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The Impact of Implementing the Lexical Approach on EFL Students' Writing Skills at Salahaddin University-Erbil

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Abstract

The effectiveness of the Lexical Approach in improving the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students at Salahaddin University in Erbil is examined in this study. Based on Lewis's (1993) theory that views language as "grammaticalised lexis," the study investigates whether teaching lexical chunks, collocations, and prefabricated expressions can improve general writing proficiency as well as the fundamental skills of complexity, accuracy, and fluency. With 100 second-year university students, a quasi-experimental design was adopted. The experimental group received lexical exercises aimed at improving CAF by extensive exposure to the Lexical Approach, whereas the control group received instruction using a conventional, non-lexical method. Although both groups improved their writing abilities, the experimental group performed noticeably better than the control group on tests of complexity, syntactic diversity, and the proper use of target lexical pieces in a variety of sentence constructions. Both alternative hypotheses were confirmed and relate to previous studies in similar EFL settings overseas, highlighting the didactic importance of teaching lexical phrases. However, statistical analysis using SPSS clearly showed significant improvements for the experimental group across all aspects of writing and facets of complexity, accuracy, and fluency, with a remarkably higher post-test average variation of 24.32 points between the two clusters ($p < 0.001$). According to the findings, the Lexical Approach is a successful and regionally appropriate method for advancing EFL writing proficiency in Kurdish colleges. Implications include improved student writing, better language learning results, and the possibility of raising the standard of English instruction in Kurdistan. Future research that replicates this work, however, would contribute to further confirming the effectiveness of this strategy in various educational settings.



About the Journal

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1. Introduction

The Lexical Approach - A Naturalistic Approach to Language from a focus on teaching grammatical structures, the Lexical Approach shifts the emphasis to lexical items, with whole chunks of language as the building blocks of language competency. Developed by Michael Lewis in the 1990s, it maintains that 'language is made up of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar' (Lewis, 1993: iv). These lexical bundles such as collocations, idioms, formulas, and semi-fixed phrases act as prefabricated units that allow conversation to flow fluently and coherently. In classroom practice, the approach focuses on lexical competence as a requisite for idiomaticity, cohesion and persuasive cogency. This section presents the historical development, theoretical aspects, empirical support, and English as a foreign language (EFL) pedagogy of the Lexical Approach in learners' writing ability.

2. Historical development

To begin with, Michael Lewis was the main applied linguist behind the Lexical Approach, which started in the 1990s and was considered a paradigm shift away from grammar-centric language instruction (1993: vi, 1997). Lewis maintained that lexical chunks, not syntactic rules, are the fundamental building blocks of linguistic competence and that language is composed of "grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar." The basis for this viewpoint was John Sinclair's (1991) corpus linguistics study, which found that 50-70% of conversation is made up of prefabricated multi-word blocks. This change was further triggered by Dave Willis's COBUILD project (1990), which illustrated the educational benefits of frequency-based lexical syllabi that give precedence to high-utility chunks over discrete grammar points. Later researchers like Harmer (2007) and Thornbury (2006) improved its use in the classroom. Since the approach supported psycholinguistic research on formulaic language storage and retrieval, the method became popular (Wray, 2005).

There are four interrelated categories of lexical chunks:

1. Words: Individual words (such as "analysis").
2. Collocations: Word pairs with a high likelihood (e.g., "conduct research").
3. Fixed Expressions: Phrases that never change, such as "in conclusion"
4. Semi-fixed Expressions: Frameworks such as "The results indicate that _____" that have movable slots (Lewis, 1997).

By facilitating automatic retrieval, these pieces reduce the cognitive load associated with writing, thereby improving fluency and reducing L1 interference (Schmitt, 2000). This is demonstrated by delexicalized verbs (such as "make" and "take"), which derive their meaning from collocates rather than from independent semantics (Lewis, 1993).

The lexical priming theory (Hoey, 2005) describes how mental storage as separate units is facilitated by repeated exposure to chunks. According to corpus studies, formulaic language makes up 50–70% of natural conversation, highlighting its importance in skilled writing (Wray, 2005). This supports Sinclair's (1991) "idiom principle," which holds that language users do not create utterances syntactically from scratch, but rather rely on preassembled pieces.

Lewis (1997) suggested chunk acquisition-focused teaching methods:

Strategies in the Classroom

- Noticing Activities: Using concordance analysis or highlighting, students locate passages in real texts (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009).
- Input Flood: Students are exposed to recurring patterns through extensive reading and listening (Krashen, 1982).
- Chunk recycling refers to structured repetition in activities such as sentence-anagram or retelling

(Lewis, 1997).

-Non-linear Recording: Traditional word lists are replaced with lexical notebooks that use mind maps or collocation grids (Lewis, 1993).

3. Writing Proficiency in Learning a Second Language

Writing skills: Texts created in a non-native language, frequently while the writer is still learning it, are referred to as second language (L2) writing. Navigating linguistic, cognitive, and societal obstacles is part of this process. These obstacles include: A-Cross-linguistic interference: L1 syntactic patterns affecting L2 output. B-Rhetorical differences: Language-specific genre conventions differ. In addition, the cognitive load as another language obstacle, is known as managing accuracy, structure, and content all at once. As stated by Hyland (2019), L2 writing is a complicated interplay of identity, context, and disciplinary knowledge rather than just a talent.

4. The Problem

Although international movements towards communicative language education have been increasing, Kurdish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) university students still struggle greatly to build satisfactory writing skills. In a globalized environment, Continuous inequalities in writing skills restrict future possibilities and hinder academic progress. Fundamental language differences between Kurdish and English, traditional teaching methods that prioritize rote memorization over communicative skills, and resource constraints like large-sized classrooms, outdated materials, and poor facilities all contribute to these difficulties. Furthermore, students are ill-prepared for academic writing assignments since writing education frequently uses expository approaches with minimal emphasis on organized practice, structured practice, or error analysis (Abdulrahman, 2012; Mahmood, 2016; Omar & Hakeem, 2022; Ameen & Muhammad, 2023).

On top of that, the Lexical Approach, which was introduced by Michael Lewis in 1993, emphasizes teaching language through meaningful lexical chunks rather than isolated words or grammar rules. While research in various EFL contexts has shown that this approach can improve vocabulary acquisition, language fluency, and overall competence, its specific impact on Kurdish EFL students' writing skills remains uninvestigated. Due to the unique linguistic and educational challenges faced by Kurdish learners, there is a pressing need to investigate whether the Lexical Approach can effectively enhance their writing proficiency and address the persistent gaps in their academic performance. This study aims to fill this research gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the Lexical Approach in improving the writing skills of Kurdish EFL university students. Based on the problems stated above, the current study aims to answer the following questions:

1-To what extent does the Lexical Approach improve the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students compared to traditional teaching methods?

2-To what extent does the Lexical approach improve the complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) as Kurdish EFL students' writing proficiency indicators?

5. Aim and Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value both academically and practically within the field of EFL pedagogy, especially in the Kurdish context. It addresses a notable research gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the Lexical Approach in improving writing skills and vocabulary acquisition among Kurdish EFL learners. The research was conducted by employing a mixed-methods design; the study combines quantitative assessments with qualitative insights into students' perceptions, offering a comprehensive evaluation of the approach's efficacy and serving as a methodological model for future research.

Consequently, the findings will shed light on the specific linguistic challenges Kurdish learners face and the educational practices implemented in the region, contributing to broader discussions on language teaching in diverse settings. In practice, the study will equip EFL instructors with valuable strategies to enhance writing proficiency and vocabulary development by adapting their teaching

methods based on the strengths and challenges of the Lexical Approach.

What's more, the research offers guidance for curriculum developers and policymakers by highlighting the benefits of integrating the Lexical Approach into EFL programs tailored to Kurdish learners' needs, potentially leading to improved academic outcomes. It aims to boost students' language fluency and natural language use, thereby expanding their academic and professional opportunities in a globalized world.

The present study aims at:

- 1- Investigating the extent to which the Lexical approach improves the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students compared to traditional teaching methods.
- 2- Scrutinizing the efficacy of the Lexical Approach in improving the complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) as writing proficiency indicators of Kurdish EFL students.

6. Study Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that:

- H1: The Lexical Approach significantly improves the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students compared to traditional teaching methods with a mean score difference between the pre-test and post-test at the level of [α 0.05].
- H0: The Lexical Approach does not significantly improve the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students compared to traditional teaching methods and there is no mean score difference between the pre-test and post-test at the level of [α 0.05].

-H1: The Lexical Approach significantly improves the (CAF) writing proficiency indicators of Kurdish EFL students with a mean score difference between the independent groups in post-test at the level of [α 0.05].

-H0: The Lexical Approach does not significantly improve the (CAF) writing proficiency indicators of Kurdish EFL students and there is no mean score difference between the independent groups in post-test at the level of [α 0.05].

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design: This study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of the Lexical Approach on the writing skills of Kurdish EFL university students. In line with recent applied linguistics and EFL studies, the present study adopted a pre-existing, intact classes as it was not feasible to rearrange them into new groups because of the existing curricular constraints (Derseh, 2020). Prior to data collection, all potential participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study, as well as their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Those who indicated their readiness to participate were then invited to sign a written informed consent form. Only participants who provided written informed consent were included in the study, and their anonymity and confidentiality were assured throughout the research process.

For the purposes of this study, the main writing test was developed by adapting tasks and model paragraphs from Oshima and Hogue's (2014) writing textbook which is widely used for teaching academic paragraph and essay writing in EFL contexts. The selected tasks were modified to correspond to the participants' proficiency level and to reflect the specific writing subskills targeted in the intervention. Students' written paragraphs were evaluated using the scoring rubric provided in the same textbook, which assesses key dimensions of effective paragraph writing, including unity, coherence, organization, content, and language use. Employing this established rubric helped to ensure consistency, transparency, and reliability in the assessment of writing performance across all participants. In addition to rubric-based scoring, the written data were further analyzed according to the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) framework proposed by Larsen-Freeman (2006), to provide a more detailed and multidimensional assessment of the participants' writing

performance.

7.2 Participants: A total of 100 Second-year students from the College of Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil were recruited during the second semester in 2024-2025 academic year. Their mean age was (19.81) as shown in Table 1, and their gender comprised 27 males versus 73 females as shown in Table 2. They were randomly assigned to two homogenous groups, namely, the experimental group comprising 50 students and the control group as of 50 students. Instructional materials included the textbook by Oshima and Hogue's paragraphs to essays (3rd edition) as the core course's writing module. Teaching instruction was based on the principles of the Lexical Approach, emphasizing the use of lexical chunks, collocations, and formulaic language in writing tasks for the experimental group. The Control group, however, received traditional writing instruction without explicit focus on the lexical approach principles.

Age Descriptive Statistics

Table (1)

Age		
N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		19.81
Minimum		19
Maximum		23

Gender Frequency Table (2)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	27	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Female	73	73.0	73.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

7.3 The Procedures: The data collection tools were checked for validity by 12 jury members across different universities in the Kurdistan region. The main writing test along with the evaluation rubric were proven to be valid and all jury members accepted the tools without changes. Then, the main writing test was piloted by the researcher (who was also the course instructor) before the start date of the second semester of 2024-2025 with (30) cases in the control group. Pre and post tests were conducted and there was only a 15 days' difference between the tests. Then, their scores were checked and analyzed using SPSS version 25. The Cronbach alpha showed (.836) which is a reliable score as illustrated in the table that follows.

Writing Test Reliability

Statistics Table (3)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.836	2

Every participant took a writing pretest at the beginning of the semester. After that, the experimental group was taught using the Lexical Approach, while the control group was taught using the regular curriculum. In order to compare results between groups, two raters used Larsen-Freeman's (2006) CAF framework and Oshima and Hogue's (2014) rubric to evaluate writing on a posttest given at the conclusion of the semester.

8. Results

The findings of an independent samples t-test carried out in SPSS are displayed in this section. The writing skills include mechanics, content, organization, and grammar which are based on Oshima and Hogue's (2014) evaluation rubric. To ascertain if there is a statistically significant difference between two independent groups, the means of the groups are compared using this statistical test. The Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test, a non-parametric technique appropriate for assessing differences between two independent groups in situations where the data might not be normally distributed, was also used in the analysis.

For the present study, decisions regarding the use of parametric or non-parametric procedures were based on the distributional properties of each writing-related variable and the equality of variances across the control and experimental groups. As shown in appendix A, tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) indicated that the post-test total writing scores (Writing-Post) did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution in either group ($p \geq .05$), whereas the pre-test total scores (Writing-Pre) and all analytic post-test indicators (Mechanics-Post, Content-Post, Organization-Post, Grammar-Post) showed significant departures from normality ($p < .05$). Levene's test for homogeneity of variance showed that variances were equal between groups for Writing-Post, Content-Post, Organization-Post, and Grammar-Post ($p \geq .05$), but not for Writing-Pre and Mechanics-Post, where the test was significant ($p < .05$).

Given that parametric tests assume approximately normally distributed data, equality of variances, and interval-level measurement, only the Writing-Post variable was judged to satisfy the requirements for parametric analysis; accordingly, independent-samples t-test was applied to compare post-test overall writing performance across groups. In contrast, the clear non-normality observed in Writing-Pre, Mechanics-Post, Content-Post, Organization-Post, and Grammar-Post led to the adoption of non-parametric alternatives (e.g. Mann-Whitney U), which do not require normality and are recommended when distributional assumptions of t-tests are violated despite relatively large sample sizes. This analytic strategy ensured that the inferential tests applied to each indicator of the writing skills test were consistent with the empirical characteristics of the data and with standard guidance on the choice between parametric and non-parametric methods.

A series of preliminary tests was conducted to determine the appropriate inferential procedures for the CAF measures. As presented in appendix B, tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) indicated substantial deviations from the normal distribution for mean length of T-unit (MLT), number of clauses, type-token ratio (TTR), error-free T-units, and total T-units in at least one of the groups ($p < .05$), and Levene's test showed additional violations of the homogeneity-of-variance assumption, particularly for TTR, error-free T-units, and T-units ($p < .05$). In light of these departures from the parametric assumptions, these five indicators were analyzed using non-parametric procedures (Mann-Whitney U tests) to compare the control and experimental groups.

By contrast, the distributions of total errors and total number of words did not show problematic deviations from normality in either group ($p \geq .05$), and Levene's test suggested acceptable homogeneity of variance for these two variables. Consequently, total errors and total words were treated as meeting the core assumptions for parametric analysis, and independent-samples t-test was employed to examine group differences on these measures. This mixed approach ensured that each CAF indicator was analyzed with a method consistent with its empirical distribution and variance characteristics while preserving statistical power where parametric assumptions were adequately satisfied.

The descriptive statistics for the writing post-test outcomes for the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) are shown in Table 4. The experimental group ($N = 50$) scored a significantly higher mean score of 80.02 ($SD = 6.258$) than the control group ($N = 50$), which received a mean

score of 55.70 (SD = 6.316). Comparable within-group variance is shown by the proximity of the standard deviations between the two groups, indicating that the instructional intervention rather than an uneven score distribution is more likely to be the cause of the performance gap.

Table (4) Group Statistics in Writing Post-Test

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WritingPost	CG	50	55.70	6.316	.893
	EG	50	80.02	6.258	.885

The findings of the independent-samples t-test used to assess if the observed mean difference between the two groups was statistically significant are shown in Table 5. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied as Levene's Test for Equality of Variances ($F = 0.061$, $p = 0.805$) was not significant. As a result, the t-test findings' "equal variances assumed" row is deemed suitable for interpretation.

A statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups was found using the t-test ($t(98) = -19.342$, $p < .001$). The control group's mean was significantly lower than the experimental group's, as indicated by the negative sign of the mean difference between the groups, which was -24.320 . The robustness of this difference is further supported by the fact that the 95% CI for it ($[-26.815, -21.825]$) does not pass zero.

Table (5) Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	T	df
WritingPost	Equal variances assumed	.061	.805	-19.342-	98
	Equal variances not assumed			-19.342-	97.992

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
WritingPost	Equal variances assumed	.000	-24.320-	1.257
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	-24.320-	1.257

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper
WritingPost	Equal variances assumed	-26.815-	-21.825-
	Equal variances not assumed	-26.815-	-21.825-

With reference to the statistical significance presented, the findings support the alternative hypothesis that there is a substantial difference between the two groups' "Writing Post" scores, and they offer compelling evidence against the null hypothesis of equal means. This confirms that the difference is not due to chance, and the EG performed significantly better than the control group on the writing test. Regarding Effect Size: In addition to statistical significance, the big absolute value of the mean difference indicates a significant practical difference between the groups.

Table (6) Writing Skills Non-Parametric Tests

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of WritingPre is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of MechanicsPost is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of ContentPost is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of OrganizationPost is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of GrammarPost is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The Mann-Whitney independent samples U test was employed. Every p-value is below the 0.05 cutoff, suggesting that there is statistically significant variation in the distributions of every variable among the group categories. The noteworthy findings imply that systematic disparities in performance or scores on each of the five variables under study are linked to group membership. This illustrates the effect of the teaching strategy or the intervention. That is, the experimental group outperformed the control group in their writing skills after the post-test. The categories include mechanics, content, organization, and grammar as skills of the academic writing as shown in Table 6.

With regard to Larsen and Freeman's (2006) CAF measurement that addresses complexity, accuracy, and fluency indicators, non-parametric and parametric tests were employed.

The variables include:

- MLT: Mean Length of T-unit (average number of words per T-unit)
- Clauses: Number of clauses per sample
- TTR: Type-Token Ratio (a measure of lexical diversity)
- Error Free: Number of error-free units
- Errors: Number of errors
- Total Words: Total words produced
- T Units: Number of T-units (minimal terminable units in syntax)

Table (7) CAF Non-Parametric Tests

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of MLT is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Clauses is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.010	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of TTR is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of ErrorFree is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of TUnits is the same across categories of Group.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

The null hypothesis, which states that the distributions of the five variables (MLT, Clauses, TTR, Error Free, and T Units) are the same for each group, is rejected. For every test, the stated significance levels (p-values) fall below the standard cutoff point of 0.05. This implies that there are notable differences in the language traits assessed between the research groups. Mann-Whitney independent samples U test was used for the non-normal data distributions in linguistic measures mentioned as presented in Table 7.

Variations in MLT (Mean Length of T-unit) indicate variations in fluency or syntactic complexity. Speaking of clauses and units, variations in these metrics might be a reflection of differences in subordination, sentence structure, or language production in general. Lexical variety is reflected in the Type-Token Ratio (TTR); group differences may represent differences in vocabulary usage. Regarding the Error Free indicator, a noteworthy disparity indicates that grammatical correctness differs throughout groups.

As for the parametric data, an independent samples t-test was applied. This included variables as errors and total words.

Table (8) Independent Samples Test

t-test for Equality of Means

		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Errors	Equal variances assumed	.000	3.6940	.4124
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	3.6940	.4124
TotalWords	Equal variances assumed	.000	-130.780-	7.951
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	-130.780-	7.951

Table (9) Independent Samples Test

t-test for Equality of Means

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

		Lower	Upper
Errors	Equal variances assumed	2.8755	4.5125
	Equal variances not assumed	2.8752	4.5128
TotalWords	Equal variances assumed	-146.559-	-115.001-
	Equal variances not assumed	-146.592-	-114.968-

The findings of the independent samples t-test are shown in Tables 8 and 9, which compare the post-test writing performance of the experimental group (EG), which was instructed using the Lexical Approach, with the control group (CG), which was instructed using the conventional technique. The CAF framework was used to analyze the writing. There are two primary indications

displayed: Total Words (a measure of fluency) and Errors (a measure of accuracy).

Accuracy (errors): The findings show that the two groups differed statistically significantly ($p = .000 < .05$).

Students in the experimental group made considerably fewer mistakes than those in the control group, according to the mean difference (EG – CG) of 3.694. It can be 95% certain that the actual difference in error reduction between the two groups is within the 95% Confidence Interval (CI) of the difference, which spans from 2.875 to 4.512. The statistical significance is confirmed because the CI does not pass zero.

Fluency (Word count): Additionally, the overall quantity of words produced differs statistically significantly ($p = .000 < .05$). The experimental group generated approximately 131 words more than the control group on average, as indicated by the mean difference of -130.780. The Dependability is confirmed by the 95% CI for the difference, which is [-146.592, -114.968], which once more does not pass zero.

9. Discussion

The proposed hypotheses established in the study received good experimental support from the obtained findings. In contrast to conventional teaching techniques, the Lexical Approach considerably enhances Kurdish EFL students' general writing abilities, according to the first hypothesis, which was validated. Obtaining a very significant p-value ($p = .000$) showing a strong instructional impact, students in the Experimental Group (EG) attained considerably higher post-test writing scores ($M = 80.02$) than those in the Control Group (CG) ($M = 55.70$). This finding is congruent with previous research showing significant improvements in writing proficiency through lexical teaching, including Momeni and Ahmadian (2022), Mohammed (2020), and Kazemi et al. (2014).

As for the second hypothesis, evidence-based support was also found, which proposed that the Lexical Approach considerably enhances writing skill metrics related to complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). The participants from EG demonstrated improved grammatical correctness (more error-free clauses and fewer overall mistakes), increased syntactic complexity (higher mean length of T-units and greater clause density), and increased fluency (higher total word count and more T-units). These results are consistent with those of Larsen-Freeman (2006) and Wray (2005), who highlighted the function of lexical chunks in reducing the demands on cognitive processing and promoting the creation of more complex, correct, and fluent language.

Likewise, the findings align with those of Abdul Qader (2016) and Zhao (2009), who discovered that formulaic language training produced writing output that was more coherent and idiomatic. Thus, the current study supports the broader incorporation of the Lexical Approach into writing curricula in comparable EFL contexts by confirming its pedagogical effectiveness in improving both general and componential writing competency among Kurdish EFL learners.

The findings of the present study provide further insight into the research questions by clarifying how and why the Lexical Approach contributed to measurable improvements in Kurdish EFL students' writing performance. Beyond confirming statistical significance, the results highlight the pedagogical mechanisms through which lexical instruction facilitates development in both overall writing quality and CAF dimensions.

With regard to the first research question, the substantial difference in post-test writing scores between the experimental and control groups indicates that instruction centered on lexical chunks and collocations leads to more effective written production than traditional grammar-oriented teaching. This improvement can be attributed to the availability of ready-made lexical patterns that enable learners to express ideas more clearly and coherently without excessive reliance on rule-based sentence construction. In contexts such as Kurdish EFL classrooms, where learners often

struggle to organize ideas while simultaneously attending to linguistic accuracy, the Lexical Approach appears to reduce the cognitive burden associated with writing. As a result, learners are better able to focus on content development and textual organization, which are essential components of academic writing.

This interpretation is consistent with previous studies conducted in comparable EFL settings. Research by Kazemi et al. (2014), Mohammed (2020), and Momeni and Ahmadian (2022) similarly demonstrated that learners exposed to lexical instruction produced texts that were more coherent and contextually appropriate than those produced under conventional instruction. The present study extends these findings by providing evidence from the Kurdish higher education context, where empirical research on lexical-based writing instruction remains limited.

In relation to the second research question, the findings reveal that the Lexical Approach positively affected complexity, accuracy, and fluency simultaneously. The experimental group's higher mean length of T-units and increased clause density suggest that lexical chunks functioned as structural scaffolds, allowing learners to construct longer and more syntactically complex sentences. This supports Larsen-Freeman's (2006) view that linguistic complexity emerges when learners gain access to stable linguistic resources that support expansion rather than fragmentation of language output.

Improvements in accuracy, reflected in fewer errors and a higher number of error-free units, further indicate that formulaic language contributes to grammatical control. Because many lexical chunks are stored and retrieved as unanalyzed wholes, their use reduces the likelihood of morpho-syntactic errors during production (Wray, 2005). This finding aligns with Zhao (2009) and Abdul Qader (2016), who reported that learners trained in lexical chunks demonstrated more accurate and idiomatic written language.

Fluency gains, evidenced by a significantly higher word count in the experimental group, suggest that lexical instruction enhances writing speed and productivity. The availability of pre-assembled phrases appears to facilitate faster text generation, enabling learners to write more within the same time constraints. This outcome supports the view that fluency in L2 writing is closely linked to automatized lexical access rather than to grammatical knowledge alone (Skehan, 1998).

The concurrent development of complexity, accuracy, and fluency challenges the assumption that gains in one area necessarily come at the expense of others. Instead, the findings support an integrated view of language development, in which lexical competence serves as a foundation for balanced growth across CAF dimensions. This is particularly relevant for Kurdish EFL learners, whose difficulties with collocation, idiomaticity, and syntactic structuring often stem from negative L1 transfer and limited exposure to authentic academic language patterns.

Overall, the extended findings reinforce the theoretical claims of the Lexical Approach by demonstrating that lexis plays a central role in writing development. The study contributes context-specific evidence to applied linguistics research and supports the integration of lexical instruction into EFL writing curricula in Kurdish higher education.

10. Conclusions

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Lexical Approach in enhancing the writing skills of Kurdish EFL students at Salahaddin University–Erbil. The main aim was to determine whether an intervention based on lexical chunks, collocations, and formulaic sequences could improve both general writing performance, including content, organization, mechanics, and grammar, and the specific dimensions of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). The study involved an experimental group taught using the Lexical Approach and a control group receiving traditional

instruction. This was done through implementing a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-tests. The results revealed statistically significant improvements in the experimental group's writing scores and CAF indicators, confirming both research hypotheses. The experimental group not only achieved higher overall post-test scores but also demonstrated greater syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, grammatical accuracy, and fluency compared to the control group.

Finally, these findings align with the existing literature such as studies by Mohammed (2020), Kazemi et al. (2014), and Momeni and Ahmadian (2022). Also, the current study supports theoretical claims that lexical chunk instruction reduces cognitive load and enhances natural language production (Lewis, 1993; Wray, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2006). Beyond experimental verification, the study contributes to the limited body of research on Kurdish EFL learners by providing context-sensitive evidence that supports the integration of the Lexical Approach in academic writing curricula. It highlights the pedagogical value of formulaic language instruction and the teaching of pre-fabricated expressions in contexts where grammar-based teaching remains dominant and where learners struggle with fluency and coherence in writing. Overall, this research demonstrates that the Lexical Approach is not only an effective tool for improving EFL writing proficiency but also a pedagogically sound and contextually relevant strategy for curriculum innovation in the Kurdish higher education system.

11. Instructional Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following pedagogical implications are proposed. To help students write more fluently, coherently, and idiomatically, EFL writing curricula should explicitly teach lexical chunks, collocations, and fixed/semi-fixed phrases. In order to help students, develop lexical awareness and noticing, teachers should employ authentic, high-frequency lexical chunks from academic texts or learner corpora. To promote automatic recall and internalization of phrases, writing exercises including sentence completion, chunk transformation, and guided writing with lexical frames should be included. Teachers should align their writing objectives with the CAF model by targeting complexity (via sentence frames), accuracy (via correct collocation use), and fluency (via retrieval practice of chunks). Pre-service and in-service teacher training should include modules on the Lexical Approach, equipping teachers with the theoretical knowledge and practical techniques to apply chunk-based teaching.

Furthermore, Curriculum designers should revise EFL writing textbooks and syllabi to reflect a shift from purely grammar-focused instruction to a more balanced approach that includes lexis as a central component. Students should be encouraged to maintain lexical notebooks or chunk journals to systematically collect and organize useful expressions, which reinforces learner autonomy and lexical recycling. Since different writing genres require different phraseological patterns, genre-based chunk instruction should be introduced to help students adapt their language to context and purpose. Lexical learning requires repeated exposure and use; teachers should design activities that promote recycling of chunks across tasks, units, and skill areas (e.g., speaking and writing). Lastly, teaching should include a contrastive analysis of Kurdish and English lexical patterns to prevent negative transfer and promote idiomatic English usage.

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Appendix A

Writing Skills' Tests of Normality

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
WritingPre	CG	.177	50	.000	.934	50	.008
	EG	.172	50	.001	.947	50	.026
WritingPost	CG	.108	50	.198	.970	50	.240
	EG	.133	50	.026	.976	50	.383
MechanicsPost	CG	.214	50	.000	.859	50	.000
	EG	.363	50	.000	.723	50	.000
ContentPost	CG	.197	50	.000	.897	50	.000
	EG	.161	50	.002	.942	50	.017
OrganizationPost	CG	.187	50	.000	.918	50	.002
	EG	.196	50	.000	.897	50	.000
GrammarPost	CG	.206	50	.000	.926	50	.004
	EG	.180	50	.000	.947	50	.025

Appendix B

CAF Measures' Tests of Normality

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
MLT	CG	.096	50	.200*	.973	50	.300
	EG	.193	50	.000	.846	50	.000
Clauses	CG	.160	50	.003	.755	50	.000
	EG	.163	50	.002	.912	50	.001
TTR	CG	.154	50	.004	.889	50	.000
	EG	.159	50	.003	.944	50	.019
ErrorFree	CG	.167	50	.001	.882	50	.000
	EG	.095	50	.200*	.951	50	.036
Errors	CG	.064	50	.200*	.984	50	.729

	EG	.101	50	.200*	.979	50	.515
TotalWords	CG	.118	50	.080	.984	50	.724
	EG	.090	50	.200*	.972	50	.277
TUnits	CG	.166	50	.001	.946	50	.023
	EG	.211	50	.000	.939	50	.012

کاریگری جیبه جیکردنی ریازی واژهی له سه کارامیی نووسینی قوتاییانی ئینگیزی وهک زمانی بیانی له زانکوی سه لاهه دین - هه ولیر

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پوخته

له م توژیینه وهیه دا کاریگری ریازی واژهی له باشترکردنی کارامیی نووسینی قوتاییانی کورد له زانکوی سه لاهه دین له هه ولیر که ئینگیزی وهک زمانی بیانی فیرده بن، لیکولینه وهی لیکراوه. به پشتبهستن به تیوری لیویس (۱۹۹۲) که زمان وهک "واژهیهکی ری زمانی" ده بیانیته، ئەم توژیینه وهیه لیکولینه وه دهکات که ئایا فیرکردنی پارچه واژهی، هاوریکه ری واژهکان، و ده برینه ئاماده کراوهکان ده توانیت کارامیی گشتی نووسین و کارامیی بنه رتهیهکانی ئالۆزی، وردی، و پهوانی باشتر بکات. به به کارهینانی نه خسهیهکی نیمه ئەزمونی له گه ل ۱۰۰ قوتایی سالی دووه می زانکۆ. گروپی ئەزمونی راهینانی واژهی وهرگرت که مه بهست لپی باشترکردنی لایه نهکانی ئالۆزی، وردی، و پهوانی بوو له ریگه ی به روه و بوونه وهیهکی فراوان له گه ل ریازی واژهی، له کاتیکدا گروپی کونترۆل فیرکردنیکی به ریازیکی ئاسایی و نا-واژهی وهرگرت. ئەگه رچی هه ردوو گروپ کارامیی نووسینه که یان باشتر کرد، گروپی ئەزمونی به شینوهیهکی دیار له گروپی کونترۆل باشتر بوو له تاقیکردنه وهکانی ئالۆزی، جۆراوجۆری رسته سازی، و به کارهینانی دروستی پارچه واژه ئامانجارهکان له جۆراوجۆری دروستکردنی رستهکاندا. هه ردوو فه رزیه ی جیگری پشتراستکرانه وه و په یوه ندیان هیه به توژیینه وه پینشووهکان له رووبه ری ئینگیزی وهک زمانی بیانی هاشینوهه دا له ده روه ی ولات، که گرنگی په روه ده ی فیرکردنی ده برینه واژهیهکان ده رده خه ن. به لام، شیکردنه وه ی ئاماری به به کارهینانی گورزه ی ئاماری بو زانسته کومه لایه تیهکان به روونی باشبوونیکه به رچاوی نیشاندا بو گروپی ئەزمونی له هه موو رووهکانی نووسین و لایه نهکانی ئالۆزی، وردی، و پهوانی، له گه ل جیاوازییهکی تیکرای دوا تاقیکردنه وه ی سه رسورهینه ر که ۲۴.۳۲ خال بوو له نیوان دوو کومه له که دا ($p < 0.001$). به پینی ئەنجامهکان، ریازی واژهی ریگهیهکی سه رکه وتوو و نیوخوی گونجاوه بو پینخشستی کارامیی نووسینی ئینگیزی وهک زمانی بیانی له زانکۆکانی کوردستان. لیکدانه وهکان بریتین له باشترکردنی نووسینی قوتاییانی، باشترکردنی ئەنجامی فیربوونی زمان، و ئەگه ری به رزکردنه وه ی پیوه ری فیرکردنی ئینگیزی له کوردستان. توژیینه وه ی داهاتوو که ئەم کاره دووباره دهکاته وه، به لام، یارمه تی بو پشتراستکردنه وه ی زیاتری کاریگری ئەم ستراتژییه یه له چه ندین رووبه ری په روه ده ییدا ددهات.

وشه سه رهکیهکان: کارامیی نووسین، ئالۆزی، وردی، و پهوانی، ریازی واژهی، پارچه واژهیهکان.

تأثیر تطبیق المنهج المعجمي على مهارات الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في جامعة صلاح الدين - أربيل

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المخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في فعالية المنهج المعجمي في تحسين مهارات الكتابة لدى طلاب الأكراد الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة صلاح الدين في أربيل. استناداً إلى نظرية لويس (١٩٩٣) التي تنظر إلى اللغة على أنها "معجم نحوي"، تتحرى الدراسة ما إذا كان تدريس الوحدات المعجمية والتراكيب والتعبيرات الجاهزة يمكن أن يحسن الكفاءة العامة للكتابة بالإضافة إلى المهارات الأساسية للتعقيد والدقة والطلاقة. تم اعتماد تصميم شبه تجريبي مع ١٠٠ طالب من طلاب السنة الثانية الجامعية. تلقت المجموعة التجريبية تمارين معجمية تهدف إلى تحسين التعقيد والدقة والطلاقة من خلال التعرض المكثف للمنهج المعجمي، في حين تلقت المجموعة الضابطة تعليماً باستخدام طريقة تقليدية غير معجمية. على الرغم من أن كلا المجموعتين حسنتا قدرتهما في الكتابة، إلا أن المجموعة التجريبية أدت بشكل ملحوظ أفضل من المجموعة الضابطة في اختبارات التعقيد والتنوع النحوي والاستخدام الصحيح للقطع المعجمية المستهدفة في تشكيلات جمالية متنوعة. تم تأكيد كلا الفرضيتين البديلتين وهما مرتبطتان بالدراسات السابقة في بيئات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مشابهة في الخارج، مما يبرز الأهمية التعليمية لتدريس العبارات المعجمية. ومع ذلك، أظهر التحليل الإحصائي باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية بوضوح تحسينات كبيرة للمجموعة التجريبية عبر جميع جوانب الكتابة وأبعاد التعقيد والدقة والطلاقة، مع تباين متوسط ملحوظ في الاختبار البعدي قدره ٢٤.٣٢ نقطة بين المجموعتين ($p < 0.001$). وفقاً للنتائج، فإن المنهج المعجمي هو طريقة ناجحة ومناسبة محلياً لتطوير كفاءة كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الكليات الكردية. تشمل الآثار تحسين كتابة الطلاب، وتحسين نتائج تعلم اللغة، وإمكانية رفع معيار تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في كردستان. البحث المستقبلي الذي يكرر هذا العمل، مع ذلك، سيساهم في المزيد من تأكيد فعالية هذه الاستراتيجية في مجموعة متنوعة من البيئات التعليمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارات الكتابة، التعقيد والدقة والطلاقة < المنهج المعجمي، الوحدات المعجمية