Hindawi

Research Article

The Impact of a Contrastive Lexical Approach in Formulaic Expressions' Perception on University EFL Learners' Writing Proficiencies

Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal [ID],[1,2] **Sayed Sadek** [ID],[2,3]
Madani Osman Ahmed [ID],[3] **Amal Zakaria Mahmoud Hal** [ID],[2]
and Said Elsayed Ahmed Saleh [ID][4]

[1]*Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia*
[2]*Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Port Said, Egypt*
[3]*Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, University of Bahrain, Zallaq, Bahrain*
[4]*Department of English, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt*

Correspondence should be addressed to Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal; ma.abdulaal@psau.edu.sa

The purpose of this study was to look at how the contrastive lexical approach influenced Saudi EFL learners' writing proficiencies. Forty-six Saudi EFL learners from the College of Science and Humanities at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University were randomly selected for this study. The study sample was then divided by the block randomization method into two equal groups: an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). All the EFL learners were males, aged between 16 and 19. First, a pretest was administered to the two groups to gauge their writing proficiency. The experimental group then received writing instructions using the Contrastive Lexical Approach (CLA) over the course of 12 sessions, precisely, two fifty-minute sessions a week. While the participants in the EG were given *L*1 equivalents for *L*2 formulaic codes, the CG received conventional instructions and regulations during which participants began to skim and scan texts comprising the same formulaic codes as for the EG without being given any kind of translation and were then requested to write on the same subject matters as the experimental group. The two groups each received a posttest at the end of the treatment. After confirming the normal distribution of the data, the paired sample *t*-test was used to strike a comparison between the mean scores of the two posttests. The results demonstrated that adopting a contrastive lexical approach had a considerably significant impact on Saudi EFL learners' writing proficiencies. The implication, as the size effect results showed, was that there was a strong correlation between CLA and writing skill development.

1. Introduction

Native and nonnative language learners have historically regarded writing as a difficult and convoluted task [1, 2]. According to Melloni and Masini [3] and Sarumathi [4]; writing is unquestionably the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. Abdi Tabari [5] asserted that writing is highly demanding and difficult to acquire and drew attention to its complexity. EFL learners are asked to develop their productive skills in English, which can range from the ability to write simple texts to the capacity to produce essays and highly professional articles. Writing is always a difficult task for EFL students, and even seasoned language instructors think it is challenging to help students properly master this skill. The lack of writing competence becomes a significant issue for university EFL learners who must read and write properly in English. Some learning techniques have shown promising results in addressing this issue.

Dinesh [6] supported a strategy in which language learners are taught how to use various techniques by dissecting writing operations into more explicit and controllable subskills and subprocesses. Assisting language learners in improving their writing abilities from their *L*1 to *L*2 could be one technique used to deal with this problem. The success of employing this technique, according to Fontich et al. [7], depends on the EFL learners' command of their *L*1 grammar. Furthermore, Al-Juraywi [8] revealed a strong relationship between EFL students' *L*1 and *L*2 writing proficiencies at high levels. Benali [9] validated this transferability by demonstrating how Spanish EFL learners' *L*2 writing proficiency is affected by their L1 writing performance.

Formulacity could also be another key tactic for mastering writing abilities. This is made even more obvious considering the claims made by Lin [10]. Based on corpus-driven research, the contrastive lexical approach influences EFL learners' usage of formulaic sequences depending on recurrence, non-idiomaticity, and the style of discourse. Collocations that are stored and recovered holistically and not generated from scratch with each use are frequently referred to as formulaic language [11, 12]. There are widely agreed definitions of what a "formulaic sequence" is and the characteristics that define it from other sequences. The consensus seems to be that collocations are multi-entity linguistic items that eventually become isolated lexical units. Gutowska [13] identified formulacity as a series of words, whether continuous or discontinuous, that seems to be prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved in its entirety from memory at the time of use rather than being generated by the language grammar.

Using a distinct term for formulaic language units, Wray [14] defines formulae as sentence stems, i.e., systematic and semantic pairs. Schmitt and Carter [15] pointed out that formulaic expressions are functional composites or grammatical lexical items that fall between the conventional lexical and syntactic poles; they are identical to the lexicon in that they are processed as units, but many of them can also be generated from the standard norms of syntax, just like other lexical structures. In other words, they are multilexical strings that are formed and remembered as a single unit, such as one lexical phrase. Wood [16] proposed the most thorough taxonomy and characterization of formulaic language units, which they refer to as lexical expressions. There are two different forms of lexical phrases: (1) abstract frames made up of categorical symbols and fundamental lexical units that are assigned a particular pragmatic purpose and (2) sequences of individual lexical entities. These frames serve as the basis for several distinctive lexical expressions, such as one year ago, or would you please pass the salt?'.

Despite the significance of English as a worldwide language, EFL instruction and learning practices have not received the required attention in Saudi Arabia. Writing has been one of the best ways to share new ideas, but the Saudi curriculum does not spotlight it [17]. Saudi EFL learners typically follow the official curriculum developed by instructional designers when learning how to write in English in academic contexts at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University. Despite Saudi EFL learners' great reading abilities and knowledge, their performance in essay writing is still below average [18]. Insufficient writing abilities and essay writing skills are to blame for this unimpressive outcome. Regardless of their field of study, the inability of Saudi EFL students to communicate effectively in English after graduation is one of their main concerns. This is due to their lack of proficiency in English, particularly in the writing ability that is essential for the dissemination of their information. This will unavoidably have an impact on their academic success.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Underpinnings. The lexical approach, according to Lovestrand [19], means that language is composed of prefabricated chunks of manifold words rather than standard grammar. Lexical approach instructors recommend these chunks for EFL learners to master the target language in the classroom. Since many of the fundamental ideas emphasized using communicative methods have been established, this new approach is seen as a significant re-evaluation endeavor for EFL instructors. The other most important distinction is a comprehensive understanding of the nature of lexis in the human language and a potential contribution to language teaching. The practitioners' classroom activities frequently include a clear theoretical foundation in addition to formulae and procedures. O'Brien and Jones [20] claimed that only a small percentage of language teachers exhibit academic curiosity and a drive to develop their professional position. It is discouraging that many EFL instructors are opposed to anything that challenges the fundamental tenet of syntactic instruction, which exposes any notions that the Lexical Approach enhances or rejects.

Al Ibrahim et al. [21] and Zimmerman [22] believe that there are some possible solutions for dealing with lexical anomalies, including using a lexicon that contains the distinctive contrasting peculiarities that characterize each word. One is grounded in its lexical properties and explicitly encodes its unusual properties as a peculiar lexical item, encapsulating its distinction from nonexceptional senses. The term "obesity", for example, may be preventively listed in/ti/. The alternative solution is to focus on general techniques and index the phonological norms or limits found or unnoticed on lexical objects. In contrast to Richards and Rodgers [23]'s claims, Jarvis [11] contended that any modern lexical approach can be referred to as a post method not because it was implemented following the harsh attack on teaching methods but rather because it made every effort to overcome the challenges faced using earlier prototypical methods. The post method era is not regarded as a convincing argument that should be acknowledged at the expense of systemic methodological efforts.

Siegel [12] demonstrated that ways function top-down as opposed to the bottom-up tendency of post method teaching. In such a case, the benefits of top-down as well as bottom-up systems can be realized. Bell claims that when local conditions are disregarded, the techniques and post

methods combined strengthen education. They support analytical coherence and dissect the entire tendency of methods developed after the approach. Johnston [24] contended that it is unacceptable to ignore such methods, even though most post methodologists reject the concept. Additionally, Johnston maintained that the outmoded concept of the method can return to the post method context in the years to come.

2.2. Empirical Studies. Numerous experiments have examined the state of writing abilities in backgrounds where English is a second language. Writing is regarded as a complex and dynamic master skill [25]. Ohlrogge [26] was successful in demonstrating how formulaic language used in $L1$ writing can help $L2$ writers employ formulaic language more effectively. Other researchers have discovered that using formulaic expressions increases the likelihood of overcoming the difficulties associated with L2 writing. For instance, 115 first-year undergraduates at a private university in Japan were the subjects of a study conducted by Murray [27]. In contrast to other comparable studies, Murray claimed to have tried a less controlled intervention, where the subjects were requested to proofread academic formulaic sequences in predetermined paragraphs. He claimed to have discovered that the intervention had a positive impact on the academic writing abilities of the participants in the experimental group. Other comparable research (e.g., [28]) either showed a highly positive impact of formulaic language on writing skills or a moderate association between formulaic competence and writing skills [29, 30].

Jacobs et al. [31] conducted more research on university EFL learners, where they conducted longitudinal examinations into the lexical approach to the subjects' writing skills. With the assistance of the EG and CG, results have demonstrated that lexical instruction can improve students' comprehension of lexical structures, enhance their lexical rate, and raise the level of L2 writing.

To better educate and improve writing skills, Namaziandost et al. [32] initially presented the contrastive lexical approach (CLA), which integrates both methodologies. The CLA, which compares lexical chunks from the first and second languages, is relevant to and effective in nurturing some language learning skills [33].

CLA can be introduced as a contemporary teaching approach that contrasts and identifies similarities between set phrases in various languages and examines how these set phrases can be utilized to perform specific functions. A constant search for the closest translations of lexical chunks between languages is a requirement of the contrastive lexical method of teaching. By gradually removing the connections between $L1$ and $L2$ lexical chunks and starting to utilize them independently, language learners will be better equipped to understand the practical units of a language that can be employed in their production. The bottom line is that those language learners who use this method have a greater chance of remembering and retrieving frequently used structures in their speech, and as they become more proficient, they choose $L2$ lexical chunks more automatically and rely less on their $L1$ counterparts, which are thought to scaffold the entire operation. EFL learners may find that they are unable to write well since they are unfamiliar with the appropriate lexical chunks that would ease their performance [34].

As language teachers and learners, it is difficult to forget the notion that EFL students are bad at communicating their ideas in writing. Most learners who study at colleges in English-speaking nations, where they must read and write in English, find that this lack of proficiency is a pressing issue. Lack of awareness of the presence, value, and benefits of lexical chunks may prevent language learners from realizing the urgent need to utilize such a priceless repertoire to improve their proficiency and performance in writing. Their disregard for the assistance they would receive from rendering formulaic lexical items between the target language and source language may also be a contributing factor [35–38].

By raising learners' knowledge of the advantages of using contrastive lexical chunks in writing, the results of the current study may help to improve language learning and instruction. Due to their real concerns about the literacy abilities of their learners and their desire for a more facilitative method to be employed as a head start in developing writing skills, language teachers may also benefit from the findings of the current study. This study may prove to be useful in exposing the good impact of contrastive activities as a supportive routine in instructing writing, which will be of interest to material developers. Thus, the current study concentrates on CLA and seeks to determine whether it fosters language learners' writing abilities or not. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to address the following research question:

Research Question: Does instructing formulaic chunks employing CLA have a substantial impact on how well EFL students write?

The following null and alternative hypotheses were presented to be investigated based on the study question:

H0. The competency of the writing skills of EFL learners is not considerably impacted by the CLA teaching of formulaic language.

H1. The competency of the writing skills of EFL learners is considerably impacted by the CLA teaching of formulaic language.

2.3. Research Significance. This study suggests that CLA can offer excellent potential for language instructors to assist students in developing their writing abilities. It is usually a good idea to expose language learners to the $L2$ formulaic expressions that are equivalent to their $L1$ and vice versa to improve their writing skills. This research study urges language learners to investigate how the collocation systems in Arabic and English operate so that they can improve their writing abilities in both their $L1$ and $L2$ languages. Because of using contrastive memorization as a learning approach, students are better able to retain the structures and

expressions they should write. It is advised to maintain contrastive logs as a reminder of the best ways to represent ideas in writing without spending too much time deliberating and having little chance of choosing the most appropriate words. It is important to note that, despite substantial efforts to do so through CLA activities, language learners still face the challenge of finding it difficult to use formulaic language when putting pen to paper.

2.4. Research Objectives. This study aims to look at how the contrastive lexical approach influenced Saudi EFL learners' writing proficiencies. To attain this aim, the researchers set the following objectives:

(1) To measure the influence of instructing formulaic chunks employing CLA on how well EFL students write

(2) To define the correlation between teaching formulaic structures via CLA and developing EFL learners' writing skills

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants. 46 EFL male students from the College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, were chosen for this study. The 46 students who volunteered to participate in the study were chosen from among the 86 EFL learners. The participants were chosen via a nonrandom sampling technique. Then, they were divided into two equal groups of 23: an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). Block randomization sampling was employed to create two groups of comparable size. The ages of the volunteers ranged from 16 to 19. The oxford placement test (OPT) was employed to determine the participants' proficiency level. There are six basic levels within the CEFR: $A1$ and $A2$ (elementary); $B1$ and $B2$ (intermediate); and $C1$ and $C2$ (advanced). Only three CEFR levels—$B1$, $B2$, and $A2$—are reported by OPT, a multilevel English proficiency test that evaluates communication and comprehension skills in English. The four skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—are all covered on OPT. The test helped the researchers identify the participants' proficiency levels. Only $B1$ learners opted for this study. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a list of various language proficiency levels created by the Council of Europe, places English at level $B1$, which is the third level of English. This level would be referred to as "intermediate" in daily conversation.

4. Research Design and Instrumentation

To attain the research objectives, the researchers adopted a mixed research design. That is, the researchers conducted a quantitative analysis of the numerical data and a qualitative analysis of the nonnumerical data.

A rubric adopted from Illinois State University, American Public University, Oregon Department of Education, and Mankato State University was employed to grade the participants' writing assignments. The five criteria—(1)

purpose and audience, (2) main idea, (3) development and support, (4) organization, (5) sentence structure, (6) mechanics and presentation, and (7) vocabulary and word use—make up the most popular and widely accepted rubric in Saudi Arabia for assessing writing activities. There are five levels of scoring for each component: (1) pre-college competencies, (2) first-year outcome: beginning competencies, (3) second-year outcome: developing competencies, (4) third-year outcome: practicing competencies, and (5) fourth-year outcome: accomplished competencies (For an example copy, see Table1.

5. Data Collection Procedure

The following procedures were carried out to attain the study's objective:

(1) Two groups of students were initially chosen from the Department of English Language, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University.

(2) The researcher administered the Oxford Placement Test to pick up a random sample of intermediate EFL learners.

(3) The participants were split into experimental and control groups at random. Twenty-three students made up each group.

(4) A pretest was completed by both groups. The authentic exam sheets from Cambridge English: IELTS 11 General Training [39] were the source of some of the themes for the essays that the students were required to compose. In 50 minutes, the participants had to compose a 250-word essay. The pretest was administered in front of the class under the researcher's supervision. All the essays were gathered after the exam and scored according to the same standards.

(5) Over 12 sessions that lasted an hour and 35 minutes each, the treatment group received writing instructions through CLA. The instructor in the experimental group made students aware of the existence of $L2$ counterparts for $L1$ formulaic statements that signified greater degrees of acceptability and were determined to be more like what native speakers would choose in the same circumstance.

(6) Contrarily, the participants in the control group followed the regular curriculum in the classroom and were required to read texts that contained the same formulaic language without being given any translation duties. They were not to be given any suggestions as to the presence or significance of formulaic language; they were only to write about the subjects they had already read about.

(7) The same instructor taught the participants in both groups. Finally, the same test that was utilized as a pretest was repeated as a posttest at the end of the treatment to evaluate the effectiveness of the

instructions and the learners' knowledge. For both groups, the testing was conducted in a single session. The students were required to prepare an essay on the same subject as their pretest essay for the posttest.

(8) Two scorers scored each essay once it was collected, and their agreement was evaluated by computing inter-rater reliability analyses ($r = 0.875$). The determined acceptable alpha level was (0.7.2) (See Table 2). The average ratings provided by the raters were used for the final statistical analysis once the raters' agreement was confirmed.

6. Results

After collecting the data, the researcher used SPSS Statistics 28.0.1.1 to determine whether teaching formulaic expressions using CLA had a significant effect on how well EFL students write. The data were further examined to determine whether the researcher had to adopt parametric or non-parametric data analyses by checking the data's normality after assuring an acceptable degree of inter-rater agreement and averaging the two sets of raters' scores (See Table 3 below). The effect size values were also calculated to determine the power of the statistical tests, which is a key factor in determining how much confidence we may place in the occurrence of significant or non-significant results.

Thus, Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests of normality were run on the data obtained from the above-mentioned tests (See Table 2: Cohen's kappa coefficient). Nonsignificant results (Sig = 0.831; 0.535 and Sig = 0.922; 0.531) showed no violation of normality (See Table 3). All these findings showed that the distribution of the scores is normal, and this allowed the use of parametric tests for further data analysis. To compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups before and after the experiment, independent and paired-sample t-tests were carried out once the scores were confirmed to have a normal distribution (see Tables 4 to 10).

According to Table 4, the mean score on the pretest for EG students was 61.09, whereas the mean score for CG students was 62.01. The researchers had to look at the p value under the Sig. (2-tailed) column in the t-test table to determine whether the difference between these two mean scores, and consequently the two groups on the pretest, was statistically significant (See Table 5).

According to the data in Table 6, there was no statistically significant difference between EG's pretest score ($M = 61.09$, SD = 2.44) and CG's pretest score ($M = 62.01$, SD = 1.53) ($t = 0.04$), $p = 0.38$). (two-tailed). This conclusion was drawn because of the p-value exceeding the significance level ($p > 0.05$). The learners in the two groups were therefore assumed to be at the same proficiency level in the pretest.

The experimental group's descriptive statistics for the pretest and posttest are shown in Table 6. The experimental group's pre-test and post-test means were 74.01 and 84.32, respectively. From the pretest to the post-test, the experimental group's mean score rose. Examining the p-value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column of the paired-samples t-test table

allowed the researcher to determine whether the difference between these mean scores was statistically significant (See Table 7). A difference between the pretest and posttest that is statistically significant in this table would have a p value under 0.05, whereas a difference that is not statistically significant would have a p-value above 0.05.

The experimental group's pretest and posttest scores are shown in Table 7 together with the findings of the paired sample t-test. Both $t = -73.848$ and p-value $= .000$ revealed that the pre-test scores ($M = 74.01$, SD = 2.712) were significantly lower than the post-test scores ($M = 84.32$, SD = 2.405). The size of the mean difference was quite large (eta-squared = 0.81), indicating that the intervention's scope was broad and that CLA accounts for 81 percent of the variance in writing ability. Cohen's d also came out to be 1.34, which is high and further supports the effectiveness of the intervention.

The learners in the control group attained mean scores of 65.91 on the pre-test and 65.85 on the posttest, as shown in Table 8. To assess if the difference between these two mean scores was statistically significant or not, the researchers checked the paired-samples t-test table (See Table 9). The results for the control group showed that the pretest scores ($M = 65.91$, SD = 3.24) and posttest scores ($M = 65.85$, SD = 3.25), respectively, did not differ in a way that was statistically significant ($t = 0.80$ and $p = 0.52 > 0.05$). Cohen's d was also found to be 0.03, which is a very low value.

The posttest results of the experimental and control groups were compared using an independent sample t-test. A substantial difference between the posttest scores of the experimental group ($M = 85.32$, SD = 2.42) and the control group ($M = 75.82$, SD = 2.42), as shown in Table 10, with a t value of 5.14 and a p-value of 0.00 < 0.05, is evident (two-tailed). Given the size of the mean difference (eta-squared = 0.41), it may be concluded that CLA accounts for 41% of the variance in writing ability. Additionally, Cohen's d comes out to be 1.22, which is high and provides additional evidence of the intervention's effectiveness.

7. Discussion

The results showed that adopting a contrastive lexical approach had a significant positive impact on Saudi EFL learners' writing proficiencies. The implication, as the size effect results showed, was that there was a strong correlation between CLA and writing skill development. This finding is backed by academics who have demonstrated that formulaic language plays a role in fostering writing abilities, particularly those whose research has been done in the context of the Saudi EFL [34]. Furthermore, research showing that L1 writing positively influences L2 writing [32] is quite consistent with the result that CLA improves EFL students' writing competence. Ghaemi and Ziafar [33]'s findings that having less writing fluency in a second language may be attributed to knowing fewer collocations offer more evidence for the relationship the researcher found in this study. It is also supported by Fahd Aljuhaish et al. [18]'s findings, which demonstrate that a lexical approach to teaching SLA can increase students' awareness of lexical chunks,

TABLE 1: Scoring rubric for writing assessment.

Rubric	Pre-college competencies	First-year outcome: beginning competencies	Second-year outcome: developing competencies	Third-year outcome: practicing competencies	Fourth-year outcome: accomplished competencies
Citing sources	External sources are beginning to be used and discussed in the text, even if they are not yet a major part of the paper. If external sources are used, there is an attempt at citation	Any material drawn from a source is documented and cited, although not always correctly. Sources are mostly credible and relevant	Any material drawn from a source is credible and relevant and is properly documented and cited	Any material drawn from a source is properly cited and documented in a format that is appropriate for the particular discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing. Sources are discipline-appropriate	All quoted material is properly cited and documented in a format that is appropriate for the particular discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing. Sources are discipline-appropriate, sufficient, and reflect an understanding of the state of research in the field

*Rubrics have been culled from these sources: America Public University. "Undergraduate Writing Rubric (Lower Level)." Learning Outcomes Assessment. https://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=D4WAX9&sp=yes. America Public University. "Undergraduate Writing Rubric (Upper Level)." Learning Outcomes Assessment. https://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=B4WAXB&sp=yes. Illinois State University. PORTFOLIO GRADING STANDARDS: LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION (ENGLISH 101). http://www.english.ilstu.edu/writingprogram/Grading.PDF. Mankato State University. General Education Goals and Competencies for English. http://english.mnsu.edu/genedgoals.htm. Oregon Department of Education. Official Scoring Guide, Writing. https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/essentialskills/Documents/wriscorguide_info-argu_eng.pdf. Saint Mary's College School of Extended Education. College-Level Writing Rubric. https://www.vuu.edu/Content/Uploads/vuu.edu/files/University%20College/Writing%20Assignment%20Rubric%208%2019%2018.pdf.

TABLE 2: Cohen's kappa coefficient.

Symmetric measures	Value	Asymp. Std.Error[a]	Approx.T^b	Approx.Sig.
Measure of Agreement N of valid cases	0.875 46	0.77	7.798	0.000

[a]. Not assuming the null hypothesis, [b]. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

TABLE 3: Normality of score distribution of pre- and posttests.

Tests	Kolmogorov–Smirnov[a]			Shapiro–Wilk[s]		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.752	45	0.831	0.748	45	0.922
Posttest	0.883	45	0.535	0.849	45	0.531

TABLE 4: Pretest descriptive statistics.

	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE mean
Pretest	Experimental group (EG)	23	61.09	2.44	0.66
	Control group (CG)	23	62.01	1.53	0.46

TABLE 5: T-test for independent samples for the pretest scores of EG and CG.

		t-test for equality of means					95% confidence interval of the difference	
Levene's test for equality of variances		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	Lower	Upper
Average	Equal variances assumed	0.04	45	0.38	0.92	0.07346	0.15595	0.14882
	Equal variances not assumed	0.04	45	0.38	0.92	0.07451	−0.15602	0.15891

noticeably increase the frequency with which they use lexical chunks, and raise their proficiency in English writing.

The study by Jacobs et al. [31], which showed that higher lexical chunk input frequency reduced the negative transfer of the native language in $L2$ writing, can best explain the findings of this research study. This may lead to the more appropriate use of wording collocation, sentence construction, discourse cohesion, and expression. This may be

TABLE 6: Paired Samples *t*-test descriptive results (experimental group).

	Mean	*N*	SD	SE mean
Pair 1				
Pretest. Experimental group	74.01	23	2.712	0.891
Posttest. Experimental group	84.32	23	2.405	0.798

TABLE 7: Paired Samples *t*-test of the experimental group (pretest Vs. posttest).

			Paired differences				
Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% confidence interval of the difference		*t*	df	Sig.
Pretest and posttest		Mean	Lower	Upper			
−10.30	1.423	0 .231	−18.166	−20.265	−73.848	22	.000

TABLE 8: Descriptive results (control group) (CG).

	Mean	*N*	SD	SE mean
Pair 1				
Pretest. Control group	65.91	23	3.24	0.892
Posttest. Control group	65.85	23	3.25	0.898

TABLE 9: Paired samples *t*-test for the control group (pretest Vs. posttest).

			Paired differences				
Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% confidence interval of the difference		T	df	Sig.
Pretest and posttest		Mean	Lower	Upper			
−10.30	1.423	0 .231	−18.166	−20.265	0.80	23	0.52

TABLE 10: Independent samples *t*-test for the experimental and control groups.

	Levene's test for equality of variances		*t-test for equality of means*					95% confidence interval of the difference	
	F	Sig.	*T*	df	Sig.	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	2.93	0.085	0.715	45	0.00	9.50	0.305	−0.382	1.249
Equal variances			0.715	45	0.00	9.50	0.305	−0.382	1.249

connected to the notion that *L*1 and *L*2 processing cannot be separated. However, *L*2 users can utilize their *L*1 to process their *L*2 and have access to their *L*1. This is reinforced by Hoey [40], who, based on his neuroimaging investigations, asserted that collocations in both languages are stored in the same area of the brain, making such access even more conspicuous.

The combined effects of the translation and formulaic techniques, as well as the potential beneficial interaction that these two strategies may have had during the course of the treatment, may be responsible for the significant impact of CLA, as noticed in this study, in addition to the remarkable effect size values. These studies show how important it is to use a contrastive lexical strategy while honing writing skills. Other research seemed to support similar conclusions, giving us the confidence to assert the importance of CLA in enhancing language learners' capacity for completing writing assignments [41]. It may help language learners write more effectively if they have access to premade materials whose meanings and uses have already been clarified through translation. It is possible that translating these fixed frameworks gives EFL students a writing boost and gets them ready to be more impromptu when expressing their ideas in writing. CLA gives EFL learners a foundation to fall back on when it is difficult and time-consuming to begin composing correct sentences because this method of teaching writing has already given students vital knowledge about useful language units to draw from.

Knowing how to employ *L*1 formulaic structure speeds up the *L*2 acquisition of formulaic phrases because the *L*1 acquisition of formulaic expressions is similar to the *L*2 processing of formulaic expressions. This is an example of

the skill transfer that some people think occurs with certain learning abilities, including writing competence, as shown in this study. Writing competency endures drastic changes, just like any other ability, on the part of language learners through continual practice and usage of writing procedures in $L2$ that are similar to those in $L1$, which may increase the likelihood that $L2$ writing will see the same improvement. By using their $L1$ as their already acquired and deeply ingrained pragmatic knowledge, contrastive exercises assist learners in improving their writing by giving them insights into the appropriate use of language. CLA's contrastive nature gives EFL students the option to compare their ability to communicate their ideas and intentions to their established $L1$ competency in conducting identical tasks. If $L2$ context is defined using $L1$, learners may understand $L2$ context more effectively since $L2$ learners naturally comprehend $L1$ descriptions better.

8. Conclusion

It appears that CLA offers excellent potential for language instructors to assist students in developing their writing abilities. It is usually a good idea to expose language learners to the $L2$ formulaic expressions that are equivalent to their $L1$ and vice versa to improve their writing skills. It is advised for language learners to investigate how the collocation systems in the two languages operate so that they can improve their writing abilities in both their $L1$ and $L2$ languages. Because of using contrastive memorization as a learning approach, students are better able to retain the structures and expressions they should write. It is advised to maintain contrastive logs as a reminder of the best ways to represent ideas in writing without spending too much time deliberating and having little chance of choosing the most appropriate words. It is important to note that, despite substantial efforts to do so through CLA activities, language learners still face the challenge of finding it difficult to use formulaic language when putting pen to paper.

The results of this study may dispel whatever prejudice language instructors may have had toward the use of $L1$ in their lessons. CLA may debunk teachers' beliefs that using parallels is ineffective in assisting language learners in becoming competent writers by exposing the inadequacies of EFL learners in good writing. Before rejecting the use of $L1$ terms in writing instruction, language teachers are urged to reconsider. Teachers might use contrastive activities as opportune occasions to start metacognitive discussions about how the two languages function in helping language learners' experience writing. As the key components of efficient higher-order thinking, criticism, and questioning, which teachers should always value and encourage, are facilitated by comparisons and contrasts. As they raise their students' awareness of the presence and significance of such very rigid patterns in writing, teachers can use contrastive evaluations to monitor their students' learning. By using various structures and expressions, this kind of teaching allows students to identify their strengths and limitations when expressing their ideas on paper.

8.1. Study Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions. Despite its widespread use, a fresh approach to teaching that focuses on the differences between $L1$ and $L2$ formulaic utterances has never really been attempted. The infamous effects of the behavioralists' advocated use of $L1$ in $L2$ education may be to blame for this. It is important to note that $L1$ can be viewed as highly beneficial support for teaching and learning $L2$. Using one's $L1$ should not be forbidden if someone does not know the second language form; instead, an effort should be made to create a constructive and advantageous answer.

Some flaws in this study could restrict the applicability of our findings. Initially, it was done with small groups of EFL students (only 46 Saudi learners participated in this study). More volunteers from around the nation should be included in the upcoming studies, it is recommended. In terms of language proficiency, the participants in the current study were pre-intermediate learners; subsequent studies are proposed to include intermediate and advanced learners. Third, while this study was conducted in the setting of the Saudi EFL, similar work may be done in other nations. Fourth, because male students were excluded from this study, the findings might not apply to them. Finally, the treatment's allotted application time was brief.

Some ideas crossed the researchers' minds as they were conducting the current investigation. The first recommendation for future research is to recruit more people to obtain more trustworthy results. The second recommendation is to consider gender, which means including both male and female students in future studies on the same topic. The third recommendation is that future studies be conducted on related subjects in different regions. Finally, comparative contrastive investigations between other pairs are encouraged for future scholars.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of the study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] E. Weigand, "Contrastive lexical semantics," *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, vol. 25, 1998.

[2] C. Schwarze, "Types of lexical variation," *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, vol. 187, 1998.

[3] C. Melloni and F. Masini, *Cognate Constructions in Italian and beyond*, , pp. 220–250, Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today, 2017.

[4] J. Sarumathi, "Develop writing skills in english," *English for Nursing*, vol. 22, pp. 78–98, 2011.

[5] M. Abdi Tabari, "Investigating the interactions between L2 writing processes and products under different task planning time conditions," *Journal of Second Language Writing*, vol. 55, pp. 100871–101145, 2022.

[6] K. Dinesh, "A report on challenges faced by students and research scholars on academic writing skills in the English

language," *Challenges in Academic Writing–A Pragmatic Study*, Royal Book Publishing, Tamilnadu, India, pp. 44–65, 2021.

[7] X. Fontich, J. Van Rijt, and I. Gauvin, "Research on L1 grammar in schooling: mediation at the heart of learning grammar," *L1: Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, vol. 20, pp. 1–13, 2020.

[8] J. A. H. Al-Juraywi, "Pragmatic transfer in advanced Saudi EFL learners' refusals," *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 15, pp. 1–85, 2021.

[9] H. Benali, "Teaching oral and written communication strategies to enhance," *The Spanish EFL learners' fluency and self-confidence*, vol. 3, pp. 51–66, 2013.

[10] P. M. Lin, "Study one: do formulaic sequences align with intonation units?" in *The Prosody of Formulaic Sequences: A Corpus and Discourse Approach*, pp. 65–112, Bloomsbury Academic, London, UK, 2018.

[11] P. Jarvis, Ed., *The Theory and Practice of Teaching*, Routledge, Londan, UK, 2nd edition, 2002.

[12] J. Siegel, "Teaching bottom-up and top-down strategies," *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, vol. 1-7, pp. 1–7, 2018.

[13] U. Gutowska, "Formulacity in ESP teaching: a case of doing a balancing act between form and meaning," *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 89–108, 2017.

[14] A. Wray, "The function of formulaic sequences: a model," in *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, pp. 93–102, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2002.

[15] N. Schmitt and R. Carter, "Formulaic sequences in action," *Language Learning & Language Teaching*, vol. 18, pp. 1–22, 2004.

[16] D. Wood, "Identifying formulaic language — frequency, psychological representation, and judgment," in *Fundamentals of Formulaic Language: An Introduction*, pp. 19–34, Bloomsbury Academic, London, UK, 2015.

[17] S. Samah A Alenezi, "The effects of writing in a class blog on Saudi EFL students' attitudes towards writing in English," *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 2, pp. 329–341, 2022.

[18] S. Fahd Aljuhaish, J. Othman, and F. Senom, "Saudi EFL teachers' identity formation in Saudi schools: a case study," *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 431–445, 2020.

[19] J. Lovestrand, "Lexical-functional grammar," *Barayin Morphosyntax*, pp. 15–59, 2022.

[20] J. O'Brien and K. Jones, "Professional learning or professional development? Or continuing professional learning and development? Changing terminology, policy, and practice," *Professional Development in Education*, vol. 40, no. 5, pp. 683–687, 2014.

[21] K. Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim, Z. S. Mohammad Zaitoun, and B. Ajanil, "Unemployment anxiety in light of the coronavirus 2019 pandemic and its relationship to psychological reassurance among graduate students at prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University," *Educational Research International*, vol. 2022, pp. 1–10, 2022.

[22] C. B. Zimmerman, "Chapter 9. Teachers' perceptions of lexical anomalies: a pilot study," *Directions in Applied Linguistics*, vol. 24, pp. 131–146, 2005.

[23] J. Richards and T. Rodgers, "The nature of approaches and methods in language teaching," in *Approaches And Methods In Language Teaching (Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, pp. 20–43, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2014.

[24] R. Johnston, *Integrating Methodologists into Teams of Substantive Experts*, 2003, PsycEXTRA Dataset.

[25] E. Finch and S. Fafinski, "10. Writing skills," 2017. Legal Skills.

[26] A. Ohlrogge, "Formulaic expressions in intermediate EFL writing assessment," *Typological Studies in Language*, vol. 375, 2009.

[27] L. Murray, "A study in enhancing L2 learners' utility with written academic formulaic sequences," *TESL Canada Journal*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 76–92, 2017.

[28] F. Ebrahimi, E. Namaziandost, M. Ziafar, and P. M. Ibna Seraj, "The effect of teaching formulaic expressions through contrastive lexical approach on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' writing skill," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, vol. 50, no. 5, pp. 1087–1105, 2021.

[29] M. Jones and S. Haywood, "Facilitating the acquisition of formulaic sequences: an exploratory study in an EAP context," in *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition Processing, and Use*, N. Schmitt, Ed., pp. 269–300, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2004.

[30] Q. Zhang and Z. Yu, "Meta-analysis on investigating and comparing the effects on learning achievement and motivation for Gamification and game-based learning," *Educational Research International*, vol. 2022, pp. 1–19, 2022.

[31] H. J. Jacobs, S. Zingraf, D. Wormuth, V. Hartfield, and J. Hughey, *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach*, Newbury House, London, UK, 2003.

[32] E. Namaziandost, L. Neisi, Kheryadi, and M. Nasri, "Enhancing oral proficiency through cooperative learning among intermediate EFL learners: English learning motivation in focus," *Cogent Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 1683933–1684015, 2019.

[33] F. Ghaemi and M. Ziafar, "Contrastive lexical pragmatics as an effective strategy in teaching pragmatics: a review article," *Educational Research and Reviews*, vol. 6, no. 9, pp. 598–604, 2011.

[34] M. A. Al-Dawoody Abdulaal, N. Ramadan Khalil, M. Heji Alenazi, and M. Robso Wodajo, "Dynamic vs nondynamic assessments: impacts on intermediate EFL learners' receptive skills," *Educational Research International*, vol. 2022, pp. 1–12, 2022.

[35] M. Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal, "The effectiveness of gallery run technique on Saudi EFL upper-intermediate students' speaking skill: learners' attitudes in focus," *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 536–550, 2021.

[36] M. A. Abdulaal, "Tracing machine and human translation errors in some literary texts with some implications for EFL translators," *Journal of Language & Linguistics Studies*, vol. 18, pp. 176–191, 2022.

[37] P. Maftoon and M. Ziafar, "A contrastive lexical approach to second language acquisition: a theoretical framework and related techniques," *TESOL Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 57–81, 2014.

[38] A. Marzban and F. E. Jalali, "The interrelationship among L1 writing skills, L2 writing skills, and L2 proficiency of Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 6, no. 7, pp. 1364–1371, 2016.

[39] University of Cambridge, *Local Examinations Syndicate*, Cambridge IELTS 11 general training student's book with answers: Authentic examination papers, Cambridge English, 2016.

[40] M. Hoey, *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language*, Routledge, London, UK, 1st edition, 2005.

[41] Q. Li, "An empirical study on the application of lexical chunk to college English writing," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 682–688, 2014.