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EAP *focus on form*, Lexical Phrases for Writing: Implications of Gains from Explicit Teaching Methodology over the Input Enhancement Pedagogy of Implicit Teaching

Kristie Sage

Abstract

When the functions of lexical phrases are taught and framed within the discourse of EAP writing, learners acquire pragmatic competence. This pilot study sought to ascertain whether the instructional methodology of implicit or explicit teaching approaches better facilitated the acquisition of EAP lexical phrases in SLA learner writing. *Focus on form* was the dominant SLA theoretical rationale introduced to underscore *noticing* and input enhancement. The research design targeted EAP students at a Japanese university. The exogenous motivation for the study was to improve the SLA of EAP writing with respect to lexical phrases. The statistical models of ANOVA and *t*-tests were used to ascertain learner gains, and a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test were used to capture the effects of the instructional treatment. The statistical models showed positive effect for learner gains and these were maintained more significantly for classroom explicit instructional approaches than implicit. In short, for the pedagogical development of SLA learners' EAP writing, a *focus on form* instructional method is advocated. By inputting lexical phrases into learners' early SLA, the manipulation on retrieval of output is facilitated at a later stage of their language development. In addition, targeting the EAP writing *form* of lexical phrases is pertinent due to global tests of EAP language proficiency holding a gatekeeping function for learners' personal advancement.

Key words: EAP writing, lexical phrases, pragmatic competence, *focus on form*, *noticing*, SLA, implicit, explicit, input enhancement, learner gains, output

Introduction

Lexical phrases are comprised of two or more words. For the discourse of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), writing, they can act as building blocks. Later in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) learner's development, EAP writing, lexical phrases can be drawn upon to improve their EAP writing skills. In addition, lexical phrases in EAP writing function in order for a learner to acquire pragmatic competence. Research into this area of applied linguistics in the SLA field was motivated by the observed high frequency of conjunctions in sentence first position in EAP writing at one Japanese university. That is, the proliferation of *Also*, *Like*, *Because*, *But* and *And* warrants investigation into effective

classroom teaching methodology which could serve to placate this phenomenon. In preference, EAP written lexical phrases, including: *In addition to*, *For instance*, *Due to this*, *Despite this*, and *In consequence* are considered optimal. To substantiate this claim, this paper will present the theoretical rationale and present the findings of the first stage of what is a larger research project. Moreover, although this paper seeks to quantifiably demonstrate this claim's validity from input and output perspectives; it is important to note that output will not be statistically analysed in this paper. For the first stage of this research project, this paper will present quantitative data which has been restricted to the exploration of implicit and explicit instructional classroom pedagogy in terms of the input enhancement for EAP written lexical phrases. In consequence, the theoretical rationale of this paper will orient towards input enhancement and present issues that impede the gathering of statistically quantifiable data in linguistic performance of EAP lexical phrases, for writing, that is, output.

Beginning with the theoretical rationale, at first, Schmidt's (1990) *Noticing Hypothesis* with respect to input enhancement will be outlined. For the most part, Schmidt (1994) explains that in language learning, when a *form* is paid attention to or noticed, it is consciously experienced. From such a stimulus event, the SLA learner develops *conscious awareness*, and the *form* is subsequently stored in a learner's long term memory. Thus giving rise to the introduction of Long's (1998) notion of *focus on form*. This is due to this researcher's pedagogical approach, which indicates that *noticing* is essential to register targeted language, in other words, *focus on form*. That is, *form*s are stored in the memory, despite the fact that a learner may not understand their meaning or function, they are retrieved as output in subsequent language developmental stages. These can be revealed for instance when a communication problem arises since it triggers to a learner that they have partially understood either the meaning or the function of the new *form* in earlier stages of attending to input. Moreover, this is an optimal condition in learners' control over their means of production. Izumi's (2002) study considered a clear account of this process. Izumi's (2002) study is a complex research design which accounts for input enhancement through *noticing*, and presents statistical analysis of quantifiable output data. In this study, it is introduced as a goal for future stages of this paper's researcher's larger research design. Therefore, statistical analysis of EAP writing, lexical phrase data will not be included in this paper.

However, since this paper will preface input enhancement, White's (1998) study will be presented. This researcher found that acquisition might be sped up by using typographical enhancement – such as highlighting, circling, or underling. On the other hand, the research also revealed that a purely implicit *focus on form* may not be adequate enough for SLA leaners. Yet, on comparison with L1 learners, explicit instruction was deemed to be more effective for the aforementioned. This is further supported by reference to Ellis (2009), whose

overview of various studies in the constructs of SLA implicit and explicit language teaching is extensive. Ellis (2009) laments the implicit-explicit interface conundrum which reflects the difficulty in ascertaining what a leaner acquires explicitly and what has been learnt implicitly. Ellis (2009) advocates that research must be ongoing with regard to this predicament.

Following the theoretical rationale, the categorization of lexical phrases, as the target *focus on form* for this paper is considered necessary. Predominantly, Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992) book on lexical phrases will be drawn from. In the form/function section of this book, they defined the functions of lexical phrases as pragmatic competence. That is, a language learner skill which enables learners to select form/function composites according to circumstance. A benefit is that lexical phrase chunks can be learned in association with their functions in context (For example, EAP writing). Context will also be argued as necessary to showcase to SLA learners how phrases are used by referencing the research of Nagy et al. (1985). Although Nagy et al. (1985) advocates incidental vocabulary learning through reading; this researcher also acknowledges its limitations. In short, unless a learner's reading exposure has been prolonged and extensive, acquisition is unlikely without more explicit explanations of the target *form* (Nagy & Scott, 2000). In terms of phrase categorization, this paper will introduce Siepmann's (2005) analysis of taxonomies. This will serve to demonstrate the researcher's stance regarding how the lack of correct and cohesive categorization of phrases obfuscates research in this particular field of applied linguistics.

After the theoretical rationale and lexical phrase classification has been outlined, this paper will move onto the research methodology of the research design. Following that, the results of the research will be presented. The research design sought primarily to provide implicit and explicit instructional treatment to Japanese university, SLA learners in sophomore, EAP classes. The research was conducted over a 15-week period. In the first 10 weeks the instructional treatment was carried out. The target *form*s, EAP writing, lexical phrases, were taught implicitly and explicitly, by alternating the constructs weekly, over a 10-week period. At the same time, yet over a 15-week period, the testing instrument was administered in four classes. In Week 1, the pre-test, in Week 10 the post-test and in Week 15 the delayed post-test were conducted. The statistical modes of analysis used were ANOVA and *t*-tests. This post hoc quantifiable data analysis resulted in a clear answer to the research question. That is, SLA learner gains (dependent variables) were greater when EAP writing, lexical phrases were taught explicitly, not implicitly (independent variables).

Based on the findings of the results section, this paper will discuss how for the first stage of the larger research project these results seem very positive. However, these do not significantly contribute to the research. Moreover, the exclusion of EAP writing data, which is the section of this larger research project that could contribute to the literature, were excluded. Following the discussion section, the future directions will address how this

research intends to address the research design flaws and how to procure and analyse EAP writing data.

In sum, this paper will, to a larger extent, outline the theoretical rationale and categorization of lexical phrases from the perspective of EAP writing. With respect to the data that was collected, it largely reflected input enhancement or *noticing*; thus, the analysis of output is lacking. The latter is where greater contribution to the literature can be made and in the second stage of this research project forthcoming, it will be attempted.

1. Theoretical Rationale

1.1 *Noticing*

For a start, Schmidt (1990, 2010) argued that conscious *noticing* is necessary for learning to take place, as demonstrated by the researcher's proposal of the *Noticing Hypothesis*. Schmidt (1990) claimed it is "a hypothesis that input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered" (Schmidt, 1990, as cited in Schmidt, 2001, p. 27). The theory was put forth to provide an alternate view of language learning. Thus, it differed from previously established notions of unconscious learning processes (Schmidt, 2010). At the time, Robinson (1995) surmised that Schmidt's (1990) notion of *noticing*, or conscious attention to input, for the promotion of L2 development was supported by other researchers in the SLA field. This advocation includes research areas, for instance, *conscious raising* or *focus on form* (Robinson, 1995 cites Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Long, 1998, 1991; Rutherford, 1987; and Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993). In short, this stance somewhat counters claims to Krashen's view of SLA as a subconscious process in which conscious learning serves as a monitor or editing function of a knowledge base, and that which is non-consciously acquired (Robinson, 1995 cites Krashen 1981, 1982 & 1985). Albeit not in full support of Krashen, Schmidt (2010) does raise the predicament that would arise if the importance of unconscious processes in language comprehension and acquisition were to be denied. Further acknowledging that in the literature, there is "no consensus on consciousness." As cited by Harley (1998), Schmidt (1994) states that in language learning, when a *form* is paid attention to or noticed, it is consciously experienced and twofold; that is, "…the registration of the occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and subsequent storage in long term memory" (1994, p. 179). Stating further that, the acquisition of the target language *form* will not occur unless this *noticing* takes place. Moreover, instruction is the key to increase the salience of these *form*s in input so that learners are more likely to notice them.

Despite the debate of *consciousness* being significantly more extensive than is indicated above, a succinct summary by Izumi (2002) highlights three key positions. These include, at first, reference to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis (elucidated aforementioned). In addition, Izumi points out the necessity of learners' "focal attention and awareness." The

second position, cited by Izumi (2002, p. 543) is from Tomlin and Villa (1994) who believe that of "…three interrelated processes of attention – alertness, orientation, and detection – only detection, which does not require conscious awareness, is crucial for learning; the other two processes may help to increase the chance of detection and, thus, learning." The third stance is based on Robinson's (1995) proposal which redefines Schmidt's noticing with regard to what is detected and then, "further activated as a result of attentional resources from a central executive" (p. 543). What is more, maintaining that the differing demands of a task further stimulate distinct forms of cognitive processing.

1. 2 *Focus on form*

In order to more clearly situate the notion of the previously mentioned *noticing* (*attentional resources*) as applicable to language teaching in the classroom, Long's (1998) working paper, published by Long and Robinson (1998) is referred to. Firstly, Long and Robinson (1998) ascertain that language teaching has been susceptible to pendulum swings. At the time of publication, they attributed this, simultaneously, to the lack of broadly accepted language learning theory and common classroom practice. In consequence, the researchers highlighted frustration with a *focus on formS* teaching methodology since it prefaces grammar, and is highly interventionist. The swing towards de-emphasis on grammar and largely, a non-interventionist, "focus on meaning" stance pedagogy thus evolved. However, as Long (1998) posited, this was also not a viable option since it "…affects the way a course designer approaches the thorny issue of grammar in the communicative classroom" (p. 35). The researcher proffered the following question: "Is teaching a new language more successful when the main focus is the L2 as *object* or the L2 as a *medium* of communication while students are learning something else, like the history, culture or geography of a society where the L2 is spoken?" (Long, 1998, p. 35) Lamenting both pedagogical approaches, Long (1998) proposed the veritable middle ground; *focus on form* (Long & Robinson, 1998):

> Focus on form refers to how attentional resources are allocated, and involves briefly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements (words, collocations, grammatical structures, pragmatic patterns, and so on), *in context*, as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication, the temporary shifts in focal attention being triggered by students' comprehension or production problems. (Long, 1998, p. 40)

In brief, Long's (1998) methodology reinforces Schmidt's (1983) work in that through inducing, *noticing* is essential to register targeted language, that is, *focus on form*. In doing so, *form*s can be stored in the memory, despite the fact that a learner may not understand their meaning or function until later language developmental stages. Hence, learners build skills to learn new items, and to categorize them linguistically and not necessarily according

to metalinguistic awareness. This is in response to the limitations of solely focusing on a meaning based system; in other words, target language is attended to as an object, or as it is systematically provided. Long (1998) argued that a *focus on form* approach would therefore be "radical" in terms of its psycholinguistic dimension since it takes into account the learner's internal syllabus. In addition, this stance endorses that an internal syllabus is under a learner's control, and that it presents itself when a communication problem arises. This indicates that learners partially understand either the meaning or the function of the new *form*, whilst attending to input. Moreover, it is considered that these are optimal conditions in learners' control over their means of production.

1. 3 Limitations of input enhancement in learner acquisition

White (1998) published a study entitled, *Getting the learners' attention, A typographical input enhancement study*. In particular, it highlights "…the effects of manipulating and enhancing input, implicitly and explicitly, with the aim of increasing the usefulness for L2 acquisition of the input available in the classroom" (p. 85). White (1998) sought to ascertain whether students having difficulty acquiring a linguistic feature, could aid acquisition through enhancement of the target linguistic feature. In this study, a *focus on form* approach was adopted in response to mounting research which suggested that if language instruction focuses predominantly on meaning, that is, at the exclusion of formal language aspects, learners will be affected. For example, learners may not be able to attain high levels of linguistic knowledge, or demonstrate that knowledge, despite extensive meaning based exposure (White, 1998 cites Harley & Swain, 1984; Lightbrown & Spada, 1990; Swain & Lapkin, 1982, 1986). Thus, in order to produce the language, it has been put forward that meaning based classrooms can impede higher levels of accurate learning because of a limited number of opportunities to convey their message (Cited by Swain, 1985, 1993). Furthermore, White (1998) states that the quality of input available for acquisition should be investigated, especially if it involves drawing on the linguistic output of other learners. White (1998) cites Hulstijin (1989) that at the point of input encoding, attention to *form* is necessary and adequate for language acquisition to take place.

Thus, White's (1998) study sought to increase the "perceptual salience of a set of linguistic features without placing excessive demands on learners' attentional resources" (White, 1998, p. 86, cites VanPatten). To do so, White (1998) attempted to demonstrate if typographical enhancement could highlight and direct the attention of learners to the target *form*s—in a manner more explicit than input floods, yet less explicit than rule explanation. These typographical enhancements included manipulation of italics, bolding, enlargement, and underlining as key for White's (1998) investigation. In conclusion, White's (1998) study found that acquisition may be sped up by using typographical enhancement; however, the researcher contended that implicit *focus on form* may not be adequate on comparison with

L1 learners. In other words, there is a relative ceiling that is less pronounced than if students had received explicit instruction.

1. 3. 1 Output's role vis-à-vis *focus on form*

While Izumi's (2002) article entitled, *Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis: An experimental study of ESL relativization* provides clarification that *noticing* is essential, Izumi raises that the amount and type of attention for learners is a point of contention among researchers. Izumi's (2002) article puts forward two stances with regard to "Pedagogical Attempts to Promote Leaners' Noticing of Form" (p. 543) for the purpose of developing the literature. These are: 1) visual (textual or typographical) input enhancement and 2) learner's output. Of note is that Izumi (2002) draws attention to the research design, whereby learner output becomes an independent variable. Izumi also advocates that regarding 1) it can be introduced by external means such as underlining or highlighting. Whereas for 2) Izumi states that it emerges through the processes of production; that is, when learners attend to the *form*s in output and thus notice more of that *form* for subsequent exposure to input. Thus, Izumi (2012) surmises that visual input enhancement is an external process for drawing attention to *form*, while producing output is an internal one. This assessment was based on Izumi's (2012) review of nine independent research studies, from which Izumi gathered that four were able to see learner gains from visual enhancement, two somewhat less, and another two, very little.

1. 4 Issues with the assessment of implicit and explicit learner knowledge

Ellis's (2009) book, *Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing and Teaching*, provides extensive analysis and moreover reflects on SLA trends with respect to the proliferation of the interface notion of implicit-explicit instructional methodology. In the book, Ellis (2009) promulgates that due to the different ways in which implicit and explicit instruction have been operationalized, the distinction between the two methods is not straightforward. For example, Ellis demonstrates how Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis classifications distinguish implicit as instructional treatment, which includes enriched input. That is, input seeded with the target structure or sentences for memorization. Meanwhile, explicit instruction included on one hand, a metalinguistic explanation, while on the other, production practice. To further classify the two types of instruction, Ellis (2009) believes that the terminology of reactive and proactive should be introduced. Yet, in doing so, another layer of misclassification is added. Ellis (2009) elucidates this through conducting a comparison of Doughty's (1991) study and Robinson's (1996) study (cited in Ellis, 2009). In Doughty's study, Ellis muses implicit input enhancement could be classified as reactive if students skimmed texts which are presented by a computer and received support only in terms of strategies for lexical and semantic rephrasing and

sentence clarification. While explicit instruction would be categorized as proactive when it is comprised of rule statements and on-screen sentence manipulation. In contrast to Robinson's instructional treatment, there were four conditions of which Ellis (2009) classified two as implicit and direct, and the other two as direct explicit and indirect explicit. For the former, these learners were required to remember and be exposed to sentences imbued with the target phrase, and the treatment encompassed meaning based conditions. Meanwhile for the latter, direct explicit examples, students searched and identified rules, and for indirect explicit, written rules and explanations were provided. Thus, through attempting to succinctly define implicit and explicit, Ellis (2009) has revealed widespread misclassifications.

Furthermore, Ellis (2009) introduces the three positions relating to the interface of implicit and explicit knowledge, which are 1) Non-interface, 2) Strong Interface and 3) the Weak Interface. Ellis cites DeKeyser's (1995) study and DeJong's (2005) study to illustrate the different positions with regard to interface. Nonetheless, in the end, Ellis (2009) surmised that both studies had effective test instruments for possibly measuring explicit knowledge, since students could produce grammatically the rules in different contexts. Ellis (2009) regarded this as deductive, or explicit. As a result, Ellis (2009) claimed that it was more effective to demonstrate the deductive and explicit in SLA instructional methodology, than the inductive implicit condition. Thus, Ellis (2009) concluded that these two studies reflect the relative ease of ascertaining what a leaner acquires explicitly, vis-à-vis what has been learnt implicitly. This typifies an ongoing research predicament when examining the effects of what are considered to be the two main types of form-focused assessment, explicit as deductive and implicit as inductive (Ellis, 2009).

More specifically, Ellis (2009) cites DeKeyser (1995) and DeJong's (2005) studies as examples of differences in the operationalization of the "same" constructs of implicit and explicit. DeKeyser (1995) had learners carry out the following: fill out a computerized judgement and production test, to describe a picture, and test grammatical rules with gap-fill. Whereas in DeJong's (2005) study, testing the constructs consisted of: listening tests of dialogue about a picture, grammatical judgement tests, and oral production questionnaires. Ellis (2009) laments that these studies typify how researchers continue to unsuccessfully define implicit and explicit knowledge as distinct constructs. Thus, Ellis proffers that common foundations for empirical tests of the implicit-explicit interface of these positions remains elusive. In response to the nonuniformed classifications, Ellis (2009) operationalizes the constructs of L2 implicit and explicit knowledge as follows (See Table 1):

Table 1. *Operationalizing the construct of L2 implicit and explicit knowledge* (Ellis, 2009)

Criterion	Implicit Knowledge	Explicit Knowledge (analyzed knowledge)
Degree of awareness	The task requires the learner to respond according to 'feel'	The task encourages the learner to respond using 'rules'
Time available	The task is time-pressured	The task is performed without any time pressure
Focus of attention	The task calls for a primary focus on meaning	The task calls for a primary focus on form
Systemacitity	The task results in consistent responses	The task results in variable responses
Certainty	The task results in responses that the learner is certain are correct/incorrect	The task results in responses, the correctness/incorrectness of which the learner is uncertain about
Utility of knowledge of metalanguage	The task does not require the learner to use meta-linguistic knowledge	The task invites the learner to use metalinguistic knowledge
Learnability	The task favors learner who began learning as children	The task favors learners who have received form-focused instruction

2. Target *Focus on Form*: Lexical Phrases

Lexical phrases can be referred to as lexical chunks or formulaic sequences. As Staples et al. (2013) put forward, formulaic sequences have been shown by researchers to be an important measure of learner development, and SLA theory points out that early stages of language learning rely heavily on such sequences (Staples et al., 2013 cites Ellis, 1996 and Wray, 2002). In fact, since they tend to be stored as a whole unit, they are drawn upon in later stages in learner development of language acquisition through reanalyzing and reprocessing to form more malleable constructions (Staples et al., 2013 cites Ellis, 1996 and Wray, 2002).

2.1 Specific lexical phrase definition

Although lexical phrases are syntactic strings or collocations, they are not ordinary

syntactic strings. In fact, they are more precisely defined as collocations that have a pragmatic function of which two main types exist (Nattinger & Decarrico, 1992). These are 1) strings of specific (non-productive) lexical items which can be canonical or non-canonical (non-canonical forms are not typical of English expressions), such as, *at any rate*. They are alternatively categorized as 2) generalized and productive frames which underlie specific lexical phrases, such as, *a year ago*, which can also be canonical, or non-canonical in the case of *away with all the bureaucrats*. These researchers argue that lexical phrases are "crucial intermediaries between the levels of lexis and grammar and have been too long neglected in linguistic analysis" (p. 37). Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) believe that there is merit to further describe lexical phrases and account for variation of this target form, and to categorise them for descriptive and pedagogic purposes. Yet the researches acknowledge that their classification is not an exhaustive list of the functions associated with various lexical phrases.

In this way, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) attempt to classify lexical phrases into four aspects based on structural criteria. Firstly, *polywords* represent short phrases, and are either canonical or non-canonical. Moreover, they allow for no variability and are continuous. They function in order to relate one topic to another, to summarize, and or shift topics and etcetera. Some such examples are, *for the most part*, which is a canonical qualifier, or, *in part*, which is a non-canonical qualifier. Secondly, *institutionalized expressions* represent a sentence or a finite expression, and are predominantly canonical, invariable, and additionally, continuous. That is, canonical can be represented by, *the public seldom forgives* and non-canonical, *be that as it may*. Thirdly, *phrasal constraints* are short to medium phrases, which can be both canonical and non-canonical, and also variable and continuous. For instance, in the case of canonical summarizers, *in short*, *in sum*, *in summary* and non-canonical exemplifiers such as, *for instance* and *for example*. Fourthly, *sentence builders* provide the framework for sentences that have slots for either the parameters or arguments of the idea. They can be canonical and non-canonical, display variation and clausal elements, and are both continuous and discontinuous. Summarizers for example are canonical, *the point is that*, and comparators which are non-canonical, and follow the sequence, *the _er X, the _er Y*, that is, *the greater the number of subjects, the better the results*.

2. 2 Lexical phrases as pragmatic competence

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) refer to lexical phrases as form/function composites which are seeded in pragmatic competence. It is argued by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) that pragmatic competence arose out of the absence of learner competencies and performance not proposed in the Chompskyan model. They surmise that linguistic performance predominantly accounts for language in use, whereas linguistic competence provides the base

for generating a language's grammar. With regard to pragmatic competence, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) support that it is this language learner skill which enables the selection of form/function composites in particular circumstances. In doing so, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) ascertain that lexical phrase chunks can be learned in association with functions in context. Figure 1 shows from the dashed lines, the delimitations in terms of how pragmatic competence is situated in relation to grammar for learners (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992).

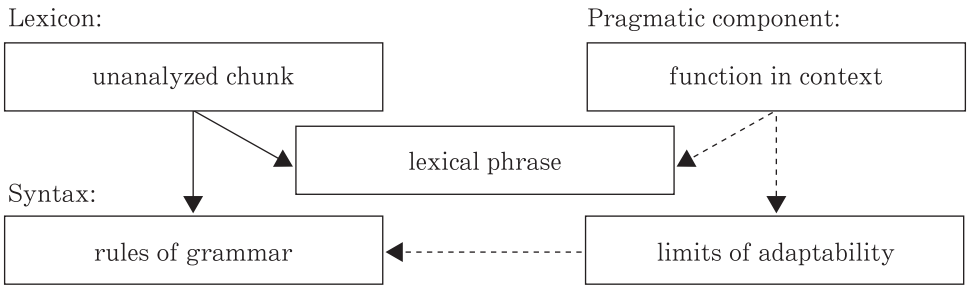

Figure 1. Pragmatic competence of lexical phrases (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 16)

2. 3 Lexical phrases as macro-organisers

Moreover, lexical phrases can be distinguished from idioms or clichés in terms of their function. For example in discourse, lexical phrases could express comparative relationships among ideas, for instance, *on the other hand*. When phrases serve as discourse devices, the function of what the information to follow is going to be, considers the preceding information, and whether or not it contrasts, thus acting as exemplifiers. This has led lexical phrases to be recognized more often than not as macro-organisers. Due in part to the way they signal high-level information, comprised of: "marking topics, shifts in topics, summary of topics, exemplification, relationships between topics, evaluations, qualifications, and asides" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 90). However, they are not as linear as the aforementioned description suggests. This is because they divide high-level information to coordinate as global markers, and subordinate for local markers. In short, "Global macro-orgnisers are those which signal the introduction of a topic at the beginning of a discourse, the shift to a new topic, and the summary of a topic" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 95). Whereas, the "Local macro-organisers sequence the high level information within the overall framework which has been set by the global macro-organisers" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 95). These include markers of "exemplification, relations between topics, sub-topics, or other subordinate material, evaluative comments, qualification of previous material, and asides" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, p. 95).

2. 4 Lexical phrases within discourse, integrating reading and writing

With specific reference to lexical phrases within discourse, of note is that Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) highlight the different stances of product-based vis-à-vis process-centered

discourse perspectives. The former lends itself to the connection of sentences through cohesive devices, while the latter to devices which focus on textual coherence. In considering this, the researchers add that when reading activities focus on lexical phrases, this *form* is beneficial to both reading and writing pedagogy. Thus, from a process-centered discourse perspective, which is notably supported by Carrell (1987), as cited by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), reading comprehension and writing convention research has been complementary. In other words, Li and Schmitt (2009) cite Coxhead and Byrd (2007) and Hyland (2008) to underscore that for academic discourse; formulaic sequences or lexical phrases are both central to and an important building block for characteristic features of academic texts. The researchers claim that a novice writer cannot be considered competent in understanding the conventional sequences of the discipline until they have adopted them. That is, when considering, the dual benefits of product and process orientated approaches, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners should be taught both the top-level rhetorical structures of texts, and also how to, through linguistic devices, signal a text's organizational plan (Li & Schmitt, 2009).

Furthermore, the reading of appropriate academic writing texts provides modeling for students since they can draw upon contextual cues. The discussion of Nagy et al. (1985) regarding context is thus relevant; since the argument that combining definitional and contextual processes with regard to learning vocabulary, is more effective than practicing either in isolation. Context is stated as necessary to show the students how the word is used. Although Nagy et al. (1985) do not discount the need for instruction of vocabulary; they acknowledge that it is an intensive task for instructors to carry out well. Under these circumstances, Nagy et al. (1985) advocates that incidental word learning can arise from reading; yet posits that this method is less effective when considering that not all learners have been exposed to "systematic intensive and prolonged vocabulary instruction" (Nagy, 1998, p. 15). The effects of which would show learner gains in reading comprehension. Despite the misgivings, research in this area tends to support incidental word learning. In later studies, Nagy's stance on context and incidental learning of vocabulary is further developed when Nagy and Scott (2000) examine metalinguistic approaches in terms of awareness and utilisation of context vis-à-vis usage of definitions. Nagy and Scott (2000) reiterate Nagy's earlier claims, whereby even if students learn words implicitly from context, it is only effective if exposure is extensive. In consequence, the researchers conclude that the aforementioned gives rise to explicit explanations of, or definitions to make the process more efficient (Nagy & Scott, 2000).

2. 5 Lexical phrases: Issues with classification and variance in taxonomies

As Siepmann (2005) acknowledges, providing a structural taxonomy of lexical phrases in academic texts is beneficial. However, Siepmann (2005) is critical of Hyland's (1998) well-

established taxonomy. Table 2 shows an adapted version of Hyland's taxonomy by Siepmann (2005). The columns labelled category, functions, and examples are reintroduced in the proceeding Table 3. This table compares and contrasts four researchers, Vande Kopple (1985), Hyland (1998), Hutz (1997) and Fraser (1988). However, compared with the categories and functions of Hyland's taxonomy, the classifications of lexical phrases are at times amalgams of the two. In tabulating these disparate classifications of lexical phrases, Siepmann demonstrates the variety of classifications of this target *form*. Siepmann (2005) argues that it was important to tabulate to address methodological concerns of inconsistency. One being that, taxonomies are relatively top down, grammatical, category-based and have insufficient empirical basis. In the second instance, Siepmann (2005) believes that they are often based on the "linguist's semantic intuitions" (p. 86).

Table 2. *Variety in lexical phrase classifications* (Adapted from Hyland, 1998: 442) (Cited by Siepmann, 2005)

Category	Function	Examples
Textual metadiscourse		
Logical connectives	Express semantic relation between main clauses	In addition
Frame markers	Explicitly refer to discourse acts of text stages	To reiterate
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above/ See Fig. 1/
Evidentials	Refer to source of information from other texts	According to X/ Y states
Code glosses	Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	For example/ In other words/ Such as
Interpersonal metadiscourse		
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to statements	It is possible
Emphatics	Emphasize force of writer's certainty in message	In fact /It is clear
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to propositional content	It is claimed/ X states
Relational markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	Note that/ As can be seen

Table 3. *Classifications of discourse markers* (Adapted from Siepmann, 2005)

Examples	Vande Kopple (1985)	Hyland (1998)	Hutz (1997)	Fraser (1988)
In addition	Text connectives	Logical connectives	Causality and result, Exemplification, Addition	Message relationship markers
In sum	Action markers, Text connectives	Frame markers	Text structuring, Summary and generalization, Order of importance, Chronological order	Discourse activity markers
The following	-	Endophoric markers	Text structuring	Topic markers
According to	Narrators, Attributors	Evidentials	-	Topic markers
In other words	Code glosses (Defining, explaining, limiting)	Code glosses	Specification (in particular), Explanation (in this sense)	Topic markers (elaborative) (explanatory)
It is possible/ tends to	Modality markers, Hedges	Hedges	Degree of probability	-
In fact/ It is clear	Modality markers, Emphatics	Emphatics	Emphasis	Topic markers
X claims	Attitude markers, Commentary	Relational markers	-	Message relationship markers

3. Methods: Research Design

The action research conducted in this pilot study initially sought to collate data in the similar vein of Izumi (2002). In other words, data which could demonstrate learner gains in output after input and input enhancement. However, flaws in the research design with respect to output, that is, writing data collection, delimited this data collation. Despite this setback, this pilot study could test a fairly well established notion that explicit over implicit teaching methods in the classroom would show greater learner gains, albeit with a less common emphasis on lexical phrases. The gains therefore represented the dependent variable as shown in Figure 2. Therefore, the modified research question, appropriate for the data analysed is: To what extent does a *focus on form* explicit teaching methodology over an implicit approach show more positive gains in students EAP writing lexical phrase acquisition?

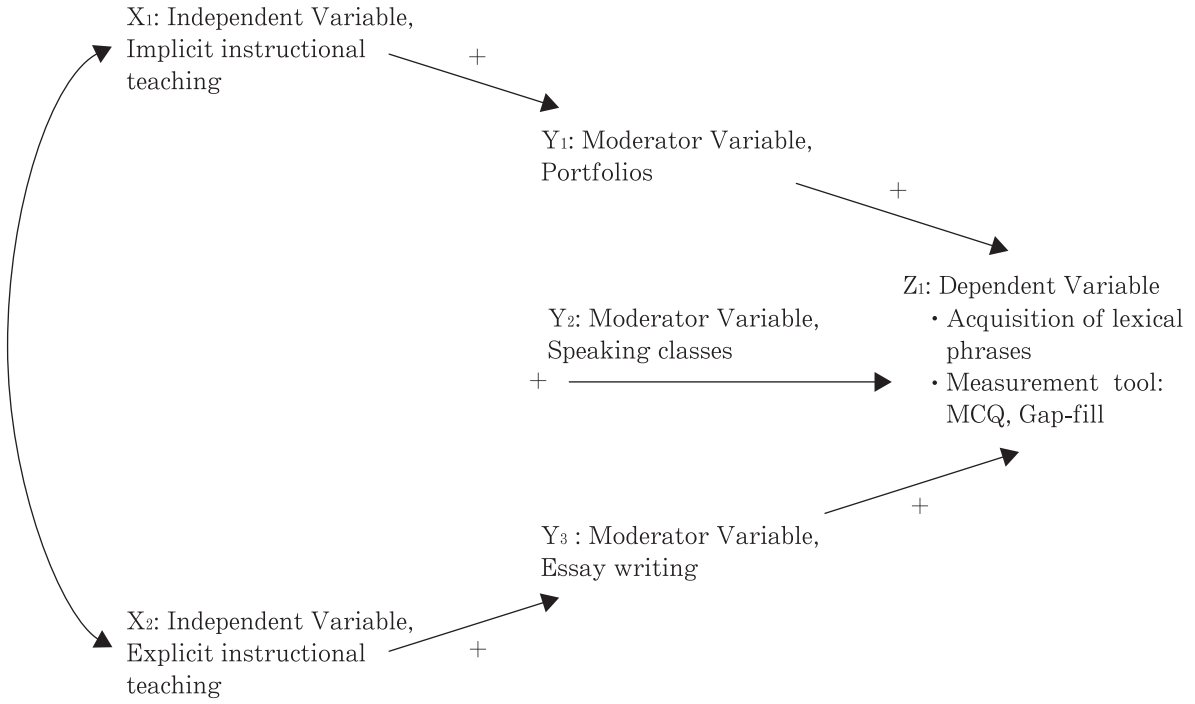

Figure 2. Dependent, independent and moderating variables (Adapted from Creswell, 2003)

3. 1 Participants

The participants were 87 ESL sophomore students at a private, female Japanese university learning EAP reading and writing for the purposes of potentially writing an English thesis on graduation (N=86 (Q1)), (N=87 (Q2)). For Q1, one student outlier was deleted. Their ages were around 19–20. The second year students have had junior and senior high school English and two semesters of English, as part of an English major degree at university level. The general English proficiency of the participants is estimated at an IELTs band of between 4.00–6.00, or the Upper level of B1 and Lower level of B2 according to CEFR levels. This assumption is based on textbooks completed in the first year of their study within the department. In second year, four courses are conducted entirely in English, and taught by native speakers. There are five class levels, and the instructional treatment was administered to, and data collected from, the upper and lower two of the five classes, with the middle class excluded from the study. Participants were taking both a 15-week EAP reading course, assessed by portfolios and an EAP writing course, assessed by argumentative essays. Three portfolios and essays were due, one of each per five weeks, over the 15-week course. In addition, the essay questions were conveyed simultaneously to the writing, and reading course teachers. Ideally, the portfolio promotes the collection, collation, and interaction with reading materials by students of the sources required to write the essay in the writing course. There were also two 15-week speaking courses that indirectly and directly reinforced the essay topics; one speaking course was specifically from an American perspective and the other from a Japanese perspective. The three topics, one per five weeks

for the reading and writing courses included, 1) The Constitution and gun control in America, 2) Foreign aid, and 3) Quotas for women in the workforce. With 2) and 3) covering material for both America and Japan. Thus, the portfolio, essay, and speaking courses were moderating variables, as indicated in Figure 2.

3. 2 Instructional treatment: Schedule and samples

3. 2. 1 Schedule

The instructional treatment of explicit teaching and implicit teaching activities was conducted within group rather than having a research design which included experimental and control groups. This research design was selected in order to avoid ethical issues, in other words, to ensure that no participant was disadvantaged by a different instructional treatment. The *focus on form* EAP writing lexical phrases were loosely based on Knott's (1996) taxonomy. They were selected based on usage judgements from Knott (1996) and the researcher's intuition prior to the 15-week courses running in semester one of the 2016/2017 Japanese university academic year. The lexical phrases were taught for ten weeks, as shown in Table 4. The instructional method, that is explicit or implicit teaching of these lexical phrases alternated weekly within the 10-week period. Specifically, explicit teaching was conducted in the odd weeks, Week 1, Week 3, Week 5, Week 7 and Week 9 and implicit teaching was carried out in the even weeks, Week 2, Week 4, Week 6, Week 8, and Week 10. The instructional treatment was avoided in the final five weeks. This was carried out in order to not influence whether or not learning was maintained between Weeks 10 and 15. In other words, between the Post-test and the Delayed Post-test (See Table 4).

Table 4. *Instructional treatment schedule*

Week	Instructional Treatment		Instrumentation Test: Q1, Q2, Q3
	Implicit Teaching	Explicit Teaching	
1	X	In addition to	Pre-test
2	That is/ In short	X	
3	X	To begin with/ For a start	
4	Considering that/ Given that	X	
5	X	Due to this/ As a result	
6	Owing to	X	
7	X	In spite of this	
8	On the other hand	X	
9	X	To sum up	
10	In that case/ In the same way	X	Post-test
11	X	X	
12	X	X	
13	X	X	
14	X	X	
15	X	X	Delayed Post-test

3. 2. 2 Instructional treatment: Explicit and implicit samples

The explicit instructional teaching treatment primarily included the teacher providing explicit instruction of the pragmatic function of the lexical phrases on the chalkboard or displayed on the projector. Two to three sentences had to be used in order to provide context and elicit the correct function of the lexical phrase as it appears within a sentence with respect to the larger EAP writing discourse. For example, in the below Sample 1 (See Figure 3.), *That is* and *In short* exhibit the pragmatic function of acting as a restatement of the previous sentence. This explicit instruction was followed up by a secondary activity whereby students were asked to reproduce this form in unmeasured, informal, and in-class oral or written activities.

Bearing arms is a constitutional right in America's constitution and in particular, the Republican Party protects this amendment. *That is/In short*, the Republican Party policies, in general, oppose gun control measures.

Figure 3. Sample 1 of explicit teaching of the lexical phrase, *That is/In short*

Regarding the implicit instructional treatment, students were asked to highlight, circle and/or underline the target lexical phrase from a contextualized A4 page reading about the topic (See Figure 4). As a secondary activity, participants could have presented lexical phrases in their portfolios or essays; however, they did so independently.

Week 1. Reading, Topic #1/3: Gun Control in America

Instructions:

In the following reading, *highlight, circle or underline* *lexical phrases in the below extract which indicate that the following sentence will be* *a summary or restatement of information.*

Gun Control: The United States

[Extract] A number of gun advocates consider ownership a birthright and an essential part of America's heritage. The United States, with less than 5 percent of the world's population, has about 35–50 percent of the world's civilian-owned guns, according to a 2007 report by the Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey. In short, it ranks number one in firearms per capita. The United States also has the highest homicide-by-firearm rate among the world's most developed nations. That is, more American citizens are killed by guns when compared to citizens of other developed countries.

The above text was created by slightly modifying the information from the following sources:
Masters, J. (2016, January 16). Gun Control Around the World: A Primer, Lessons from Canada to Japan. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved April 18, 2016 from *The Atlantic*: http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/01/worldwide-gun-control-policy/423711
Gun Laws in Alaska. (n.d.). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved April 18, 2016 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_laws_in_Alaska

Figure 4. Sample 1. Input enhancement, implicit reading sample of *That is/In short*

3. 3 Instrumentation

As can be seen from Table 4, the testing instrument to collect data consisted of a pre-test in Week 1, a post-test in Week 10 and a delayed post-test in Week 15. There were three types of testing questions. These were administered by a paper-based test in order to test students' acquisition of lexical phrases. The phrases comprised of two or more words from various pragmatic categories and were of varying difficultly levels. Question 1 (Q1) was multiple choice; Question 2 (Q2) was a gap-fill and Question 3 (Q3), a short essay. Q1 gave four choices (a, b, c or d), and had to replace a substandard conjunction such as, *Like* with the correct lexical phrase such as, *That is* (See Figure 5). In Q2, for the gap-fill, the first letter was given, and the correct number of spaces indicated for each word that made up the phrase (See Figure 5). As for Q3, although it has been excluded from this paper, this question requested test-takers to produce the lexical phrases in the context of a short essay. The rationale behind using the three item types was to incrementally increase the difficulty of each question to be able to test the ability of the student to retrieve the lexical phrase. In short, Q1 tested receptive knowledge, however in Q2 and Q3, the questions were designed so that students were required to retrieve the lexical phrases from their own memory. In Q2, it is easier since they are given prompts, that is, the first letter of each word in the lexical phrase. However, for Q3, this question was purely based on output in context, and the understanding of the pragmatic function in addition to being able to retrieve the appropriate lexical phrase. Since Q3 did not elicit the lexical phrases to the degree necessary to analyse; it was considered to be either i) not explained well or ii) too much of a cognitive load on the students. Q3 will be revised for later studies which seek to stimulate output driven data. The researcher developed Q1, Q2, and Q3 and the distractor questions. Furthermore, with regard to the multiple choice and gap-fill, according to sound practice, the questions were scrambled and distractors added when the post-test and delayed post-test were administered. However, for analysis the distractors were not included, and the same 12 items for Q1 and Q2 were anlaysed for the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test. Moreover, Q3, which sought to collate output data, yet due to poor research design and instrumentation, were deleted from this study.

Sample Question, Q1, Multiple Choice:
13. In the last two decades, developing nations have improved child mortality (/death) rates.
Like *better medical practices have decreased the death rate.*
a) That is
b) It was criticized that
c) That's why
d) It was not the case that
Sample Question, Q2, Gap-fill:
6) *This thesis has put forward various key points related to health care.*
I __ s __ __ __ __, *a national healthcare system is essential for a healthy society.*
N.B. Sample Question 3, Q3: Output in context (Removed from the results of this study)

Figure 5. Sample Q1 and Q2 from the testing instrument

It is important to note that with regard to consent, students were asked to sign a form attached to the test. This consent form was removed to keep their anonymity. The form outlined to participants how their data was to be calculated as a group for the means and standard deviations only (See Appendix). In addition, departmental approval was given at a meeting in early 2016 for administering the data collection, since the study involved one part-time teacher.

4. Results

4.1 Q1

As for Q1, as shown in Table 5, the students' scores improved significantly after the treatment/coursework. After treatment, the effect was maintained until the delayed post-test. The means show that the explicit scores rose from at the pre-test to post-test and further rose at the delayed post-test. That is, they rose from 3.48 to 3.87 and went up again to 3.99. In this case, this reflects a positive result due to these gains. Moreover, the scores arose after implicit treatment. This can be seen by 3.30 at the pre-test, and rose to 3.53 at the post- and for the delayed post-test 3.59. This is seen to be quite good results. In terms of standard deviation, it ranged from 0.76–1.06. Skew and kurtosis were all less than + or − 1.0, which is a good indication of normal distribution.

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics for Q1*

			Explicit	Implicit
Pretest	*M*		3.48	3.30
	95% CI	Lower Bound	3.26	3.09
		Upper Bound	3.71	3.51
	SD		1.07	1.00
	Skewness		-0.25	-0.07
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-0.78	-0.65
	SEK		0.51	0.51
Posttest	*M*		3.87	3.53
	95% CI	Lower Bound	3.69	3.33
		Upper Bound	4.06	3.73
	SD		0.87	0.93
	Skewness		-0.39	0.01
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-0.50	-0.81
	SEK		0.51	0.51
Delayed Posttest	*M*		3.99	3.59
	95% CI	Lower Bound	3.79	3.38
		Upper Bound	4.19	3.79
	SD		0.93	0.97
	Skewness		-0.50	-0.48
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-0.33	-0.13
	SEK		0.51	0.51

Note. $N=86$.

4.2 Q2

As for Q2 as shown in Table 6, the students' scores improved significantly, yet less significantly for Q2 than Q1 after the treatment/coursework. After treatment, the effect was maintained until the delayed post-test. The means show that the explicit scores rose from at the pre-test to post-test and further rose at the delayed post-test. That is, they rose from 2.03 to 2.52 and went up again to 2.68. In this case, this reflects a positive result due to these gains. Moreover, the scores rose after implicit treatment. This can be seen by 1.08 at the pre-test, and rose to 1.82 at the post-test and for the delayed post-test to 1.81. This is seen to be relatively good results. In terms of standard deviation, it ranged from 0.76–1.06. Skew and kurtosis were all less than + or − 1.00, which is a good indication of normal distribution.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics for Q2*

			Explicit	Implicit
Pre-test	*M*		2.03	1.08
	95% CI	Lower Bound	1.77	0.85
		Upper Bound	2.30	1.31
	SD		1.26	1.07
	Skewness		-0.03	0.60
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-1.08	-0.45
	SEK		0.51	0.51
Post-test	*M*		2.52	1.82
	95% CI	Lower Bound	2.30	1.59
		Upper Bound	2.74	2.05
	SD		1.03	1.08
	Skewness		-0.34	-0.18
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-0.32	-0.54
	SEK		0.51	0.51
Delayed Post-test	*M*		2.68	1.81
	95% CI	Lower Bound	2.43	1.56
		Upper Bound	2.93	2.05
	SD		1.16	1.16
	Skewness		-0.59	0.16
	SES		0.26	0.26
	Kurtosis		-0.33	-0.62
	SEK		0.51	0.51

Note. $N=87$.

A two-way repeated measures ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted to evaluate the effect of treatment with two levels (explicit teaching of *form*s by the teacher and typological underlining of *form*s by the participant) on the students' acquisition of lexical phrases and test with three levels (pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test) of scores. The dependent variables were the students' test scores on each treatment at each test. The treatment main effect was determined using the univariate test results. The test main effect

and treatment X test interaction effect were tested using the multivariate criterion of Wilks' Lambda (Λ). The main test effect was significant, $\Lambda = .75$ $F(1, 86) = 13.88$, $p = .001$. The interaction effect was not significant, $\Lambda = .98$, $F(1,86) = .83$, $p = .44$. The treatment main effect was $F(1, 86) = 13.70$ and $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$ showing that the treatment factor accounts for 14% of the variance.

Three paired-sample *t*-tests were conducted to follow up the significant test main effects. The Holm's sequential Bonferroni adjustment to control for Type 1 error. Differences in mean ratings of the tests were significantly different between Test 1 and Test 3, t (86) = −5.23, $p = 0.001$ ($\alpha < 0.0067$) and Tests 1 & 2, t (86) = −3.65, $p = .001$ ($\alpha < 0.025$). However, the difference between Test 2 and Test 3 was not significant, t (86) = −1.14, $p = 0.26$ ($\alpha = < 0.05$). To follow up the main treatment effect, T1 mean and T2 mean were computed. The pair-wise test results confirmed that the explicit treatment was significantly more effective than the implicit treatment, t (86) = −3.70, $p = 0.001$. To follow up the main test effect, the means for Test 1, Test 2, and Test 3 were computed. The pair-wise test between the three test means showed that the difference between Test 1 mean and Test 2 mean was significant, t (86) = −3.65, $p = 0.001$, and the difference between Test 1 mean and Test 3 mean was also significant, t (86) = −5.22, $p = 0.001$. In addition, the difference between Test 2 mean and Test 3 mean was not significant, t (86) = −1.14, $p = 0.26$.

5. Discussion

This paper was able to further establish what current research in the literature has shown with respect to implicit and explicit methodologies when quantifiable data is the outcome. That is, statistical data is easier to gather to show how explicit teaching demonstrates larger learner gains than that of implicit teaching. In this research, the particular *form*, EAP writing, lexical phrases, was targeted and the participants under study demonstrated larger gains in the target *form* when they were taught explicitly rather than implicitly. This result substantiates arguments put forward in this paper's theoretical rationale. That is, as Schmidt has claimed, *noticing* of input in order to raise *conscious awareness* is important. Further, Long reinforced this by indicating that by focusing on a target *form*, it is sound teaching methodology. In other words, a relative middle ground as opposed to *focus on meaning* or *focus on formS*. Although as White found, an implicit teaching methodology, such as typographical, whether it be underlining or circling of target phrases, can be inadequate for learner acquisition. Nagy's position elucidates further that unless learners have extensive and prolonged exposure to target *form*s through reading, acquisition by this more implicit methodology can be a weak stance.

For this reason, Izumi's study is vital to the next stages of this research project. That being the case, Izumi's research documents the full spectrum from *noticing* and input enhancement, and in doing so, draws on similar theoretical rationale as this paper. In

contrast, in Izumi's research design, writing output was also part of the instructional treatment and data collection and analysis. Moreover, Izumi's study targeted the *form*, relativisation. Nonetheless and despite this developed and complex research design, by not addressing context, it provides for an area that this paper's researcher could seek to address a gap in the literature. That is, to incorporate the discourse requisite for EAP writing, lexical phrases. With respect to the theoretical rationale for the need of context, Nagy briefly outlined that the quality of the reading materials needs to be an appropriate model for the linguistic performance required; in this case, EAP writing.

In light of the aforementioned, it is highly pertinent to return to Nattinger and DeCarrico's definition of a lexical phrase. These researchers assert that a lexical phrase is a form of pragmatic competence. Therefore, if learners are not aware of how these target *form*s function in discourse, for instance an EAP writing conventions, such as an argumentative essay, then it will remain difficult to judge their linguistic performance. Moreover, as Li and Schmitt contended, when considering the dual benefits of product and process orientated approaches, ESL learners should be taught both the top-level rhetorical structures of texts, and also how to, through linguistic devices, signal a text's organizational plan.

In this respect, implicit teaching methodologies, where input is enhanced, can provide for essential *noticing* or *consciousness raising*. However, the more specific way in which lexical phrases function in EAP written discourse is also important. Siepmann drew attention to the fact that the literature conflicts in terms of taxonomies apt to provide for comprehensive classification and categorization of lexical phrases. Albeit in a slightly dissimilar vein, yet still relevant, this gives rise to Ellis' implicit and explicit interface conundrum. Ellis argues that researchers of these methodologies have also not sought to permeate into SLA theory common implicit or explicit constructs.

Further complicating the aforementioned, is the fact that lexical phrases often remain in learners' memories, and are drawn upon in later stages of their language development. This propels necessary research into output as the most effective measure of SLA for EAP written lexical phrases. At present, SLA applied linguistics researchers tend to avoid analysis of output driven data. When collating data, multiple choice and gap-fill provide relatively easily administrable and immediately quantifiable data. It is important to note that, of late, technological advances have been made in corpus linguistics (Kaneko, 2010; Cortes, 2012). As a result, it could be postulated that theoretical development, which has largely been orientated towards spoken output, could benefit from these advances in terms of EAP writing, SLA research development.

Despite the original intention of this pilot study to contribute to the literature with regards to replicating and building on studies such as Izumi's, the research in this paper was obfuscated by poor pre-planning with respect to output. This applied to both the 15-week instructional treatment and testing instrumentation. Irrespective of whether the

teacher was applying the instructional treatment of implicit or explicit constructs, there was no dependent variable in terms of writing output. Due to this, the testing instrument, Q3, which sought to gather output for data collection did not bear the results to be able to qualitatively analyse let alone provide quantitative data. This must be rectified for the future stages of this ongoing action research project.

6. Future Directions

Therefore, the future direction of the larger research project should be orientated towards output or linguistic performance in terms of students' pragmatic competence of lexical phrases. It is also argued as important to seed this research in the context of EAP exclusively. In this vein, Swales' publications, stemming from the 1990s, have provided a fundamental platform for research in the EAP genre. In brief, Swales (2016) genre pedagogy research has outlined three achievement points. These include: 1) *Noticing* (or rhetorical consciousness-raising); 2) Highlighting students attention to: genre structure, style, citation forms and functions, and phraseology rather than just content; and, 3) Fostering a transferable skill set of value for students to draw on when they need to act independently (Swales, 2016).

Building on Swales' past research, yet with particular reference to EAP writing, lexical phrases, two articles are worthy of mention. They are considered important to the future stages of this study since they reflect the emergence of a niche research field dedicated to research in the pragmatic competence of lexical phrases. They are: 1) *Formulaic sequences and EAP writing development: Lexical bundles in the TOEFL iBT writing section* by Staples, Egbert, Biber and McClair (2013) and 2) "*The purpose of this study is to:* Connecting lexical bundles and moves in research article introductions" by Cortes (2013). Cortes (2013) cites Swales' (1981) move analysis which is a methodology to analyse particular texts' rhetorical organization, within a genre.

Based on the aforementioned, the issues related to the categorization of lexical phrases now come to the fore. This is particularly relevant since for analyzing ESL SLA texts, the adoption of corpus analysis is highly recommended. Cortes (2013) goes so far as to say that due to the advances in computers, and with regard to their usage for analyzing language corpora, the shift towards research into formulaic expressions or lexical phrases is emerging. Moreover, as the issues associated with taxonomies were presented in the theoretical rationale, so too must future research adopt a solid taxonomy of EAP writing, lexical phrases. This paper suggests that in order to do so, further investigation into Cortes' (2013) research, which created an appropriate taxonomy for the introduction section of academic English articles is warranted. In fact, the research of Biber et al. (2003, 2004) was built on original research by Cortes (2001). Since, Biber and Cortes (2012) have republished research which focused on "[the] general functional classification of the lexical bundles identified in

the corpus of introductions" (p. 38). Collectively three major functional groups were established: 1) *stance markers*, 2) *discourse organisers* and 3) *referential expressions*. Firstly, an example of a lexical bundle/phrase such as, *it is important to*, would be categorized as a stance marker, with impersonal attitudinal/modality stance. In the case of a *discourse organizer* for instance, *on the other hand*, would be further categorized into the group, topic elaboration/clarification. In the form of *referential expressions*, an example of the specification of attributes of referential bundles and framing attributes in expressions would be, *in the context of*.

Therefore, the import of classification of EAP writing, lexical phrases is clear. Furthermore, Professor Touno Yukio of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, a renowned corpus linguistics expert indicated the same after viewing the research design of this project. Professor Touno surmized that without careful pre-planning and correct classification of the EAP writing, lexical phrases prior to administering the instructional treatment, corpus linguistic analysis will not be effectively accomplished (Touno, 2016).

In terms of whether EAP writing lexical phrases are relevant outside the ESL classroom, the future is bright. This is due to global English proficiency tests. More specifically, the score of the writing section of IELTs and TOEFL entrance exams, which is highly evaluated as one key indicator of global English proficiency standards. As McNamara (2010) claimed, language tests occupy important roles in contemporary society, especially in gatekeeping. That is, these tests allow access to membership of valued social groups, and for opportunities in personal advancement. Simply, they determine whether a student's abilities are good enough to enter into foreign university level instruction (Shasha, 2011 reviews McNamara & Roever, 2006). This crosses over into the notion of *washback* from the field of testing in SLA. Especially in terms of the positive or negative impact caused on all stakeholders, parents, employers, university admission officers and etcetera. Furthermore, another major impact that affects the language learner is in the way that a candidate learns and prepares for the test and engages in activities beyond the classroom (Hawkey, 2006). Although these tests may not be of interest to all students, or educational institutions for that matter; they are an indicator of a global standard of English language proficiency in which all ESL SLA institutions should consider when designing institutional programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, due to inadequate pre-planning for the classroom instructional treatment, which was exacerbated by a flawed output question in the testing instrument; this pilot study could not collate data of lexical phrases in an EAP writing context effectively. Thus, contribution to the literature in terms of the linguistic performance of EAP writing, lexical phrases, and how they function in discourse; that is, pragmatic competence, could not be made. Instead, this paper centered on how learners' attentional resources could be influenced

with respect to input, namely in terms of implicit or explicit *focus on form* language instruction. Of which, the results of this study found, from quantifiable data, learner gains in explicit construct instruction. It could be surmised, and which is not dissimiliar to other studies aforementioned in this paper, that research data which shows learner gains from explicit teaching as the instructional methodology, are relatively more manageable and widespread. It is posited that this is due to the expedient nature of the measurability of the explicit construct, compared with that of the implicit.

Despite the quantifiable data showing lesser learner gains being achieved from implicit language instruction, in terms of this study, there may be a theoretical rationale to explain. It is posited that this phenomena can somewhat be attributed to the fact that a lexical phrase is a more complex language chunk and in all likelihood, is stored in learner memory, and retrieved at a later point in a learner's development. This is in accordance with Schmidt's and Long's concept of *noticing* and input enhancement respectively. In short, this study proffers that to more accurately gauge SLA in lexical phrases for ESL leaners and for EAP writing, lexical phrase research, instructional teaching methodologies of *noticing* and input enhancement are best actioned with output. This claim is based on Izumi's research. Moreover, for clear outcomes in linguistic performance, such as pragmatic competence with respect to how lexical phrases function, *focus on form* is put forward as an inextricable component of the research design's instrumentation. Previous studies have shown that the notion of implicit and explicit instructional methodology in the classroom as constructs can successfully operationalize target language if a *focus on form* pedagogy is observed. Even so, as Ellis has raised, the implicit-explicit interface conundrum negatively pervades accurate SLA applied linguistic research for these two approaches. In other words, despite their effectiveness in classroom instructional methodology, they need to be better defined for future research and classroom application to fully benefit from the interface.

Clearly, explicit classroom instruction can be operationalized through a *focus on form* instructional approach. Albeit less measureable, implicit instruction can provide for foundations such as accurate modelling of the target discourse, EAP writing. However, as Nagy argues, the quality of the reading material which models the discourse to elicit the target *form* is highly relevant. Therefore, as a platform from which to extend this research in output, Swales' research is considered pertinent. Genre analysis, coined by Swales, introduces the concept of move analysis. This theoretical rationale has been more specifically adapted to suit EAP writing, lexical phrase acquisition by Cortes and Biber. This move analysis can also aid in developing more uniformity in the classification of lexical phrases.

In terms of output, the future directions of the next stage of this larger research project intend, to some extent, reference a research design similar to Izumi's. The reason for this is that Izumi's study accounts for output. In addition, it is also considered that the context of EAP writing; in other words, its discourse, cannot be ignored. In observing this,

the categorization of the various functions of pragmatic competence will need to be set to more accurately reflect relevant EAP writing, lexical phrases in future research. Even though the instruction and instrumentation design flaw impeded output data collection for this particular study, it is anticipated that by incorporating the progressions in EAP writing research, such as those which have been spurred on by advances in corpus linguistics technology, would benefit future research.

Moreover, it is anticipated that the demand on English SLA learners to improve their EAP writing skills will continue. Particularly as they themselves seek to meet global English language proficiency benchmarks set by TOEFL and IELTS. Therefore, although it is difficult to operationalize research projects which analyse student output in terms of EAP writing, and more specifically lexical phrases; this research area supports present and real-world applications for actionability.

Thus, in the acknowledgement that formal EAP writing conventions are relevant, this paper posits that pragmatic competence in lexical phrases is important for English language programs. Although this particular study has its delimitations, it is more or less a platform for future research in the output of EAP writing, lexical phrases. In conclusion, this paper has sought to mitigate against the trend of adopting less formal pragmatic competence in lexical phrases. That is, it seeks to encourage learners and teachers alike in the field of EAP SLA to replace reductive and cognitively simple words such as *And*, or *But* with lexical phrases including, *In addition to* or *On the other hand*. In doing so, in EAP writing, lexical phrases will become more indicative of sound classroom instructional pedagogy.

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Appendix

Consent Form

Student Consent Form: Research in Transitions

XXX University

Department of XXX

2016. Date

Dear Students,

You have been invited to participate in a series of three tests researching Japanese university student usage of lexical phrases.

This test is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Furthermore, it has no effect on your grade for this course.

Your data will not be individually analysed. Rather, the group data will be calculated. If there is any part that may identify you, it will remain entirely confidential to the researcher only.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact the data collectors' emails: XXXX

Your signature indicates that you have given consent, yet you are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Thank you for your participation!

Data Collectors

- -

Cut here _ _ _ _

Signature: _____

Student number: _____ ***(CONFIDENTIAL)***

Date: ***XXX***

（クリスティー・セイジ　英語コミュニケーション学科）