. Furthermore, the students were required to reorder jumbled words to form meaningful sentences and then underline any FSs. Concordance lines was another activity whose aim was to enable the students to learn more about the use of FSs. Different concordance lines were taken from COCA for each target FS and students' attention was drawn to the different contexts in which the selected sequence appeared in, its meanings as well as grammar. Another activity that was done regularly was asking the students to examine their own essays for FSs use.

As for the activities which were meant to build students' productive knowledge of FSs, they entailed gap-filling in which the students were offered the target FSs embedded in short sentences but with a content word omitted. The students' task was to supply the missing word. Another version of gap-filling activity required the students to fill in the blanks with the appropriate FSs but without offering them a list to choose from or giving them any clues

about the target sequences. Other activities included the dictogloss in which a passage is read several times and the students listened, then they took notes and then in groups attempted to reconstruct the text; C-test activity where students had to provide the missing first halves of the target FSs; rephrasing which involved giving students short authentic passages with bolded explanations of the target FSs and the students had to supply the FS used to express the same meaning of the expression in bold. Hints was another activity which required a student to guess a FS based on its provided meaning in addition to a hint in the form of one content word from that sequence. If the student failed to remember the target sequence, another one was asked and so on. The students were also continuously asked to use the previously met FSs in sentences of their own and in their own essays.

5.4.2. The Lesson Plan

FSs instruction was integrated into the regular writing lessons and thus it was aligned with the content of the syllabus whereby students were supposed to deal with three types of essays in the second semester: the exemplification essay, the cause and effect essay, and the argumentative essay. Before beginning the treatment, the participants were first briefed about the notion of FSs as it was a new term for them. The aim was to raise their awareness of this language phenomenon and the role it plays in enhancing their writing skill.

With respect to the steps followed in designing the lessons, the students were initially acquainted with the target pattern of development such as exemplification, or argumentation. It is worth noting that due to time constraints, the students were provided before the instruction with handouts on the theoretical account on the target pattern as well as the reading texts. It is believed that completing the readings at home would allow the students to take time to understand the texts and seek support from outside sources (e.g., dictionaries or the internet) to solve any problems that might arise. The model essay text was provided to the

students with the target FSs highlighted so as to draw their attention to them. The students then together with the teacher briefly discussed the content of the model essay text and analyzed its organization. Next, they were engaged with a noticing activity to raise their awareness of the form and meaning of some useful FSs that were used inside the text.

After that, the second reading text, taken from a newspaper article on the same topic that would be developed later on in students' essays, was succinctly discussed in terms of its content. This was basically to furnish the students with the ideas needed for developing their essays. We were interested mainly in the use of FSs and we did not want ideas generation to cloud the issue. The students were then engaged in noticing activities that would foster deep processing of some of the highlighted sequences and deepen the students' knowledge about their form and meaning. These included underlining or highlighting, definitions, synonyms, concordance lines, translation, and classifying FSs according to their pragmatic functions.

Following the noticing stage came the retrieval stage whose aim was to review and expand what had been done in the previous stage. A separate session was devoted to it as the gap between the learning stages would allow the students to form durable memory of the target FSs. The tasks at this stage involved a great deal of what memory researchers call 'rehearsal'. Thus, tasks of various types, such as matching, multiple-choice, error-correction, word-reordering, gap-filling, C-test, dictogloss, and rephrasing, deliberately targeted a set of selected FSs to help the students commit them to memory before using them in their writing. The students were clearly told after each activity to record the target FSs in their notebooks to refer to them in the process of writing. It is worth mentioning that a set of new FSs, previously selected from the books mentioned above, were introduced at this stage. This was because these sequences had immediate connection to the students' target essay and they did not appear in the reading texts.

As for the generation stage, which was the third and the last one, the students were given a writing prompt and were asked to write a five-paragraph essay on the assigned topic. They were also instructed to incorporate as many of the encountered FSs as possible. After finishing the first draft, the students were asked to examine their essays for FSs use. Due to the limited time available, the teacher picked one essay for feedback provision and together with the students provided feedback on it, paying special attention to FSs use. Misuse of FSs was discussed and appropriate use was encouraged. The students had to complete the essay individually within 90 minutes and if they could not finish within the allotted time, they were allowed extra 30 minutes. The students were supposed to write two essays for each pattern of development.

Throughout the treatment period, the teacher followed the same steps for the remaining lessons. Nevertheless, when the students were asked to write the second essay on the same target pattern, they were provided only with the background reading text. Furthermore, since one or two encounters with the target sequences is unlikely to leave any memory trace and because spaced repetition is beneficial for improving students' long-term recall of the sequences, a brief review of the met FSs was regularly conducted before starting any new lesson.

5.4.3. Teaching the Control Group

Students of the control group were taught the same writing lessons and received the same reading materials, one model text for each pattern of development and another text from a newspaper article for each assigned essay. However, their instruction differed from that of the experimental group students only in the exposure to FSs. That is to say, the control group participants were taught writing in the traditional way without calling their attention to FSs. The following were the steps followed in teaching the control group students:

1. A theoretical account on the target pattern of development was provided.
2. A model text was offered and a classroom discussion of its content and organization was held. Unknown words as well as some grammatical structures were explained.
3. A second text taken from a newspaper article on the same topic that would be addressed in the students' essays was given and a discussion of its content was held.
4. The students were given a writing prompt and were asked to write a five-paragraph essay.
5. The students received feedback so as to improve their writings.

5.5. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

5.5.1. The C-test

5.5.1.1. The C-test Pretest Results

As stated earlier, the purpose of the C-test pretest was to assess students' productive knowledge of FSs and to ascertain the homogeneity of the groups. The results of the pre-C-test are first presented for each group separately. Then, the overall mean scores as well as the minimum and maximum scores of both groups are reported together to compare overall performance of the control and experimental groups before the implementation of the intervention.

5.5.1.1.1. The Control Group

Table 37

C-test pretest Results of the Control Group

FSs	Control Group Students																			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
1. It is obvious	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	3	3
2. Make a mistake	3	3	2	3	3	0	1	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	0	3	3
3. Commit a crime	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	0	1
4. Over a period of time	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
5. To relieve/reduce the pain	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	0
6. In other words	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
7. As a matter of fact	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	0
8. Referred to as	2	2	2	2	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
9. The extent to which	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
10. A wide range of	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0
11. On the other hand	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
12. Take into account	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	3	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
13. As opposed to	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
14. Run the risk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. In the long run	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
16. For the most part	3	3	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	3	3	0	0
17. Live below the poverty line	3	3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0
18. With respect to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. It is likely that	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
20. A piece of cake	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	0	0
21. On the brink of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22. Bear in mind	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23. In such a way that	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
24. In the sense that	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0

25. Two sides of the same coin	1	1	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	
26. Sit on the fence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	
27. To add insult to injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28. Come to terms with	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
29. Pay lip service to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
30. Think nothing of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Scores	**40**	**23**	**19**	**20**	**14**	**5**	**31**	**13**	**17**	**21**	**14**	**14**	**6**	**10**	**30**	**19**	**31**	**20**	**6**	**8**	**Mean Score = 18.05**

Table 37 above shows the pre-C-test results of the control group participants. It indicates that the students demonstrated a quite limited ability to provide the target FSs as they obtained a mean score of 18.05 out of 90. All the participants scored less than the average score (45), with 40 being the highest score and which was obtained by one participant. Moreover, it can be easily noticed that there was a prevalence of 0 scores as opposed to 3 scores which reflects students' failure to complete most of the target FSs. Half of the obtained 3 scores were recorded when 3 target sequences were completed accurately by most participants, while the other half was dispersed over the other sequences. The three sequences which were completed by most students were '*it is obvious*', '*make a mistake*', and '*a piece of cake'*. Similarly, there were some 1 scores, most of which were scattered over the different sequences, while the remaining ones were obtained when there was an attempt to produce four sequences by half of the participants. These sequences were '*commit a crime*', '*over a period of time'*, '*in other words'*, and '*two sides of the same coin*'. In the first sequence, the participants failed to provide the right verb that collocates with the noun '*crime'* which is '*commit*', but instead used other verbs like '*do*' and '*make*'. In the second sequence, the students provided a wrong preposition, '*on a period of time*' instead of '*over a period of time*'. In the last two sequences, the students replaced content words with other words, like '*in other way'* instead of '*in other words'* and '*two sides of the same cover'* instead of '*two sides of the same coin'*. Overall, it seems that the students had poor knowledge of FSs as they failed to complete most of the FSs regardless of their type, opacity or their level of difficulty.

5.5.1.1.2. The Experimental Group

Table 38

C-test Pretest Results of the Experimental Group

FSs	Experimental Group Students																			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
1. It is obvious	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	0
2. Make a mistake	3	3	2	3	0	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	3	3	2
3. Commit a crime	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
4. Over a period of time	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
5. To relieve/reduce the pain	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	0
6. In other words	3	3	1	0	2	3	1	0	1	3	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	3	3	1
7. As a matter of fact	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
8. Referred to as	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. The extent to which	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. A wide range of	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
11. On the other hand	1	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
12. Take into account	1	3	0	3	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
13. As opposed to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Run the risk	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
15. In the long run	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16. For the most part	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
17. Live below the poverty line	0	3	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
18. With respect to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
19. It is likely that	1	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20. A piece of cake	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	3

21. On the brink of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
22. Bear in mind	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
23. In such a way that	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	
24. In the sense that	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
25. Two sides of the same coin	1	1	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	
26. Sit on the fence	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
27. To add insult to injury	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28. Come to terms with	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
29. Pay lip service to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
30. Think nothing of	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Scores	**30**	**40**	**21**	**26**	**15**	**38**	**21**	**27**	**19**	**19**	**10**	**22**	**9**	**17**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**32**	**20**	**10**	**Mean Score = 19.65**

The table above shows the scores the experimental group participants obtained in the C-test pretest. It can be observed from the table that the mean score of the participants was 19.65 out of 90. This indicates that they also had little knowledge of FSs.

Similar to the control group, the highest score achieved was 40 which was also obtained by one participant. It can also be seen that there were few 3 scores and a preponderance of 0 scores. Only 2 sequences were completed accurately by most participants. These were '*it is obvious'* and '*a piece of cake'*. 6 sequences were completed partially; that is with some kind of error. These sequences were '*make a mistake'*, '*commit a crime'*, '*over a period of time'*, '*on the other hand*' '*in other words*', and '*a wide range of*'. In the first two sequences, the participants failed to provide the words that go with the nouns '*mistake*' and '*crime*' which are '*make*' and '*commit*' respectively and provided other words instead like '*do a mistake'* and '*make or do a crime*'. Some participants used the wrong tense in the first expression. In the next two sequences, the students used the wrong preposition. For example, they wrote '*on/ of a period of time*' instead of '*over a period of time*' and '*in the other hand*' instead of '*on the other hand'*. As for the sequence '*in other words'*, some participants omitted the '*s'* at the end of the word '*words*', while others replaced it with another word and wrote '*in other way'*. Likewise, in the last sequence, the students substituted the word '*range*' with the word '*rate*' and wrote '*a wide rate of*' instead of '*a wide range of'*.

5.5.1.1.3. Comparison of the Results of the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the C-test Pretest

Table 39

Students' Overall Performance in the C-test Pretest

Group	Mean	Max.	N	Min.	N
Control	**18.05**	40	1	5	1
Experimental	**19.65**	40	1	5	2

The data shown in table 39 indicates that participants in the experimental group obtained slightly higher (albeit non-significant) score than participants in the control group with a mean of 19.65 and 18.05 respectively, which means that their performance was slightly better. Regarding the maximum score, both groups achieved 40 which was obtained by one participant in both groups. Similarly, 5 was the minimum score and it was obtained by 1 participant of the control group and 2 participants of the experimental group.

Examination of students' scores in the C-test pretest revealed that though the mean score of the experimental group was slightly higher than that of the control group, they also showed an intolerable lack of knowledge of FSs. Both groups failed to complete most of the target FSs. Very few sequences (3 in the control group and 2 in the experimental group) were completed accurately. Also, though the participants managed to complete some sequences (4 FSs in the control group and 6 in the experimental group), they were not free of mistakes. More specifically, the students showed ignorance of the way words collocate with each other and seemed to rely on their mother tongue when providing collocates. Providing the right preposition was also a problem for the participants, which shows that though they had an idea of the sequences, they did not really have deep knowledge of them. The participants also used the wrong tense with some sequences like '*referred to as'* and '*make a mistake'*. As for students' mistake of substituting a content word with another word within the same sequence, it seemed that the participants had no knowledge of these sequences and they were just guessing based on the provided first letters.

It is important to note, here, that the results of the C-test pretest presented above came to confirm the findings yielded from the students' and the teachers' questionnaires which revealed students' unawareness of FSs as well as teachers' lack of cognizance of the formulaic nature of language and thus their neglect to incorporate these sequences in their language classrooms.

Overall, with a non-significant mean difference between the two groups (1.6), it can be said that both the control and the experimental groups had nearly the same level of knowledge of FSs. In other words, the two groups were homogeneous and hence any difference in performance at the end of the study would be due to the treatment.

5.5.1.2. The C-test Posttest Results

5.5.1.2.1. The Control Group

Table 40 below presents the results obtained from the control group for each participant in the C-test posttest.

Table 40

The C-test Post-test Results of the Control Group

FSs	Control Group Students																			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
1. Commit a crime	3	1	1	1	3	0	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1
2. Is unlikely to	3	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	3	0	0
3. In the long run	3	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
4. When it comes to	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	0	1	0	3	0	3	3	2	1
5. Have to do with	3	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	2	0	0
6. In other words	3	3	1	3	2	0	3	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	0	3	3	0	1
7. More often than not	1	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
8. Begin in earnest	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. At our fingertips	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
10. Follow in his footsteps	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
11. Make peace with	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	3	0	0
12. Bring to the table	3	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0
13. An array of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. In terms of	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. Live under the poverty line	3	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	2	1
16. For the sake of	3	3	0	3	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	1	0
17. Cut corners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18. On the one hand	0	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	1	0	0

19. A case in point	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	
20. Take into consideration	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	
21. Regardless of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	
22. Hold in high regard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
23. The tip of the iceberg	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	
24. On the grounds that	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
25. Make ends meet	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	
26. Cast a shadow over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
27. Come to terms with	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	
28. In exchange for	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
29. Come up with	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	
30. A rat race	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Scores	**40**	**25**	**20**	**35**	**22**	**07**	**24**	**11**	**24**	**19**	**14**	**07**	**11**	**20**	**32**	**27**	**24**	**31**	**08**	**04**	**Mean Score = 20.25**

The results displayed in table 40 reveal that the mean score of the control group participants was 20.25 out of 90, which indicates that students' knowledge of FSs was still very poor. This was further confirmed when looking at the participants' individual scores. They all failed to achieve the average mean score (45), recording 40 as the highest score.

Moreover, though the scores varied somehow according to the sequence, it could be easily noticed that there was a prevalence of 0 scores as opposed to 3, 2, and 1 scores, which reflected students' inability to complete most of the target FSs. Most of the recorded 3 scores were scattered over the different sequences and thus we found that half of the sequences (15) were completed accurately by 2 to 4 students maximum. Further, a quick glance at the table shows that no sequence was completed by all or most participants. Only the sequence '*for the sake of'* was completed by half of the participants (N=10). Also, no student was able to produce even partially the sequences '*an array of'*, '*to cut corners'*, '*to cast a shadow over'* and '*a rat race'*. Only 4 sequences were completed accurately by 8 participants. These were *'commit a crime'*, '*when it comes to*', '*in other words'*, and '*on the one hand'*. However, some participants produced these sequences with different kinds of mistakes. For example, 11 students used the verb '*do*' instead of '*commit*' with the noun '*crime*'. As for the second sequence, the participants (n= 4) omitted the 's' of the third person singular and wrote '*when it come to'*, while 2 participants replaced the word '*when*' with '*what*', which shows that these two students were just guessing and were not relying on the provided context or explanation of the sequence. In the third sequence, the students (n=6) wrote '*in other word*' instead of '*in other words'*, 2 other students could not provide the last word of the sequence '*words*', while another one substituted it with the word '*work*', which indicates that this participant also had no knowledge of the sequence and s/he was just guessing. Regarding the fourth sequence, the students produced the sequence yet with a wrong preposition; they wrote '*in the one hand'* instead of '*on the one hand'*.

Furthermore, 4 sequences were produced partially by a considerable number of participants. These were '*in the long run'*, '*more often than not'*, '*at our fingertips'*, and '*live under the poverty line'*. In the first sequence, the participants substituted the word '*run*' with other words like '*range*' and '*road*'. In the second sequence, the students (n=9) also replaced the last word of the sequence '*not*' with other words like '*ever', 'that', and 'more*', whereas another participant produced the sequence with a mistake of inflection and wrote '*most often than not'* instead of '*more often than not'*. As for the third sequence, the participants (n=6) produced it with a mistake of derivation and wrote '*at our fingers'* instead of '*at our fingertips*'. In the fourth sequence, 7 participants substituted the verb '*live*' with '*lie*'; 1 participant replaced the word '*line*' with the word '*life*'; while another one wrote '*live under the poverty lines'* instead of '*live under the poverty line'*.

Considering students' performance in the C-test posttest, it can be said that their knowledge of FSs was very poor. Besides, the mistakes they made when trying to produce some sequences attest to the fact that their knowledge about them was not deep enough as to be able to produce them accurately though they met many of them in the reading texts. This supports the view which holds that incidental learning of FSs is by no means effective as it is slow and rarely leads to retention let alone the carry-over to productive use.

5.5.1.2.2. The Experimental Group

The results of the experimental group participants in the C-test posttest are shown in the table below.

Table 41

The C-test Post-test Results of the Experimental Group

FSs	Experimental Group Students																			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
1. Commit a crime	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3
2. Is unlikely to	0	3	0	3	3	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	0
3. In the long run	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4. When it comes to	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3
5. Have to do with	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	0	0	3	0	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	0
6. In other words	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	2	0	2	0	3	3	3	3	1
7. More often than not	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	3	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	3	0	3	3	0
8. Begin in earnest	0	2	3	0	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	0	2	2	3	0	3	3	2
9. At our fingertips	3	3	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
10. Follow in his footsteps	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	3	3	0	0	3	2	0	3	0	3
11. Make peace with	0	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	3
12. Bring to the table	0	3	3	0	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	3
13. An array of	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	0
14. In terms of	3	3	2	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3
15. Live under the poverty line	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	3	0	3
16. For the sake of	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	3
17. Cut corners	0	0	2	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	3	3	2	0
18. On the one hand	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3
19. A case in point	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	0	3	3	2	0	1
20. Take into	0	3	3	2	0	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	3

consideration																					
21. Regardless of	0	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	
22. Hold in high regard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	
23. The tip of the iceberg	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	
24. On the grounds that	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	
25. Make ends meet	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	3	
26. Cast a shadow over	3	1	0	1	3	3	0	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	1	3	
27. Come to terms with	0	3	2	3	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	
28. In exchange for	3	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	
29. Come up with	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
30. A rat race	3	1	0	3	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	
Scores	**52**	**61**	**49**	**48**	**62**	**72**	**54**	**39**	**55**	**65**	**53**	**70**	**20**	**54**	**49**	**51**	**54**	**73**	**40**	**59**	**Mean Score = 54**

As can be seen in table 41 above, the participants in the experimental group performed remarkably well on the C-test posttest, recording a mean score of 54 out of 90. Many students exhibited considerable ability to complete most of the C-test items, a fact which was reflected in the preponderance of 3 scores as well as the high number of participants who scored above the average mean score (17 out of 20). It can also be easily noticed that there was a scarcity of 1 scores which suggests an increase in the accurate production of the target sequences. Only the sequence *'more often than not'* was completed partially by a considerable number of participants (n=11), of whom 9 failed to provide the last word of the sequence '*not*' and substituted it with other words like '*before*', '*usual*' and '*that*', thereby producing a meaningless expression, whereas 2 participants completed the sequence with a mistake in inflection, writing '*most often than not'* instead of '*more often than not'*. A possible reason for this sequence to be produced inaccurately by many students might be its infrequent recurrence in the teaching materials which made it hard to acquire appropriately. The remaining 1 scores were dispersed over the other sequences.

Though the participants were able to complete most of the sequences, some other sequences proved difficult for most of them. These are '*is unlikely to'*, '*cut corners'*, '*hold in high regard', 'make ends meet', 'in exchange for', and 'come up with*'. In the first sequence, out of 20 participants, only 7 were able to complete it correctly, whereas 11 failed to produce it in addition to 2 participants who produced it with a derivational mistake, writing '*is unlike to*' instead of '*is unlikely to'*. As for second sequence, only 2 participants were able to complete it, whereas 15 failed to do so. The remaining 5 participants completed it with a mistake in inflection, writing '*cut corner*' instead of '*cut corners'*. The third sequence, '*hold in high regard'*, was completed by 5 participants while the remaining 15 students left it unanswered. Regarding the fourth sequence, '*make ends meet'*, it was produced accurately by 4 participants, while 4 others produced it partially, making slight mistakes such as adding's'

to the infinitive '*to makes ends meet*' or leaving out the 's' of the word 'ends' '*make end meet*'. The remaining 12 participants left it unanswered. The fifth sequence, '*in exchange for'* was completed by 8 students, while the sixth one was produced by only 3 students. The reason for these six sequences to be left unanswered by most participants or be produced inaccurately by few others could be accounted for by their rare recurrence during the treatment period which made their acquisition impossible or made them not deeply entrenched in students' mental lexicon so as to be produced accurately.

Overall, the results above show that the experimental group's performance was to a great extent satisfactory as they were able to deal with many of the target sequences. As for the progress made in the posttest and thus the efficiency of the treatment, they will be proved in what follows by comparing the posttest results with those obtained in the pretest and later on by comparing them against those of the control group.

5.5.1.3. Comparative Evaluation of Results

5.5.1.3.1. Comparison of the Control Group C-test Pretest and C-test Posttest Performance

Table 42

Control Group C-test Pretest vs C-test Posttest Performance

Students	C-test Pretest Scores	C-test Posttest Scores	Difference
1	40	40	00
2	23	25	+02
3	19	20	+01
4	20	35	+15
5	14	22	+08
6	5	07	+02
7	31	24	-07
8	13	11	-02
9	17	24	+07
10	21	19	-02

11	14	14	00
12	14	07	-07
13	6	11	+05
14	10	20	+10
15	30	32	+02
16	19	27	+08
17	31	24	-07
18	20	31	+11
19	06	08	+02
20	08	04	-04
Mean Score	**18.05**	**20.25**	**2.2**

The results in table 42 demonstrate a slight increase in students' mean score from 18.05 to 20.25. However, the difference between the pretest and posttest is not significant (+2.2) as students' knowledge of FSs remained nearly the same. The table shows that 12 participants increased their scores from pretest to posttest by 2 to 15 points. Nevertheless, the improvement these students made was far from satisfactory as they failed to achieve even the average score (45). Besides, the gain scores students obtained (from +2 to +15 points) reflected just a slight increase in the number of the completed items, from 1 to 3 sequences. It seems that these students managed to notice and even acquire few of the target sequences incidentally through reading texts or classroom discussions without having been taught them explicitly. It can also be observed that the highest score achieved in the two tests was 40 and it was obtained by the same student (student 1). Moreover, while 2 students got the same scores in the posttest as in the pretest (student 1 and student 11), the remaining 6 students obtained lower scores on the posttest. Taken as a whole, the results suggest that though participants in the control group showed a slight improvement in terms of their knowledge of FSs, it could not be considered as noticeable.

5.5.1.3.2. Comparison of the Experimental Group C-test Pretest and C-test Posttest Performance

Table 43

Experimental Group C-test Pretest vs. C-test Posttest Performance

Students	C-test Pretest Scores	C-test Posttest Scores	Difference
1	30	52	+22
2	40	61	+21
3	21	49	+28
4	26	48	+22
5	15	62	+47
6	38	72	+34
7	21	54	+33
8	27	39	+12
9	19	55	+36
10	19	65	+46
11	10	53	+43
12	22	70	+48
13	09	20	+11
14	17	54	+37
15	7	49	+42
16	5	51	+46
17	5	54	+49
18	32	73	+41
19	20	40	+20
20	10	59	+49
Mean Score	**19.65**	**54**	**34.35**

A cursory look at table 43 reveals that participants in the experimental group performed significantly better in the C-test posttest in terms of FSs knowledge compared with the C-test pretest. This could be clearly seen in the substantial increase in the overall mean score from 19.65 on the pretest to 54 on the posttest. All participants, without exception, increased their scores, showing different gains. More specifically, except for 2 students who made moderate gains (+11 and +12 respectively), 5 students gained from +20 to +28, 4 students gained from +33 to +37, while the remaining 9 participants achieved the highest gain scores (from +41 to +49). More importantly, it cannot escape our notice that it was the lower achievers who made the greatest gains (7 out of the 9 participants who obtained high scores

attained the highest gain scores, from +42 to +49). The table also shows that the minimum score was 5 on the pretest and 20 on the posttest. Contrarily, the highest score was 40 on the pretest and 73 on the posttest. Also, while all participants failed to achieve the average score (45) on the pretest, most of them (17 out of 20) scored above the average score on the posttest.

Overall, the results reported above make it clear that there was a noticeable change in students' productive knowledge of FSs. Our belief is that the difference in performance between the pretest and the posttest is unlikely to have occurred by chance. In other words, the treatment, i.e., the explicit teaching of FSs proved efficient in improving students' productive knowledge of these sequences. This is made clear when we notice the difference of the two mean scores which is 34.35. Nevertheless, the significance or non-significance of this difference remains just a claim until it is determined through statistical testing. Also, before leaping to conclusions about the efficiency of the treatment, we need to run a comparison between the control group and experimental group C-test results.

5.5.1.3.3. Comparison of the C-test Pretest and C-test Posttest Results of the Control and the Experimental Group

Table 44

C-test Pretest vs. C-test Posttest Performance of the Control and Experimental Groups

Students	Control Group			Experimental Group		
	C-test Pretest	C-test Posttest	Difference	C-test Pretest	C-test Posttest	Difference
1	40	40	**00**	30	52	**+22**
2	23	25	**+02**	40	61	**+21**
3	19	20	**+01**	21	49	**+28**
4	20	35	**+15**	26	48	**+22**
5	14	22	**+08**	15	62	**+47**
6	05	07	**+02**	38	72	**+34**
7	31	24	**-07**	21	54	**+33**
8	13	11	**-02**	27	39	**+12**
9	17	24	**+07**	19	55	**+36**

10	21	19	**-02**	19	65	**+46**
11	14	14	**00**	10	53	**+43**
12	14	07	**-07**	22	70	**+48**
13	06	11	**+05**	09	20	**+11**
14	10	20	**+10**	17	54	**+37**
15	30	32	**+02**	07	49	**+42**
16	19	27	**+08**	05	51	**+46**
17	31	24	**-07**	05	54	**+49**
18	20	31	**+11**	32	73	**+41**
19	06	08	**+02**	20	40	**+20**
20	08	04	**-04**	10	59	**+49**
Mean Score	**18.05**	**20.25**	**+2.2**	**19.65**	**54**	**+34.35**

From the table above, it seems clear that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the C-test posttest. One can notice that both the control group and the experimental group started out nearly the same with a mean score of 18.05 and 19.65 respectively. However, after the treatment, participants of the experimental group with a mean score of 54 demonstrated considerable ability to complete the C-test posttest compared to participants of the control group who obtained a mean score of 20.25. As depicted in the table above, though the control group also showed some progress from pretest to posttest in terms of FSs knowledge, still it was not as significant as that made by the experimental group. The mean gain score for the experimental group was +34.35, whereas that of the control group was +2.2. Thus, the difference between the two groups in terms of change is highly significant (+32.15). Other indications of the experimental group outstripping the control group lie in participants' individual performance. Most students of the control group (n=12) achieved moderate gain scores from +01 to +15 points while the remaining 8 students made no progress; On the contrary, 6 of them obtained lower scores. On the other hand, we found that nearly all participants of the experimental group (n=18) made significant gains (from +20 to +49). Besides, it is also noticed that the minimum score in the

pretest was 5 in both the control and the experimental group; however, in the posttest it was 4 in the control group and 20 in the experimental group. On the other hand, the highest score in the pretest was 40 in the two groups; nevertheless, in the posttest it remained 40 for the control group while it increased to 73 in the experimental group.

All in all, the substantial increase in the experimental group's results suggests an increase in their productive knowledge of FSs which is due to the treatment. In other words, explicit FSs instruction improved students' productive knowledge of these sequences.

5.5.2. The Writing Test

5.5.2.1. The Production of Formulaic Sequences in Essays

5.5.2.1.1. Control and Experimental Groups' Performance in the Pretest

The number of FSs in each participant's essay, the total and the mean scores per sequence for the accuracy of these sequences, and the scores for their appropriateness are reported in table 45. It should be noted, here, that repetitions of FSs in the same essay were overlooked. That is, each instance was counted once so as not to inflate the results.

Table 45

Number and Quality of FSs in Students' Pretest Essays

Student	Control Group				Experimental Group			
	Number of FSs used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy	Number of FSs used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy
01	17	47	2.76	15 (88.23%)	15	41	2.73	15(100%)
02	09	25	2.77	07 (77.77%)	06	16	2.66	06(100%)
03	08	20	2.50	07 (87.5%)	08	20	2.5	08(100%)
04	08	20	2.50	08 (100%)	05	15	3.00	05(100%)
05	06	18	3.00	04 (66.66%)	06	16	2.66	05(83.33%)
06	06	16	2.66	04 (66.66%)	13	38	2.92	12(92.30%)
07	10	30	3.00	10 (100%)	11	29	2.63	09(81.81%)
08	10	26	2.6	09 (90%)	14	41	2.92	14(100%)
09	09	25	2.77	08(88.88%)	07	15	2.14	07(100%)
10	16	43	2.68	16 (100%)	06	18	3.00	04(66.66%)

11	03	09	3.00	03 (100%)	08	21	2.62	07(87.5%)
12	10	26	2.6	10 (100%)	12	33	2.75	12(100%)
13	04	12	3.00	02 (50%)	11	29	2.63	11(100%)
14	08	20	2.5	07 (87.5%)	08	20	2.5	06(75%)
15	11	31	2.81	10(90.90%)	05	12	2.4	04(80%)
16	09	25	2.77	09 (100%)	03	06	2.00	02(66.66%)
17	04	09	2.25	03 (75%)	09	25	2.77	09(100%)
18	02	06	3.00	01 (50%)	04	12	3.00	03(75%)
19	07	21	3.00	07 (100%)	10	30	3.00	10(100%)
20	05	15	3.00	04 (80%)	05	14	2.8	05(100%)
Total	**162**	**444**	**2.74**	**144 (88.88%)**	**166**	**451**	**2.71**	**154(92.77%)**
Mean	**8.1**			**7.2**	**8.3**			**7.7**

Table 45 indicates that participants in both groups performed nearly the same in terms of the production of FSs in free writing as the mean was 8.1 for the control group and 8.3 for the experimental group. The total number of FSs produced by participants of the control group was 162 while that of the participants of the experimental group was 166. As the table shows, most participants in both groups (14 in the control group and 13 in the experimental group) incorporated less than 10 sequences in their essays. The maximum number of FSs produced in the control group was 17 (found in the essay of participant 1), while that in the experimental group was 15 (produced by participant 1). However, the minimum number of FSs was 2 in the control group (used by participant 18) and 3 in the experimental group (found in the essay of participant 16). So, as the participants could not complete most of the FSs in the C-test pretest (controlled situation), it was only natural that they would make limited use of these sequences in their writing (uncontrolled situation). Additionally, a closer look at the nature of the used sequences indicates that discourse markers formed a great part of the used sequences (58 FSs, 35.80%) in the control group and (54, 32.53%) in the experimental group, excluding one-word and two-word discourse markers. Undoubtedly, discourse markers are of paramount importance to any piece of writing; however, if they are

overused or used unnecessarily, they make the piece of writing too heavy and artificial. It was also noticed that the participants used those sequences which are too common and mainly three-word sequences. Therefore, according to these results, the participants did not incorporate enough FSs in their essays, which is a clear indication of their unawareness of these sequences.

With regard to the accuracy of the used sequences, the total scores (444 out of 486 for the control group and 451 out of 498 for the experimental group) as well as the total mean scores per sequence (2.74 for the control group and 2.71 for the experimental group) indicate a high level of accuracy in the FSs the participants employed. However, it was easy to notice that though the participants of the control group incorporated slightly less sequences than participants of the experimental group, they scored slightly better than them in terms of accuracy. This could be accounted for by the fact that the more learners take risks with these sequences, the more errors they make. A further proof of this claim could be found in the participants' individual performance. The table shows that nearly all the participants who got the full mark (3/3) in accuracy (6 out of 7 students in the control group and 3 out of 4 students in the experimental group) used very few sequences in their essays (from 2 to 7 sequences).

As for the number of the accurate and inaccurate sequences, the table below shows that participants in the control group produced 136 (83.95%) accurate FSs and 26 (16.04%) inaccurate ones, while participants in the experimental group produced 136 (81.92%) accurate FSs and 30 (18.07%) inaccurate ones.

Table 46

The *Frequency of Accurate vs. Inaccurate FSs in the Writing Pretest*

	The Control Group		**The Experimental Group**	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Accurate FSs	136	83.95%	136	81.92
Inaccurate FSs	26	16.04%	30	18.07
Total	162	100%	166	100%

Another possible reason for the high number of accurate FSs in students' essays could be that these sequences were too common for the learners inasmuch as they became part of their subconscious mind and they were strengthened by repeated encounters through exposure to the language. Below are some instances of the FSs the participants produced accurately.

Table 47

A Sample of the Accurate FSs Produced by Students in the Writing Pretest

The Control Group	The Experimental Group
- One of the	- During the early years
- A piece of information	- Take the day off from work
- When it comes to	- At the end of
- The system of education	- But what to do
- First of all	- Abide by rules
- No pain no gain	- In addition to that
- To take a rest	- As a matter of fact
- With a big smile on her face	- By setting a good example
- An angel from the sky	- First of all
- What it means to be	- Took responsibility for her actions
- I made a mistake	- Actions speak louder than words

Concerning the inaccurate sequences, a close examination of the FSs produced by the participants reveals that incorrect tense use was the dominant type of error made by participants of the experimental group (14 instances) and the second major error for the control group (5 instances). It is observed that in most cases, the participants used the simple present tense though the context dictated the use of the past simple tense. For instance, a student in the experimental group wrote: "*In the beginning, I **think** that it can help me to get rid of many difficulties*". Another participant in the control group wrote: "*she **do** her best to evaluate and test us in a successful way*". One explanation for the experimental group making more tense errors than the control group could be their use of long less-fixed FSs. On the other hand, many of the sequences participants of control group used were short (mostly three

word sequences) and fixed. The misuse of prepositions was also prevalent to some extent within the used sequences (6 instances in both groups). For example, one student in the control group wrote "*the kind of food that is available in the campus obliged me to eat **on** my own cost*", while another one in the experimental group wrote "*in addition **of** leaving home, you need to take your own responsibilities in dormitories*". The students' prepositional errors were most likely due to transfer from their first language. In addition to the misuse of prepositions, miscombination of words (miscollocations) was another frequent error made by participants of the control group (6 instances). The participants seemed to combine synonymous words with the same collocate since they translated from their first language as in "*I **have done** a mistake*" (produced by participant 12) instead of "I **made** a mistake". Negative transfer from French was also apparent in few sequences, like "*we **were passing** our exams*" (in the essay of participant 4) instead of "*we were having exams*". There were also some errors of inflection (4 instances in both groups). These entail mistakes in plural formation, the omission of the possessive, and the misuse of the comparative form. Other types of errors included the omission of a function word within the sequence (4 instances in the experimental group), the omission of a content word (3 instances in the control group), the substitution of one word with another of the same word category that has the same pronunciation (1 instance in the control group), the addition of an unnecessary word (1 instance in the control group and 2 instances in the experimental group), and finally the production of ill-structured sequences (1 instance in the control group and 2 instances in the experimental group). A sample of the inaccurate FSs is presented in the table below.

Table 48

A Sample of the Inaccurate FSs Produced by Students in the Writing Pretest

The Control Group	The Experimental Group
- A couple of **person**	- I do not know **how** we would do without her
- in addition **of** that	-Stepped on **someone** foot
- to **leave** in peace	- in order **to do not**
- as far as I concerned	- A **best** teacher is like a candle-it consumes
- **to realize** an aim	itself to light the way for others
-piece of **advices**	- **In** any time
- live in fear **from**	- Under the **supervising** of
- in other **word**	- **in** a conclusion
-She **do** all her best to	- **in** the same time
- The **accurate** solution	- He also **make** funny faces

Judging the accuracy of FSs used in a piece of writing is not enough. The appropriateness of the way the sequences were used needs also to be assessed. The data displayed in table 48 illustrate that the control group and the experimental group scored respectively (144 out of 162) and (154 out of 166). That is, 88.88% of the FSs used by the control group participants and 92.77% of those used by the experimental group were considered as appropriate. The table also shows that while 7 participants in the control group used all the FSs they produced appropriately, 11 participants in the experimental group did so. Thus, though the experimental group scored slightly higher than the control group, still it can be said that both groups exhibited high level of mastery over FSs in terms of appropriacy. A probable reason for the high rate of appropriate FSs in both groups' essays could be the students' reliance on very well-known sequences which seemed to be part of their subconscious lexical knowledge.

Referring to the students' inappropriate sequences (18 FSs, 11.11% in the control group) and (12 FSs, 7.22% in the experimental group), it appears that the students

misunderstood the meaning of some sequences while used others in inappropriate contexts. Below is a sample of the inappropriate sequences:

The Control Group

- *"The electric weirs are not safe at all.* ***There was a time*** *when my friend computer damaged and because of this problem."* (Essay 2)

- *"****First of all,*** *sometimes we meet people who affect ourselves and changed our life to the best."* (Essay 6)
- *"She is the best teacher that I has never met in my live showed me* ***a lot of*** *meaning of respect, help, and honesty."* (Essay 13)

The Experimental Group

- *"****By setting a good example*** *for me, my teacher was a hard worker, debonair, and indulgent."* (Essay 10)
- *"His strategy of teaching history makes things very easy because he presented the lesson* ***in terms of*** *an interesting story like we are watching a movie."* (Essay 10)
- *"****In the early years****, any student meet different teachers in several branches in the primary, middle and secondary school."* (Essay 14).

Many students (6 participants in each group) also tended to repeat certain FSs a little too often and at times too close together inasmuch as they became problematic. This repetitive use of the same sequences when alternate expressions that convey the same meaning could have been used is a clear indication of poor lexical knowledge and is deemed poor style. It was also found that the sequences the students used repetitively were high-frequency expressions like '*one of the'*, '*in order to*', '*a lot of*', '*in addition to'*, to name just a few. Essay 18 of the experimental group is a case in point, where the student used the sequence '*one of the'* three times: once at the beginning of each new paragraph. The student wrote:

*Good treatment is **one of the** main characteristics of my best teacher I have ever met.*

*Supporting students is **one of the** main characteristics of my best teacher I have ever met.*

*Broad knowledge is also **one of the** main characteristics of my best teacher I have ever met*.

Another instance of repetition is found in essay 1 of the control group where the student used the same sequence twice. The participant wrote:

*So he has to get up very early to come to our university to teach and go back late in the day so he can do the same in the second college **not to mention** his responsibility towards his own house and family. **Not to mention** he always do it with a cheerful personality and a loving manner*.

So, though the first instance is considered appropriate, the repetitions often are not.

On the whole, comparison of the results shows that both the control group and the experimental group displayed nearly the same level of performance in terms of both the number of FSs used in writing as well as the quality of these sequences. In other words, the two groups are homogeneous and that any change after the treatment can only be due to the teacher researcher's intervention.

5.5.2.1.2. Control Group's Performance in the Posttest:

Table 49

Number and Quality of FSs in the Control Group's Posttest Essays

Student	Number of FSs	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriateness
01	20	54	2.7	19 (95%)
02	05	15	3.00	05 (100%)
03	09	25	2.77	07(77.77%)
04	11	27	2.45	11 (100%)
05	11	31	2.81	10 (90.90%)
06	09	27	3.00	09 (100%)
07	15	44	2.93	13(86.66%)
08	08	22	2.75	07(87.5%)
09	15	41	2.73	13(86.66%)

10	16	41	2.56	15(93.75%)
11	08	22	2.75	08 (100%)
12	11	30	2.72	11 (100%)
13	03	09	3.00	01(33.33%)
14	09	27	3.00	06 (66.66%)
15	15	41	2.73	13(86.66%)
16	14	37	2.64	14 (100%)
17	15	42	2.8	15 (100%)
18	04	12	3.00	03 (75%)
19	02	06	3.00	02 (100%)
20	08	24	3.00	08 (100%)
Total	**208**	577/624	2.77	**190 (91.34%)**
Mean	**10.4**			9.5

As can be seen in table 49, participants of the control group employed an average of 10.4 FSs in the posttest essays. The total number of FSs produced was 208. The maximum number of FSs produced was 20, found in the essay of participant 1, while the minimum number was 2, found in the essay of participant 19. The table also demonstrates that half of the participants (N=10) employed less than 10 sequences in their essays. The FSs used were mostly three-word sequences. In terms of the types of FSs used, discourse devices together with stance expressions formed the lion's share of the total number of the used sequences (53.36%). One possible explanation for the frequent use of these expressions is that they are typical of argumentative writing and were used mostly as argument initiators. Examples of such sequences as found in participants' essays included '*I totally agree with*', '*opponents of the idea that ….argue that..*', '*some people claim that*' etc.

With regard to the accuracy of the used sequences, the results in the table above illustrate that the total accuracy score was 577 out of 624 and that the total mean score per sequence was 2.77 out of 3, which is a clear indication of the good mastery over FSs forms. All participants produced most of the target sequences with great accuracy, with 7 of them obtaining the full mark 3/3. More specifically, and as shown in table 50 below, 179 out of the

208 FSs used were produced correctly (86.05%). This high level of accuracy could be due to the participants' use of mainly those sequences they were sure about.

Table 50

The Frequency of the Accurate vs. Inaccurate FSs in the Control Group's Post-test Essays

	The Control Group	
	Number	**Percentage**
Accurate FSs	179	86.05%
Inaccurate FSs	29	13.94%
Total	208	100%

A sample of the accurate FSs students produced in the posttest essays is presented below:

Table 51

A sample of the Accurate FSs Produced by the Control Group in the Post-test Essays

The Control Group
- **The first thought that comes to our minds**
- **To keep in touch with**
- **More often than not**
- **The fact that**
- **It is true that**
- **I strongly believe that**
- **They missed the point**
- **Plays a major role**
- **With the development of technology**
- **A case in point**
- **From all around the world**
- **Opponents argue that**

As for the inaccurate sequences (n=29), a close examination of them reveal that the misuse of prepositions was the dominant type of mistake. The participants produced 11

sequences with wrong prepositions. Other types of mistakes include the omission of a function word within the sequences (5 instances), inflectional mistakes (4 instances), miscollocations, replacing a content word with another wrong word, the addition of an unnecessary word, wrong tense choice/form (2 instances each), and finally the use of a totally wrong expression. Below is a sample of the FSs the participants produced inaccurately with the mistakes in bold.

Table 52

A sample of the Inaccurate FSs Produced by the Control Group in the Posttest Essays

The Control Group
- A **small** period of time
- Impose a heavy **stress**
- **In** the other hand
- **In a** purpose of
- **In a plate of selver**
- Gases are **thrown into** the atmosphere
- In favour **with**
- I disagree the idea that
- Make **amend** to
- Those who **are** agree with the idea that
- Take care **with**
- Some **sees** that
- **Be** no matter what

Regarding appropriacy, the results in table 49 show that the participants obtained a total score of 190 out of 208, which means that they managed to use 91.34% of the FSs they produced appropriately. The results also show that all the FSs (100%) produced by nearly half of the participants (n=9) were used appropriately. On the other hand, the inappropriate

sequences formed only 8.65% (n= 18) of the FSs used by the participants in their posttest essays. A sample of the inappropriate FSs is shown below:

- *Technology made our travel easier and faster **in order to** make our lives better*. (Essay 7)

- *Technology is making students becomes so lazy, all their homework they do it from the internet, they don't worry themselves. But in the past we find they really **learn by heart** and doing a lot of research from many books.* (Essay 8)
- *At the end, logically speaking, we cannot **make amends to** development of technology*. (Essay 10)
- *Thus, technology was and still **an effective outlet for** people's excitement and development because it creates global interaction, facilitates life and develops it.*(Essay 15)

Furthermore, few sequences (e.g. *in the past, a lot of, I think that, they believe that*) were repeated over and over again by 5 students to the point that they grew quite wearisome. The following example from essay 12 illustrates this problem:

- *Moreover, there are people who are against the idea in which the technology make our lives less simple. **They believe that** life **in the past** was much better because **they think that** face to face contact is sacred and it is one of their basic principles. Also, people **in the past** were spent their free time in libraries reading books and enjoying novels. In addition, **I think that** even the internet devices allows people to communicate and work in teams and reads electronic books*.

All in all, the results above indicate that though the participants incorporated relatively few sequences in their posttest essays (M= 10.4), most of them managed to use these sequences accurately (M=2.77) and appropriately (91.34%). As for the progress made, it will

be proved by comparing the posttest results with those of the pretest and later on with the experimental group posttest results.

5.5.2.1.3. Experimental Group's Performance in the Posttest

Table 53

Number and Quality of FSs in the Experimental Group's Posttest Essays

Student	Number of FSs	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriateness
01	22	62	2.81	21(95.45%)
02	19	53	2.78	18(94.73%)
03	20	52	2.60	14(70%)
04	20	54	2.70	18(90%)
05	11	33	3.00	10(90.90%)
06	26	76	2.92	24(92.30%)
07	19	51	2.68	18(94.73%)
08	18	54	3.00	18(100%)
09	15	45	3.00	14(93.33%)
10	13	37	2.84	12(92.30%)
11	12	36	3.00	09(75%)
12	18	47	2.61	18(100%)
13	21	56	2.66	21(100%)
14	13	37	2.84	13(100%)
15	25	71	2.84	17(68%)
16	10	26	2.60	09(90%)
17	11	33	3.00	11(100%)
18	21	62	2.95	20(95.23%)
19	10	30	3.00	10(100%)
20	11	32	2.90	11(100%)
Total	**335**	**947**	**2.82**	**306 (91.34%)**
Mean	**16.75**			**15.3**

As illustrated in table 53, the mean number of FSs produced by the experimental group participants in their posttest essays was found to be 16.75 FSs per essay. The participants produced a total of 335 FSs. The maximum number of FSs used was 26, found in the essay of participant 6, whereas the minimum number was 10, found in the essays of two

participants (students 16 and 19). When examining the FSs used, it can be noticed that the participants did not rely solely on three-word sequences, but instead used a considerable number (48.65%) of relatively long sequences (four or more word sequences). Besides, discourse markers were the dominant type among other types of FSs (43.24%).

Moreover, in terms of accuracy, the results demonstrate that the participants obtained a total score of 947 out of 1005 and a mean score of 2.82 out of 3 per sequence, which suggests a high level of accuracy in the sequences the participants produced. More specifically, table 54 below shows that the participants produced the overwhelming majority of FSs accurately (n= 299, 89.25%).

Table 54

Frequency of the Accurate vs. Inaccurate FSs in the Experimental Group's Posttest Essays

	The Experimental Group	
	Number	**Percentage**
Accurate FSs	299	89.25%
Inaccurate FSs	36	10.74%
Total	335	100%

A sample of the sequences which were produced correctly is as follows:

Table 55

A Sample of the Accurate FSs Produced by the Experimental Group in the Post-test Essays

The Experimental Group
- In the long run
- Over the past few years
- The tip of the iceberg
- Once in a blue moon
- They strongly believe that
- When it comes to
- Under the dominance of
- Made the world a better place to live
- A double edged sword
- A familiar sight
- We all know that
- It is clear
- Drop out of school

Regarding the sequences which were produced inaccurately, it seems that the participants' major problem was with the use of prepositions as well as tense forms (11 and 8 instances respectively). Other types of mistakes entailed the omission of a function word within the sequence (3 instances), the addition of an unnecessary word (3 instances), the use of a wrong word (3 instances), plural formation (2 instances), derivation, the omission of a content word within the sequence, miscollocations, wrong structure and wrong word order (1 instance each). Below is a sample of the inaccurate sequences.

Table 56

A Sample of the Inaccurate FSs Produced by the Experimental Group in the Post-test Essays

The Experimental Group
- A point in case
- Learners do not pass exams
- In a matter of fact
- In addition of
- Exams should be taking into account
- The overwhelming of those people
- From the one hand
- In the front of
- In the past few year
- I am totally disagree with
- Going to the extra miles
- Some of people think that
- To bring a halt

Furthermore, examination of the data presented in table 53 demonstrates that the participants performed well in terms of appropriacy as 91.34% of the FSs they used were deemed appropriate. Also, 7 participants used all the FSs they incorporated in their essays appropriately. However, the participants failed to use 8.65% (n=29) of FSs appropriately. It is noteworthy to mention that nearly all of these sequences had already been encountered many times by the students during the treatment period which shows that the students were trying to incorporate the sequences they learned in their essays, but it seems that they did not have good understanding of the meaning of these sequences and their suitable contexts of use. The following are some instances of the inappropriate use of these sequences:

- *After discussing these arguments, I want to say that* ***the array of*** *students that said exams should be* ***taking into consideration****, are totally wrong and they should* ***bring to halt*** *what they believe.* (Essay 3)

- *Technology facilitates many things in this domain. Another example, it allows not only students but also all the people* ***to come up with*** *the cultures from different countries. Secondly, as technology* ***brings to the table*** *in education, it is also at work.* (Essay 15)

In the first example, the student used three sequences inappropriately. The first sequence '*the array of'* which means a large group does not make any sense in this situation. The second sequence '*take into consideration'*, which means to remember to consider something or someone, seems to be misunderstood by the student as this is clearly not the meaning s/he intended to convey, and s/he meant to say that the students who believe that exams should not be abolished. As for the third sequence '*bring to a halt'*, which means to stop someone or something abruptly, the student seemed to have some knowledge of its meaning, but he failed to use it in its appropriate context as beliefs can only be changed but not stopped.

In the second example, the ambiguity arose because of the use of wrong sequences *'come up with*' and '*bring to the table'*, which mean respectively 'to produce or suggest an idea or plan' and 'provide something that will be a benefit'. Presumably, the meaning intended by the participant was that technology allows people to know about other cultures and that is useful not only for education but also for business. However, it seems that s/he did not know the exact meaning of the first sequence and the appropriate context of use of the second one.

It was also observed that there were few instances of repetition in which 4 participants tended to overuse certain FSs, mainly discourse markers and stance expressions (e.g. on the

one hand, on the other hand, in addition to that, as a matter of fact, I believe that etc) over and over again as the following extract illustrates:

- ***Some people think that*** *life was better when technology was less and more simple, but there are other people who disapprove on this idea, because* ***they believe that*** *the technology facilitates their daily life. According to me, I'm totally agree with those* ***people who think or believe that*** *life is good with technology*. (Essay 20)

On the whole, the obtained data show that the participants performed well in terms of both the number of FSs incorporated and the quality of these sequences. To show if there is any progress and, hence, prove the efficiency of the treatment, we need first to run a comparison of the posttest results with those of the pretest and then compare them against those of the control group.

5.5.2.1.4. Comparative Evaluation of Results

5.5.2.1.4.1. Comparison of the Control Group Production of FSs in the Pretest and Posttest Essays

Table 57

Number and Quality of FSs in the Control Group Pretest and Posttest Essays

Student	The Pretest Essay				The Posttest Essay			
	Number of FSs Used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy	Number of FSs Used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy
01	17	47	2.76	15 (88.23%)	20	54	2.70	19 (95%)
02	09	25	2.77	07 (77.77%)	05	15	3.00	05 (100%)
03	08	20	2.50	07 (87.5%)	09	25	2.77	07(77.77%)
04	08	20	2.50	08 (100%)	11	27	2.45	11 (100%)
05	06	18	3.00	04 (66.66%)	11	31	2.81	10 (90.90%)
06	06	16	2.66	04 (66.66%)	09	27	3.00	09 (100%)
07	10	30	3.00	10 (100%)	15	44	2.93	13(86.66%)
08	10	26	2.60	09 (90%)	08	22	2.74	07(87.5%)
09	09	25	2.77	08(88.88%)	15	41	2.73	13(86.66%)
10	16	43	2.68	16 (100%)	16	41	2.56	15(93.75%)
11	03	09	3.00	03 (100%)	08	22	2.75	08 (100%)

12	10	26	2.60	10 (100%)	11	30	2.72	11 (100%)
13	04	12	3.00	02 (50%)	03	09	3.00	01(33.33%)
14	08	20	2.50	07 (87.5%)	09	27	3.00	06 (66.66%)
15	11	31	2.81	10(90.90%)	15	41	2.73	13(86.66%)
16	09	25	2.77	09 (100%)	14	37	2.64	14 (100%)
17	04	09	2.25	03 (75%)	15	42	2.8	15 (100%)
18	02	06	3.00	01 (50%)	04	12	3.00	03 (75%)
19	07	21	3.00	07 (100%)	02	06	3.00	02 (100%)
20	05	15	3.00	04 (80%)	08	24	3.00	08 (100%)
Total	**162**	**444**	**2.74**	**144 (88.88%)**	**208**	**577**	**2.77**	**190 (91.34%)**
Mean	**8.1**			**7.2**	**10.4**			9.5

The results in table 57 reveal that participants in the control group performed slightly better in the posttest in terms of both the number and the quality of FSs. The frequency of FSs increased from 162 on the pretest to 208 on the posttest. That is, 46 FSs more than the ones incorporated in the pretest essays. The mean number of FSs for each essay was 8.1 FSs per essay in the pretest and 10.4 FSs in the posttest. More specifically, the table shows that except for 4 participants who used fewer sequences than they did in the pretest essays, most participants (n=15) employed more FSs in their posttest essays. However, the increase in the number of FSs was non-significant as nearly all these participants (14 out of 15) used only from 1 to 6 more FSs. Only one participant (student 17) made a significant increase as s/he produced only 4 sequences in the pretest essay, which then increased to 15 in the posttest essay. One participant (student 10) produced the same number of FSs (n= 16) in both essays.

On closer examination of the used FSs, one can see that three-word sequences were dominant in both essays. Also, while discourse structuring devices formed 35.80% of the total number of the employed sequences in the pretest essays, they constituted more than half (53.36%) in the posttest essays. This significant increase was, as stated earlier, due to the students' use of stance expressions (19.23%) which characterize argumentative essays. Another reason might be the participants' overuse of this type of sequences. It was also found

that most of the FSs used in the posttest essays differed from those used in the pretest essays. That is, the participants used 134 new FSs (64.42%). When examining these sequences, the researcher found that half of them were discourse markers and stance expressions (68 out of 134, 50.74%). More importantly, it was found that only 3 sequences which appeared in the reading texts were employed by the participants. This supports the view which holds that FSs are difficult to be acquired incidentally through reading (Boers and Lindstromberg, 2009; Lewis, 1993; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1993). As for the remaining sequences (N=66, 49.25%), they were topic-related and might be part of the participants' mental lexicon.

With respect to accuracy, the results indicate that participants performed nearly the same in both tests as the mean score per sequence was 2.74 in the pretest and 2.77 in the posttest. Though the number of FSs produced accurately increased from 83.95% in the pretest to 86.05% in the posttest, this increase was by no means significant. Nevertheless, it remains to be said that the students' level of accuracy was very high in both tests. This could be ascribed to the participants' reliance on common simple sequences. Referring to the inaccurate FSs, the misuse of prepositions was the dominant type of mistake in both tests (6 instances in the pretest and 11 in the posttest).

Similarly, a very slight improvement in the appropriate use of FSs from pretest to posttest was observed. In the writing pretest, 88.88% of FSs were considered as appropriate, whereas this rate increased to 91.34% in the writing posttest. On the other hand, the inappropriate rate went down from 11.11% to 8.65%. Further evidence of this slight progress could be found in the participants' individual performance. While 5 participants used all the FSs appropriately in both essays, 7 participants made a slight increase, with one of them making a noticeable increase from 66.66% to 100%, and the remaining 8 participants slightly deteriorated. This deterioration was often related to the number of FSs used. That is, the more

sequences the students used in their essays, the more errors they made in terms of appropriacy.

Therefore, comparing the pretest and posttest results revealed a slight increase in the number of FSs used and a very slight one in accuracy and appropriacy. The slight increase in the number of FSs in most participants' essays was mainly due to the high number of discourse markers and stance expressions. However, the modest improvement in the quality of the FSs used (accuracy and appropriacy) could not be judged as a deficiency because the participants' performance was already high in the pretest. This leads us to question why this had been so. One possible explanation for the high performance in accuracy and appropriacy might be that the participants used a small number of FSs and employed only those sequences they were familiar with and were sure about their use.

5.5.2.1.4.2. Comparison of the Experimental Group Production of FSs in the Pretest and Posttest Essays

Table 58

Number and Quality of FSs in the Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Essays

Student	The Pretest Essay				The Posttest Essay			
	Number of FSs Used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy	Number of FSs Used	Total Score	Mean Score per FS	Appropriacy
01	15	41	2.73	15(100%)	22	62	2.81	21(95.45%)
02	06	16	2.66	06(100%)	19	53	2.78	18(94.73%)
03	08	20	2.5	08(100%)	20	52	2.60	14(70%)
04	05	15	3.00	05(100%)	20	54	2.70	18(90%)
05	06	16	2.66	05(83.33%)	11	33	3.00	10(90.90%)
06	13	38	2.92	12(92.30%)	26	76	2.92	24(92.30%)
07	11	29	2.63	09(81.81%)	19	51	2.68	18(94.73%)
08	14	41	2.92	14(100%)	18	54	3.00	18(100%)
09	07	15	2.14	07(100%)	15	45	3.00	14(93.33%)
10	06	18	3.00	04(66.66%)	13	37	2.84	12(92.30%)
11	08	21	2.62	07(87.5%)	12	36	3.00	09(75%)
12	12	33	2.75	12(100%)	18	47	2.61	18(100%)
13	11	29	2.63	11	21	56	2.66	21(100%)
14	08	20	2.5	06(75%)	13	37	2.84	13(100%)

15	05	12	2.4	04(80%)	25	71	2.84	17(68%)
16	03	06	2.00	02(66.66%)	10	26	2.60	09(90%)
17	09	25	2.77	09(100%)	11	33	3.00	11(100%)
18	04	12	3.00	03(75%)	21	62	2.95	20(95.23%)
19	10	30	3.00	10(100%)	10	30	3.00	10(100%)
20	05	14	2.8	05(100%)	11	32	2.90	11(100%)
Total	**166**	**451**	**2.71**	**154(92.77)**	**335**	**947**	**2.82**	**306 (91.34%)**
Mean	**8.3**			**7.7**	**16.75**			

Table 58 shows that participants in the experimental group showed a superior performance in terms of the quantity of FSs and moderate improvement in accuracy, but a slight deterioration in appropriacy on the posttest compared to the pretest. As can be observed in the table, the participants used a total of 166 FSs in the pretest, which then jumped to 335 FSs in the posttest, which means that the participants increased their use of FSs by more than half (+169 FSs). The mean number of FSs for each essay was 8.3 FSs per essay in the pretest and 16.75 FSs per essay in the posttest, an increase of 8.45. All participants, except one, produced more FSs than they did in their pretest essays (from 2 to 20 more FSs). More specifically, 7 participants increased their use of FSs significantly (from 10 to 20 more FSs). Participant 5 made the most significant increase as s/he used only 5 sequences in the pretest, but produced 25 in the posttest.

Furthermore, comparing the FSs used across the two tests, it was noticed that while the participants relied mainly on three-word sequences in the pretest, they used a large number of relatively long FSs in the posttest, which implies that the participants benefited from the treatment they received and tended to employ long sequences to facilitate fluent expression. More importantly, it was found that most of the FSs which were used in the posttest essays (226, 67.46%) were not used in the pretest essays, which indicates that the treatment was effective in raising students' awareness of the importance of using FSs in free production. Although the pretest and posttest used different essay topics which makes the used sequences

a little not directly comparable, still it can be clearly noticed that a wide range of FSs of different types were used in the posttest essays compared to those used in the pretest essays. In an attempt to identify the source of these newly used sequences, we found that most of them (n=115, 50.88%) were taught during the treatment period. The remaining ones (N=111, 49.11%) might be acquired by the learners on their own or had already been part of their mental lexicon. In addition to the sequences which were used newly in the posttest essays, the participants used many sequences which were used in their pretest essays (109 instances, 32.53%). The findings show that some of these sequences were used infrequently in the pretest, but they showed an increase in the posttest. A case in point are the expressions '*as a matter of fact'* and '*when it comes to'* which were used only twice in the pretest, but were used 6 times in the posttest. Similarly, the sequence '*first of all'* was used only 3 times in the pretest, but after the treatment it was used 9 times. This increase could be explained as evidence of students' increased awareness of these sequences knowing that they were taught explicitly during the treatment. It was also observed that some FSs were used frequently in both tests which could be attributed to their being part of the participants' repertoire and the students' tendency to rely on them whenever they write. Examples of such sequences included: '*in order to'*, '*a lot of'*, '*one of the'*, '*not only…but also'*, '*in addition to'*, '*to sum up'*.

Concerning accuracy, the results indicate that there was a slight increase in the accurate use of FSs as the mean score per sequence was 2.71 in the pretest and 2.82 in the posttest, an increase of (+0.11). Also, the rate of FSs produced accurately increased slightly from 81.92% in the pretest to 89.25% in the posttest. By contrast, a slight decrease in the rate of inaccurate sequences was observed (from 18.07 % in the pretest to 10.74% in the posttest). When comparing the inaccurate sequences of the two tests, it was noticed that most of the sequences which were produced inaccurately were the newly used ones, an evidence of risk

taking as the participants were trying to use the sequences they learned in their essays even inaccurately.

As for appropriacy, the results indicate a slight decrease in performance as the rate of appropriate FSs went down from 92.77% to 91.34% and, by contrast, that of the inappropriate sequences increased from 7.22% to 8.65%. The table above shows that 6 participants slightly improved, 7 slightly deteriorated while the remaining 7 participants recorded the same rate of appropriacy in both tests. Of these latter, 6 managed to use all the FSs they incorporated in both essays appropriately.

As evidenced by the results above, a very marked increase in the number of FSs incorporated did occur from pretest to posttest. However, when it comes to the quality of these sequences, the results showed that though the students made minimal progress in terms of accuracy and slightly deteriorated in terms of appropriacy, still it can be said that their performance in this regard was nearly the same in both tests.

5.5.2.1.4.3. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Production of FSs in the Writing Pretests and Posttests

Table 59

Number and Quality of FSs in the Control Group and the Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Essays

	Control Group			**Experimental Group**		
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Difference**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Difference**
Number of FSs	162 (M= 8.1)	208 (M=10.4)	+46 (M= +2.3)	166 (M=8.3)	335 (16.75)	+169 (M=+8.45)
Accuracy	2.74	2.77	+0.03	2.71	2.82	+0.11
Appropriacy	144/162 (88.88%)	190/208 (91.34%)	(+2.46%)	154/166 (92.77%)	306/335 (91.34%)	(-1.43%)

The results in table 59 reveal that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in terms of the number of FSs, but showed approximately the same level in accuracy and appropriacy in the posttest. More specifically, both groups started out nearly the

same in terms of the number of FSs incorporated in the writing pretest as the control group produced 162 FSs (M=8.1) and the experimental group produced 166 FSs (M= 8.3). However, in the writing posttest, the experimental group significantly increased their use of FSs to 335 FSs, while the control group slightly increased from 162 to 208 FSs. Thus, the mean gain score for the control group was (+2.3), while that of the experimental group was (+8.45). These gain scores clearly show that though the control group increased their use of FSs from pretest to posttest, this increase was by no means significant compared to that of the experimental group. The table shows that the difference between the two groups in terms of change is +6.15. Participants' individual performance also proves the significant difference between the two groups. Most participants (n=15) in the control group made only slight increase of FSs use (from 1 to 6 more FSs), while 4 participants used fewer sequences than they did in their pretest essays and 1 participant made no increase. On the other hand, nearly all the experimental group participants (n=19) increased their use of FSs (from 2 to 20 more FSs), with 12 of them making an increase of 7 to 20 more FSs. Only 1 participant made no increase.

Concerning the nature of the used sequences, the analysis showed that both groups used mainly three-word sequences in the writing pretest. However, after the treatment, the experimental group participants used a wide range of relatively long sequences as opposed to the control group participants who still relied on the use of three-word sequences. An increase in the use of discourse devices was also observed in both groups which is highly likely because of the type of the essay the students were required to develop, the argumentative.

As for accuracy, comparison of the results indicates that the control group and the experimental group achieved nearly the same in the pretest as the mean score per sequence was respectively 2.74 and 2.71. According to these scores, both groups showed high mastery

over FSs forms due to reasons that have been discussed earlier. Nevertheless, after the treatment, the mean score for control group participants slightly increased to 2.77, an increase of 0.03, while that the experimental group participants slightly rose to 2.82, an increase of 0.11. When comparing the progress each group made, it can be said that there is almost no difference between the two groups' performance in terms of accuracy.

With regard to appropriacy, the pretest mean scores for both groups were approximately the same as the control group scored 88.88% and the experimental group 92.77%. However, after the treatment, no remarkable progress was noticed as participants' performance remained nearly the same in both groups. As table 59 shows, the control group scored 91.34%, an increase of 2.46%, and similarly the experimental group obtained 91.34%, a slight decrease of 1.43%. Thus, no significant difference was observed between the two groups in terms of appropriacy.

Overall, according to the analysis above, the explicit teaching of FSs proved efficient in improving students' production of FSs in essays. However, it seemed to have little or no impact on accuracy and appropriacy as the results showed a very slight improvement in accuracy and no improvement in the appropriate use of these sequences.

5.5.2.2. Students' Writing Performance

5.5.2.2.1. Control and Experimental Groups' Overall Writing Performance in the Pretest

Control and experimental groups' pretest scores on overall writing performance are shown in the table below:

Table 60

Participants' Overall Writing Performance in the Pretest

Group	Mean	Max.	N	Min.	N
Control	**44.9**	63	01	34	06
Experimental	**45.8**	60	02	34	03

As can be observed, the mean score of the control group in the pretest was 44.9, while that of the experimental group was 45.8. This clearly indicates that participants in both groups had a below average level in writing. Comparing the means obtained, it is seen that there was a slight difference between the two groups in writing performance in favour of the experimental group. The table also demonstrates that the highest score recorded was 63 in the control group, obtained by one participant, and 60 in the experimental group, obtained by two participants. The lowest score (34) was obtained by 6 participants of the control group and 3 participants of the experimental group. The results also show that the number of participants who failed to obtain an average score was 14 in the control group and 11 in the experimental group.

In brief, the obtained scores indicate that both groups have approximately the same level of writing ability before the treatment; thus, any progress that occurs afterwards could only be the result of the treatment received.

To get a better view on participants' writing performance, the scores obtained on each aspect of writing are reported separately.

5.5.2.2.1.1. Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest Performance in Content

Table 61

Students' Pretest Results in Content

Scoring Range	Control Group	Experimental Group
	N	**N**
30-27	00	00
26-22	01	00
21-17	06	07
16-13	13	13
Mean	**15.65**	**15.7**

The results in table 61 above show that the mean score of the control group was (15.65) and that of the experimental group was (15.7). This indicates that participants in both groups had equivalent level in content. More specifically, the table demonstrates that the

scores of the majority of participants (13 in each group) ranged between 13 and 16. The remaining participants (7 in the experimental group and 6 in the control group) scored between 17 and 21. The remaining participant of the control group obtained 24, which is also the highest score in this group. The highest score in the experimental group was 21 and was obtained by 1 participant. The lowest score (13) was obtained by 6 participants of the control group and 7 of the experimental group. These results denote that the students had an average level in content. Though most participants managed to develop ideas which were relevant to the topic, they failed to create effective, well-developed essays. Their ideas were too general, boring and lacked details.

5.5.2.2.1.2. Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest Performance in Organization

Table 62

Students' Pretest Results in Organization

Scoring Range	Control Group	Experimental Group
	N	**N**
20-18	00	00
17-14	00	01
13-10	08	08
9-7	12	11
Mean	**08.95**	**9.6**

Regarding organization, the results indicate that the control group obtained a mean score of 8.95, while the experimental group got 9.6. As can be seen, both groups performed nearly the same. Data displayed in table 62 above show that the majority of participants in both groups (12 in the control group and 11 in the experimental group) obtained scores that range from 7 to 9. 8 participants in both groups scored between 10 and 13, while only 1 participant in the experimental group scored 14, which is the highest score in this group. The highest score in the control group was 12 and was obtained by 4 participants. However, the lowest score (7) was obtained by 7 participants of the control group and 6 participants of the experimental group. Therefore, a look at these results reveals that the students' level in

organization is below the average. These students failed to produce clear, fluent, and well-organized essays. It was also noticed that though the participants used so many discourse devices to move from one paragraph to another, a break was felt when reading their essays.

5.5.2.2.1.3. Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest Performance in Vocabulary

Table 63

Students' Pretest Results in Vocabulary

Scoring Range	Control Group	Experimental Group
	N	**N**
20-18	00	00
17-14	00	00
13-10	06	09
9-7	14	11
Mean	**08.65**	**09.05**

Table 63 demonstrates that the mean vocabulary score was 08.65 for the control group and 09.05 for the experimental group. Therefore, both groups performed nearly alike as the means were very close to each other. Similar to organization, the participants' essays were rated as very poor in terms of vocabulary. This is reflected in the results displayed in the table above where the majority of participants in both groups (14 in the control group and 11 in the experimental group) scored between 7 and 9, and the remaining participants (6 in the control group and 9 in the experimental group) scored between 10 and 13. The highest score in the control group was 12 and was got by 4 participants, while in the experimental group, it was 13 and was recorded by 1 participant. On the other hand, the lowest score (7) was obtained by 8 participants of the control group and 9 participants of the experimental group.

5.5.2.2.1.4. Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest Performance in Language Use

Table 64

Students' Pretest Results in Language Use

Scoring Range	Control Group	Experimental Group
	N	**N**
25-22	00	00
21-18	00	00
17-11	06	09
10-5	14	11
Mean	**09.30**	**9.15**

According to the results in table 64, the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group were respectively 9.30 and 9.15. This suggests that both groups had the same level in language use. It is worth noting that the participants' performance in this aspect of writing was the lowest compared to the other aspects. The majority of participants in both groups (14 in the control group and 11 in the experimental group) scored between 5 and 10, and the remaining ones (6 in the control group and 9 in the experimental group) scored between 11 and 17. Only 5 participants in each group got above-average scores (≥13 out of 25). Also, the highest score was 17 in the control group and 16 in the experimental group, obtained by one participant each. The lowest score (5) was got by 7 participants of the control group and 4 participants of the experimental group. So, according to these results, most participants had serious problems with language use and showed no mastery of conventions. This was evident in their papers which teemed with different grammar mistakes.

5.5.2.2.1.5. Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest Performance in Mechanics

Table 65

Students' Pretest Results in Mechanics

Scoring Range	Control Group	Experimental Group
	N	**N**
5	00	00
4	00	00
3	07	06
2	13	14
Mean	**02.35**	**02.30**

Table 65 shows that both groups performed the same in terms of mechanics as the mean scores were respectively 2.35 and 2.30. Similar to the previous last three aspects, students' performance in mechanics was rated below average. This is clearly shown in the table above where no participant scored 4 or 5. Most participants (13 in the control group and 14 in the experimental group) got 2, while the remaining participants (7 in the control group and 6 in the experimental group) scored 3. Most participants even those who wrote acceptable essays seemed to have serious problems with conventions especially punctuation and spelling.

All in all, the above results show that the performance of the control group and the experimental group was approximately the same in all aspects of writing. Thus, it can be said that both groups were homogeneous.

5.5.2.2.2. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Overall Writing Performance

Table 66

Control Group Overall Writing Performance in the Pretest and the Posttest

Control Group	Mean	Max.	N	Min.	N
Pretest	**44.9**	63	01	34	06
Posttest	**48.1**	74	01	34	03

Data displayed in table 66 show a slight increase in participants' overall mean scores. One can notice that the participants started with a mean score of 44.9 and ended with a mean of 48.1. However, this slight increase in the mean score (+3.2) did not reflect a significant improvement in overall writing performance as most participants (n=12) failed to get the average. Only 8 participants managed to obtain relatively high scores on the posttest. More specifically, looking at the participants' individual scores, it was found that 11 participants obtained scores higher than those of the pretest, showing different gains (from +2 to +18). Only one participant made a significant increase, recording a gain of (+18). This student started with a moderate score (56) and then jumped to 74 in the posttest. 6 participants obtained lower scores than the pretest, while the remaining 3 participants obtained the same

lowest score (34) in both tests. The table also shows that the highest score in the pretest was 63, obtained by 1 participant, while it was 74 in the posttest, got by 1 participant as well. On the other hand, the lowest score (34) was obtained by 6 participants in the pretest and 3 participants in the posttest (For individual students' writing scores see Appendix 8). Overall, these results suggest that teaching writing in the traditional way was not effective enough in improving participants' overall writing quality.

Below is a detailed comparison of each aspect of writing.

5.5.2.2.2.1. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Content

Table 67

Control Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Content

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	**N**
30-27	00	00
26-22	01	02
21-17	06	08
16-13	13	10
Mean	**15.65**	**16.4**

A look at table 67 above reveals that participants of the control group showed a slight increase in terms of content from 15.65 in the pretest to 16.40 in the posttest. However, this increase was non-significant as the difference between the two means was just (0.75). The results show that 8 participants obtained scores slightly higher than those of the pretest, with gains of +1 to +5 points. On the other hand, 6 participants slightly deteriorated. 5 of these students retreated by -1 to -2 points, while the sixth participant retreated by -5 points. This student got 18 in the pretest which then decreased to 13 in the posttest. This participant's essay was very poor in terms of content compared to the pretest essay in that it was very superficial, lacked details and showed no knowledge of the subject. The remaining 6 participants got the same low scores in both tests. The results also show that the maximum score in the pretest was 24, obtained by 1 participant and was 22 in the posttest, got by 2

participants. However, the minimum score (13) was obtained by 6 participants in the pretest and 5 participants in the posttest. Generally, these results indicate that the students' performance in content remained nearly the same.

5.5.2.2.2.2. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Organization

Table 68

Control Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Organization

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	N
20-18	00	00
17-14	00	03
13-10	08	03
9-7	12	14
Mean	**08.95**	**09.3**

As can be seen in table 68 above, the control group performed nearly identically in both tests in organization as the mean score was 8.95 in the pretest and 9.30 in the posttest. The results show that only 7 participants increased their scores by 1 to 5 points. Participant (10) made the most significant increase (+5) as s/he obtained 10 in the pretest which then jumped to 15 in the posttest. On the other hand, 6 participants obtained lower scores while the remaining 7 participants got the same scores in both tests. So, according to the participants' individual scores as well as the difference between the two means (0.35), it can be said that the control group made no noticeable improvement in terms of organization.

5.5.2.2.2.3. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Vocabulary

Table 69

Control Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Vocabulary

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	N
20-18	00	00
17-14	00	01
13-10	06	05
9-7	14	14
Mean	**08.65**	**09.05**

Similar to the previous writing aspects, there was no noticeable improvement in participants' performance in vocabulary as the difference between the two means was just 0.4. The participants obtained a mean score of 8.65 in the pretest and 9.05 in the posttest which indicates that their vocabulary level was below average in both essays. The results show that 9 participants slightly increased their scores, with a gain of (+1 to +3), whereas 4 participants obtained lower scores (-1 to -3). The remaining 7 participants obtained the same scores in both tests. In addition, the maximum score in the pretest was 12 and was obtained by 4 participants, but it was 14 in the posttest and was obtained by 1 participant. On the other hand, the lowest score (7) was got by 8 participants in the pretest and 7 participants in the posttest. Thus, according to these results, no remarkable improvement was made in vocabulary.

5.5.2.2.2.4. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Language Use

Table 70

Control Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Language Use

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	N
25-22	00	00
21-18	00	04
17-11	06	04
10-5	14	12
Mean	**09.3**	**10.75**

As the table shows, the control group scored 9.3 in the pretest and 10.75 in the posttest in language use. Compared to the previous aspects, it seems that the improvement participants made in language use is relatively remarkable as the difference between the two means was 1.45. The results show that most participants (N=13) increased their scores, with a gain of +1 to +8. Participant 1 made the most significant improvement (+8) as s/he obtained 10 out of 25 in the pretest, which then increased to 18. Moreover, 4 participants obtained lower scores while the remaining 3 participants got the same lowest scores in the two tests. The highest

score in the pretest was 17 and was obtained by 1 participant; however, in the posttest it was 20 and was obtained also by 1 participant. The lowest score (5) was got by 7 participants in the pretest and 6 participants in the posttest. Therefore, the obtained data show that the control group relatively improved in terms of language use compared with the other aspects. However, the progress these students made was not really remarkable as their level in this regard was still below the average.

5.5.2.2.2.5. Control Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Mechanics

Table 71
Control Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Mechanics

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	N
5	00	00
4	00	02
3	07	08
2	13	10
Mean	**02.35**	**02.6**

According to the results in table 71, the mean score for mechanics was 2.35 in the pretest and 2.6 in the posttest. Hence, the control group's performance was nearly identical in both tests. The table shows that the scores of most participants ranged between 2 and 3 in both tests. So, 3 was obtained by 7 participants in the pretest and 8 participants in the posttest, while 2 was got by 13 participants in the pretest and 10 participants in the posttest. No participant achieved the maximum score (5) in both tests. Besides, while no participant achieved 4 in the pretest, it was obtained by 2 participants in the posttest. These findings point to a slight improvement in participants' mastery over writing mechanics.

The table below offers a summary of the control group results in the writing test.

Table 72

A Summary of the Control Group Results in the Writing Test

	Overall Writing Performance	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanics
Pretest	44.9	15.65	8.95	8.65	9.30	2.35
Posttest	48.1	16.4	9.3	9.05	10.75	2.6
Difference	**03.2**	**0.75**	**0.35**	**0.4**	**01.45**	**0.25**

The comparison results above indicate a very slight increase in all writing aspects, with the increase in language use being somehow remarkable (1.45) compared to the other aspects. The second highest rate of increase went to content (0.75) followed by vocabulary (0.4), organization (0.35) and finally mechanics (0.25). These findings lead us to say that participants of the control group did not benefit too much from the instruction they received, i.e., writing instruction according the traditional approach, as their writing level remained nearly the same.

5.5.2.2.3. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Overall Writing Performance

Table 73

Experimental Group Overall Writing Performance in the Pretest and the Posttest

Experimental Group	**Mean**	**Max.**	**N**	**Min.**	**N**
Pretest	**45.8**	60	02	34	03
Posttest	**54.9**	77	01	34	01

A glance at table 73 reveals that the experimental group performed better on the posttest in terms of overall writing performance compared to the pretest. This could be clearly seen in the mean score which increased from 45.8 in the pretest to 54.9 in the posttest. All students, except one who had the same score on both tests, were able to boost their scores. Many students (N=6) made significant improvement, recording a gain of +10 to +18; however, the most significant increase was made by participant (18) who had a gain score of

(+33). Though this student showed poor writing ability in the pretest (38), s/he improved remarkably in the posttest (71). The table also shows that the highest score achieved in the pretest was 60, obtained by 2 participants, while it was 77 in the posttest, got by 1 participant. On the other hand, the lowest score (34) was obtained by 3 participants in the pretest and only 1 participant in the posttest. Thus, according to these results, one can postulate that the treatment participants received helped them improve their writing quality.

5.5.2.2.3.1. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Content

Table 74

Experimental Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Content

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	**N**
30-27	00	00
26-22	00	02
21-17	07	07
16-13	13	11
Mean	**15.7**	**17.05**

A closer look at the mean scores provided in table 74 indicates that the mean scores for content in the pretest and the posttest were 15.7 and 17.05 respectively. Thus, a mean difference of (1.35) was recorded which suggested a considerable improvement in this aspect. Most participants (N=14) improved their performance, recording gain scores of +1 to +6. The maximum score recorded in the pretest was 21 and was obtained by 1 participant, but it was 22 in the posttest and was got by 2 participants. However, the minimum score (34) was obtained by 6 participants in the pretest and 4 participants in the posttest. This demonstrates that it was likely that after getting the treatment, the students were motivated to improve the content of their essays.

5.5.2.2.3.2. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Organization

Table 75

Experimental Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Organization

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	**N**
20-18	00	00
17-14	01	03
13-10	08	09
9-7	11	08
Mean	**09.6**	**10.55**

The data presented in the table 75 show a slight improvement in terms of organization. The participants got a mean of 9.6 in the pretest and a mean of 10.55 in the posttest which shows that the participants managed to achieve an average level after obtaining a below average score in the pretest. The results show that 12 participants obtained relatively high scores (≥10 out of 20). As shown in the table, no participant scored between 18 and 20 in both tests. Besides, the number of participants who scored between 14 and 17 increased from 1 to 3 participants in the posttest and that of those who scored between 10 and 13 rose from 8 to 9 participants. However, the number of students who obtained scores that ranged from 7 and 9 decreased from 11 participants in the pretest to 8 in the posttest. The highest score in the pretest was 14, while it was 15 in the posttest. On the other hand, the lowest score (7) was obtained by 6 participants in the pretest and 4 participants in the posttest. These results suggest that the slight improvement participants made in terms of organization might be due to the instruction they received.

5.5.2.2.3.3. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Vocabulary

Table 76

Experimental Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Vocabulary

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	**N**
20-18	00	00
17-14	00	05
13-10	09	07
9-7	11	08
Mean	**09.05**	**11**

Table 76 above shows that there was noticeable improvement in terms of vocabulary as the mean score was 9.05 in the pretest which then rose to 11 in the posttest, an increase of 1.95. When comparing individual results, it was found that except for 3 participants who obtained the same score on both tests, most participants (N=17) increased their scores by 1 to 6 points. Concerning the maximum score, while it was 14 in the pretest, it rose to 15 in the posttest. By contrast, the number of participants who obtained the lowest score (7) decreased from 9 participants in the pretest to only 1 participant in the posttest. Thus, these results suggest that the explicit teaching of FSs to student writers improved their vocabulary use. Many students were able to make effective word/ sequence choice which enabled them to say exactly what they meant. It was also noticed that the participants made special efforts to include the FSs they acquired, many of which were idiomatic, during the treatment period, which made their writing more powerful and gave an impression that the students were using language that far exceeded their actual level. (See Appendix 7 for students' essays).

5.5.2.2.3.4. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Language Use

Table 77

Experimental Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Language Use

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	**N**
25-22	00	00
21-18	00	06
17-11	09	07
10-5	11	07
Mean	**9.15**	**13.5**

From table 77, it is evident that the experimental group participants improved remarkably in terms of language use in the posttest compared to the pretest. This was reflected in the mean score which increased from 9.15 in the pretest to 13.5 in the posttest. Nearly all participants (N=18) boosted their scores except for 2 participants who got the same scores on both tests. More specifically, it was noticed that 3 participants (6, 10, and 13) were able to increase their scores significantly (+8), while 1 participant (18) raised their score by 14 points, thereby attaining the highest gain score. These participants scored 11, 13, 11, and 6 respectively in the pretest, but got 19, 21, 19 and 20 respectively in the posttest. As for the maximum score, it was 16 in the pretest and was obtained by 1 participant (8); however, it was 21 in the posttest and was obtained by 1 participant (10) as well. Concerning the minimum score (5), the number of participants who obtained it decreased from 4 participants in the pretest to only 1 participant in the posttest.

Therefore, individual results as well as the difference in mean scores between the pretest and the posttest (4.35) proved that the treatment had a positive impact on the participants' ability to use the language accurately. The increase students made in terms of language use was the most significant compared to the other aspects. These results, though not statistically tested, seem to support the view which holds that the use of FSs reduces grammar errors (Boers et al., 2006).

5.5.2.2.3.5. Experimental Group Pretest and Posttest Scores in Mechanics

Table 78

Experimental Group Pretest vs. Posttest Scores in Mechanics

Scoring Range	Pretest	Posttest
	N	N
5	00	00
4	00	05
3	06	06
2	14	09
Mean	**02.3**	**02.8**

In terms of mechanics, the results demonstrate a slight increase in participants' performance from pretest (M=2.3) to posttest (M=2.8). No participant achieved the maximum score (5). As the table shows, no participant obtained the score (4) in the pretest, but it was obtained by 5 participants in the posttest. Also, while the number of participants who scored (3) was the same (N=6) in both tests, the number of students who got the lowest score (2) decreased from 14 in the pretest to 9 in the posttest. So, these results and the mean difference between the two tests (0.5) indicate a slight improvement in students' mastery of writing mechanics. However, it should be pointed out that the improvement participants made in this aspect was the least significant compared to the other aspects.

The table below summarizes the results the experimental group achieved in overall writing performance as well as in each writing aspect.

Table 79

A Summary of the Experimental Group Results in the Writing Test

	Overall Writing Performance	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanics
Pretest	45.8	15.7	9.6	9.05	9.15	2.3
Posttest	54.9	17.05	10.55	11	13.5	2.8
Difference	**9.1**	**1.35**	**0.95**	**1.95**	**4.35**	**0.5**

The results reported in table 79 above show that the highest gain score was in language use (4.35) followed by vocabulary (1.95), content (1.35), organization (0.95), and

finally mechanics (0.5). The significant increase in language use and vocabulary could be because the treatment dealt with a linguistic aspect, i.e., lexis.

On the whole, these results prove the efficiency of the treatment which yielded an overall difference of (9.1) between the two tests. However, the significance or non-significance of this difference cannot be claimed until it is determined through statistical testing.

Below is an overall comparison of the control and the experimental groups' results.

5.5.2.2.4. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Overall Writing Performance

Table 80
Control Group and Experimental Group's Results in Overall Writing Performance

Overall Writing Performance	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	44.9	45.8
Posttest	48.1	54.9
Difference	**3.2**	**9.1**

The results presented in table 80 show that the control and the experimental groups exhibited nearly the same writing level in the pretest as they recorded a mean score of 44.9 and 45.8 respectively. However, after the treatment, the experimental group with a mean score of 54.9 outperformed the control group which obtained a mean score of 48.1. Thus, though the control group showed an increase of (3.2), it was by no means significant compared to that of the experimental group (9.1). The difference between the two groups in terms of change was (5.9). So, these results indicate that the group which received the treatment improved their overall writing performance better than the group which did not.

5.5.2.2.4.1. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Results in Content

Table 81
Control Group and Experimental Group's Results in Content

Content	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	15.65	15.7
Posttest	16.4	17.05
Difference	**0.75**	**1.35**

As can be observed, the pretest mean scores of the control and the experimental groups were 15.65 and 15.7 respectively, which indicates that they performed the same in terms of content. In addition, these scores indicate that both groups had an average level. After being exposed to the treatment, the experimental group's mean score increased to 17.05, while that of control group increased to 16.4. Hence, the experimental group was able to obtain a mean score increase of 1.35 as opposed to 0.75 achieved by the control group.

5.5.2.2.4.2. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Results in Organization

Table 82
Control Group and Experimental Group's Results in Organization

Organization	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	08.95	09.6
Posttest	09.3	10.55
Difference	**0.35**	**0.95**

In terms of organization, the results demonstrate that the control and the experimental groups were approximately on equal level of achievement in the pretest as their mean scores were 8.95 and 9.6 respectively. According to these scores, both groups had a below average level in organization. Nonetheless, in the posttest, the experimental group with a mean score of 10.55 made an increase of 0.95, whereas the control group, which recorded a mean score of 9.30, made an increase of 0.35. These results indicate that though both groups made only slight progress from pretest to posttest, the improvement of the experimental group was

relatively greater than that of the control group. Participants of the experimental group were able to have an average score as opposed to the control group participants whose achievement remained below the average. Nevertheless, it remains to be said that the experimental group still needed to achieve better results so as to reach a satisfactory level in organization.

5.5.2.2.4.3. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Results in Vocabulary

Table 83
Control Group and Experimental Group's Results in Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	08.65	09.05
Posttest	09.05	11
Difference	**0.4**	**1.95**

As illustrated in table 83 above, the pretest mean score was 8.65 for the control group and 9.05 for the experimental group which demonstrates that both groups showed nearly the same level in terms of vocabulary before the intervention. These scores denote that both groups had below average level. However, after the treatment, participants of the experimental group with a mean of 11 performed better than their counterparts in the control group who obtained a mean of 9.05. Thus, considering each group's gain score (1.95 and 0.4 respectively), it seems that the explicit teaching of FSs improved the experimental group participants' performance in terms of vocabulary.

5.5.2.2.4.4. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Results in Language Use

Table 84
Control and Experimental Group's Results in Language Use

Language Use	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	09.3	09.15
Posttest	10.75	13.5
Difference	**1.45**	**4.35**

With regard to language use, it can be clearly seen that both groups improved in the posttest compared to the pretest. The table shows that the control group's mean score increased from 9.3 to 10.75, while that of the experimental group jumped from 9.15 to 13.5. Yet, the obtained gain scores for each group (1.45 for the control group and 4.35 for the experimental group) as well as the difference in means (2.9) show that the experimental group performed better than the control group. It should be noted that though the control group improved, their improvement was far from satisfactory as they failed to achieve even an average score. In this regard, the experimental group also still needs to develop more in this aspect.

5.5.2.2.4.5. Comparison of the Control Group and the Experimental Group's Results in Mechanics

Table 85
Control Group and Experimental Group's Results in Mechanics

Mechanics	Control Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	2.35	02.3
Posttest	02.6	02.8
Difference	**0.25**	**0.5**

Comparing the pretest and posttest results presented in table 85 above, it appears that the experimental group performed slightly better than the control group. The table shows that the control and the experimental groups had nearly the same mean score in the pretest (2.35 and 2.30 respectively), which they increased later on to 2.6 and 2.8 respectively. Thus, compared to the control group's gain score (0.25), that of the experimental group (0.5) was greater.

All in all, the findings presented above show that students of the experimental group performed better than their counterparts in the control group in overall writing performance as well as in all writing aspects, yet with different rates. The highest rate went to language use (2.9), followed by vocabulary (1.55), then content and organization (0.6), and finally

mechanics (0.25). However, before jumping to conclusions about the effectiveness of FSs instruction, statistical testing is needed to determine the significance or non-significance of the obtained differences. This will be addressed in the next section.

5.6. Hypotheses Testing (Inferential Statistics)

To test our hypotheses, a statistical t-test was opted for. A t-test is employed "to determine whether two groups of scores are significantly different at a selected probability level" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012, p. 351). In other words, a t-test tells whether an obtained difference is due to the independent variable and that it is big enough to transcend chance. There are two common types of a t-test. These are the independent samples t-test and the paired samples t-test. The independent t-test is used to compare the means of two independent groups or samples on a given variable. The two samples are not related to each other in that one participant cannot be a member of both groups. On the other hand, the paired samples t-test, which is also called the dependent samples t-test, is used to compare the means that come from the same sample. For example, you could use a paired samples t-test to measure two means from the same group during a pretest and a posttest.

In the present study, an independent t-test was used to compare the control group and the experimental group's performance in the posttest given that our samples were independent. A one-tailed test was also opted for since we predicted the direction in which the results would go. That is, the teaching of FSs *improves* students' production of these sequences in a C-test as well as in their essays and *enhances* students' overall writing quality.

5.6.1. Testing the First Hypothesis

The Independent Samples t-Test

To compute the t-value, we need first to highlight the stages that will be followed (Miller, 1984, p. 67):

- Calculate the two samples means $\overline{X}_1$ and $\overline{X}_2$ using the formula:

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

- Calculate the two sample variances S_1^2 and S_2^2 using the formula:

$$S^2 = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - \overline{X}^2$$

- Substitute the values of $\overline{X}_1$, $\overline{X}_2$, S_1^2, S_2^2, N_1, N_2 in the computational formula for t:

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{(\bar{X}1-\bar{X}2)\sqrt{(N1+N2-2)N1\,N2}}{\sqrt{(N1\,S1^2+N2\,S2^2)(N1+N2)}}$$

- Find the number of degrees of freedom using the formula: $df = N1+N2-2$.
- Find the value of *t* needed for the chosen level of significance using the *t* table. This value will depend on the number of degrees of freedom, and whether the prediction is one-tailed or two-tailed.
- If the observed t value is equal to or greater than the tabulated t value, reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternate hypothesis.

Where:

$\overline{X}_1$ = Mean of the first group

$\overline{X}_2$ = Mean of the second group

N_1 = Number of participants in the first group

N_2 = Number of participants in the second group

S_1^2 = Variance of the first group

S_2^2 = Variance of the second group

1. Calculating the Means of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

$$\overline{X}_1 = \frac{1080}{20} = \mathbf{54}$$

$$\overline{X}_2 = \frac{405}{20} = \mathbf{20.25}$$

2. Calculating the Variances

Before using the variation formula, we have first to calculate the square sum of the individual scores of each participant to obtain the squared sum of the two samples.

Table 86

Experimental and Control Groups' Posttest Scores in the C-test

	The Experimental Group		**The Control Group**	
N	$\mathbf{X_1}$	$\mathbf{X_1^2}$	$\mathbf{X_2}$	$\mathbf{X_2^2}$
01	52	2704	40	1600
02	61	3721	25	625
03	49	2401	20	400
04	48	2304	35	1225
05	62	3844	22	484
06	72	5184	07	49
07	54	2916	24	576
08	39	1521	11	121
09	55	3025	24	576
10	65	4225	19	361
11	53	2809	14	196
12	70	4900	07	49
13	20	400	11	121
14	54	2916	20	400
15	49	2401	32	1024
16	51	2601	27	729
17	54	2916	24	576
18	73	5329	31	961
19	40	1600	08	64
20	59	3481	04	16
Total	$\mathbf{\sum X1 = 1080}$	$\mathbf{\sum X1^2 = 61198}$	$\mathbf{\sum X2 = 405}$	$\mathbf{\sum X2^2 = 10153}$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{61198}{20} - (54^2) = 3059.9 - 2916 = \mathbf{143.9}$$

$S_2^2 = \frac{10153}{20}$ − $(20.25^2) = 507.65 - 410.06 =$ **97.59**

3. Computing *t*:

$$t\,N_1 + N_2 - 2 = \frac{(\bar{X}1 - \bar{X}\mathbf{2})\sqrt{(N1+N2-2)N1\,N2}}{\sqrt{(N1\,S1^2 + N2\,S2^2)(N1+N2)}}$$

$$= \frac{(54-20.25)\sqrt{(20+20-2)20\times 20}}{\sqrt{(20\times 143.9 + 20\times 97.59)(20+20)}}$$

$$= \frac{(33.75)\sqrt{(38)400}}{\sqrt{(2878+1951.8)(40)}}$$

$$= \frac{33.75\times 123.28}{\sqrt{4829.8\times 40}}$$

$$= \frac{4160.7}{439.53}$$

$$= \mathbf{9.46}$$

4. Calculating the Degree of Freedom (*df*):

df = N1+ N2 -2

df = 20 +20 –2 **= 38**

5. Finding the Critical Value of *t* in the *t* Distribution Table:

First, it should be made clear that the significance level used in the study is ***α = 0.05***. Thus, for 38 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance, the tabulated t value which corresponds to one-tailed test is **1.68**. Obviously, the computed *t* (**9.46**) is greater than the tabulated *t* (**1.68**) which confirms that the results are statistically significant. Hence, we reject

the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis which states that the teaching of FSs improves students' knowledge of FSs as measured by a C-test.

5.6.2. Testing the Second Hypothesis

To test the second hypothesis, the same steps for computing the *t* value as used above were followed.

Table 87
T-test for the Production of FSs in Essays

	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
The number of FSs produced in essays	Experimental	16.75	24.79	**4.04**	**1.68**
	Control	10.4	22.04		

As the table above shows, there is significant difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of the production of FSs in essays as the *t* value (4.04) is greater than the critical value (1.68). This confirms our hypothesis that teaching FSs improves students' production of FSs in their essays.

5.6.2.1. Accuracy of the Produced FSs

Table 88
T-test for the Accuracy of the Produced FSs

	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
The accuracy of FSs produced in essays	Experimental	2.82	8.06	**0.054**	**1.68**
	Control	2.77	7.95		

The results indicate that there is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group with regard to the accuracy of the FSs they used in their essays since the computed *t* (0.054) is less than the tabulated *t* (1.68). This demonstrates that the treatment had no effect on the accuracy of the FSs used in essays. One explanation for this result was that participants of both groups had attained high mean scores in the pretest (2.71

out of 3 for the experimental group and 2.74 for the control group) which made any increase afterwards of no significance.

5.6.2.2. Appropriacy of the Produced FSs

Table 89

Experimental and Control Groups' Posttest Scores in Appropriacy

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Number of FSs	Appropriacy	Number of FSs	Appropriacy
01	22	21	20	19
02	19	18	05	05
03	20	14	09	07
04	20	18	11	11
05	11	10	11	10
06	26	24	09	09
07	19	18	15	13
08	18	18	08	07
09	15	14	15	13
10	13	12	16	15
11	12	09	08	08
12	18	18	11	11
13	21	21	03	01
14	13	13	09	06
15	25	17	15	13
16	10	09	14	14
17	11	11	15	15
18	21	20	04	03
19	10	10	02	02
20	11	11	08	08
Total	**335**	**306**	**208**	**190**
Mean	**16.75**	**15.3**	**10.4**	**9.5**

As we have seen earlier, the appropriacy of FSs used was measured on 0-1 point scale (1 = appropriate, 0 = inappropriate), so the scale depended on the total number of FSs used by each participant. For example, if a participant used 20 FSs in his essay, and produced 12 appropriately, he would get 12 out of 20 and so on. Thus, having different scales we came up with different means for each group (15.3 out of 16.75 for the experimental group, and 9.5 out of 10.4 for the control group) which made it difficult to make a direct comparison between the two groups. To solve this problem, we applied '*the rule of three'* to adjust the scores obtained

by the control group participants to the same scales of their counterparts in the experimental group. For instance, to adjust the score of participant 1 of the control group who obtained 19 out 20 to the scale of participant 1 in the experimental group (22), we made the following calculation:

$$x = \frac{19 \times 22}{20} = 20.9$$

So, 19 out of 20 becomes 20.9 out of 22. The same rule was applied to the remaining scores; each control group participant's score is adjusted to the scale of his counterpart in the experimental group. The table below presents the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group after being adjusted in addition to their squares.

Table 90

Experimental Group and Adjusted Control Group's Posttest Scores in Appropriacy

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	X_1	X_1^2	X_2	X_2^2
01	21	441	20.9	436.81
02	18	324	19	361
03	14	196	15.55	241.80
04	18	324	20	400
05	10	100	10	100
06	24	576	26	676
07	18	324	16.46	270.93
08	18	324	15.75	248.06
09	14	196	13	163
10	12	144	12.18	148.35
11	09	81	12	144
12	18	324	18	324
13	21	441	7	49
14	13	169	8.66	74.99
15	17	289	21.66	469.15
16	09	81	10	100
17	11	121	11	121
18	20	400	15.75	248.06
19	10	100	10	100
20	11	121	11	121
Total	**$\sum X1 = 306$**	**$\sum X1^2 = 5076$**	**$\sum X2 = 293.91$**	**$\sum X2^2 = 4797.1727$**

Going through the stages of computing the t-test for independent samples, we came up with the following results:

Table 91

T-test for the Appropriacy of the Produced FSs

	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
The appropriacy of FSs produced in essays	Experimental	15.3	19.71	**0.40**	**1.68**
	Control	14.69	24.06		

Thus, as indicated above there is no significant difference between the experimental and control group in appropriacy (t= 0.40 < t = 1.68). Similar to accuracy, participants of both groups managed to produce the overwhelming majority of FSs appropriately (92.77% for the experimental group and 88.88% for the control group) in the pretest and this would render any improvement after the treatment of no significance. As stated earlier, the high performance of students in both tests could be attributed to their tendency to use only those sequences they are sure about.

5.6.3. Testing the Third Hypothesis

The data needed to compute *t* are included in Appendix 8.

Table 92

Independent T-test for Overall Writing Performance

Overall Writing Performance	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	54.9	183.79	**1.55**	**1.68**
	Control	48.1	177.59		

The *t*-test results, as shown in table 92, reveal that there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of overall writing performance as the *t*-value (1.55) is slightly less than the critical value (1.68). Though descriptive statistics showed that both groups improved their overall writing quality from pretest to posttest (from 45.8 to 54.9 for the experimental group, and from 44.9 to 48.1 for the control group), with the experimental group making the most significant increase, it seems that the treatment had no significant effect on the experimental group students' overall writing

quality. Thus, the hypothesis which suggested that FSs instruction would improve students' overall writing quality is rejected.

5.6.3.1. Statistical Improvement in Content

Table 93
Independent T-test for Content

Content	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	17.05	11.25	**0.62**	**1.68**
	Control	16.4	9.44		

As displayed in table 93, there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group (t= 0.62 < t=1.68). This denotes that the treatment did not help students improve the content of their essays.

5.6.3.2. Statistical Improvement in Organization

Table 94
Independent T-test for Organization

Organization	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	10.55	8.5	**1.38**	**1.68**
	Control	9.3	7.01		

Similar to content, no significant difference was found between the experimental and the control group in organization as the *t*-value (1.38) was less than the critical value (1.68). This proves that the explicit teaching of FSs had no effect on students' organization of their essays.

5.6.3.3. Statistical Improvement in Vocabulary

Table 95
Independent T-test for Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	11	6.4	**2.45**	**1.68**
	Control	9.05	5.55		

According to table 95, the *t*-value (2.45) is greater than the critical value (1.68), which shows a statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups. These findings suggest that FSs instruction proved efficient in helping students improve their vocabulary use.

5.6.3.4. Statistical Improvement in Language Use

Table 96
Independent T-test for Language Use

Language Use	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	13.5	22.25	**1.62**	**1.68**
	Control	10.75	32.29		

Descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group with a mean of 13.5 outperformed the control group (10.75) in language use. Nevertheless, the *t*-test results presented in table 96 above reveal that no significant difference was found between the two groups since that t-value (1.62) was slightly less than the critical value (1.68). Thus, it can be said that the treatment had no effect on language use.

5.6.3.5. Statistical Improvement in Mechanics

Table 97
Independent T-test for Mechanics

Mechanics	Group	Mean	Variance	T Value	Tabulated *t*
	Experimental	2.8	0.66	**0.83**	**1.68**
	Control	2.6	0.44		

The t-value (0.83), shown in table 97 above, suggests that there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in terms of mechanics. This means that FSs instruction had no impact on students' use of writing mechanics.

Taken as a whole, the results presented above suggest that the teaching of FSs had no noticeable effect on students' abilities to produce better quality essays. Examination of each

writing aspect separately revealed that vocabulary was the only aspect in which the experimental group outperformed the control group. As for the other aspects, though the scores of the experimental group were larger than those of the control group, they did not stand out.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the C-test and the writing test show that the explicit teaching of FSs in the writing classroom improved students' production of FSs in a C-test as well as in their essays, thus confirming our first two hypotheses. As for the third hypothesis, the results did not support it, showing that FSs instruction had no significant effect on students' writing quality.

Chapter Six

Students Attitudes Questionnaire

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Chapter Six: Students Attitudes Questionnaire

Introduction

In this part of the research, students' attitudes towards FSs learning will be explored by the means of a questionnaire. Data gained from this questionnaire will help us see whether students' awareness of the importance of FSs had increased, whether these sequences were useful to them, what difficulties they encountered when learning the sequences, and last but not least what was their impression about this new learning experience as a whole.

6.1. Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to the experimental group students (n=20) after the posttest. The choice of a questionnaire in this part of the study was dictated by time-constraints. The researcher's intent was to use an interview so as to vary the research methods (triangulation), on the one hand, and to be able to investigate deeply how the respondents thought and felt about the treatment they received, on the other hand. However, as the students were in the period of exams, it was difficult to guarantee their presence for an interview session. So, the researcher designed a questionnaire and administered it after the respondents took one of their exams. The respondents filled out the questionnaire and returned it on the spot.

As shown in Appendix 14, the questionnaire comprised 19 items and questions which were arranged into 2 sections:

Section One: Students' Attitudes towards FSs Learning

This section was concerned with the students' attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs into their writing lessons. More specifically, this section aimed to see whether the teaching of FSs was a new experience for the students (item 1), if their awareness of the significance of these sequences had increased (item 2), if they were motivated to learn them

(item 3), and whether they translated this motivation into action by taking responsibility of their own learning (item 4). Then, to see the effects of the instruction on the students' writing motivation, the classroom atmosphere, and the students' willingness to incorporate FSs in their own writing, items 5, 6, 7, and 8 were put. Moreover, items 9, 10, and 11 were put to enquire about the usefulness of the chunks to the student writers. After that, the students were requested to express their attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs in all writing compositions (item 12) and whether they wanted to continue to learn them in their future writing classes (item13). Furthermore, to get a better understanding on how FSs learning improved students' writing performance, question 14 was put. This section also gave the students the opportunity to evaluate the quality of the teaching they received (questions 15 and 16) and to voice the difficulties they experienced in learning FSs together with the solutions they saw appropriate to overcome them (questions 17 and 18).

Section Two: Further Comments and Suggestions

This section entailed only one item (19) which invited the respondents to add any useful comments or suggestions that were related to the topic.

6.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Section One: Students' Attitudes towards FSs Learning

Item 1: The teaching of formulaic sequences is new to me.

Table 98
The Newness of FSs Teaching

Options	**N**	**%**
Yes	16	80
No	03	15
No Answer	01	05
Total	**20**	**100**

This question was already asked in the pre-questionnaire. The aim behind repeating it in the post-questionnaire was our belief that many students did not have a clear idea of the concept of FSs before the treatment. Evidence of this claim lies in the different answers obtained in the two questionnaires. While most students (60%) in the pre-questionnaire said that their teachers drew their attention to FSs often times, sometimes, or rarely, 40% said that they never did so. However, in the post-questionnaire and after being acquainted with the nature of these sequences, most participants (80%) asserted that the teaching of FSs was new to them.

Item 2: Formulaic sequences or language chunks are much more important than single words.

Table 99

The Importance Students Attach to FSs after Receiving the Treatment

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	16	80
Agree	02	10
Neutral	01	05
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

According to table 99, the majority of the respondents (80%) strongly agreed that FSs are much more important than single words. In addition, 10% agreed with the same statement. However, only 1 respondent (5%) expressed his disagreement, while the remaining one (5%) remained neutral. These results suggest that the students came to realize that though words are important, they are not the operational unit for native speakers as meanings often arise from chunks in which the words occur rather than from single words. Thus, raising students' awareness of the importance FSs is a first step towards helping them move towards operating at the chunk level.

Item 3: I was motivated to learn FSs.

Table 100

Students' Motivation to Learn FSs

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	11	55
Agree	06	30
Neutral	02	10
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

Most students (N=17, 85%) strongly agreed (55%) or agreed (30%) that they were motivated to learn FSs. 2 students (10%) were neutral, whereas only 1 student (5%) disagreed with the statement. Thus, according to these results, most students found FSs interesting and were willing to learn them. Classroom observation attests to this claim as the teacher-researcher noticed that the students were highly motivated and they translated this motivation into action by participating in class without the teacher's encouragement.

Item 4: Due to FSs instruction, I look for FSs whenever I read/ listen to English materials.

Table 101
Independent Learning of FSs

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	04	20
Agree	10	50
Neutral	06	30
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

As the table illustrates, half of the students (50%) agreed with this statement, whereas 20% strongly agreed. This shows that the treatment these students received raised their awareness of the formulaicity of language inasmuch as they became aware of the presence of FSs when they deal with English materials. The table also shows that many students (N=6,

30%) expressed neutrality for this item. These students might have felt that the treatment did not encourage them to look for these sequences, or they found it difficult to identify them on their own.

Item 5: FSs instruction increased my motivation to write.

Table 102
Students' Opinion about the Role of FSs in Increasing Writing Motivation

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	06	30
Agree	08	40
Neutral	03	15
Disagree	03	15
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

The results in table 102 demonstrate that most students (70%) indicated that FSs instruction had a positive effect on their motivation to write. 40% agreed that learning FSs increased their motivation, while 30% strongly agreed with that statement. The table also shows that the remaining students (N=6, 30%) were equally divided between those who demonstrated neutrality (15%) and those who disagreed (15%). These students might have felt that the treatment did not boost their motivation to write. Though there is yet no empirical evidence of the impact of FSs on students' writing motivation, the teacher researcher as an observer noticed that most of the participants put great efforts into the writing tasks, participated in class discussions, interacted with one another and competed to provide comments on each others' essays during collective feedback provision, which are all signs that they were motivated.

Item 6: Incorporating FSs into the writing classroom created an enjoyable atmosphere and alleviated the boredom of the traditional writing classroom practices.

Table 103
Students' Attitudes towards the Learning Atmosphere

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	08	40
Agree	10	50
Neutral	01	05
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

The overwhelming majority of the students (N=18) strongly agreed (40%) or agreed (50%) that FSs instruction in the writing classroom created an enjoyable atmosphere. The results also show that one student (5%) demonstrated neutrality, while the remaining one (5%) disagreed with that statement. These findings suggest that nearly all students held positive attitudes towards FSs instruction since they felt that incorporating FSs into the writing classroom created a new lively atmosphere quite different from the one they were accustomed to.

Item 7: I try to use the chunks the teacher gave us whenever I write.

Table 104
Students' Use of FSs after Receiving FSs Instruction

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	09	45
Agree	10	50
Neutral	00	00
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

Except for 1 student (5%) who disagreed with this statement, nearly all the students (95%) agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (45%) that they tried to use the FSs the teacher gave them whenever they write. This was seen in the respondents' essays where nearly all of them incorporated sequences they acquired during the treatment period. Even more, some students

were taking risks with these sequences as they produced some wrong ones and used some others inappropriately. This indicates that the treatment students received raised their awareness of the importance of FSs in writing.

Item 8: I try to memorize any useful chunks I meet to use them in my writing.

Table 105

Autonomous Learning of FSs after Receiving FSs Instruction

Options	N	%
Strongly agree	09	45
Agree	07	35
Neutral	04	20
Disagree	00	00
Strongly disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

The majority of the students strongly agreed (45%) or agreed (35%) that they tried to memorize any useful FSs they met to use them in their writing. The remaining 4 students (20%) were neutral, which might imply that they did not yet reach the stage of autonomous learning. Generally, the reported results are encouraging as they indicate that the students did not content themselves only with the FSs provided in the classroom but they were trying to add new ones to their repertoire to use them in their writing.

Item 9: FSs helped me develop my writing confidence.

Table 106
Students' Writing Confidence after Receiving FSs Instruction

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	09	45
Agree	09	45
Neutral	01	05
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

From table 106 above, it can be seen that 90% of the students reported that learning FSs increased their writing confidence. Statistically speaking, while 45% strongly agreed,

another 45% expressed their agreement with the statement. These findings imply that learning FSs increased students' ability to use the language and encouraged them to take risks which, in turn, boosted their writing confidence.

Item 10: Knowledge of FSs helped me express my ideas easily.

Table 107
Students' Opinion about the Role of FSs in Facilitating Ideas Expression

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	05	25
Agree	13	65
Neutral	02	10
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

Most students (65%) agreed that knowledge of FSs helped them express their ideas easily. 25% strongly agreed, while the remaining 10% neither agreed nor disagreed. No respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Apparently, students' perception of FSs as helpful in expressing their ideas might be because these sequences spared them the burden of processing language analytically. That is, instead of selecting a group of words and going through the burden of combining them according to grammar rules, students could just select a FS to express the intended meaning.

Item 11: Using FSs helped me improve the quality of my writing.

Table 108
Students' Evaluation of the Quality of their Writing after Receiving FSs Instruction

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	03	15
Agree	13	65
Neutral	04	20
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

As illustrated in table 108, most students (80%) agreed (65%) or strongly agreed (15%) that FSs instruction helped them improve the quality of their writing. The rest of the students (N=4, 20%) remained neutral. These findings reveal that the students had positive attitudes towards the treatment as they believed it had a positive effect on their writing quality. The results obtained from descriptive statistics corroborate these findings as most students improved their writing in comparison with the pretest.

Item 12: FSs should be part of writing classes.

Table 109
Students' Attitudes towards the Integration of FSs Instruction in Writing Courses

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	14	70
Agree	04	20
Neutral	02	10
Disagree	00	00
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

Except for 2 students (10%) who expressed their neutrality, nearly all the students (90%) strongly agreed (70%) or agreed (20%) that FSs should be part of writing classes. This positive attitude on the part of the students is much more likely to have emanated from their belief that these sequences helped them write better essays.

Item 13: I want to continue to learn FSs in my next writing classes too.

Table 110
Students' Attitude towards Pursuing FSs Learning in the Next Writing Classes

Options	N	%
Strongly Agree	12	60
Agree	04	20
Neutral	03	15
Disagree	01	05
Strongly Disagree	00	00
Total	**20**	**100%**

The results show that most students (80%) expressed their desire to continue to learn FSs in their next writing classes. The table also displays that 3 students (15%) were neutral, whereas the remaining student (5%) expressed his disagreement. These results are indicative of the students' satisfaction with the treatment which they considered as a rewarding experience worthy of pursuing in the next writing classes.

Question 14: How did the use of FSs help you improve your writing?

This is an open question which seeks to investigate how FSs improved students' writing from the students' own perspective. The students' responses were grouped according to their sameness in the table below:

Table 111

Students' Opinions on how FSs Improved their Writing

Options	N
1. The use of FSs helps in achieving accuracy and reduces grammatical mistakes	07
2. Ideas are expressed easily	06
3. Writing gets more organized	05
4. Redundancy is avoided	04
5. Broad vocabulary knowledge and better word choice	04
6. Better writing style	03
7. Increased writing confidence	02
8. Beautiful writing	02
9. Less spelling mistakes	01
10. More formal writing	01

Thus, as can be clearly seen in the table above, most participants (7) reported that the use of FSs helped them reduce their grammar mistakes and achieve better accuracy. Evidence of this claim could be found in the results obtained from descriptive statistics where it was found that the writing aspect in which the students improved the most, after vocabulary, was language use. The results showed that the students increased their language use mean score from 9.15 in the pretest to13.5 in the posttest. However, and as stated earlier, there is yet no empirical evidence on the relationship between FSs use and linguistic accuracy, which leaves the door open for future studies to investigate this matter. Moreover, the table also

demonstrates that 6 students stated that FSs use enabled them to express their ideas easily, while 5 students maintained that their writing got more organized and their ideas well-connected. The high number of discourse devices in students' essays corroborates this last finding. The results showed that these devices formed a great part of the total number of FSs to the extent that some of the students overused them in their essays. In addition, while 4 students said that FSs developed their vocabulary knowledge and enabled them to choose the right word for the right meaning, 4 others asserted that these sequences helped them avoid redundancy and express their ideas in just few chunks instead of long sentences. Other reported benefits included better writing style (3 participants), increased writing confidence (2), beautiful language (2), less spelling mistakes (1), and finally more formal language (1). Below is a sample of students' answers to this question.

1. "*The use of chunks made me avoid a lot of mistakes; it made my writing style better and reduced the use of long sentences*".

2. "*They are ready-made sequences so we don't need to translate from Arabic to English. They colour our writing and beautify our style. They help us avoid wordiness and redundancy, and achieve organization and coherence*".

3. "*Learning FSs made me obsessed with using them since they improved my vocabulary and developed my confidence when writing. I guess that my writing improved and became more formal and organized*".

On the whole, it seems that the teaching of FSs was beneficial for the students to improve the quality of their writing. It is noteworthy that when these students were asked this same question before the treatment, most of them provided replies that suggested that they had no clear idea how FSs improve writing. This obviously indicates that the students' awareness of the significance of these sequences in the writing skill increased considerably.

Question 15: Of the following activities, which ones were helpful to you to learn FSs the best? Why?

a. Matching **b.** Gap-filling **c.** Error correction **d**. Dictogloss **e.** Corpus lines **f.** Noticing/ highlighting and using the sequences in different contexts **g.** Translation **h.** C-test **i.** Providing the missing word of the sequence **j.** Multiple choice **k.** Re-ordering words to form sentences

This question required the students to select the activities they thought helped them the most in learning FSs, and to justify their choice(s). The results are shown in the table below:

Table 112

The Most Useful Activities for Learning FSs from the Students' Perspective

Options	N
a	06
b	07
c	03
d	01
e	02
f	05
g	02
h	01
i	05
j	01
k	04

As the table shows, the respondents made different choices. Nonetheless, it can be clearly seen that the most opted for activities were gap-filling (7 participants), matching (6 participants), noticing (5 participants), providing the missing word of the sequence (5 participants), and reordering (4 participants). As for the reason(s) underlying those choices, the respondents were unanimous in their view that those activities helped them memorize the sequences easily and enabled them to see the different contexts in which they occurred (b, f, and k).

Question 16: Which ones were not helpful? Why?

This question is related to the previous one and it required the students to select the activities they considered least helpful in acquiring FSs, and to explain why they thought so. The students' choices are illustrated in the table below:

Table 113

The Least Useful Activities for Learning FSs from the Students' Perspective

Options	N
a	04
b	02
c	02
d	01
e	00
f	01
g	06
h	00
i	04
j	02
k	01

According to table 113, translation (6 participants), matching (4 participants), and providing the missing word of the sequence (4 participants) were considered by many participants the least useful activities. As for their reasons, the students stated that translation was not useful because it was of no benefit to them when writing and it did not help them with the memorization of the sequences. As for matching, the 4 respondents provided different justifications. For instance, 2 students said that matching was difficult since if you did not know the sequence beforehand, you could not match its parts together even when its meaning was provided. 1 student considered it an easy task that depended mainly on guessing, while the remaining one said that matching made you forget the sequences easily. Concerning the activity of providing the missing word of the sequence, the students (4) said that it was difficult to do and it did not help with the memorization of the sequences.

Question 17: What difficulties did you encounter in learning formulaic sequences?

This question invited the students to mention the difficulties they faced in learning FSs. The elicited responses showed that the main challenges the students experienced were memorizing the sequences (10 participants), understanding and memorizing their meaning (4 participants), especially of opaque ones, using them in appropriate contexts (5 participants), dealing with the large number of the encountered sequences (1 participant), and finally insufficient practice (2 participants).

It seems clear that the major concern the students raised was the difficulty of achieving full mastery of the target sequences. In this regard, research showed that acquiring FSs is a slow process which requires frequent exposure. In our case, classroom time was too limited to guarantee multiple encounters with all the target sequences and especially to see and practise them in context. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that learners are also required to take responsibility of their own learning if they aspire to achieve full mastery of the target sequences.

Question 18: What do you suggest to overcome these problems?

Related to the previous question, this question requested the students to suggest solutions to the problems they encountered to improve their learning of FSs in the classroom.

According to the elicited responses, most students (8) commented that more practice is needed either in the classroom or outside. This shows that the students were aware of the significance of independent learning in the acquisition of these sequences. Moreover, the respondents suggested that the teacher should introduce only few sequences in each session, focus more on the context in which the sequences occur, provide more authentic materials, and do more reviewing activities to help them memorize the already encountered sequences. 2 other students indicated that reading is the key to learning FSs, while another student suggested that FSs should be taught as a separate module. This last suggestion is interesting

considering the huge number of FSs and their different types which cannot all be covered in the writing classroom.

Section Two: Further Suggestions

Item 19: Please feel free to add any other comments or suggestions that are related to the topic.

Out of the 20 students, 16 offered their comments and suggestions. Nearly all of these comments revolved around the usefulness of FSs in improving the students' writing and their satisfaction with this new rewarding experience which they hoped would continue in the future. A sample of the students' comments is offered below:

- "*This year I saw a new thing in Written Expression, which is formulaic sequences. These sequences were very helpful to me. They enhanced my writing and made it better. I think FSs are very helpful for learners*".

- "*Learning formulaic sequences was an interesting experience. They are important and useful in improving one's writing skill. I think they should be taught in all levels of writing classes*".

- "*Formulaic sequences should be taught in a separate lesson in order to understand them very well and use them in writing*".

- "*FSs are the way to improve our writing skills, so I think that we must teach them in all modules (writing, speaking, ...)".*

- "*Learning FSs is useful because it helps EFL students to know more about the language used by native speakers*".

- "*Formulaic sequences are very useful in learning. They helped me write better essays, reduce mistakes and broaden my vocabulary*".

6.3. Summary of the Main Findings

The above discussion yielded the following findings:

- The teaching of FSs is a new experience for most students.
- FSs instruction raised students' awareness of the importance of FSs.
- The students reported that FSs instruction created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, motivated them to write, and increased their writing confidence.
- FSs instruction fostered autonomous learning among the students since they reported that they look for these sequences whenever they deal with English materials and they try to memorize useful ones to incorporate them in their own writing.
- Students asserted that learning FSs improved their writing in that it helped them reduce their grammar mistakes, express their ideas easily and succinctly, organize their writing better, and broaden their vocabulary knowledge.
- Memorizing and using the sequences accurately and appropriately presented a challenge to many students.
- The students recommended that FSs should be an integral part of any writing classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to answer the last research question which relates to students' attitudes towards the treatment they received. Findings gained from the post-questionnaire revealed that the students showed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs into the writing classroom, hence confirming our assumption.

Chapter Seven

Discussion of the Results and Pedagogical Implications

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Chapter Seven: Discussion of the Results and Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

This final chapter briefly discusses the main findings of the study, offers some implications for EFL writing pedagogy, and finally raises some issues that need to be considered in future research.

7.1. Discussion of the Results

7.1.1. The Place of FSs in the Department of English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University

Based on the teachers questionnaire results, it was found that the teachers are not aware of the formulaic nature of language. Teachers still think of vocabulary as single words that constitute the basic unit of meaning, a view which emanates from their perception of language as a composite of grammar rules and single vocabulary words. Besides, though the teachers claimed to focus on both single words and chunks when they deal with vocabulary, their contradictory answers revealed that they do not really have these chunks in mind only when explicitly asked about them.

As for their attitudes and practices regarding the incorporation of FSs in their writing classrooms, the results showed a gap between the teachers' beliefs and their actual practices. Although the teachers consider FSs of paramount importance in improving students' writing skill and hold positive attitudes towards their inclusion in their writing classrooms, the systematic teaching of these sequences is not really a common practice among them. The results from the students pre-questionnaire support these findings. Most students reported that their teachers do not draw their attention to FSs systematically. The results from the students attitudes questionnaire also showed that nearly all the students asserted that FSs instruction is a new experience for them. Another finding worth drawing attention to is that the notion of

FSs is misunderstood by some teachers and students as they limited them to only those fixed opaque expressions like idioms.

Overall, the results obtained from the teachers and the students questionnaires made it clear that second year students of English at Oum El Bouaghi University are not aware of FSs mainly because of the teaching practices which give primacy to grammar rules and treat vocabulary as single words. Thus, in addition to giving us an overview of the teaching/learning situation before embarking on the treatment, these findings paved the way for the field work.

7.1.2. The Effect of FSs Instruction on Students' Productive Knowledge of FSs

This part of the study is meant to investigate the effect of FSs instruction on students' productive knowledge of FSs. As such, a C-test was used as a measurement tool. Based on the t-test results, a significant difference was found between the experimental group and the control group. These results are congruent with findings from previous studies (Čolović-Marković, 2012; Jones & Haywood, 2004; Schmitt et al., 2004). In her study, Čolović-Marković (2012) reported that the explicit teaching of FSs had a positive effect on students' abilities to produce both academic and topic-related FSs in a C-test. Similarly, Jones and Haywood (2004) found that EAP second language learners who were taught academic FSs for a ten-week period slightly improved their productive knowledge of FSs. In their turn, Schmitt et al. (2004), who investigated L2 learners who were engaged in a three month intensive EAP program, reported an increase in students' knowledge of FSs though the absence of a control group made it difficult to determine whether the improvement occurred due to the treatment. Thus, the present study, which lasted eight weeks and which targeted all types of FSs, corroborates previous findings and indicates that the teaching of FSs promotes their acquisition.

7.1.3. The Effect of FSs Instruction on Students' Production of FSs in their Essays

The t-test results showed a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental groups in terms of the number of FSs used, but no significant difference was found in the mastery of these sequences. Interestingly, the findings of the present study are not in line with previous studies which failed to show any significant improvement in the production of FSs that could be attributable to FSs instruction (Cortes, 2006; Jones & Haywood, 2004). Cortes (2006) conducted a study that focused on the teaching of lexical bundles in a writing-intensive history class to a group of students who were native speakers. The results showed no significant difference between the pretest and the posttest in terms of the frequency of lexical bundles. The researcher argued that this might be due to the limited time of instruction (5 mini lessons during ten weeks) and the type of activities which were not suitable to trigger students' autonomous use of lexical bundles.

Likewise, in Jones and Haywood (2004), no noticeable improvement was found in the number of FSs. The researchers contended that the short period of time devoted to the teaching of the target genre, argumentative (two weeks) and the lack of textual support in the final essay compared to the first essay were the main factors that lead to this lack of progress.

As for Čolović-Marković's study (2012), in which she investigated the effects of teaching both academic and topic-related FSs, the results indicated no significant progress in the production of academic FSs, but a statistically significant difference was found between the control group and the experimental group in the production of topic-related FSs. This last finding matches to a certain extent with our research. However, as the students in her study were provided with reading materials during writing, it is difficult to say that the students retrieved the sequences from memory.

Therefore, an important contribution of the present study, which provided an intensive exposure to FSs, regardless of their type, through an array of activities and which did not allow for any outside sources during the writing posttest, is that the teaching of FSs has a positive effect on students' production of these sequences in their essays.

Concerning the quality of FSs, it seems that our accuracy results are consistent to a certain extent with those of Jones and Haywood (2004) who reported no observable improvement in the accuracy of FSs used. As a matter of fact, the lack of improvement in accuracy and appropriacy in the present study is due to the high mean scores obtained in the pretest, making, thus, any progress in the posttest of no significance. One possible explanation for the high scores in the quality of FSs in the pretest is that the students stuck only to those FSs they were familiar with and sure about their use.

7.1.4. The Effect of FSs Instruction on Students' Writing Quality

The t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in terms of overall writing quality. These results, though a disappointment, are similar, to some extent, to those of Čolović-Marković (2012). The researcher argued that the students' production of topic-related FSs only did not seem to influence their overall writing performance.

In the present study, several factors might have contributed to the lack of improvement in students' overall writing performance. First, the number of FSs used by many students in the experimental group did not seem to have an effect on their writing quality. Descriptive statistics showed that the students who used from 10 to 12 FSs made only very slight increase in their writing scores. On the other hand, the students who used from 18 to 26 FSs made significant increase in their writing scores. Another explanation could be that the judges' evaluation of students' essays might have been affected by the students' language proficiency.

That is, the prevalence of grammar errors in many students' essays might have influenced the judges' evaluation of other aspects. In addition, and more importantly, the fact that the study lasted only one semester gave little time for any significant improvement to be observed.

The results obtained from descriptive statistics showed that the experimental group with a mean score of (54.9) outperformed the control group which obtained a mean of 48.1. Besides, comparison of students' individual scores revealed that the gain scores of both the high achievers and the low achievers in the experimental group were higher than those of their counterparts in the control group. This leads us to conclude that the treatment was useful to both high and low achievers, but it was the high achievers who benefited the most. This last result is in stark contrast with that of Čolović-Marković (2012) who found that FSs instruction benefited mostly low achievers.

Regarding the different writing aspects, descriptive statistics indicated that the students in the experimental group performed better than their counterparts in the control group in all writing aspects (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). However, statistical testing showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups in all writing aspects except in vocabulary. Thus, it can be concluded that though the scores of the experimental group were higher than those of the control group they did not stand out.

7.1.5. Students' Attitudes towards the Incorporation of FSs in the Writing Classroom

Findings gained from the students attitudes questionnaire revealed that the students hold positive attitudes towards FSs learning. The students consider FSs learning a new experience that raised their awareness of the significance of these sequences. The questionnaire also showed that incorporating FSs in the writing classroom created an enjoyable atmosphere for the students and increased their writing motivation and confidence.

As for the usefulness of these sequences in improving the students' writing skill, the students reported that FSs enhanced their writing quality in that they helped them express their ideas clearly and succinctly, reduce their grammar errors, organize their writing better, and enrich their vocabulary knowledge. This was clearly seen in the students' overall writing scores which increased from pretest to posttest. However, the t-test results showed that this increase was not significant. Concerning the difficulties of learning FSs, the students reported that memorizing the sequences and using them appropriately were the main challenges that encountered them. This explains why the students considered some activities as less useful. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the students from expressing their satisfaction with this learning experience considering it a rewarding experience worthy of pursuing in future writing classes and worthy of applying in all writing compositions.

7.2. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the present study, several implications need to be taken into account.

First, it is of vital importance to have a change of mindset on the part of teachers regarding their view of vocabulary. Teachers should adopt 'a lexical approach' to vocabulary teaching as meaning arises from chunks rather than single words. As a change of beliefs generally results in a change of practices, teachers are expected to raise their students' awareness of these chunks and gradually inculcate in their minds the idea that words do not occur in isolation, but co-occur with other words. This entails helping them notice FSs in discourse through designing different noticing and chunking activities. This last suggestion is rooted in Lewis's Lexical Approach (1993) in which he stated that "a central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness, and developing their ability to chunk language successfully" (p. vi).

Moreover, though awareness-raising is necessary as a first step, it is not sufficient to trigger the acquisition of FSs let alone their productive use. Therefore, teachers should not content themselves with just helping students with the noticing of FSs but should also aid them with their internalization. Thus, different activities that encourage retrieval could be devised. Teachers should present sequences to students systematically and repeatedly so that students achieve better mastery over these sequences and entrench them in their long-term memory.

Regarding the incorporation of FSs in writing classrooms, it has been shown in the literature review as well as in the students attitudes' questionnaire that these sequences are a vital part of accurate and fluent writing. Thus, it goes without saying that these sequences deserve a place in any writing composition. Teachers should raise students' awareness of the importance of these sequences in writing and encourage them to use them in their essays by providing adequate activities.

As for which FSs to target, teachers should select those sequences that are directly related to students' essay topics and genres. For example, if students are required to write an argumentative essay on death penalty, the teacher should focus on the FSs that fulfill the functions related to argumentation (e.g., expressing opinion, taking positions, persuading, giving examples etc.) in addition to those that are related to the topic of death penalty.

Moreover, considering teachers' and students' views of the importance of reading in the writing classroom, another implication would be that curriculum designers as well as teachers should grant reading the place it deserves. Reading should be an integral part of any writing classroom as it is commonly agreed that it leads to increased writing ability. Teachers need to encourage students to read both inside and outside the classroom. For instance, providing model texts is one way teachers help students with writing inside the classroom. In

addition to providing students with background knowledge on the selected topic and the way it is organized, these model texts give students insights into the writers' use of FSs. This will raise students' awareness of the necessity of using FSs, enable them to see how they are used in context and last but not least lead to indirect acquisition of these sequences.

In addition, to foster students' acquisition and appropriate use of these sequences, it would be useful if these sequences are considered in the process of feedback provision. Teachers could review students' use of FSs in their essays by providing them with written comments and through collective feedback. Therefore, by drawing students' attention to employed sequences, especially the misused ones, students will gain better mastery over these sequences both in terms of form and usage.

7.3. Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of the present study open new horizons for other researchers to investigate further the effects of FSs instruction on EFL writing. The results also give rise to several other issues that need to be addressed in future studies.

This study is, to the best of our knowledge, the first in the Algerian context. Therefore, more similar studies need to be conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the role of FSs in improving EFL students' writing skills.

To begin with, since this study was carried out with a small number of EFL sophomore students at Oum El Bouaghi University, broadening the scope of the study to include larger number of participants with different levels and from different universities, or even secondary schools, may yield results different from the ones obtained from the present study. In addition, it would be highly desirable to investigate the effect of FSs instruction over a longer period of time, say a whole year, as one semester might not be sufficient for a language skill like writing to develop.

Moreover, the study used an explicit approach to the teaching of FSs; therefore, it would be useful to carry out a study that compares the effect of an explicit approach to an implicit approach. In the latter approach, the students would be exposed to reading texts that allow for multiple encounters with the target sequences.

Regarding the role of FSs in reducing grammar mistakes, though it is often reported in the research literature, there is yet no empirical evidence that supports this claim. Future studies could, thus, empirically investigate whether the use of FSs lead to an increased linguistic accuracy.

Furthermore, this study used a questionnaire to investigate students' attitudes towards FSs learning. An interview might more helpful to get deeper insights into students' attitudes and perceptions of the learning experience they had undergone. It would also be useful if researchers enquire about the strategies students use to acquire the target sequences as well as the source of FSs they employ in their essays.

Finally, the aim of this study was to determine whether FSs instruction would improve students' writing quality. Though the results did not show a significant improvement in students' writing quality, this does not mean that these sequences are insignificant for EFL writers. Therefore, future research could investigate the role of FSs in improving other language skills like listening, speaking, or reading.

Conclusion

FSs instruction proved to be effective in helping students improve their knowledge of FSs as well as their ability to use them in their writing. However, the teaching of these sequences did not seem to have a significant effect on students' writing performance. Despite this last result, the students showed positive attitudes towards the learning of FSs considering it a rewarding experience worthy of pursuing in future writing classrooms. Therefore, teachers

should raise their students' awareness of the importance of FSs in enhancing the writing skill and train them to spontaneously accumulate these sequences and use them in their writing. Similarly, researchers are required to further investigate this area and furnish more information on how FSs affect the writing skill.

General Conclusion

FSs are increasingly recognized to be beneficial to language learners. These sequences which may constitute up to 52% of written discourse (Erman & Warren, 2012) are central to the creation of discourse, and thus foreign language writers have a lot to gain from mastering them. Accordingly, the present thesis was designed mainly to investigate the effects of FSs instruction on EFL students' writing performance. More specifically, through this research, it was hypothesized that students who are taught FSs would improve their productive knowledge of these sequences, use them frequently and accurately in their essays and more importantly improve their overall writing quality. It was also assumed that after the treatment, the students would develop positive attitudes vis-à-vis the incorporation of FSs in writing classrooms.

Before embarking on the empirical part, the study was first placed in its theoretical context. Issues related to the writing skill, FSs, and the relationship between the two were deeply discussed and critically synthesized. Next, a quasi-experimental design was adopted to test the above hypotheses. Two questionnaires were, first, employed to investigate the place FSs hold in our writing classrooms: a students pre-questionnaire which aimed to find out students' awareness of FSs and their importance in writing and a teachers questionnaire which sought to examine their awareness of the formulaic nature of language, their attitudes and practices regarding the inclusion of FSs in writing classrooms. The obtained results showed students' unawareness of FSs which can be attributed to the teaching practices which give primacy to grammar rules and treat vocabulary as single words. These practices stem, in turn, from the teachers' lack of awareness of the formulaicity of language, the fact which was proved by their contradictory answers throughout the questionnaire. Also, though the teachers

expressed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of FSs in writing classrooms, they were not really teaching them.

The results obtained above served as a springboard for the fieldwork. First, both the experimental and the control group were pretested through a C-test and a writing test. The aim was to elicit students' productive knowledge of FSs in controlled (C-test) and uncontrolled situations (essays), check their writing proficiency, and ensure their homogeneity before the treatment. After that, the experimental group received explicit instruction of FSs during regular writing classes over one semester (8 weeks), while students in the control group were taught writing in the traditional way without calling out their attention to FSs. After the treatment, both groups were posttested. At last, a post-questionnaire was administered to the experimental group students to elicit their attitudes towards the learning experience they underwent.

The attained results showed that FSs instruction has a positive effect on students' productive knowledge of FSs as measured by a C-test, thus corroborating findings from previous studies that the teaching of FSs promotes their acquisition. A significant improvement was also found in the production of FSs in essays. However, no significant difference in the mastery of these sequences was found. The reason might be the high mean scores obtained in the pretest which rendered any development in the posttest of no significance. Another explanation might be the students' resorting to only those sequences they knew very well. The results also indicated that the teaching of FSs did not have a significant effect on students' writing quality. Despite this last result, the students were positive towards the incorporation of FSs in writing and expressed their zeal to pursue learning these sequences in future writing classes. Thus, the onus is on teachers to have a change of mindset and bring to forefront FSs not only in writing classrooms but in every foreign language classroom. They should sensitize learners to the significance of these

sequences in enhancing the writing skill and motivate them to internalize them in their linguistic repertoire and thus utilize them spontaneously in their writing. Likewise, researchers should investigate further FSs and their role in EFL writing. Finally, any further developments that would deal with the areas of difficulties that have been arisen above or other issues that have not been dealt with would be required.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Teachers Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral research work which aims at investigating the role of formulaic sequences in developing second year students' writing proficiency. This questionnaire therefore aims at gathering information about the teachers' opinions about their students' writing, their awareness of the importance of formulaic sequences and attitudes towards the inclusion of these sequences in their language classrooms.

We would appreciate your cooperation, if you could fill in this survey.

Guidelines: Please tick (√) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer(s) whenever necessary.

Miss. Khoualdi Safa
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English
University of Constantine 1

Section I: Background Information

1. Degree held:

License (BA) □ b. Master □ **c**. Magister □ **d.** Doctorate (PhD) □

2. How long have you been teaching at the university?

…….

3. How long have you been teaching "Written Expression"?

……..…….

4. Which level?

a. First year □ **b.** Second year □ **c.** Third year □ **d.** Master one □

Section II: The Writing Skill

5. How would you rate your students' level in writing?

a.Very good □ **c.** Average □

b. Good □ **d.** Weak □

6. Do you think that your students fail to write appropriately mostly because:

a. They lack grammatical knowledge

b. They do not have the words

c. They have the words, but they do not know how to put them together in combinations or chunks (e.g., instead of saying: 'to make a mistake', many students say 'to do a mistake')

7. According to you, the student who writes proficiently is:

a. The one who uses well chosen words. □

b. The one who generates each sentence from scratch using accurate grammar rules. □

c. The one who knows how to put words together in chunks or [*1]formulaic sequences □

[1] ***Formulaic Sequences :** a term coined by Alison Wray (2002) to refer to a sequence of words- continuous or discontinuous, opaque or transparent- which is stored and retrieved from memory as one word. These sequences are generally preferred by native speakers for every recurrent situation over other expressions which may seem grammatically correct. Examples of formulaic sequences may include: by and large, first of all, fast food, not only X but also Y, as a matter of fact, turn out ….etc.

d. Other, please specify.

……
……

8. When providing feedback on students' writing, do you focus on

a. grammar errors? □

b. wrong word choice? □

c. miscombination of words □

d.Other, please specify

……

9. Do you think that writing proficiency can be improved through

a. the teaching of grammar? □

b. the teaching of vocabulary? □

c. Both □

d. Other, please specify.

……
……

10. What is your understanding of vocabulary?

……
……

11. In your writing classrooms, do you focus on vocabulary?

a. Yes □ b. No □

12. If you answer 'no', would please say what prevents you from doing so?

……
……

Section III: Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Practices Regarding Formulaic Sequences

13. When you deal with vocabulary, do you focus on

a. individual words? □

b. formulaic sequences (chunks)? □

c. Both □

14. Do you teach new words

a. in isolation? □

b. with the words surrounding them? □

c. in context? □

15. When dealing with reading materials, do you encourage your students

a. to read by words? □

b. to read by chunks? □

c. I do not care how they read. □

16. Do you draw your students' attention to formulaic sequences (language chunks) during your writing lessons?

a. Always □ **b.** Often □ **c.** Sometimes □ **d.** Rarely □ **e.** Never □

17. If your answer is 'sometimes', 'rarely' or 'never', what is the main reason for doing so?

a. I do not have the time □

b.I do not think it is useful □

c. I do not know how □

d. Other, please specify

……

18. How often do you help your students memorize useful chunks through different activities to use them in their writing?

a. Always □ b. Often □ c. Sometimes □ d. Rarely □ e. Never □

19. Which type(s) of formulaic sequences do you regularly draw your students' attention to?

a. Idioms □ b. Phrasal verbs □ c. Collocations □ e. Discourse devices □ d. Sentence frames (e.g. Not only X but also Y) □ f. Frequent expressions (e.g. I think that, it is likely that □ g. Other, please specify. □

20. How do you know that a formulaic sequence is useful and deserves to be brought to students' attention?

.....
.....

21. Do you think that mastering formulaic sequences helps learners improve their writing proficiency?

a. Yes □ **b.** No □

22. If 'Yes', in what ways do they do so?

.....
.....

23. Are you interested in incorporating formulaic sequences in your writing classrooms to help students write proficiently?

a. Yes □ **b.** No □

Section IV: Further Suggestions and Comments

24. Please feel free to add any other comments or suggestions that are related to the subject.

……
……
……
……
……
……
……

May I thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 02: Students Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral research work which aims at investigating the role of formulaic sequences in developing students' writing proficiency. We would be so grateful if you could answer the questions below as honestly as possible.

Guidelines: Please tick (√) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer(s) whenever necessary.

Miss. Khoualdi Safa

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English

University of Constantine 1

Section I: The Writing Skill

1. How would you rate the language skills in terms of their difficulty for you? (Please rank your choices in order of difficulty, from the least difficult to the most difficult 1-4).

a. Listening □ c. Reading □

b. Speaking □ d. Writing □

2. How would you rate your level in writing?

a. Very good □ b. Good □ c. Average □ d. Weak □

3. When writing, do you find it difficult to express your ideas

a. when you do not have the words? □

b. when you have the words, but you do not know how to put them together in chunks (e.g., instead of saying: 'to make a mistake', many students say 'to do a mistake')? □

c. when you do not know how to put words together using grammar rules? □

4. When writing your paragraphs/ essays do you generate sentences by

a. putting words together using grammar rules? □

b. combine words together in chunks or formulaic sequences? □

c. Both □

5. Which of these, do you think, can improve your writing?

a. Grammar □ b. Vocabulary □ c. Both □

6. How often do you read to improve your writing skill?

a. Often □ b. Sometimes □ d. Rarely □ e. Never □

Section II: Formulaic Sequences

7. What is your understanding of vocabulary?

.....

8. When you read, do you do so

a. word by word? □ b. chunk by chunk? □

9. When you read, can you infer which word or phrase might follow at the sight of certain words?

a. Yes □ b. No □

10. Do you learn new words

a. in isolation? □

b. in chunks? □

c. in context? □

11. When dealing with reading materials in English (newspapers, novels, etc), do you try to find chunks or formulaic sequences like ‘on the other hand’, ‘when it comes to’, ‘put up with’ etc?

a. Yes □ b. No □

12. If ‘yes’, do you memorize these sequences to use them in your writing?

a. Yes □ b. No □

13. How often does your teacher draw your attention to language chunks (formulaic sequences) in the writing classroom?

a. Often □ b. Sometimes □ d. Rarely □ e. Never □

14. Do you think that formulaic sequences can help you improve your writing?

a. Yes □ b. No □

15. Whatever your answer, please justify your choice.

.....
.....

16. In your opinion, should vocabulary be taught as a separate module like grammar?

a. Yes □ b. No □

17. Whatever your answer, please justify your choice.

.....
.....

Section III: Further Suggestions and Comments

18. Please feel free to add any other comments or suggestions that are related to the subject.

.....
.....

May I thank you for your collaboration

Appendix 03: The Pre-C-test

Instruction:

Read the extracts below taken from authentic texts. Each contains a chunk (multi-word unit) in bold-which can be either idiomatic or transparent in meaning- with some parts cut off. Look at the context and fill in the blanks with the missing part of the words. Sometimes some words in these chunks have their second half cut off; sometimes the whole word is missing; and sometimes a word will be provided. The meaning of the expressions is provided between brackets.

Example: A quality program of reading instruction stresses selected factors. Fi—— o— a——, it encourages reading of diverse kinds of genre. *(to begin with)*

Answer: First of all

1. As I read every day about the deaths of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, it becomes more apparent that the only sacrifices being made by Americans in this war are by the troops and their families. I— i—— ob——— that the Bush administration underestimated the cost of the war by every measure. ***(this is clear)***
2. Some students refuse to participate in classroom activities because they are afraid they will ——— a_mi—— and others will laugh at or make fun of them. ***(do something in a wrong way)***

3. Under such laws, child sex abusers, who ——— a cr—— against children in another country, can be convicted and punished for their crime in their home country. ***(do an illegal action)***

4. In the past detection and assessment of patients with suspected raised blood pressure involved repeated measurements o—— a pe—— of time, often with a gap of two to three weeks between them, to establish consistently raised readings. ***(a particular length of time)***

5. They said that their friend had been shot in the hand and needed drugs to re—— the pa——. I offered antibiotics but they wanted morphine. ***(To lessen an unpleasant feeling that resulted from injury).***

6. There is a disconnect between the thoughts and actions of some individuals with autism. I—— o——w——, his or her appearance or behavior may not reveal what he or she is thinking. ***(to put it differently)***

7. Migrant workers suffer a lot since migrant labor is not integrated into the global economy. A—— a m—— of f—— many of the jobs left to migrants are the "3D jobs" (dirty, dangerous, and disdained). *(Actually)*

8. During his Nation of Islam phase, Malcolm X called for the overthrow of "white people", whom he ref——— t—— a—— "devils". He argued that "blacks" are superior to "whites", and that blacks eventually would take over the world. *(to call)*

9. The world is indeed warming, and the climate is changing. What is not certain is the ex—— to wh—— people are responsible. The warming started long ago, and the connection to human activity has not been empirically established. ***(the degree of something)***

10. Fear of both terrorism and violent crime has contributed to growing acceptance of surveillance in public areas. In Britain, some 1.5 million surveillance cameras now monitor a **wi—— r—— o—** public areas, including schools, office buildings, streets, and shops. ***(great number)***

11. Researchers say that an aversion to bitter and sour is a survival instinct, since most toxins taste that way too**. —— the o—— h——,** sweetness typically indicates that something is safe to eat, so children are born with a preference for sweets. ***(looking at the opposite argument)***

12. Future research should examine strategies to school violence prevention. In addition, it is important to **ta—— in—— acc——** demographic factors, such as school size, poverty, and level of neighborhood crime associated with increased violence. ***(consider)***

13. Some teachers resort to hurtful, **as opp—— t——** constructive, remarks when faced with an unfavorable incident in the classroom. Directing threatening and insulting phrases at students during class alienate them from the school and learning, and lead to the development of a negative attitude towards teachers. ***(in contrast with)***

14. If teachers get too close to students, they **r—— the ri——** of losing control of their classes and invite criticism from their superiors. ***(the possibility of suffering harm)***

15. Despite the horrific violence currently tearing Iraq apart, **i—— the lo—— r——** there is hope for the return of a viable Iraqi state based on a political bargain among Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish leaders. ***(at a time that is far away in the future)***

16. One of the challenges in the USA today is to find a way to reconcile our Christian supermajority with our many religious minorities -- the Jews and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, Sikhs and non-believers in our midst. **F—— the mo—— pa——**, we are an extraordinarily tolerant society. *(generally*)

17. It is estimated that more than 40 per cent of the 6.5 million people in El Salvador li—— below the **pov——— li———,** that is, they make so little that they cannot buy all the necessities of life. *(the income is too low for achieving the basic needs of life)*

18. The effect of fathers on children's language continues until they enter school. But fathers contribute to their children's mental development more broadly than **just wi—— res—— to** language. They also influence their children's intellectual growth, adjustment to school, and behavior. ***(concerning this certain thing)***

19. Although this study focused on the roles of teachers in meeting student needs and supporting their motivation, **i—— is li—— th——** this responsibility is shared between teachers and students. ***(probably)***

20. I decided to return to university, and began to prepare to take the examination for graduate school. As a graduate of Peking University, I thought the exam would be **a pi—— of ca——.** But after being away from classroom for so many years, it wasn't easy to get back into the right mind-set. ***(easy to do)***

21. Both of my parents suffered from health issues like type 2 diabetes and heart problems, and I feared I was o—— the br—— of getting sick just like them. I wanted more for myself, and I wanted to set a healthy example for my kids. ***(about to experience something bad)***

22. Our understanding of the influence of genetic predisposition on the ageing process is still evolving and may in turn affect the way we care for the elderly and treat age related illnesses. For now, there are some key points **to be—— in mi——:** Old age is associated with disease but does not necessarily cause it. ***(remember an important information)***

23. The teachers, therefore, should competently use the language **in su—— a w——** that students in class hear, listen and understand well enough, to comprehend the explanations being passed along. ***(describing the result of something)***

24. Political rights include free speech and the rights to organize and demonstrate peacefully. Although political rights are largely negative**, i—— the se——** that they limit state interference rather than require state action, they do sometimes require governments to take a variety of steps to enforce them, especially when they involve minority groups voicing opinions that are unpopular with the majority. **(specifying one meaning/aspect)**

25. Gastil considered political rights and civil liberties as two distinct dimensions. To me, they seem to be two **si—— of the sa—— co——.** Political rights cannot be conceived without the guarantee of civil liberties. Civil liberties cannot be made available without political rights. ***(closely related though they seem different)***

26. In our increasingly polarized culture, taking a middle position on important issues is becoming more difficult. Few seem to appreciate when individuals **s—— on the fe——** dividing two opposing camps, and interestingly, those on either side often demand allegiance to one position or the other. ***(not to take sides*)**

27. Consumers are guilty of buying and discarding tons of fresh fruit and vegetables each year. Then, **to a—— insult to in——,** we spend millions to dispose of the waste. *(make a bad situation worse)*

28. The Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state stands at the root of the struggle and behind every so-called core issue, from determining borders to resolving the dispute over Palestinian refugees. Genuine reconciliation can be achieved, then, only once the Palestinians **co—— to te——**with Israel's existence as a Jewish state. ***(start to accept a difficult situation)***

29. A 2009 survey of 45 social networking sites by the University of Cambridge found that privacy policies were routinely difficult to understand, and there were no industry standards for privacy protection. (Google and Facebook have since revised their policies to address this

concern). Yet experts we spoke with say that these sites **p—— lip se—— to** privacy but routinely compromise the data of their users through neglect or for profit.***(support that is expressed only in words but not in actions)***

30. But today, scholars -faculty members and students alike- **thi—— no—— of** copying selected portions of articles, entire articles and chapters of books, or even complete books in order to facilitate their scholarly pursuits in the cheapest way. ***(give little consideration)***

Appendix 04: The C-test Post

Instructions

Read the extracts below taken from authentic texts. Each contains a chunk (multi-word unit) in bold-which can be either idiomatic or transparent in meaning- with some parts cut off. Look at the context and fill in the blanks with the missing part of the words. Sometimes some words in these chunks have their second half cut off; sometimes the whole word is missing; and sometimes a word will be provided. The meaning of the expressions is provided between brackets.

Example: A quality program of reading instruction stresses selected factors. **Fi—— o— a——**, it encourages reading of diverse kinds of genre. *(to begin with)*

Answer: First of all

1. Clearly, people who are mentally ill when they ——— **a cri——** like murder shouldn't be treated the same as those who are sane. They should be hospitalized and put on medications to help them regain their sanity. *(do an illegal action)*

2. The US **is unl—— t—** send American ground force back into Iraq. (*probably not*)

3. Farmers know the salty water could harm their land **i— the lo—— r——,** but hope that after the drought fresh water will flush the salts out of the soil. *(at a time that is far away in the future)*

4. Candidates should not volunteer too much personal information during an interview. They should also treat everyone respectfully. Every word matters **wh—— it co—— t—** interviewing. *(as regards/ when the situation entails that thing)*

5. While university leaders say it's highly unlikely the school will lose its accreditation - and along with it, its reputation. They admit they are struggling to fix the problems, at least the ones that ha—— **to** —— **wi——** money. *(related to something)*

6. The role of the teacher is just to provide guidance to ensure that students' learning goals are met. This student-directed approach enables students to gain a deeper understanding of the content while strengthening their critical thinking skills and intellectual development. I— **o—— wo——,** students have to listen, analyze, compromise, synthesize ideas, and draw conclusions in order to solve problems. *(to put it differently)*

7. You probably ask yourself what should I eat five times a day? The answers you're being fed are, sadly, the wrong ones, because they come from marketers pushing foods that are, **mo— — oft—— than** ——, hyperprocessed and not at all good for you. *(usually)*

8. Before negotiation on specific issues can beg—— **in ear——,** the principles to be negotiated, particularly self-determination, must be clarified. *(start seriously and with full effort than before*)

9. The widespread use of social-networking sites, webcams and cell phones places just about every corner of the planet **a—— our fing——.** Suddenly, anyone with a computer can be a travel writer and any day spent far from home can be instantly shared with "friends" you'll never see. *(within one's reach or hand)*

10. Edison realized the importance of keeping careful records to help organize his own design thinking, but also as a record for others to use. Through the inventor's notebook, Edison was able to pass on his knowledge and discoveries to his assistants as well as share these ideas with other inventors who would **fo—— in his foot——. (***pursue what someone has done)*

11. One of the things my therapist stressed was the need for me **to ma—— pe—— w——** what happened in my childhood, working through that and letting it go. *(accept something)*

12. Both men and women vary regarding the resources and the skills they **br—— to the ta——,** and the kinds of things that they are going to be able to provide for a partnership. *(contribute something that will be of benefit)*

13. The event had transformed, albeit gradually, into one in which students were introduced to librarians, services, and **an ar—— of** resources. *(a group of things)*

14. Teachers need to understand how different children are **in te—— —** their readiness and learning experiences and use this understanding to provide an appropriate learning environment in the classroom. *(regarding something)*

15. The government, which had hoped to eradicate poverty by 1990, says the work will continue for five more years. Some 50 million Chinese still **li—— under the po—— li——,** with annual incomes of less than $38. *(the income is too low for achieving the basic needs of life)*

16. For years, Western leaders chose to ignore Putin's domestic authoritarianism **f— the sa—** of continuing business as usual with the Kremlin. *(for the benefit)*

17. The temptation to use drugs in sports reflects the larger temptation **to c—— cor——** in life. Perhaps the most powerful antidote ultimately arises from a single value: respect. We can cultivate respect for ourselves by living a simpler life, aligned with our most important priorities. ***(****Do something in the easiest way)*

18. There is evidence that prison turns people into career criminals. —— **the one h——**, it cuts prisoners off from families, friends, and neighbors, who give them reasons to follow the law. ***(*** *the first thing to consider)*

19. How does one explain their religious belief? C. S. Lewis is **a ca—— — po——.** In his spiritual autobiography, Surprised by Joy, he indicated that he was comfortable, even contented, as an atheist, but small happenings and little intimations began to undermine his materialistic worldview. *(an example****)***

20. Common approaches to teaching literature **ta—— i—— cons——** historical and biographical contexts. Reading with a text in this dimension often entails asking questions

such as: How does the novel reflect what was happening during the time the book is set or written? How does the novel reflect the author's life experiences? *(remember to think about something)*

21. Educational reform can he defined as the outcome of the social and political forces calling for school improvement to increase learning for all students **reg———— — race,** ethnicity, or economic status**.** ***(*** *irrespective or without being influenced by something)*

22. Other Southeast Asian scholars generally **ho— in high re——** the practice of art history in the Philippines, which enjoys something of a leadership position in the Southeast Asian region. ***(****to value)*

23. February's incident at UCLA where a Jewish student was initially disqualified for a student government job was just the **t—— of the ic——** of a growing problem of prejudice**.** *(a small part of a larger problem)*

24. In January, a cultural preservation board, independent of the government and created to regulate improper development, canceled the project **— the gr——th——**it did not "serve the public interest. ***(*** *because of this reason)*

25. Working-class parents stress over finding a way **to ma— en—— meet** so that daughters can look their best and travel in style. *(Earn enough money to cover your basic needs)*

26. The threat of economic sanctions seemed very real, and **ca— a sha— ov— t**he Colombian economy. *(have a negative effect)*

27. Whether out of reluctance to acknowledge a fundamental change in the conception of motherhood -- or out of a fear of expanding the role of government in family life, we still haven' t **co—— to ter—— wi—** the shift of women from the home to the workplace. ***(accept an unpleasant situation)***

28. To be clear, any public official who accepts benefits **i— ex——** for favorable "official acts" must be prosecuted. *(in return for something)*

29. Students interested in building could enter build as a keyword and **co—— — with** related jobs, such as construction manager, architect, or sheet metal worker. Teaching and learning experiences can then be devised so students can research and discuss information on various occupations available in their communities through the NET web apps. *(to find something)*

30. The best way for women to improve their life is by achieving financial stability. When they can rise above **the r—— ra—— of** earning enough, they gain the time and space to figure out how they want to live their lives, and also to turn their sights outward -- to get involved in their community and help improve others' lives. *(fierce competition or struggle for success)*

Appendix 05 : ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs, et al., 1981)

Score	Level	Criteria	Comments
Content	30-27	**Excellent to very good:** Knowledgeable – substantive – thorough development of thesis – relevant to assigned topic	
	26-22	**Good to average:** some knowledge of subject – adequate range – limited development of thesis – mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail	
	21-17	**Fair to poor:** limited knowledge of subject – little substance – inadequate development of topic	
	16-13	**Very poor:** does not show knowledge of subject – non-substantive – not pertinent – or not enough to evaluate	
Organization	20-18	**Excellent to very good:** fluent expression – ideas clearly stated/supported –succinct – well-organized –logical sequencing – cohesive	
	17-14	**Good to average:** somewhat choppy – loosely organized but main ideas stand out – limited support –logical but incomplete sequencing	
	13-10	**Fair to poor:** non-fluent –ideas confused or disconnected –lacks logical sequencing and development	
	9-7	**Very poor:** does not communicate –no organization –or not enough to evaluate	
Vocabulary	20-18	**Excellent to very good:** sophisticated range – effective word/idiom choice and usage – word form mastery –appropriate register	
	17-14	**Good to average:** adequate range – occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured	
	13-10	**Fair to poor:** limited range – frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage – meaning confused or obscured	
	9-7	**Very poor:** essentially translation – little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form –or not enough to evaluate	
Language use	25-22	**Excellent to very good:** effective complex constructions – few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	
	21-18	**Good to average:** effective but simple constructions – minor problems in complex constructions – several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions *but meaning seldom*	

		obscured
	17-11	**Fair to poor:** major problems in simple/complex constructions –frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions – meaning confused or obscured
	10-5	**Very poor:** virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules –dominated by errors – does not communicate – or not enough to evaluate
Mechanics	5	**Excellent to very good:** demonstrates mastery of conventions – few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	**Good to average:** occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing *but meaning not obscured*
	3	**Fair to poor:** frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing – poor handwriting – meaning confused or obscured
	2	**Very poor:** no mastery of conventions – dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing – handwriting illegible – or not enough to evaluate

Appendix 06: A Sample of the Treatment Lessons

Lesson 01

1.Warm-up

Task 01:

Underline words or phrases which you think are useful for improving your language proficiency.

Fair trade chocolate and coffee may be a familiar sight on supermarket shelves. But a new study has found the British do not practise what they preach when it comes to 'green' groceries. While most people claim to take environmental and social issues into consideration when filling their shopping basket, their actual purchasing behaviour shows little evidence of this. Overall, this survey has shown that although the vast majority of consumers believe their choice could make a difference to companies 'ethical policies', they are still failing to act on their beliefs.

I. Introducing Formulaic Sequences

1. **Formulaic Sequences:** A term coined by Alison Wray (2001) to refer to a group of words- opaque or transparent, continuous or discontinuous- that, like individual words, are stored and retrieved as wholes from memory by the language user. These sequences are not necessarily created anew by grammar rules each time they are used. Generally, they are preferred by native speakers for every recurrent situation over other expressions which may seem grammatically correct.
2. **Types of Formulaic Sequences**
   a. **Idioms:** Expressions whose meanings cannot be understood from the individual meanings of their elements. For example, **practise what they preach**, **let the cat out of the bag** etc.
   b. **Collocations:** Words that are commonly used together. For example, **make a decision**, **commit a crime** etc.
   c. **Phrasal Verbs:** A group of words that functions as a verb, and is made up of a verb and a preposition, an adverb or both. For example, **put off, give up**, **keep up with** etc.
   d. **Discourse Devices:** Devices that link the meaning and structure of discourse. For example, **on the other hand**, **in other words**, **as a matter of fact** etc.
   e. **Semi-fixed Expressions:** Chunks that allow some variation. For example, **the .....er, the .....er** as in the sooner, the better; **take .....into account**

f. **Lexical Bundles:** These are groups of words which appear frequently together in a corpus. These expressions are usually transparent in meaning and serve certain discourse functions. For example, **it is likely that**, **I think that** etc.

3. The Importance of Formulaic Sequences

3.1. *Formulaic sequences are widespread in language use.* A number of studies have shown that a large amount of discourse is made of different kinds of FSs. It has been estimated that FSs constitute more than 50 per cent of spoken and written discourse. This means that native speakers know a large number of FSs, which in turn means that that second or foreign language learners need to acquire and use these sequences if they are to appear as proficient and native-like.

3.2. *Formulaic sequences have processing advantages.* FSs decrease processing effort. Since they are stored in the long term memory as single units, they can therefore be accessed and processed more quickly and easily than the same sequences when generated creatively.

3.3. *Meanings and functions are often realized by formulaic sequences.* FSs can communicate a wide range of meanings and functions. "on the other hand" expresses "opposition", "could you please...." for requesting, "I'm very sorry....." to apologize, "as far as I ....." to express evaluation.

3.4.*The use of formulaic sequences leads to linguistic accuracy.* The appropriate use of these sequences reduces the number of errors in learners' language production. So, the risk of erring will be confined only to the spaces in between these sequences or creative language.

3.5.*Formulaic sequences make language production sound more natural.* By learning FSs, learners will know the natural combinations so that they can make their language sound natural and idiomatic i.e. native-like.

3.6.*Formulaic sequences can improve the overall impression of learners' language production.* Language speakers or/and writers were judged, in many studies, as more proficient when they used FSs.

Practice

Task 02

Use the above underlined sequences in sentences of your own.

Expository Development by Examples

Perhaps you've heard a friend recently complain about a roomate. "Tina is inconsiderate slob, impossible to live with", she cries. Your natural response might be to question your friend's accusation: "What makes her so terrible? What does she do that's so bad?" Your friend might then respond with specific examples of Tina's insensitivity: she never washes her dishes, she ties up the bathroom for hours, and she borrows clothes without asking. By citing several examples, your friend clarifies and supports her general criticism of Tina, thus enabling you to understand her point of view.

Such a use of examples is one strategy of expository writing whose primary purpose is to present facts or ideas. Expository writing explains and analyses a subject based on facts. In addition to examples, there are other ways to develop an analysis such as by definition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, classification and process.

Most students use few examples in their writing which can be attributed to their weak background. They depend mainly on general statements that are neither convincing nor interesting. Without providing examples to show the truth of their statements, these remain mere unsupported generalities or mere opinions.

The writer uses examples or illustration to develop a general idea or prove a general statement. Examples are specific and concrete, not general or abstract. They explain, clarify, or demonstrate a general idea. An illustration is an extended, developed example.

Examples help readers understand the writer's ideas by making abstract ideas concrete and easier to understand. Just as a picture or illustration helps the reader see and understand the writer's ideas, examples or illustrations help the reader understand a general idea. Examples are also more memorable than abstractions. Most students remember the examples an instructor used in class long after they've forgotten the point the instructor was trying to make. Examples keep the reader's attention and make writing vivid and memorable.

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is the general statement that the examples or the illustration are intended to support. For instance, you might choose a statement like "my uncle is a good role model". To develop this essay, you need to generate an extensive list of examples and look for areas of similarity around which to structure your paragraphs. If you choose illustration, generate one example per paragraph to support or prove your thesis statement. You could develop a list that might include the time he helped your father financially, the time he lost his job and started his own business, and the time he broke his favorite fly rod and didn't use his temper.

The first sentence of a paragraph, also known as the topic sentence, will state the main idea contained throughout that particular paragraph. An option for your first sentence might include a statement directly connecting the example as proof of your thesis statement. If you have a thesis that says you will show that some authors from the past influence writers today,

your sentence might look like this: "The continued popularity of Emily Dickinson's poetry proves that some authors continue to have an effect on modern poets". The rest of the paragraph will give research and examples that show this in action.

Before you can write the first sentence of your body paragraphs, you need to determine a logical order for your examples. A common order will arrange your examples from most important to least important or vice versa. The order you choose will depend heavily on your topic as well as the examples you chose to prove your thesis statement. Avoid giving disconnected examples. Make sure that each example is tied directly to your topic sentence or thesis. Examples are of little value if the reader doesn't see the connection between the example and the idea it is intended to illustrate. For example, if you are supporting the statement that your roommate is a neatnick, it would not be enough to state that her clothes are hung up. Your might want to add that the clothes in her closet are arranged by color and are hung precisely one inch apart.

The sample essay

An Admirable Man

(Introduction) My dad didn't have a college degree, but he was an intelligent man. He could fix most things, from cars to toasters to radios, and he had a knack for nurturing things such as crops, animals, and children. My father was well liked and well respected in our community, and nobody deserved his reputation more than he did. Most of the things I learned of value in my childhood came from watching my father and learning from him. By setting a good example for me, my father showed me the meaning of honesty, hard word, and generosity.

Thesis statement

(Topic sentence 1) My father showed me the meaning of honesty. I never heard him tell a lie, even the kind of white lie we tend to use to save ourselves time or money or hassle. Once when a cashier gave him change for a twenty rather than the ten he had given her, he handed back the extra ten dollars and told her she'd made a mistake. Needless to say, she was astounded by his unexpected honesty. Another time when he backed into a car in a parking lot a left a small scratch on its fender, he left a note on the windshield with his name and phone number. He always took responsibility for his actions, and if something went wrong, he was the first to admit his mistake. When the crops failed or an animal died, if it was his fault, he admitted it. He always said it takes a man to admit his mistakes rather than run away from them. By watching my father, I learned what it means to be honest.

(Topic sentence 2) Not only was my dad honest, but he was also the hardest-working man I've ever known. His day began before daylight when he got up to feed and water the animals and take care of household chores. In winter, he had to get up a half an hour earlier to bring in wood for the stoves and shovel the snow out of the driveway in his pickup truck to drive thirty miles to his job working for the physical plant of a large corporation. Rain or snow, he never missed a day of work. At work he did everything from installing desks to fixing electrical problems. His job kept him on his feet most of the day, and when he came home at five, he

was tired, but he was never too tired to help with dinner or to complete whatever jobs needed doing around the house.

(Topic sentence 3) My father was also an enormously generous man. He helped out whenever anyone in our community needed a roof repaired, a fence mended, or a crop brought in. he also volunteered his time to coach our little League Baseball team and to serve as a volunteer firefighter. Not only was he generous with others, but also with kids. He was never too busy to help out with a school project, toss a basketball with us in the front yard, or just sit on the porch swing and talk. I don't know how he found the time to do everything he did, but he believed it was his responsibility to help others.

(Conclusion) There aren't many men like my dad, and the older I get, the more I appreciate and admire him. The old saying "actions speak louder than words" is certainly true of my father. He didn't preach about how to be a good person, but he was one. I learned good values from watching him and from the example he set. I only hope I can set as good an example for my children.

Task 01:

Provide sequences that correspond with the definitions below:

To be exceptionally proficient at doing something (§1) = ...

Escape (§2) = ...

To stay active and focused on something (§3) = ...

A correlative conjunction which helps convey two related toughts or pieces of information (§4) = ...

People's behaviours show their real character rather than what they say (§5) = ...

Task 02: Read the article below. Then underline word units which, to you, seem to be formulaic sequences.

Is Technology Making us Less Human?

Over the past few years, scientists, pundits, and psychologists have started questioning technology's effects on our humanity. Our fascination with social media, our reliance on GPS to find an urban destination, or even a simple Google search as a replacement for remembering the capital of Nebraska, could be transforming us.

Sensory dynamism

This concept has to do with our perception. When you look out of a window, you perceive millions of variances - colour, sound, feeling, and many others. But when you gaze at an iPad, you're sensing just a few variables - and with email and SMS, you may barely be using your senses. That could pose a problem in the long run for future human development. Neema Moraveji is the director of the Calming Technology Lab at

Stanford University. He says sensory dynamism can be a problem when it comes to an over-reliance on computer technology. Moraveji says technology can sometimes cloud our sensory judgement. We see only factual and textual information instead of an array of human emotions. "Technology makes us less human when we believe life is a rat race to be won - a zero-sum mentality - and when we are isolated and individual rather than interconnected, and primarily competitive rather than primarily collaborative," he says.

Search dependence

Search has put a world of information at our fingertips. For example, we can search for information about the latest Syrian army attacks. In 2010, however, Nicholas Carr wrote a seminal book on whether search is making us stupid. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* recounts how our search dependence could have ill effects in society when we lose our ability to self-reason.

Geolocation

One final concern has to do with geolocation. We've all heard the stories of the driver who mistakenly crashes into a riverbank because the GPS said to make a left turn. Like the problem of search dependence, relying on a GPS for all way-finding results in us lacking spatial cognisance - a voice guides us rather than our intuition or knowledge.

Moraveji says relying on technological assists for geolocation could, in the long-run, be detrimental to our human development. "They essentially leave the brain under-representing major components of the natural world - in particular navigation and memory of the physical environment and self-reliant exploration. These are components of the natural world that leave the brain-body balanced and whole."

The GPS is helpful, but also means we are missing out on the journey of discovery. "We are not exposing or exercising our brain in a way to enjoy an experience; we enjoy the accomplishment of the goal of reaching our destination - hence missing out on the journey. Much of our character, creativity and moral fabric is built on the journey."

Ultimately, tech is helping - society is improving overall. The experts are not decrying the value of tech advancements. At the same time, we should all be more aware of the determinants, especially when it comes to over-use of technology.

Adapted from Techradar.com

<u>Task 02</u>: Fill in the gaps then check the text for the answers.

1. **Over ..... few years**, scientists, pundits, and psychologists have started questioning technology's effects on our humanity.

2. This concept **has ..... with** our perception.
3. He says sensory dynamism can be a problem **when it .....** an over-reliance on computer technology.
4. Technology makes us less human when we believe life is **a ..... race** to be won -**a .....-sum .....** .
5. Search has put a world of information **..... our fing..... .**

<u>Task 03:</u> Find in the text sequences whose definitions are as follow:

a. Be concerned or associated with = ...
b. Over a long period of time = ...
c. When the specified matter is under consideration = ...
d. A large number of things = ...
e. The unpleasant situation in business or in life in which people are always struggling to compete against each other for success = ...

<u>Task 04</u>: Complete each of the sequences in list 1 with its corresponding missing part from list 2. Each sequence should have the same meaning as a word in list 3.

List 01	List 02	List 03
In the long	fingertips	To do more and make a greater effort.
By and	account	A way of life in which people compete aggressively to reach success.
As a matter of	run	Over a lengthy period of time.
At our	race	In general
Go the extra	fact	At one's command.
Take into	mile	Consider.
A rat	large	Actually.

<u>Task 05:</u> There is a mistake in each of the formulaic sequences in bold. Correct it.

- Spectators may view different objects **in the same time** through the same opening.
- Some firstborns complain that they are expected to **make an example for** their younger brothers or sisters.
- Animal populations naturally **take care for** themselves without human interference.
- When I **do a mistake**, I admit it.

<u>Task 06:</u> Fill in the gaps below with one of the following discourse markers.

In other words, for example, on the contrary, a case in point is , another example of, in retrospect

1. Words of songs are very easily remembered because of the strong musical connection, and, therefore, are often used as an educational tool. Toddlers, **……**, learn

the letters of the alphabet through the familiar "Alphabet Song". **……..** song-based learning is the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

2. E-books allow users to search for specific words or phrases within the book. When discussing a particular text passage in class, learners can simply type in a keyword they associate with that passage to quickly locate the relevant text. Besides, they can search for a character's name to help recall how he or she first entered the story. **……..,** much like readers who often flip back through chapters, e-book readers may use the find/search feature to quickly navigate texts and avoid scrolling through large portions of the book.

3. I decided to leave school at sixteen. **……..,** it was the wrong decision. I should have stayed on and gone to university.

4. Favourite cookbooks are like old friends, time does not diminish their value. **……** "The New York Times Cookbook". First published in 1961, this volume was one of the major cookbooks of its day.

5. Parents whose children played team sports pointed out that youth sport is an activity in which their children are able to learn social life skills such as teamwork. **……..,** parents whose children participated in individual sports such as swimming and taekwondo stressed learning self-discipline through participating in a youth sport program.

<u>Task 07</u>: Fill in the blanks with the missing parts of the FSs in bold.

1. Researchers have discovered that much of the risk of having cancer **h---- to – w---** the genes.
2. **Wh.... it c----** to speaking fluent English, there is no better way than learning idiomatic expressions and using them in your life.
3. Nurses must be **aw--- o-- an ar--- o-** patient safety measures as well as safety measures.
4. New technology has put the world **at o—fing----- t---.**

Production

<u>Task 08:</u> Write an essay developed by examples about one of the following topics:

1. Overreliance on computers has many bad consequences.

2. Misfortunes in life are not always bad.

<u>N. b.</u> Refer back to your notebook for FSs use.

Lesson 02

Reviewing Task:

Below are jumbled words of the some of the target FSs you have met before. Put the words back in order again.

- The/ run/ long/ in - of/array/an

- One's/ at/ fingertips - it/ to/ comes/ when
- The /mile/go/ extra/ - sum/a/mentality/zero
- In/a/point/ case - to/have/do/with
- Large/by/and - a/of/ matter/as/ fact

Task 01: Read the article below. Then underline word units which, to you, seem to be formulaic sequences.

To be happy, we must admit women and men aren't 'equal'

Norman Vincent Peale, author of "The Power of Positive Thinking," once wrote these words: "Change your thoughts, and you change your world".

His statement is highlighted at the beginning of my new book, "How to Choose a Husband and Make Peace with Marriage." Its premise is that if women want to be successful in love, they should reject the cultural script they've been sold and adopt a whole new view of men and marriage.

As products of divorce, the modern generation has few role models for lasting love. That alone is a problem. But young women have an added burden: they've been raised in a society that eschews marriage. They've been taught instead to honor singlehood and female empowerment.

Consider this statement by Rebecca Traister in Marie Claire: "The world as we've known it for a very long time - one in which a woman's value was tied to her role as a wife- is ending, right in front of us. It is now standard for a woman to spend years on her own, learning, working, earning, socializing, and yes, having babies in the manner she - and she alone- sees fit. We are living through the invention of independent female adulthood."

This message is not an anomaly; the idea that women don't need men or marriage is palpable. It began in earnest more than forty years ago, with the modern feminist movement. Feminism is, to some extent, becoming a lifestyle. Feminists assured women their efforts would result in more satisfying marriages, but the result is something else altogether. It looks something like this:

Marriage becomes a competitive sport. The complementary nature of marriage -in which two people work together, as equals, toward the same goal but with an appreciation for the qualities each gender brings to the table - has been obliterated. Today, husbands and wives are locked in a battle about whom does more on the home front and how they're going to get everything done. That's not a marriage. That's war.

It's time to say what no one else will: Feminism didn't result in equality between the sexes – it resulted in mass confusion. Today, men and women have no idea who's supposed to do what.

Prior to the 1970s, people viewed gender roles as equally valuable. Many would argue *women* had the better end of the deal! It's hard to claim women were oppressed in a nation in which men were expected to stand up when a lady enters the room or to lay down their lives to spare women life. When the Titanic went down in 1912, its sinking took 1,450 lives. Only 103 were women.

Compare that with last year's wrecked cruise line, the Costa Concordia. It resulted in fewer deaths, but there was another significant difference. "There was no 'women and children first' policy. There were big men, crew members, pushing their way past us to get into the lifeboats. "It was disgusting," said passenger Sandra Rogers, 62.

You see, the problem with equality is that it implies two things are interchangeable – meaning one thing can be substituted for the other with no ramifications That is what feminists would have us believe!

But the truth must be heard. Being equal in worth, or value, is not the same as being identical, interchangeable beings. Men and women may be *capable* of doing many of the same things, but that doesn't mean they want to.

Those of us with children know better. We know little girls love their dolls and boys just want to kick that ball. This doesn't mean men can't take care of babies or women can't play sports. It just means each gender has its own energy that flows in a specific direction. For God's sake, *let it flow*

The battle of the sexes is over. And guess what? No one won. Why not try something else on for size? Like this: *men and women are equal, but different*. They've each been blessed with amazing and unique qualities that they bring to the table. Isn't it time we stopped fussing about who brought what and simply enjoy the feast?

Adapted from Fox News

<u>Task 02:</u> Choose the correct answer from the options then check the text for the answers.

1. It **began (on/in/ by) earnest** more than forty years ago.
2. How to choose a husband and make (peace/quiet/calm) with Marriage.
3. This doesn't mean men can't **take care (for/ off/ of)** babies.
4. Why not (**try/test/attempt) something else on for size**?
5. With an appreciation for the qualities each gender **brings to the (chair/table/desk).**

<u>Task 03:</u> Match each sequence with its appropriate definition.

Definition	**Sequence**
Test something in order to form an opinion about it.	Lay down one's life
Get the most benefit or advantage from an arrangement	Bring to the table
Bring oneself to accept something or someone	The better end of the deal
To die in order to help other people	Try something on for size
Make a contribution or offer a useful skill or attribute	Make peace with

<u>Task 04:</u> Examine the following corpus lines and try to notice the different co-texts and contexts of the word 'extent'.

- **To what extent** do reading specialist candidates perceive digital technologies to influence reading proficiency and literacy growth?
- Furthermore, it is a question **to which extent** the communist regime was content to see any major social activity undertaken by major religious leaders.
- Teachers can influence **the extent to which** making errors is an acceptable part of learning.
- Students with disabilities should have access to the general curriculum **to the greatest extent p**ossible, and that involves the arts as well.
- Any future reconciliation and interfaith work carried out by the religious communities in Bosnia depends, **to a large extent**, upon this relationship.
- Although, this can be true, **to a certain extent**, one has to admit that religious leaders, even during communism, exercised certain influence over their respective communities.
- However, their capability and, **to some extent**, readiness are recognized as encouraging signs for the future.
- German, British, and **to a lesser extent**, French soldiers exchanged seasonal greetings, small gifts, and Christmas carols with one another.
- Controlled smiles, in which candidates attempt to constrain **the extent of** their amusement or self-satisfaction in response to audience laughter or applause.
- We listened carefully to him **to the extent that** we forgot to offer him tea.

<u>Task 05:</u> Re-order the words to get coherent sentences. Then underline the formulaic sequences.

1. Discuss/ the/ race/or/ I / truth/ regardless/ religion/of.

2. Women/ needless/ men/ to/ with/ cannot be/ say/and/ friends.

3. Not only/ their peoples/ important issues/ when/ lie to/ the bush/ around/it comes/ politicians/beat around/ to/but also/

<u>Task 06:</u> There is a mistake in each of the formulaic sequences in bold. Correct it.

1. The professor must make this distinction clear to the class **from the outset** ……...to avoid confusion.

2. **In the beginning**, what hurt before may be now a total favor and issues may turn out to be a **disguised blessing**.
3. Much of the media coverage has been **in response for** …….. the fact that for the first time in history, women have become the majority of the US workforce. This new phenomenon has changed the dance between **women and men** ……..**.**
4. **In a peanut** ……., women are angry; they're defensive, though often unknowingly. That's because they've been raised to think of men as the enemy.
5. This is a fight on two fronts. **In one hand .....,** we are struggling against the kinds of oppressions dominant in patriarch societies.
6. **For the whole part** ……., women against feminism are quite willing to acknowledge and credit feminism's past battles for women's rights in the west.
7. Feminists' efforts seemed **to bring fruit** ……..when they convinced women of their independence.

<u>Task 07:</u> With the help of context, provide the missing word in each of the sequences in bold below.

1. Before tonight's meal, the leader is to ask every family member **to ..... the table** one of their favorite pieces of music to listen to during dinner.
2. Before you begin to think that it might be safer to starve than to eat and **…… the risk** of food poisoning, it's important to get the whole matter of food poisoning into perspective.
3. Yoga, an ancient Eastern discipline weaving together a series of static poses held **…….. a period of time** with controlled breathing and meditative focus, took off in the United States two decades ago.
4. B. J., passed an interesting idea along to me about how to behave toward one another. I'll pass it on to you now so you can **try it on .....** and see how it works for you.
5. Studying grammar will help your speaking **to some ……..,** but it is not the only thing you need to know. You must know how to do things like ask questions and give directions. **With ……to** giving directions, you must know phrases like 'turn right at the corner'.

Production

<u>Task 08:</u> Write an essay by examples about the following topic: (refer back to your notebook for FSs use).

Feminism has done more harm to the cause of women than good.

Lesson 06

<u>Reviewing Task:</u> Try to guess FSs depending on the meaning provided. The hints, in the form of one content word of the sequence, might also be helpful.

1. A subject over which there is continuing disagreement. (**Hint:** contention) ..... .

2. Earn just enough money to live on. (**Hint:** ends) ..... .
3. Make someone/something famous or important. (**Hint:** map) ..... .
4. Say you support something, without showing support. (**Hint:** lip) ..... .
5. In reality. (**Hint:** matter) ..... .
6. To a certain degree. (**Hint:** some) ..... .
7. To cause something. (**Hint:** rise) ..... .

<u>Task 01:</u> Read the article below. Then underline word units which, to you, seem to be formulaic sequences.

Euthanasia

Those opposed to right-to-die legislation, also known as euthanasia or assisted suicide, cite legal, ethical and moral grounds in support of their objections.

Those who oppose assisted suicide for religious reasons, point to the Sixth Commandment's clear language on the subject: "thou shall not kill". This commandment is aimed at those who may wish to kill others, as well as those who wish to take their own lives. Taking a life is never acceptable, regardless of the reason. Humans are the sacred creations of God, and therefore human life itself is sacred. Clearly, committing an act of suicide, or assisting someone to do so, is against the will of God and is therefore sinful.

Similarly, the American legal system holds human life in high regard. As a result, there is no constitutional basis to support an argument that all states must grant all the citizens the right to decide for themselves whether to live or die.

Assisted suicide and euthanasia (two sides of the same coin) dangerously affect the doctor-patient relationship. Physicians have a sworn ethical duty to protect life. Almost all American physicians take the oath as they begin their medical careers. As originally written, the oath prohibits doctors from killing patients, or from helping patients kill themselves, even upon the request of the patient. The dignity of human life trumps all arguments in support of euthanasia. Also, if physicians openly embrace the right to die movement, patient trust in the medical profession will eventually erode, opponents argue. Patients will begin to question the motives of doctors who suggest considering the possibility of assisted suicide. Are the doctors looking out for the ailing patient's best interests, or are they more concerned with their own? Within the medical community, the ultimate goal should be to assist patients to live long, healthy lives rather than to pursue expedited deaths.

Opponents also argue that once euthanasia's Pandora's Box has been opened, the 'Box' can't be closed. In other words, once the door is open to euthanasia, divergent interests will thrust the door wide open, setting our society on a slippery slope to legalized murder and putting pressure on our most vulnerable citizens to commit suicide. It is for this reason that the law cannot afford to *sit on the fence*.

The Netherlands serves as a prime example of the slippery slope theory as highlited in a Feb. 12, 2015, *Newsweek* article, "Death Becomes Them," written by Winston Ross. In 1984, the Dutch Supreme Court ruled that voluntary euthanasia was acceptable, as long as doctors followed very specific guidelines. However, the legal plight of physicians remained in limbo because under Dutch criminal laws, physicians who assisted patients in committing suicide potentially faced criminal charges of murder. In response, the Dutch Parliament decriminalized euthanasia in 2002.

For the next few years, the number of assisted deaths actually decreased. Then, beginning in 2007, the numbers began to dramatically climb at the worrisome rate of 15 percent per year. In 2013, according to official records, 4,829 people turned to doctors for assistance to end their lives. This number is three times higher than similar deaths recorded in 2002. In fact, one in every 28 deaths in the Netherlands is now due to euthanasia.

Among the possible causes is the fact that qualifying for assisted suicide has become easier. Where once euthanasia candidates had to be terminally ill, this is no longer the case. According to Ross, Dutch doctors are now "helping people die if they no longer want to bear depression, autism, blindness or even being dependent on the care of others."

Opponents of assisted suicide also fear that financial considerations are driving the numbers up. The present day generation is rapidly aging, putting pressure on health care providers to reduce expenses by cutting corners. There is growing fear that euthanasia may become a viable option in the quest of containing costs.

Euthanasia opponents argue that instead of spending time and resources trying to find better ways to help patients die, the focus should be shifted to helping patients better manage pain and to provide more extensive services to those who are facing imminent death, and those who are disabled, socially ostracized or mentally ill. This is a religious, moral, ethical and legal imperative.

Adapted from Pacific Daily News

<u>Task 02:</u> Fill in the gaps with the missing word then check the text for answers.

1. **..... a life** is never acceptable, regardless of the reason.

2. The American legal system **holds** human life **in high .....** .

3. All states must **..... all the citizens the right to** decide for themselves whether to live or die.

4. The dignity of human life trumps all arguments **..... support of** euthanasia.

5. Opponents also argue that once euthanasia's Pandora's Box has been opened, the 'Box' can't be closed. **In other .....,** once the door is open to euthanasia, divergent interests will thrust the door wide open.

6. The present day generation is rapidly aging, **..... pressure on** health care providers to reduce expenses by **..... corners**.

<u>Task 03:</u> Match each sequence with its appropriate meaning.

Sequence	**Meaning**
Hold in high regard	To do something that causes many problems to appear that did not exist or were not known about before.
Two sides of the same coin	Be involved in a course of action that will lead to disaster.
Pandora's Box	Not to take sides in an argument or dispute
Set on a slippery slope	To be valued
To sit on the fence	In search of
In the quest of	Two different aspects of the same situation

<u>Task 04:</u> Write each of the following words under the appropriate verb.

Damage, a suggestion, a promise, a suicide, a mistake, a crime, devastation, an offence, a complaint, robbery, havoc.

Commit	**make**	**cause**
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

<u>Task 05:</u> Provide the meaning of each of the underlined sequences.

1. Content marketers and social media marketers are <u>*two sides of the same coin*</u>. They both use content to encourage interaction with consumers and clients.

2. The US drug problem remains awful, but any change other than increasingly vigorous enforcement is <u>a slippery slope</u> to legalization.

3. Is modern biotechnology <u>*a Pandora's box*</u>, as anti-biotechnology movements would have us believe or is it a panacea to cure many of the world's ills?

4. Needless to say, this kind of speech does not lead to a dialogue which may be helpful <u>*in the quest of*</u> *truth*. It merely breeds silent resentment, or noisy uproar, which divides society into hostile camps.

<u>Task 06:</u> Fill in the gaps with the missing word (only the first letter of that word is provided).

1. The renewed fight against fraud and corruption in the government make it imperative that the intellectual community no longer sits on the f..... . They can be of great help in ending corrupt practices.

2. The possibility of higher energy prices and tighter credit conditions represent significant risks to the outlook for grow. In other w....., expect unemployment, inflation and foreclosures to plague the economy.

3. I don't expect perfection from anyone, even individuals I *hold in high r.....*

4. To the best of my knowledge, customs/border guards are not going to let any amount of contraband across *as l..... as the laws* say no.

5. Since you have gone to a lot of trouble up to and through this stage in the process, it seems ridiculous *to cut c.....* now.

6. This license does not *gr..... the right to* reproduce these materials for resale, redistribution, electronic display, or any other purposes.

<u>Task 07:</u> Listen to your teacher reading a short passage out loud. Then, try to reconstruct it as accurately as possible.

The writer seems to make assumptions based on an unshakeable belief in the superiority of his own value system. He seems to be unaware of the extent to which his own set of beliefs has coloured his judgment. His research leads him to conclude that military action was justified. However, his evidence is based on one single document and attaches too much importance to this. I do not trust his judgment. Moreover, other documents cast doubt on his conclusions. Opinions on the issue are divided and my own considered opinion is that the writer is not to be trusted. I have serious misgivings about his research and I have doubts about the accuracy of some of his facts.

<u>Task 08:</u> Write an argumentative essay about one of the following topics:

1. Euthanasia (assisted-suicide) is right. Do you agree or disagree?

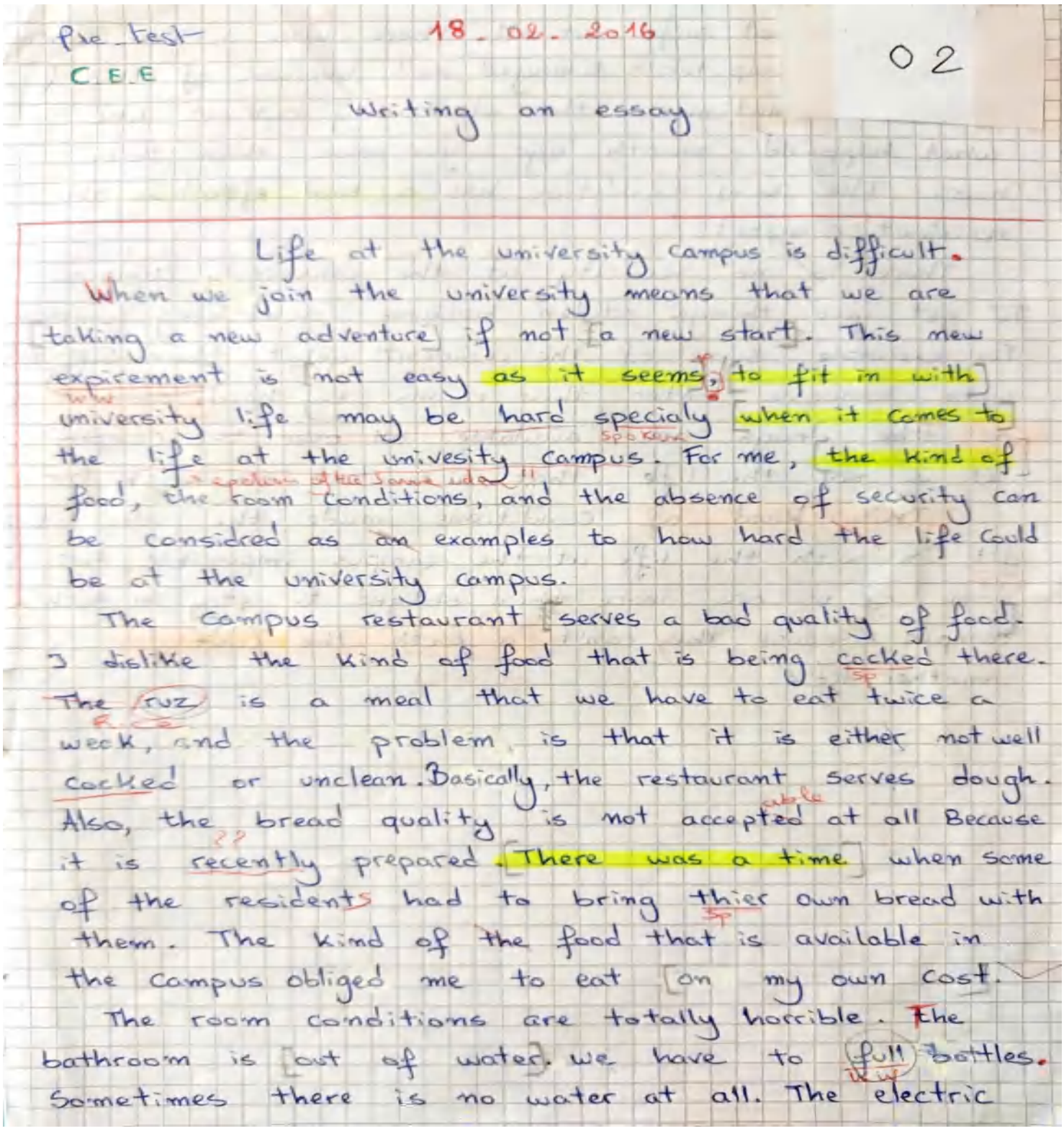
2. Learning by yourself is much better than learning with a teacher. Do you agree or disagree?

N.B. Refer back to your notebook for FSs use.

Appendix 07: A Sample of Students' Essays

N.B. Accurate FSs are highlighted in green, while inaccurate ones are highlighted in orange.

The control Group's Pre-test Essays



Pre_test
C.E.E
18. 02. 2016
02

Writing an essay

Life at the university campus is difficult. When we join the university means that we are taking a new adventure if not a new start. This new expirement is not easy as it seems, to fit in with university life may be hard specialy when it comes to the life at the univesity campus. For me, the kind of food, the room conditions, and the absence of security can be considred as an examples to how hard the life could be at the university campus.

The campus restaurant serves a bad quality of food. I dislike the kind of food that is being cocked there. The ruz is a meal that we have to eat twice a week, and the problem is that it is either not well cocked or unclean. Basically, the restaurant serves dough. Also, the bread quality is not accepted at all Because it is recently prepared. There was a time when some of the residents had to bring thier own bread with them. The kind of the food that is available in the campus obliged me to eat on my own cost.

The room conditions are totally horrible. The bathroom is out of water. we have to full bottles. Sometimes there is no water at all. The electric

wells are not safe at all. There was a time when my friend's computer damaged and because of this problem. sometimes the electrisity cut oot like what happend a month ago and for more than three hours. The room condition has a bad effect on the resident's comfort.

There is no security at the university campus. To get your things stolen became something common. For example, some of the residents lost their computers when someone enter their rooms by hard. as well as the drugs are also available all over the campus. It is not the life that a resident may ask for.

This kind of conditions made the idea of fit in with the life at the campus impossible, but some of us are more than obliged to stay in such a campus because they can't afford the cost of another life.

06 pretest

The role of teacher is very important to motivate students and make them more prepared to the future. Also, most teachers work hardly to help students to understand their courses. Additionly, there are some kindly teachers who you will never forget like my teacher of ~~grammar~~ English, she was the best teacher I have met; she ~~was~~ was with me all the time and she always guided and advised me.

First of all, sometimes we meet people who affect ourselves and changed our life to the best. For example, I had my best teacher in secondary school, she tought me English, she help me to build the base in grammar and how to conjugate verbs in deferent tenses. From that time I think I can conjugate any verb in any tense.

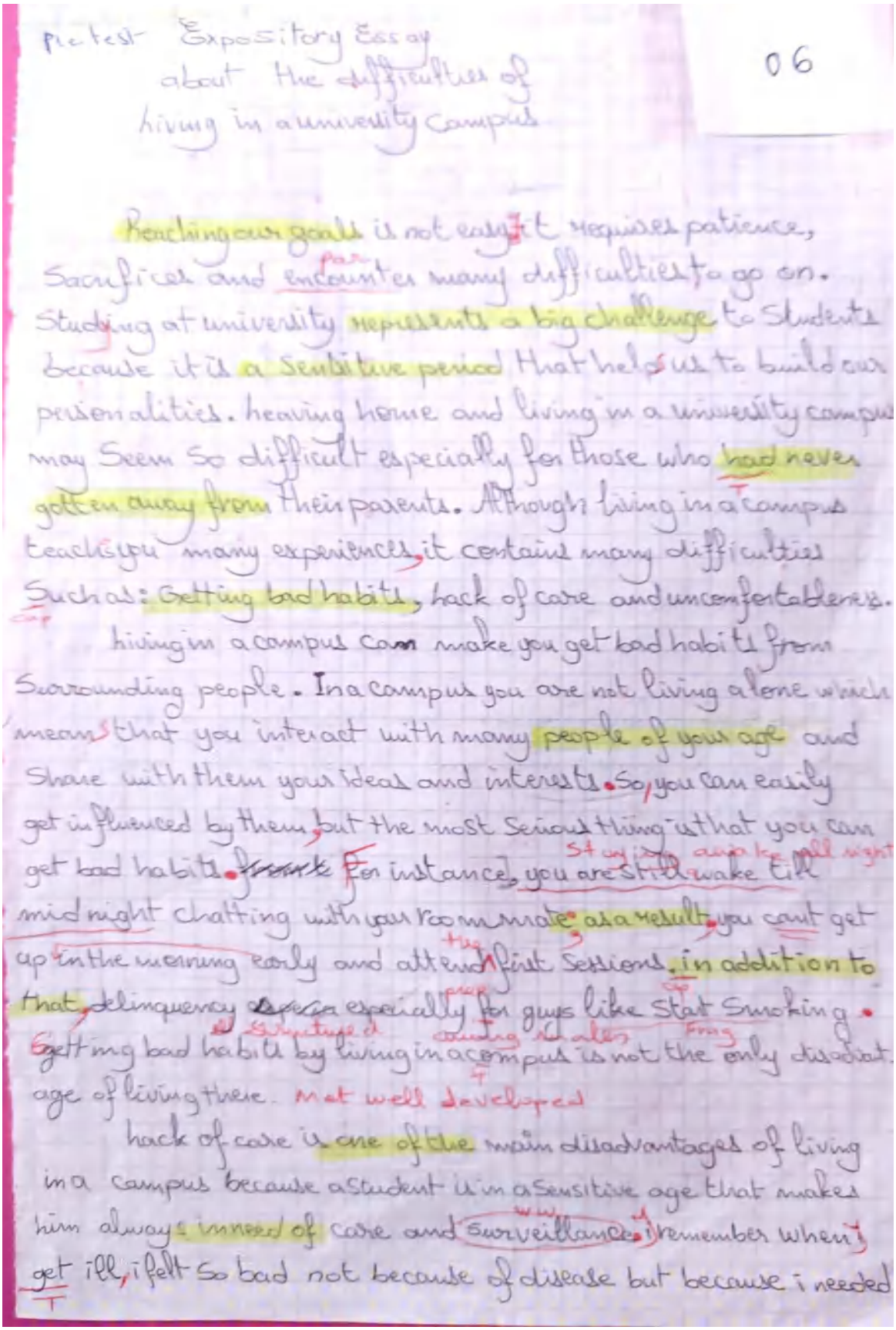
Additionly, My English teacher has been with me all the time. She has motivated

me and correct my mistakes. For example, on day, she offers me a book, I will never forget it, its name "The old man and the sea" written by Earnest Himingway, I read every day five pages; I loved it, I learnd from it lots of things. As a result, I noticed that we can learn language through reading books.

Moreover, my teacher always guided and advised me, she exhot me to study hard so as to succeed. Also, she advised me to choose English study at university because it is the best study that can help us to speek and additional language and it enable us to communicate with others.

In Conclusion, I think teachers are the only one who can Understand students, ~~and motivate them~~, and help them to improve their thinking by correcting their mistakes, motivating them, and adving them. Also, students should do what their teachers ask them to do.

Experimental Group's Pre-test Essays



Pretest Expository Essay about the difficulties of living in a university campus

06

Reaching our goals is not easy it requires patience, Sacrifices and encounter many difficulties to go on. Studying at university represents a big challenge to Students because it is a Sensitive period that helps us to build our personalities. leaving home and living in a university campus may Seem So difficult especially for those who had never gotten away from their parents. Although living in a campus teaches you many experiences, it contains many difficulties Such as: Getting bad habits, lack of care and uncomfortableness.

living in a campus can make you get bad habits from Surrounding people. In a campus you are not living alone which means that you interact with many people of your age and Share with them your ideas and interests. So, you can easily get influenced by them, but the most Serious thing is that you can get bad habits. For instance, you are still awake till mid night chatting with your room mate as a result you can't get up in the morning early and attend first Sessions. in addition to that, delinquency especially for guys like Start Smoking. Getting bad habits by living in a campus is not the only disadvantage of living there. Not well developed

lack of care is one of the main disadvantages of living in a campus because a Student is in a Sensitive age that makes him always in need of care and surveillance. I remember when I get ill, I felt So bad not because of disease but because i needed

my mother and i couldn't find her by my side to take care of me. It is incredible feeling that you cannot find who used to take care of you all the time, i felt lonely because my sister is the only friend i got and she is the one i trust the most. So when i had a bad day, i have no one to take with to discuss details.

Concerning uncomfortability is such a mess. My roommate is untidy person she doesn't organize her bed and like to can't sleep in darkness so she let the light on all the night which make me disagree with her always. In addition to that, i can't take shower what ever i like because their baths are so dirty which make me wait the whole week till i come home. Another thing to mention is noise, if i have a test or an exam, i cannot revise well because of noise, girls on the next door are always listening to music loudly till late hours night which make me mad and awake for the whole night.

To sum up, living in home has always a special taste, you feel comfortable, good simply because home is where people you cherish in. one sentence ?!

fre test

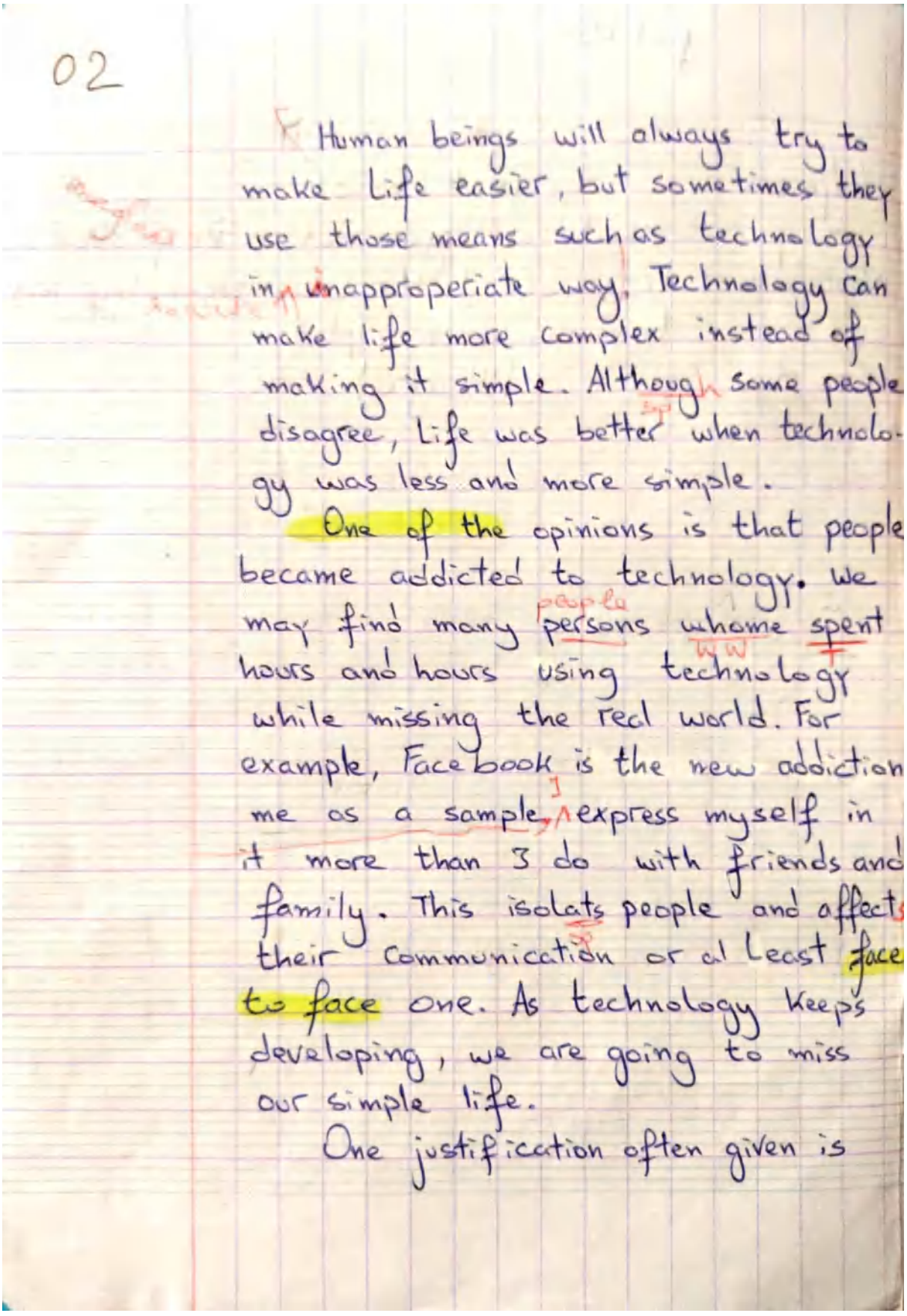
10

Throughout my stodying life I have met many teachers who taught me from primary school to colledge. One of my best teachers was my teacher of history and Geography, Mr. Khayeb Khawki. He was a great model in teaching forme, and I wished if all the teachers of the world would be like him. By setting a good example forme, my teacher was a hardworker, debonair, and indulgent.

First, My teacher of history and geography was such a hardworker. Whenever he explained the lesson to us, he try all his best to make it easy and understandable. for example, we all suffering from memorizing historical events and dates, but his strategy of teaching history makes things very easy because he presented the lesson interms of an intresting story like we are watching a movie, when it came to geography, he had another way of exphining. He used maps to show us the geography of our country, the

the diversity in relief and climate. He told us about all sorts of natural sources that Algeria had. Once he taught us how to draw the Algerian map using his own way which was very effective. He told us to hold a ruler and with taking some measures and a pencil we got a perfect map like it was done by a professional. My teacher never waste his time in other things, but only in teaching. From this great person I learned how to be a hard worker.

Second, My teacher was not only a hard worker, but he was also a debonair person. When he came to the classroom, there was always a beautiful smile decorate his face which never missed it. In his session, I feel myself comfortable and happy, and I never felt bored. I liked to study in his session all the times, and I wanted all the other teachers could be just like him. Through his high way of teaching pupils, I liked the module.



02

Human beings will always try to make life easier, but sometimes they use those means such as technology in unapproperiate way. Technology can make life more complex instead of making it simple. Although some people disagree, life was better when technology was less and more simple.

One of the opinions is that people became addicted to technology. We may find many persons whome spent hours and hours using technology while missing the real world. For example, Facebook is the new addiction me as a sample, express myself in it more than 3 do with friends and family. This isolats people and affects their communication or al least face to face one. As technology keeps developing, we are going to miss our simple life.

One justification often given is

that people depend on technology more than should be. The continuously use of technology will transform us to lazy people. We are going to miss the real life and the hard work. As an example, students runaway to the internet when they are given researches or homeworks, and that totally affects them in a negative way because every single information comes with one click. Technology started to controle our lives neither than facilitate them.

Those who disagree claim that with technology only the life is simple. They believe that it improves our lives and makes everything in our controle. Oponents think that it provides us with an easier life, saying that "easy life means simple life but franckly I wish if that was true. Technology creates more

Complex life because we can't manage anything unless we use technology. We should not forget that not all of us can handle with technology.

Sometimes the hard part of our life is the one where we learn more and keep great memories. Technology had replaced this part of our lives and an easy life does not reflect a simple one.

Incorrect

- your essay lacks analysis and concrete examples
- The conclusion is not the place to introduce new ideas

06

post-test

Our life is developing daily and scientists are always creating new things that facilitate their lives. In the past people were living simply. However, the exploration of technology has changed life and most people have affected through it. So, technology develops our life and more better. And life was not better when technology was less and simple.

First of all, Technology develops our lifes more better. because it helps students in their study and it provides them the basic information that they don't know before by searching on the internet that consists of all information in any field. Additionly, it helps people to communicate with each other by providing firstly, development materials such as ipad and personal computer, the later has become levity and easy to carried around. Secondly, the creation of the internet make people can communicate and call each other by using

new applications such as messenger, viber, facebook and so on. For example, you can see your friends and family by using viber application if you are far away from them.

Additionly, life was not better when technology was less and sample. And people were facing deffficulties to know new news and what happen in other countries. Forexample, when Algeria was colonized, the arab countries were know almost nothing about it because there is no TV and other channels to send information about what happen in it.

Moreover, there are other people who believe that ~~technology~~ life was better when technology was less and sample because

they were meeting each other and spend nice time together by watching films and matches. Besides, if students have homework or exercises to do, they go to the library and seeking on book to get the right answer though they have

you need a topic sentence there !!

!??

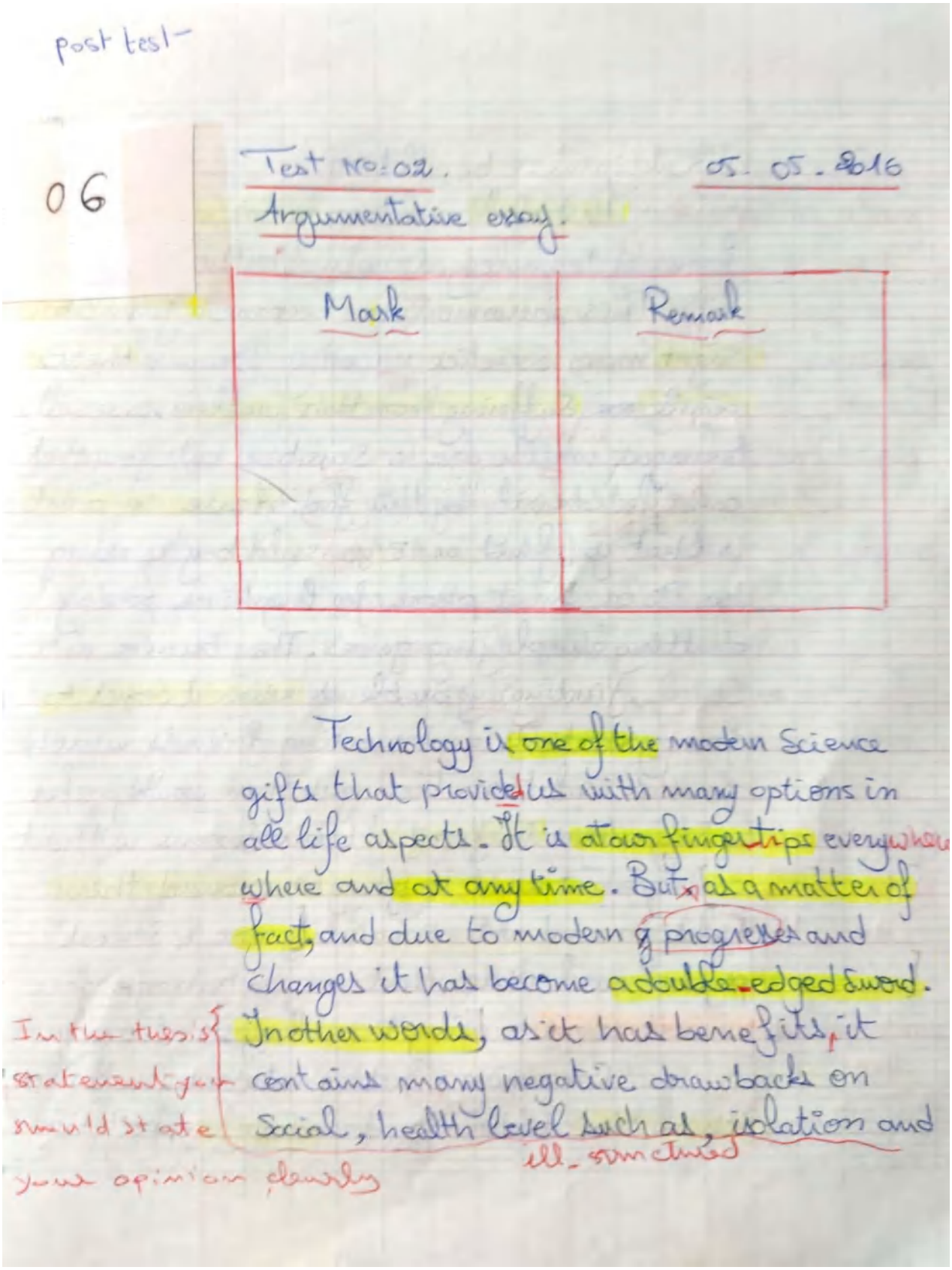
The topic sentence is missing !!

too superficial !!

a point in what they are saying, they missed the point that internet facilitates the communication between them espicially if a person is far of his family and the only way that he could do is to see them on internet.

To conclude, I strongly believe that technology is very important and it has positive effects in our life because it provides us basic necessities of life like facilitating communication between people and provides student with the information that help them in their study.

The Experimental Group's Post-test Essays



post test-

06

Test no: 02. 05. 05. 2016

Argumentative essay.

Mark	Remark

Technology is one of the modern Science gifts that provide us with many options in all life aspects. It is at our fingertips everywhere and at any time. But as a matter of fact, and due to modern progresses and changes it has become a double-edged sword. In other words, as it has benefits, it contains many negative drawbacks on Social, health level such as, isolation and ill-structured

In the thesis statement you should state your opinion clearly

effecting nature by pollution.

parad. First of all, isolation is one of the major forms of technology drawbacks on the individual life. This phenomena has become a familiar sight in our Societies nowadays. Because the vast majority are suffering from this problem, especially teenagers which are a Sensitive category that can be effected easily by this fad. A case in point is that you find an 18 years old boy is using his PC or Smart phone for long hours per day chatting and playing games. They became anti-Social, encounting problems when it comes to forming relations and meeting friends which leads to isolation. Teenagers then would prefer to Stay alone in front of their Screens without caring about what is going on around them. Isolation and anti-Sociability are a Serious psychological issues that may a teenager face when it comes to using technology irrationaly.

Repetition of the same idea !!

inappropriate Use

Concerning effecting nature by pollution, I think that technology doesnot only effect the

human life but also the nature by causing pollution. This latter is considered as a long lasting issue that is effecting our planet more and more. Statistics have shown that air pollution is on the top list of global warming factors. Because of industries growth and improvements of modern technologies, factories and vehicules are releasing too much toxic gases in the air which make a hole in the Ozon layer and this latter will cause many environmental problems, like melting glaciers and ice bergs and rise the level of Seas and make the earth warmer. These human activities will lead our nature to the balefulness and because of technology the situation is becoming worse.

Proponents argue that the changes which are caused by technology are making our lives much more easier and comfortable than before. Because in their point of view, Technology facilitates our life in many aspects

like reducing distances, save time and energy. In addition to that, they claim that due to technology we, our societies become civilized and modernized. However, this is not true because it is one of the globlization causes that try to americanize our society.

In conclusion, Technology is just a fad and it has changed our lives to the worst. life would be much better if the technology was less and simple. Humans must be selective and not addective to. Technology . We have just to use it rationally to not effect neither our Social life nor our environment.

post test

10

Argumentative essay

Technology has become a familiar sight in modern society. It has changed almost everything in our life. Although technolog has facilitated the way in which we live and makes things at our Finger figure tips, many people are feeling bored and no longer enjoying life as before. In our days, this invention seems like controlling people, and we are confused if it is a blessing or a curse. Life was much better when technology was less and simple. Technology destroyed many things in life such as communication between people, self-reliance and health problems.

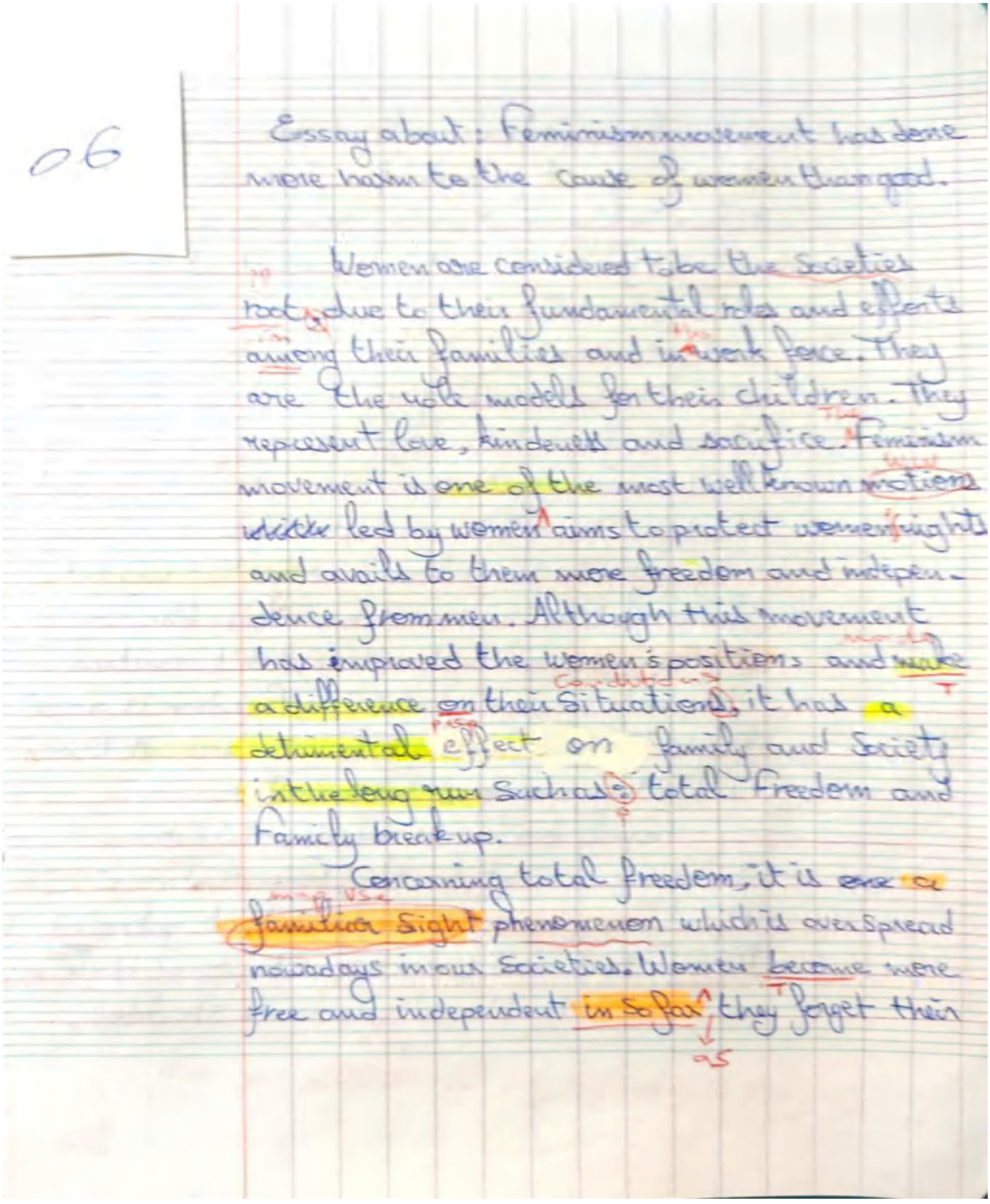
First, when technology was not very spread and was simple, family members were enjoying their life. Dinner was like a meeting for them to discuss their problems, and how they passed their day. For example, the father used to ask his children about their studies and what they did at school, and the mother raise her children teaching them moral values. Nowadays, technology

has transformed the way of communication, instead of sharing talk with family number, sisters or brothers, people are spending more time using their electronic means such as mobile phones to chat with strangers. When it comes to teaching values to children, modern parents are not taking this point into consideration which is very important. As a result, in this technological world citizens lost the way of communication and interaction between them not like before. Second, people no longer rely on themselves when doing their works. Before the invention of technology, students for instance were trying to make their homeworks by themselves. Reading books, searching for sources made the students of the past more independent in studying than those of present. Actually, students in these days rely more on internet when doing their tasks. They ignore thinking process and almost do not use their minds to solve problems. With just one click in their computers, they find whatever they want without even thinking.

Third, one of the main significant painters that technology causes many health problems to its users. In the past, people do not use technolog at all and we found them very healthy although they worked very hard using only their body effort. Today, the use of technology has damaged people's health. Using mobile phones for a very long time will causes sight problems in the long run. Also, sleeting on cheairs (using) ^Canputer will affect the backbone and creates very bad pain.

Finaly, even if technology had made many good things to help people in their way of living, it caused many problems to them. loss of communication between people in modern society, people no longer rely on themselves, and health problems are the main three damages of technology. I belive that life was much better in the past than now. I belongs to this new technological world, I do not know how life was before it, but when I am listening to my mother speaking about life in the past, I really find it more interesting than now.

A Sample of Students' Treatment Period Essays



06

Essay about: Feminism movement has done more harm to the cause of women than good.

Women are considered to be the Societies root due to their fundamental roles and efforts among their families and in work force. They are the role models for their children. They represent love, kindness and sacrifice. Feminism movement is one of the most well known motions which led by women aims to protect women rights and avails to them more freedom and independence from men. Although this movement has improved the women's positions and made a difference on their situations, it had a detrimental effect on family and Society in the long run such as total freedom and family break up.

Concerning total freedom, it is a familiar sight phenomenon which is overspread nowadays in our societies. Women become more free and independent in so far they forget their

principles and basic rules to their families. A case in point is that there is a woman who used to live in the country side. She was educated on a basis for use of certain rules, traditions and principles but when She moved to the city and got married then everything had changed. She started making relationships and got friends from both Sexes which make her husband angry. He tried many times to talk to her about her relationships, but each time She argued that She is free and has the right to form relationships and do whatever She wants. In this case, her husband could n't control her behaviours anymore. So, freedom is a good feeling but we have to take into account that it is limited and must be controlled.

Family break up is another interesting drawback of what is called Feminism because Family is supposed to be the unit that gathered its members and the responsibility of these unit must be shared on parents shoulders,

men and women not only on men. This Feminism movement created a kind of carelessness and selfishness. Women's way of thinking has changed and their interests were not the same anymore. The only thing they think about is their rights, ignoring their duties especially their roles among their families, between their husbands and children. They Suppose to preserve affection and love but due to this movement, this unit has broken down and scratched into pieces. Women became bumptious and uncontrollable. So, keeping the family together is the most important thing.

Exemplifying

To sum up, Femenism should be the motion that preserve both women and family because ~~it~~ giving the freedom to women at the expanse of family will break that sacred unit for sure.

A paragraph can't be one sentence

- The third paragraph is missing !!
- Use concrete examples
- Check the use of Fs before employing them.

An essay about: Causes and Effects of poverty.

06

Poveity:

Poverty has become a familiar sight in our Society because the overwhelming of people are Suffering from this phenomenon. Statistics have shown that more than 38% of Algerian people are living under the poverty threshold; most of them are living in run down houses while the rest are still homeless. poveity as the basic of many Social pests is caused by different factors which lead to an escact lasting toll.

Poverty is one of the widespread pests in our Society. This phenomenen is caused by many internal and external factors. A case in point is that scarcenes in job posts which makes a large number of people jobless, even the graduated ones. This situation of unemployment creates a state of insufficiency. This latter makes the Society Suffer from poverty. Fiurther, Poverty has many Serious problems especially on the psychological level like; depression, Stress, anexity and aggressivity which are all linked To bad life conditions. So, poverty is one of the main problems in most world countries that must be Solved in a way or in another.

Poverty nowaday is considered as the root of major corruption forms in our Society, because a poor man, when he found him Self unable to avail a good conditions of life to his family he deviates and get money from theft which lead him to other Social pests like Smoking weed, drinking beers and consuming drugs. This latter drive him to prison, and generally people who are released from prison are Socially discarded.

In addition to to That, There are other bad effects of poverty on human's health. For instance, malnutrition which provok many other Serious diseases; respiratory illnesses, diabets, high blood pressure etc

To sum up, Poverty is considered the major problem of Society on the basis that is the root of corruption and many other social pests. That's why government has to take crucial steps to find solutions to this phenomenon.

- pay more attention to the use of drugs
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

cause effect
joblessness → poor living conditions
cause effect
poor living conditions → Theft or crime
cause effect
crime → prisons

10

Throughout history women had faced intense discrimination from a lack of legal rights, and very little independence from their husbands. Women were viewed in the past as less than fully human which had inferior brains. In the twenteeth century, women had realized that they have to struggle and defend their rights to prove themselves as a dynamic part in all domains. With the coming of feminist makement, things started to change after a great battle made by women to gain their rights. They were capable of delivering from many restrictions that were imposed on them. Over the past few years, Sociologists found that feminism brought benifits to women, but it caused more harm than good such as: destroying family relationships, and having total freedom than it should.

First, feminism had destroyed family relationships which is one of the significant problems we should take it into consideration.

The vast majority of women in ourdays are workers. They do not spend much time in their homes with their husbands and children and this thing poses a problem at the level of family. What I mean by this is that workers women are passing most of the day outside in their jobs, so they do not take care of their children; they lose the connection between their numbers family. This is leads to split family where the spoken language is disappeared. For example, when the mother retuns home, she is going to be very tired. she has no capacity to talk with her children or husband. she asks for silence in order to relax. of course, she is not going to deal with her children's problems or takes her husband needs into account. As a metter of fact, this is considred as a great and huge problem which leads to divorce.

Second, women have tottal freedom now especially in the western world than it should. women in Europe or America act on their beliefs. They do not take their husbands or families

What do you mean?

Exemplify

facts details

decisions into consideration. women their lose their values they wear what they want, to make things clear they almost dont wear anything.

The third paragraph and the conclusion are missing

10

Cheating in exams has become a familian sight that students rely on it all over the world. The vast majority of them are secondary school students. Over the last years, this phenomenon becomes the only way for many students to succeed or graduate, even for those who are intelligent. cheating has many causes such as procrastination, parents put pressure on their children to have good marks and competation between students.

To begin with, procrastination is one of the significant causes that leads to cheating. Many people donot revise there lessons daily. They delaying revision to the last time before exams. At this time they will face difficulties to understand and memorize their lectures. Because they have many modules to deal with in a very short time. In this case, most of the students choose to cheat in order to succeed without taking the effects of this bad habit into consideration.

Secondly, the vast majority of parents put pressure on their children for the sake of success. For example, the mother has a friend whose son or daughter are very good students and always get excellent marks. So, this woman wants her child to be like her friend's children. She forces him to take a higher marks even if his level is not that good. She obliged him to make all his effort or she will punish him. In this case, the student will find himself in a great problem, and his only solution is to cheat to satisfy his mother. This is a major problem that leads students to cheat.

In addition, Competition between students is another cause of students' cheating. What I mean by this is that even the excellent students cheat in exams. Their aim is to get higher marks, and graduate with the best average no matter if they use legal or illegal ways. We find this category of students in all levels. They are very selfish people; they do not believe in Competition; They want to remain always the first in their classes.

better to say "regardless of the followed ways / means"

In conclusion, there are many causes of cheating in exams. Delaying revision to the last moment time, parents who force their children to get good marks, and competition in classes. we cannot justify cheating with any reason. It is forbidden in all religions. Also, this bad habbits has many effects. It reduces creativity, the person cannot rely on himself, and he will be excluded if someone catches him cheating.

No parallelism!!!

Rephrase

excuse

sp habit

→ Don't introduce new ideas in the conclusion

- Your essay lacks examples!!!
  don't include religion
- Pay more attention to parallelism and end sentences only when they have a complete meaning and can stand alone
- Try to employ more Fs

Appendix 8: Students' Writing Scores

N	The Experimental Group		The Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	58	60	58	71
02	55	58	61	50
03	37	43	34	40
04	60	70	45	39
05	34	42	34	44
06	51	69	39	38
07	55	66	60	68
08	59	68	37	44
09	38	53	41	40
10	58	77	56	74
11	35	41	34	36
12	57	64	47	51
13	60	72	34	34
14	38	41	42	37
15	39	42	63	61
16	34	34	57	69
17	34	40	44	57
18	38	71	34	34
19	37	46	34	34
20	39	41	44	41
Total	**916**	**1098**	**898**	**962**
Mean	**45.8**	**54.9**	**44.9**	**48.1**

Appendix 09: Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Content

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	19	20	24	22
02	19	16	18	13
03	16	15	13	17
04	20	21	17	16
05	13	13	13	17
06	17	19	15	14
07	16	21	17	21
08	16	19	15	17
09	13	16	15	18
10	19	22	17	22
11	13	14	13	13
12	18	21	16	14
13	21	22	13	13
14	14	15	15	15
15	13	13	19	18
16	13	13	17	21
17	13	14	16	17
18	14	20	13	13
19	13	14	13	13
20	14	13	14	14
Total	**314**	**341**	**313**	**328**
Mean	**15.7**	**17.05**	**15.65**	**16.4**

Appendix 10: Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Organization

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	13	12	11	14
02	11	12	12	8
03	7	7	7	7
04	14	13	10	9
05	7	8	7	8
06	10	13	7	7
07	11	12	12	14
08	12	14	8	9
09	8	10	9	8
10	12	15	10	15
11	7	7	7	7
12	12	12	10	9
13	13	14	7	7
14	9	10	8	7
15	8	8	12	11
16	7	7	12	13
17	7	8	8	11
18	8	13	7	7
19	7	9	7	7
20	9	7	8	8
Total	**192**	**211**	**179**	**186**
Mean	**9.6**	**10.55**	**8.95**	**9.3**

Appendix 11: Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Language Use

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	11	13	10	18
02	12	15	16	17
03	5	9	5	7
04	13	18	8	5
05	5	10	5	8
06	11	19	6	7
07	15	17	16	17
08	16	18	5	8
09	8	13	7	5
10	13	21	16	20
11	6	10	5	7
12	13	16	10	16
13	11	19	5	5
14	6	6	10	5
15	9	10	17	18
16	5	5	14	19
17	5	8	10	15
18	6	20	5	5
19	6	12	5	5
20	7	11	11	8
Total	**183**	**270**	**186**	**215**
Mean	**9.15**	**13.5**	**9.3**	**10.75**

Appendix 12: Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Vocabulary

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	12	12	11	14
02	11	12	12	9
03	7	10	7	7
04	10	14	8	7
05	7	9	7	8
06	11	14	8	8
07	10	13	12	13
08	12	13	7	8
09	7	11	8	7
10	11	15	10	13
11	7	8	7	7
12	11	12	8	9
13	13	14	7	7
14	7	8	7	8
15	7	9	12	10
16	7	7	12	13
17	7	8	8	11
18	8	14	7	7
19	9	9	7	7
20	7	8	8	8
Total	**181**	**220**	**173**	**181**
Mean	**9.05**	**11**	**8.65**	**9.05**

Appendix 13: Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores in Mechanics

N	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	**Posttest**	**Pretest**	**Posttest**
01	3	3	2	3
02	2	3	3	3
03	2	2	2	2
04	3	4	2	2
05	2	2	2	3
06	2	4	3	2
07	3	3	3	3
08	3	4	2	2
09	2	3	2	2
10	3	4	3	4
11	2	2	2	2
12	3	3	3	3
13	2	3	2	2
14	2	2	2	2
15	2	2	3	4
16	2	2	2	3
17	2	2	2	3
18	2	4	2	2
19	2	2	2	2
20	2	2	3	3
Total	**46**	**56**	**47**	**52**
Mean	**2.3**	**2.8**	**2.35**	**2.6**

Appendix 14: Students Attitudes Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral research work which aims at investigating the role of formulaic sequences in developing students' writing proficiency. We would be so grateful if you could answer the questions below as honestly as possible.

Guidelines: Please tick (√) the appropriate box or give full answer(s) whenever necessary.

Section One: Students' Attitudes towards FSs Learning

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The teaching of formulaic sequences is new to me.					
2. Formulaic sequences or language chunks are much more important than single words.					
3. Due to FSs instruction, I look for FSs whenever I read/listen to English materials.					
4. I was motivated to learn formulaic sequences.					
5. FSs instruction increased my motivation to write.					
6. Incorporating FSs into the writing classroom created an enjoyable atmosphere and alleviated the boredom of the traditional writing classroom practices.					
7. I try to use the chunks the teacher gave us whenever I write.					
8. I try to memorize any useful chunks I meet to use them in my writing					
9. FSs helped me develop my writing confidence.					
10. Knowledge of FSs helped me express my ideas easily.					
11. Using FSs helped me improve the quality of my writing.					
12. FSs should be part of writing classes.					
13. I want to continue to learn FSs in my next writing classes too.					

14. How did the use of FSs help you improve your writing?

……

……

15. Of the following activities, which ones were helpful to you to learn FSs the best? Why?

a. Matching **b.** Gap-filling **c.** Error correction **d**. Dictogloss **e.** Corpus lines **f.** Noticing/ highlighting and using the sequences in different contexts **g.** Translation **h.** C-test **i.** Providing the missing word of the sequence **j.** Multiple choice **k.** Re-ordering words to form sentences

……..

16. Which ones where not helpful? Why?

……

17. What difficulties did you encounter in learning formulaic sequences?

……

……

……

18. What do you suggest to overcome these problems?

……

……

……

Section Two: Further Suggestions

19. Do you have any suggestions or comments about learning formulaic sequences and their usefulness in writing?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your collaboration

ملخّص

بعدما عانت التّهميش، تصدّرت التّراكيب المعجمية مؤخّرا أبحاث اللّسانيات التطبيقيّة حيث اتّضح أكثر أنّ هاته التّراكيب تسود الاستعمال الحقيقي للّغة وذات تأثير مباشر على تطوير اللّغة وانتاجها وبذلك فهي تلعب دورا أساسيا في تحسين كفاءة الطّلاب الكتابية. سعت هذه الدراسة للبحث في تأثير تدريس التّراكيب المعجمية على قدرات طلبة اللّغة الإنجليزية– السنة الثانية ليسانس– بجامعة أمّ البواقي لإنتاج هذه التّراكيب في وضعيات مقيّدة بسياق (اختبار سي) ووضعيات حرّة (مقالات) وكذلك لتطوير مهاراتهم الكتابية. كما عنيت الدّراسة بتوعية الأساتذة والطّلبة على السّواء بأهمّية هاته التّراكيب في الكتابة. بناءا على ذلك, إفترضنا أنّه إذا درّس الطلاّب التّراكيب المعجمية فانّ معرفتهم الانتاجية بهاته التّراكيب وجودة كتابتهم ستشهد تحسّنا. كما تمّ الافتراض أنّ الطّلبة سيبدون مواقف ايجابية اتّجاه ادماج هاته التّراكيب ضمن حصص الكتابة. لبلوغ الاهداف المسطّرة، إعتمدنا ثلاث استبيانات، إختباري سي واختبارين كتابين كأدوات لجمع المعلومات ضمن بحث شبه تجريبي. أظهر تحليل إستبياني الأساتذة والطّلبة نقص وعي الطّلبة بظاهرة التّراكيب المعجمية وأهمّيتها في الكتابة. أمّا من جانب الأساتذة فانّه ورغم إدراكهم لأهمّيتها ومواقفهم الايجابية ازّاء إدماجها في حصص التّعبير الكتابي إلاّ أنّ تدريس هذه التّراكيب لم يكن في الواقع ضمن أجندتهم التعليميّة. بيّنت النّتائج أيضا أنّ تدريس التّراكيب المعجمية أثّر إيجابا على معرفة الطلاّب الإنتاجية لهاته التّراكيب إلاّ أنّه لم يثبت فعاليته في تحسين قدراتهم الكتابية. علاوة على ذلك، كشفت نتائج الإستبيان البعدي عن مواقف الطلاب الإيجابية اتّجاه تعليم التّراكيب المعجمية وتأكيدهم حاجتهم للتّعلم المنهجي لهذه التّراكيب مستقبلا بغرض الكتابة. رغم عدم إظهار النّتائج المحصّل عليها تحسنا كبيرا في كفاءة الطلاّب الكتابية إلّا أنّ هذا لا ينفي أهمّية التّراكيب المعجمية بالنّسبة لكتّاب اللّغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ولهذا ينبغي للبحوث المستقبلية أن تستقصي أكثر دور هاته التّراكيب في الكتابة.

RÉSUMÉ

Après avoir été relégué à la périphérie, les unités langagières stéréotypées (désormais ULS) ont récemment été placées au centre de la recherche en linguistique appliquée car il devient toujours plus évident que de telles unités imprègnent l'utilisation de la langue et qu'elles ont un impact direct sur le développement et la production du langage. Ainsi, elles jouent un rôle essentiel dans l'amélioration de la compétence d'écriture des apprenants de langue étrangère. Par conséquent, la présente recherche a pour objectif de sonder les effets de l'enseignement des unités langagières stéréotypées sur les capacités des étudiants EFL (English as Foreign Language) de deuxième année à produire des ULS dans des situations contrôlées (C-test) et non contrôlées (essais), et à produire des écrits de meilleure qualité. En outre, un autre aspect tout aussi important de cette étude est de sensibiliser les enseignants ainsi que les étudiants à l'importance de ces unités dans l'écriture. Par conséquent, l'hypothèse émise est que si les ULS sont enseignées aux étudiants, leur connaissance productive de ces unités ainsi que leur qualité d'écriture globale s'amélioreraient. Il est également émis que les étudiants montreraient des attitudes positives envers l'incorporation des ULS dans les classes d'écriture. Afin de répondre aux objectifs ci-dessus, trois questionnaires, deux C-tests et deux tests de rédaction ont été utilisés comme outils de collecte des données dans le cadre d'une démarche quasi expérimentale. L'analyse des questionnaires de pré-expérimentation a montré que les étudiants ne connaissent pas les ULS et ne sont pas conscients de leur importance dans l'écriture. De plus, bien que les enseignants soient favorables à l'égard de l'incorporation de ces unités dans leurs classes de l'expression écrite, l'enseignement de ces unités ne faisait pas vraiment partie de leur programme d'enseignement. Les résultats ont également révélé que l'enseignement des ULS a un effet positif sur la connaissance productive de ces unités par les étudiants. Cependant, aucun effet notable sur les capacités des étudiants à produire des essais de meilleure qualité n'a été constaté. En outre, les résultats du post-questionnaire ont démontré que les étudiants ont exprimé des attitudes positives envers l'enseignement des ULS et ont souligné la nécessité d'un futur apprentissage systématique de ces unités afin d'améliorer leur écriture. Bien que les résultats obtenus n'aient pas révélé d'amélioration significative de la compétence d'écriture des étudiants, cela ne remet pas en cause l'importance des ULS dans les écritures des étudiants EFL. Les recherches futures devraient donc approfondir le rôle de ces unités dans l'écriture.