词块输入对雅思写作效度影响的研究

摘　要

　　语料库分析和计算机语言学方面的研究成果表明，在语言中存在着大量的兼有句子和词汇特征的固定或半固定的语言结构，这些模式化的结构，即所谓的词块（Lexical Chunks），以整体形式储存在人的大脑中，是语言处理的最理想的单位。词块研究理论的最重要的原则是：语言是由语法化的词汇组成的，而不是由词汇化的语法组成的，即，语言不是由传统观念所认为的由语法和词汇组成的，而是由语法化的词块组成的。这一特点将语言的载体"形式"和"功能"融为一体，体现了语义、句法及语用之间的正相关联的关系，从而促进了语法在语言使用过程中的自然且规律性的生成和发展。

　　以词块作为英语写作的教学单位，符合认知的基本规律，并且在听说读写等各方面都有着其他教学法所不能比拟的优势。由于词块输入不再把构成有效交际的基本单位肢解成语言"碎片"，词块一经学习存储，非常容易回想和使用，这对于提高交际效率无疑起着一个积极的促进作用。由于词块有助于语言表达的流利性、地道性、和准确性，在很大程度上减轻了语言产出及处理的负担，缩短了目标语言作为外语在使用者头脑中生成与输出过程的间距，提高了语言学习的效率，因而引起了广大学者的关注和研究兴趣。

　　回顾二语学习研究史可知，语言输入一直是二语习得与语料库语言学研究的热点，并受到众多学者的重视。美国语言学家 S. D. Krashen 在 20 世纪 80 年代初期提出了"输入假设"。Krashen 认为，可理解输入是第二语言习得的唯一途径，并提出理想的语言输入应当符合"i+1"公式（i 为现有水平，1 为略高于 i 的水平），教学的主要任务是提供充足的可理解输入，其中既包括学生已经掌握的语言知识"i"，又包括新的语言知识"1"。根据 Krashen 的"输入假设"理论，学习者理解了语言输入中的"1"，从而使语言习得取得进步，因此语言教学最重要的手段就是使学习者尽可能多地接受可理解的输入。

　　尽管对词块、语言输入及产出如英语写作的研究和探讨有很多，但却很少有人把这三者的彼此关联性结合起来进行综合研究。为此本文主要按照 Nattinger 和 DeCarrico，Lewis 及 Krashen 的最新研究理论，采用对比分析的方法，提出并探讨了词块输入对提高中国学生英语写作水平的影响。本文基于与传统教学方法的对比旨在

探讨以下几个问题：1.词块输入与英语写作水平之间的正相关性。2.词块输入的数量与英语写作水平之间呈现何种关系。3.词块输入对词块掌握的影响。

为了探索这些问题，作者在自己班里进行了为期八个周的试验（从2008年10月15日持续到12月15日），实验的主体对象是备考雅思的学生，年龄从16-18岁不等。在确定实验主体之前，对目标人进行了考前测试，从中选取了分数相差不大的60名同学，并分成两个班。作者从两个班中随机取了一个班作为实验组，而另一个班则定为控制组。实验组由21名女生和9名男生组成，而控制组则由22名女生和8名男生组成。在实验过程中两个组所使用的教材及每周的课时数都相同。所不同的是实验组的教学实践主要由各种与词块相关的活动和练习构成，目的在于帮助学生建立词块概念，并培养他们有意识地使用词块以提高自己在写作中的语言运用能力，而控制组则用传统的授课方式，学生主要学习单个词汇，通过双语单词表用死记硬背的方法记忆词汇。经过八个周的对比教学实验，行将结束时又分别对两个组进行了四次同一试题的考试，作者利用统计法对这四次考试结果进行了综合分析研究。通过对比分析学生成绩及卷面表达效度，发现实验组的成绩相比之下提高较快，其语言表达效度也明显提高，而控制组的成绩提高的力度不大，而且语言表达效度提高甚微。当然影响写作能力的因素有许多，除了用作语言表达的语料之外，还有个体的写作思路，知识面，已掌握的写作技巧等。但是笔者在此主要探讨的是词块对语言的准确性、流畅性、地道性、句子的连贯性、及语义的完整性的影响。

实验证明，将词块输入法应用于写作中能够帮助学生提高语言使用的准确性和表达效度，同时也帮助学生籍其提高语言交际的能力，从而提高写作成绩，更好地达到了语言教学的目的。

当然，本研究在方法上还存在着一些不足，教学研究的时间也不够长，研究的对象覆盖面不够广，只是代表了一小部分而且是为了特定学习目的英语学习者，但笔者相信词块法一定会对今后的英语教学产生一定的启示和影响。

关键词：词块；输入理论；雅思写作

A Study of the Effects of

Lexical Chunks Input on the IELTS Writing

Abstract

A numerous fixed or semi-fixed multi-words or sentences, i.e. Lexical Chunks have been found frequently-occurred in the corpus and computer analysis of the English language as language units stored in human's brains and acquired as whole in the process of language acquisition, the key principle of which is that "language consists of grammaticalised lexis instead of lexicalised grammar", that is, language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary but often of multi-word lexical chunks. As a composite of language form and function, lexical chunk reflects the positive interaction of syntactic, syntax and pragmatics, in turn, promote further the generation and development of syntactic in-built rules in the process of language acquisition.

It complies with the cognitive law to teach English vocabulary by regarding lexical chunk as a unit in teaching English writing, i.e. "Lexical Approach" which has the advantages that can not be achieved by other English pedagogies, in which the fixed or semi-fixed multi-words or sentences may be treated as ready-made units in the language communications rather than "language segments", as once learnt and stored by the learners, they can be recalled and retrieved easily (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). The fact that the formulaic chunks helps learners facilitate the language production and ease the burden of the language processing and shorten the gap between the language formation and output of the exact target language in the mind to achieve language fluency, authenticity, exactness and learning efficiency and thus arouse an ever-increasing concern and interest of many linguists and foreign language instructors in recent years.

In retrospect of the history of Second Language Acquisition study and research, language input has been a hot topic and received much attention from many scholars. In 1980s, American linguistic Krashen put forward the "Input Hypothesis" which claims that "humans acquire language in only one way----by understanding messages or by receiving

comprehensible input" (Kreashen, 1985), in which Krashen terms the learner's current level "i", and the level that the learner will get to next, "i +1" and he insists that we acquired language by understanding input that is only slightly beyond our current level of acquired competence and that for a teacher great attention should be attached on the input of both "i" and "1" in the teaching process. According to Krashen's "Input Hypothesis", the understanding of the input "1" promote the learners' language acquisition, therefore, the most important thing is to make it possible for the learners to be exposed to as much comprehensible input as possible.

Though a host of researches on lexical chunks, language input and language output, such as English writing, have been conducting respectively, rare research on the relationship of the above three theories have been done before. Based mainly on the theories of Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, 2000), Lewis(1997,2000) and Krashen (1985), the author here proposes and explores the effect of lexical chunks input on the Chinese learners' English writing by contrastive analyses of the experiment data. Hence three research questions are formulated as follows in this thesis based on the comparison between the traditional teaching method and the lexical approach in writing:

(1) What relationship between the input of lexical chunks and the quality of the learners' IELTS writing?

(2) What correlation between the number of lexical chunks used by the learners and the quality of their IELTS writing?

(3) What the effects of input on the learners' mastering of lexical chunks?

Experiment, lasting for about 8 weeks (form October 15 to December 15, 2008), was carried out for those purpose in the author's IELTS writing class, in which the students would take IELTS examinations and the participants of which are 60 students chosen after the pre-tests with their scores almost at the same level and at the ages from 16 to 18. The author divided them randomly into two groups, one appointed as the Experimental Group consisting of 21 female and 9 male students and the other as the Control Group including 22 female and 8 male students. The two groups used the same text books and have the same classes every week while the difference is that only the Experimental Group is given the instructions, various interesting activities and exercises related to lexical chunks aiming at

aiding the participants to establish the concept of chunks and making them use lexical chunks consciously and the Control Group is taught in the traditional teaching method, i.e., students mainly learn discrete words by means of bilingual word lists and rote learning. After 8 weeks, four exams of the same paper were carried out in the two groups at the end of the experiment and statistic analyses of the four tests' results are made in terms of the scores and number of lexical chunks, from which it is can be found that the scores of Experimental Group has greatly improved much more than that of the Control Group. Of course, there are many factors that affect the writing such as individual writing ideas, the acquired knowledge and the writing skills except for the language materials. However, the author mainly discussed the language accuracy, fluency, appropriacy, coherence and completeness influenced by the input of lexical chunks.

The experiment verifies the necessity of input of lexical chunks in English writing teaching course, which can help the students improve their language accuracy, validity and promote the learners' language competence so as to get a higher score.

Although some limitations still exist in this study, such as the short period and only a small number of participants, who have special learning purpose, it has yielded some useful findings which are believed to have great implications for later foreign language learning and teaching.

Key words: lexical chunks; input hypothesis; IELTS writing

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Need for the Study

Some applied linguistics such as Peters, A.M (1983), Michael Lewis (1997), Wong Fillmore (1976), Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000), etc sate that language consists of ready-made lexical chunks or formulaic expressions stored in human's brains. Then Michael Lewis (1997) and James R. Nattinger (2000) apply this language theory to language teaching and name it as "Lexical Approach", in which, learning ready-made lexical chunks of unanalyzed language is crucial, which has aroused a lot discussion and lead to many teaching practice in the language-teaching field in the western countries.

One reason why lexical chunks is thought-provoking in the teaching process is that the EFL learners often painstakingly compose, word by word, a phrase or sentence that a native like user would have a ready-made "chunk" or combination. Another reason is that there is some evidence to support the belief that language learners can and do natural acquire chunks as easily as they can acquire words. Cowie (1998:136) argues that the existence of lexical units in a language learners store and reuse them as they are to generate them from scratch. The widespread "fusion of such expressions, which appear to satisfy the individual's communicative needs at a given moment and are later reused, is one means by which the public stock of formulae and composites is continuously enriched". Lexical chunks fill the gap between grammar, on the one hand, and vocabulary on the other. In fact, some people talk about "lexicalized grammar" near one end of this cline, and "grammaticalised lexis" near the other. As a result, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of lexical chunks in English writing teaching. Both Sinelair (1991) and Lewis (1997) stress that acknowledge of grammar helps us to understand and generate what is possible in a language, whereas the knowledge of lexis and lexical phrases shows us what is typical or probable in that language.

In those days, some Chinese linguistics explored how lexical chunks would help Chinese students to use lexical chunks in the acquisition of second language. Especially,

writing is one of the most difficult tasks in English teaching. There are many researchers studying it from different aspects. Some researchers studied this problem by analyzing students' sentences patterns in English writing and hold that it was the Chinese sentence patterns that obstructed students in expressing their ideas and some researchers studied the students' English writing by looking into the students' thinking patterns and thought that different thinking patterns in Chinese and English would influence Chinese EFL learners' writing. While other researchers thought students' mother tongue transfer would influence their English writing.

Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000) describe this language production like this: "for a great deal of time anyway, language production consists of piecing together the ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation". Native speakers retain many prefabricated lexical chunks in the memory. Language fluency and accuracy are achieved largely by retrieving and combining ready-made chunks of language. According to Lewis (1997) the ability to chunk language successfully is central to understanding of how language works. Lexical chunks can help Chinese EFL learners organize the structure of a composition effectively and improve their writing speed as lexical chunks can be learnt and stored in brain as whole and when combined, are easily produce continuous coherent text and some of them can be employed as structural organizers. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that mastering lexical chunks is essential for Chinese EFL learners in their written discourse.

However, how to master lexical chunks effectively and use them consciously is crucial to the improvement of the EFL learners' English and it is very difficult for them in their writings. A noted scholar in second language acquisition theory and research, Susan Gass (1997), believes that the concept of input is perhaps the single most important concept of second language acquisition and no individual can learn second language without input of some sort. In fact, she said "no model of second language acquisition does not avail itself of input in trying to explain how learners create second language grammars" (Gass, 1997:1). Input has played a significant role in second language acquisition. Toady, all theories in SLA research accord input an important role in how learners create linguistic systems (Van Pattern, 2003).

In 1980s, American linguistic S. D. Krashen put forward the "Input Hypothesis" in

which he claims that "humans acquire language in only one way----by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input" and that "the most important thing is to make it possible for the learners to be exposed to as much comprehensible input as possible" (Kreashen, 1985) which implies that communicative approach we have been pursuing can be rally fulfilled with exposure to great amount of comprehensible input.

Greatly influenced by Krashen, the author believes that exposing learners to the right amounts of the correct input of lexical chunks will lead to better acquisition, which will be significantly helpful in the learners' writings. Input of lexical chunks is expected to increase the chances that students will be aware of target language items in the process language production in writings. That is to say, in the process of language writing, learners need to get necessary and sufficient input of lexical chunks which lead to a successful language production for their writings. As the increasing number of people who plan to study or work abroad, IELTS, as one of the international English tests, is gaining swiftly in popularity in China, in which there are two writing tasks which most of Chinese student think it is really difficult for them to improve their writing quality. The author thinks it is significant and helpful to find a new effective way to teach the IELTS writing.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Since lexical chunks are so vital to language learning, it is significant to investigate the relationship between the input of lexical chunks and the language output in writing. As the experiment done in the author's IELTS writing class, the effects of lexical chunks inputting on writing I discuss in the study are confined to the IELTS writing, for which some questions regarding the effects of the lexical chunks on IELTS writing are formulated as followings:

(1) What relationship between the input of lexical chunks and the quality of the learners' IELTS writing?

(2) What correlation between the number of lexical chunks used by the learners and the quality of their IELTS writing?

(3) What the effects of input on the learners' mastering of lexical chunks?

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter is the brief introduction of the thesis. The second chapter makes an introduction to the definition, classification, and roles of lexical chunks and the theory of Input Hypothesis. Chapter three presents the research design, including the objectives, the participant description, and experiment procedures. The data which collected form the experiment is shown and analyzed in the Chapter four. A conclusion is drawn in chapter five followed by some pedagogical implications and the limitations of the thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Lexical Chunks

2.1.1 The Definition of Lexical Chunks

The importance of the language chunks in the teaching of EFL is being studied by many researchers. However, there is no fixed term accepted universally for the language chunks, for which, more than forty terms could be found in the existing literature such as lexical chunks, lexical phrases, formulaic speech, ready-made expressions, lexicalized sentences stems, multiword units and prefabricated phrases.

Becker is among the early researchers who propose the concept of "lexical phrase" and he points out that we use " ready-made frameworks on which to hang the expression of our ideas, so that we do not have to go through the labor of generating an utterance every time we want to say something"(Becker, 1975:17). In the abstract of *The Phrasal Lexicon*, Becker(ibid.) points out that "most utterances are produced in stereotyped social situations where the communicative and ritualistic functions of language demand not novelty, but rather and appropriate combinations of formulas, clichés, idioms, allusions, slogans, and forth. Language must have originated in such constrained social contexts, and they are still the predominant arena for language production, therefore an understanding of the phrase use is basic to the understanding of language as a whole" (ibid.). This means that words in a formulaic sequence are "glued together" and stored as a single "big word" (Ellis, 1996:111).

Moon defines the lexical chunks as"vocabulary items which consist of sequence of two or more words" (Moon, 1997:43). This sequence of words semantically or syntactically forms a meaningful and inseparable whole. Revolutionarily he holds that lexical chunks are the result of lexical process of fossilization and word-formation rather than the result of applying linguistic rules during language production.

Nattinger and DeCarrico defined as "lexical chunks of language of varying length, or

the multi-word lexical phenomena that exist somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax, conventionalized form or function composites that occur more frequently and have more idiomatically determine meaning than the language that is put together each time whatever the term, they are an important feature both in language use and language acquisition" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 2000). These phrases include short, relatively fixed phrases such as *a ___ ago, or longer phrases or clauses such as if I X, then I Y, the __er X, the __er Y*, each with a fixed, basic frame, with slots for various fillers *(a day ago, a month ago, the higher X, the more X, the more Y)*. Each is associated with a particular discourse function, such as expressing time, a month ago, or relationships among ideas *(the more X, the more Y)*.

Michael Lewis insists that language consists of not traditional grammar and vocabulary, but often of multi-word prefabricated chunks. In other words, lexis is central in creating meaning and grammar and plays a subservient managerial role. He maintains that "instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions, rather than trying to break things into ever smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in large , more holistic ways"(Michael Lewis, 1997:57). Chunks include collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions and idioms, and according to him, occupy a crucial role in facilitating language production, being the key to fluency.

Combing what all the linguists have defined, I think that lexical chunks are frequently-occurred, fixed or semi-fixed multi-words or sentences which are acquired as wholes in the process of language acquisition. Moreover, they can be recalled and used automatically as a whole rather than generated from grammatical rules.

2.1.2 The Classification of Lexical Chunks

Though there is no generally agreed set of categories of lexical chunks in use, many linguists or applied linguists present their classification from different perspectives, obviously their classifications are overlapping. Here Nattinger and DeCarrico's classification is introduced.

Nattinger and DeCarrico provide a detailed classification of lexical phrases according

to form and function with four structural criteria. The first criterion has to do with their length and grammatical status; the second, with whether the phrase has a canonical or non-canonical shape; the third, whether the phrase is variable or fixed; and the fourth, whether the phrase is continuous or discontinuous, that is, whether it consists of an unbroken sequence of words whether it is interrupted by variable lexical fillers. According to the four criteria, lexical chunks can be categorized into the following four types (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992:37-47).

a) Ploy words

Polywords are short phrases like individual lexical items and can be both canonical and non-canonical and allow no variability and are continuous. Polywords are associated with a wide variety of functions, such as expressing speaker qualification of the topic at hand, relating one topic to another, summarizing, shifting topics, and so on. Take some phrase for example: canonical polywords such as *for the most part, what on earth, as a result*, etc; non-canonical such as *all in all, so far so good, by and large* etc.

b) Institutionalized expressions

Institutionalized expressions are lexical phrases of sentence length, usually functioning as separate utterances, which mostly are canonical and invariable and mostly continuous. They are proverbs, aphorisms, formulas for social interaction, and all of those chunks that a speaker has found efficient to store as units. They are used for quotation, allusion, or frequently direct use. Some of these may be general phrases used by almost everyone in the speech community, such as *how are you?* While others may be more idiosyncratic phrases that an individual has found to be an efficient and pleasing way of getting an idea, such as *give me a break, have a nice day.* They are mainly continuous, but at times discontinuous pairs frame chunks of entire text, such as *once upon a time...... and they lived happily ever after.* Examples for the canonical institutionalized expressions are *how you do, nice meeting you, have a nice day*, etc; examples for non-canonical institutionalized expressions are *long time no see, be that as it may,* etc.

c) Phrasal constrains

Phrasal constrains are short-length to medium-length phrases which can be both canonical and non-canonical and allow variation of lexical and phrasal categories (NP, VP,

Advp, N, V, Adj, Adv, etc.) and are mostly continuous. As with polywords, phrasal constraints are associated with a wide variety of functions. In the following examples, the slots indicate the positions filled by paradigmatic substitutions. For example, *a ___ ago (a day ago, a year ago), see you ___ (see you soon, see you later), as far as I ___ (as far as I know)* are canonical phrasal constraints; *the ___er the ___er (the sooner the better, the busier the happier), what with___ (what with this weather and all)* are non-canonical phrasal constrains.

d) Sentence builders

Sentence builders are lexical phrases that provide the framework for whole sentences. They contain slots for parameters or arguments for expression of an entire idea. These phrases can be both canonical and non-canonical. They allow considerable variation of phrasal (NP, VP) and causal (s) element. They are both continuous and discontinuous. In the example below, the slots that contain the variable parameters or arguments are marked by capitalized letters (usually X, Y and Z) to distinguish these positions from the slots in phrasal constrains. Examples for canonical sentence builders like *I think X (I think he has arrived, I think it is possible.), not only X, but also Y (not only has he arrived, but also his sister.)*; example for non-canonical sentence builders like *the ___er X, the ___er Y(the sooner he arrived, the earlier he could see his sister.)*

In the experiment carried out in my study, Nattingar & DeCarrico's classification of lexical chunks above are used, that is, polywords, institutionalized expressions, phrasal constrains and sentence builders..

2.1.3 The Functions of Lexical Chunks in Language Acquisition

### 1) Helping Internalizing and Establishing Grammatical Rules

Many researchers have found that grammatical rules are generated as a result of understanding and using the prefabricated language. Sinclair (1991) once pointed out that words and phrases tend to co-occur with certain grammatical features, or grammatical patterns, such as *"to-infinitive" and "-ing"* forms. Pawley and Syder (1983:191) consider

institutionalized or lexicalized sentence stems as "a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed" such as *"what I think is ..."* and *"come to think it..."* and estimated that native speakers have at least hundreds of thousands of such units. Neither can we ignore the finding of corpus linguistics as regards the collocational behavior of so-called "grammar words" such as prepositions (*e.g. off in the following phrases: a little way off, be badly poorly off, be better off, be far off)* (Kennedy, 1991)or delexicalized verbs (*e.g. do, go, look, set, put*) (Sinclair, 1991). Kennedy writes that "The extent to which collocations occur...suggests that it may be possible to teach some of what has normally been considered as grammar in terms of vocabulary" (Kennedy, 1991:216).

The process of rules of grammar is generated from the acquisition of unanalyzed chunks is represented as the following chart.

The Process of rule generation (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992)
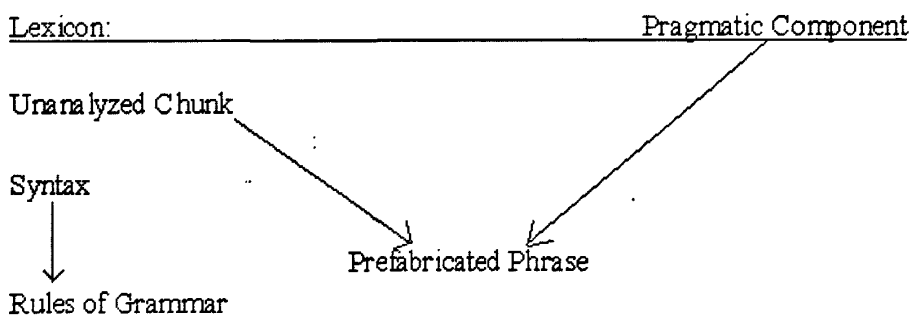
The figure indicates that prefabricated phrases are learnt first as unanalyzed chunks which treated as an unanalyzable unit by the language beginners, just like any single word in their vocabulary. The important point is that these chunks are learnt together with their associated functions in context, whereas knowledge of the associated function in context is a matter of pragmatic competence. Generally, in the process of acquiring other chunks with similar syntactic patterning (*I-want-to-get-up, I-want-my-ball, I-want-a-cookie*), the learner

detaches the pattern from its connection in context, and analyzes and generalizes it into regular syntactic rules. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that when syntactic rules emerge and become part of grammatical competence, the conventionalized association between lexical phrase as a chunk and its function in context is retained.

Since most phrases can be analyzed by regular grammatical rules and classified into patterns, learning phrases can help learners understand grammatical rules of the language. Once a chunk is known, it can be analyzed and segmented into its consistent words. This can occur when some variability is noticed in a lexical chunk. For example, after the phrase *How are you today?* is repeated and heard several times, it may be acquired as a chunk with the function of "a greeting". However, the learner may later notice the phrases *How are you this evening?* or *How are you this fine morning?*. At that point, the learner may realize that the underlying structure is actually *How are you,* where the slot can be filled with a time reference. The learner s then aware that what fits in the slot is a separate unit from the rest of the phrase, which opens the door to learning that lexical unit. Eventually, the entire lexical chunk may be analyzed into separate words, although it may continue to be stored as a whole because of its utility. Because this segmentation also involves syntax, it has been suggested that it can also lead to grammatical acquisition. Gradually, in the process of lexical chunk learning and using, some grammar rules have been internalized and established.

2) Easing the Language Processing

Another role that lexical chunks play is that they save processing resources. As was mentioned above, lexical chunks are stored and retrieved as a whole, which certainly allow for faster processing. Becker considered that lexical chunks give us ready-made framework on which to hang the expression of our ideas, so that we do not have to go through the labor of generating an utterance when we want to say anything (Becker, 1975:17). In the research made by Pawley and Syder, they give an account of one phenomenon that native speakers show a high degree of fluency when describing familiar experiences or activities in familiar phrases, which is attributable to what they called 'native-like fluency'(Pawley &

Syder,1983:208). It is seen as the ability native speakers have to produce long stings of speech which exceed their capacity of their encoding and decoding speech. For lexical chunks "coming ready-made, need little encoding work", the learners can "do the work of constructing a larger piece of discourse by expanding on or combining ready-made constructions" (ibid.). In this way, people can save their efforts in language processing. In similar vein, Ellis also points out that lexical chunks require no more decoding effort than "big word" (Ellis, 1998:11).

What is worth mentioning is the processing of discontinuous lexical chunks such as phrasal constraints and sentence builders. Although there must be some analytic processing involved in slotting words or morphological forms into an established frames, there is less effort in that than in creating the whole construction from scratch. Apparently, the reason why lexical phrases provide a short-cut for processing and overcome processing constraints is that they are stored and extracted as wholes. This feature of lexical chunks makes languages users access the mental lexicon to retrieve a piece of "ready-made" language appropriate to a particular context.

3) Facilitating the Language Production

In addition to language processing, language production can reap a lot of benefits form lexical chunks. Language use is so complicated a job that many aspects should be attended to, such as the syntactic structure, the lexical choice, and the register. Possession of a large stock of lexical chunks simplifies the task of production because learners don not have to choose the exact wording from his metal lexicon word by word and apply syntactic rules but retrieve lexical chunks as a whole. This more efficient retrieval permits learners to direct their attention to the large structure of the discourse, rather than keeping it focused narrowly on individual words as they are produced.

In language production, it is a puzzle that native speakers convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also native-like. Pawley and Syder discussed this phenomenon and explained it by the linguistic capability "native like selection" (Pawley & Syder, 1983:192). In their opinion, native speakers have the ability to select what is

natural and idiomatic from among the range of grammatically correct paraphrases. Through an analysis of "native-like selection" and "native-like fluency", Pawley and Syder pointed out that lexical chunk serve as the building blocks of language production and provide existing models for novelty and creation (ibid.). Therefore, they play a vital part in both speech and writing, contributing to the ease, fluency and appropriacy with which learners can speak or write. It is reasonable to say that language users then to apply frequently used lexical chunks into language production and achieve native-like selection as well as native-like fluency.

2.2 Lexical Approach

2.2.1 Lexical Approach by Michael Lewis

We could not discuss vocabulary teaching without mentioning Michael Lewis(1993), who is one of the leading revolutionists against the traditionally standard English teaching, who thinks that lexical chunks are basic units of language, rather than single words or grammatical structures and that they play a central role in language acquisition. It is a crucial aspect of language teaching language successfully to raise student' awareness of lexical chunks and develop their ability to "chunk". Thus he has written two books *The Lexical Approach* (1993) and *Implementing the Lexical Approach: putting theory into practice* (1997) about lexis-focused theories and how to apply lexical chunks to language teaching. These two books have gained much popularity and attention in the language-teaching field since publication.

The Lexical Approach has received great interest in recent years as an alternative to grammar-based approaches, which makes a distinction between vocabulary which are traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meanings and lexis which includes not only the single words but also the word combinations that we store in our mental lexical. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical chunks as unanalyzed wholes, and that these

chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993:95). Advocators of Lexical Approach argue that language consists of meaningful chunks that, when combined, produce continuous coherent text.

The fundamental principle of the Lexical Approach is "language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar." It means that lexis is central in creating meaning and grammar and plays a subservient managerial role. In other words, lexical chunks offer far more language generative power than grammatical structures, which concentrates on developing learners' proficiency with lexis, or words and word combination. As a result, instruction focuses on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently rather than originally created sentences.

Other key principles include:

（1）The grammar and vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language consists of multi-words "chunks".

（2）A central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness of "chunk" and developing their ability to "chunk" language successfully.

（3）Although structural patterns are known as useful, lexical and metaphorical patterning are accorded appropriate status.

（4）Collocation is integrated as an organizing principle within syllabuses.

（5）The central metaphor of language is holistic--an organism; not atomistic--a machine.

（6）It is the co-textual rather than the situational element of context which are of primary importance for language teaching.

（7）Grammar as a receptive skill, involving the perception of similarity and difference, is prioritized.

（8）Receptive skills, particularly listening are given enhanced status.

Lewis suggests that pedagogical chunking should be a frequent classroom activity, as students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed and gradually develop ways, not of assembling parts into wholes, but of identifying constituent it within the whole. The primary purpose of the teaching activities adopted by teachers is receptive, awareness-raising of lexical chunks, rather than formal teaching in a high-anxiety learning

circumstance (Lewis, 1993).

In his own teaching design, Lewis proposed a model that comprises Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment, unfortunately, he does not lay out any instructional sequences exemplifying how he thinks this procedure might operate in actual language classrooms. Nevertheless, it involves a change in the teacher's mindset of English teaching.

2.2.2 Lexical Approach by Nattinger and DeCarrico

Besides Michael Lewis(1993), in the book *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching,* Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) present their teaching approach by applying lexical chunks, in which they consider lexical phrases to be important for language teaching because there exist an interface of syntax and lexicon, usage and use, competence and performance, and such chunks have been shown to be key units in both first and second language acquisition and they claim that teaching lexical can help learners ease frustration, promote motivation and fluency, since lexical phrases can be stored and retrieved as whole chunks.

This approach avoids the shortcomings of relying too heavily on either theories of linguistic competence, or theories of communicative competence, or theories of communicative competence. Though the focus is on appropriate language use, the analysis of regular rules of syntax is not neglected. In comparison with Lewis' Lexical Approach, Nattingger and DeCarrico's teaching approach is only tentative and demands refinement. However, it still provides some insights in applying lexical chunks to language teaching, for which the author also have been trying to find out a good instructional sequences in the teaching practice.

2.3 IELTS Writing

2.3.1 A Retrospect on IELTS

IELTS stands for International English Language Testing System. It is jointly owned by

UCLES (The University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate), the British Council and IDP Education Australia. IELTS is a test for people who must demonstrate English language proficiency to gain entry to universities or training programmers in English-speaking countries and for immigration purposed to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. IELTS is also useful for entry to some professions in the UK and Australia. Available world wide, it is the most widely recognized assessment of English language proficiency for overseas candidates wishing to study or train in tertiary institutions in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and within Europe. IELTS is also accepted by an increasing number of universities in the United States. IELTS is gaining swiftly in popularity in China and tests are given at an ever-increasing number of centers, currently 21, all of them well-known universities.

IELTS tests the four main areas of language proficiency: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Candidates planning to study at undergraduate or postgraduate level must take the academic versions of the writing and reading modules. Candidates wishing to enroll in vocational training or secondary school or to undertake work experience, or to emigrate to Australia, Canada or New Zealand should take the General Training module. The two modules have different tests for the writing module.

2.3.2 The Characteristics of IELTS Writing

The writing module is the third of three sub-tests after listening and reading. The writing module lasts for 60 minutes and comprises two tasks: one is at least 150 words and the other at least 250 words. The writing tasks are set on a variety of subjects chosen for their suitability for candidates entering university or further training. In fact, IELTS writing is different from some other English language tests such as TEM 4 or CET 4 or 6. Firstly, students have to write a total of 400 words in 60 minutes, twice as much as in TEM 4. Thus, the test is very demanding, because candidates have to show not only the mastery of the appropriate language but also the rhetorical language that is required for written communication in English in the logical, organized way that is required in the English-speaking environment in which they hope to study, train or live. Of course, it is for

this reason that the IELTS test is becoming even more highly regarded around the world and indeed the only English language test accepted for immigration purposed by Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Indeed, the IELTS writing test is such a good measure of linguistic ability that students can benefit a lot.

The IELTS test consists of two categories catering to the different purposes of people sitting the test. One is for those who want to immigrate into an English-speaking country while the other is for those who want to go abroad to study. Due to the difference lying in their different purpose, the difficulty of their test papers also varies. As for the writing with the immigration group, it contains a letter as the first task and an argumentation or report as the second while with regard to the paper for the people whose main purpose is to study abroad, the first task is the description of a diagram, chart or diagram and second task is, similar to that of the immigration group, an argumentation or report. Though each paper is composed of two parts, the second, accounting for 60 to 70% of the total score. Therefore, if he examinees want to do a good job in the writing test, the importance of the second task can never be ignored. As a matter of fact, most of the examinees have great difficulty just in fulfilling the second task. Therefore, the errors made by the candidates have been sorted out and categorized in order to explore and ideal way to help the IELTS candidates to reach their goals, which, in turn, might be able to help students enter other kinds of tests such as TEM 4 or CET 6.

2.3.3 The Evaluation Standards of IELTS Writing

There are four evaluation standards of the IELTS writing, that is, task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources and grammatical range. Task response includes three aspects: topic, content, position and structure. The content should be relevant, the position clear and effective and the structure logic. For coherence and cohesion, mainly polywords such as *first of all, in the first place, to begin with, at present, for one thing*, etc. will be used to make the composition more logically. About lexical resources, words should be precise with a wide range of expressions, that is to say, words should be shown in variety. For example, to describe a good man, many students tend to use the simple adjectives such

as good, kind, wise, nice, clever, great instead of ambitious, tactful, eloquent, charismatic which give an concrete impression. Finally, whether the sentence is good or not depends largely on the accuracy of sentence structure and richness, sentence length and complexity as well as the logic of formality.

2.4 Lexical Chunks in Written Discourse

Lexical chunks serve as an aid for learners to produce speech and writing to a large extent. Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000) describe this language production like this: "for a great deal of time anyway, language production consists of piecing together the ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation". Similarly, Wray and Perkins (2000) claim that lexical chunks offer advantages in the construction of discourse by pacing the appearance of novel material or conveying the new message. As Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000) said "for a great deal of time anyway, language production consists of piecing together the ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation" it is helpful for the Chinese EFL learners to retain many prefabricated lexical chunks in their memory then retrieve and combine ready-made chunks of language in their writing discourse.

2.4.1 Characteristics of Lexical Chunks in Written Discourse

Lexical chunks have different functions in different discourses. According to Nattinger and DeCarrico, written language may be both interactional and transactional. For example, in our daily life, social conversations which may be produced to maintain our social relationships are viewed as interactional, in which we often use lexical chunks to perform functions such as greeting, introducing oneself, refusing or other communicative purpose, which serve as social interactional markers or necessary topic to maintain social relationship in the conversation (Nattinger & DeCarrio, 2000).

On the other hand, our purpose is to transmit information in some other discourses, in which lexical chunks that predominate are those that function as discourse devices to mark high-level information and signal the overall direction and organization of the discourse.

Nattinger and DeCarrio point out two major characteristics of lexical chunks in transactional discourse are distinct from those interactional discourses: "integration" and "detachment" (ibid.: 84-85).

Integration is manifested generally by nominalized phrase, conjoined parallel phrases, impersonal phrases and relative clauses. For instance, frequent conversational clarifiers are *how should I put it?, What I'm trying to say is, You know, I mean.* But in transactional writing these become less personalized *(in his paper/article) X means/signifies/is considered to be/is taken to mean Y.* furthermore, interactional discourse is marked by intersentential linking conjunctions (and/but/or). Such intersentential co-ordination tends to encourage a "clause-chaining" style. However, transactional discourse is signified by subordinate clauses. Therefore, longer and more complexly integrated utterances occur in it. The syntax in transactional discourse is typically more structured than interactional discourse.

As for detachment, Nattinger and DeCarrico (ibid.) consider passive and literary lexical chunks to be indicators of detachment of transactional writing. To illustrate their point, they give some examples. For instance, to nominate a topic in conversation, common lexical chunks are such as *do you know/remember X?* However, in transactional discourse, we are more likely to find passive topic markers like *it is asserted/believed/noted that X.* The lexical chunks expressing cause and effect in interactional written discourse can be colloquial and idiomatic phrases such as the upshot is X, so then_____. However, the more literary and formal phrases such as a result, is attributable to ____ occur in transactional written discourse. Likewise, closing can be expressed by *see you later, well, that' about it in informal letters, whereas by in conclusion, to summarize* in essays.

The above examples illustrate marked differences in structure and idiomaticity, despite the similarities in function of these interaction and transactional written discourses. Part of pragmatic competence is the functions assigned to lexical chunks that are appropriate to interactiaonl discourse versus those appropriate to transactional discourse. Roughly speaking, lexical chunks interactional discourse, which are similar to those used in spoken discourse, tend to be more conversational in style, whereas lexical chunks tend to be more formal in transactional discourse.

2.4.2 Application of Lexical Chunks in Writing Discourse

Lexical chunks as signals of discourse functions, will help Chinese college students organize the structure of a composition effectively and improve their wring speed, that is, they may use less time on thinking how to open, how shift a topic, how to evaluate, and how to summarize, etc. After constructing a good framework, they may fill their arguments into it and explain them. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that mastering lexical chunks of structural organization is essential for Chinese college approach works in written discourse. We would like to investigate the framework in which lexical chunks are employed as structural organizers.

2.5 Krashen's Input Hypothesis

Input has played a significant role in second language acquisition. Susan Gass, a noted scholar in SLA theory and research, believes that the concept of input is perhaps the single most important concept of second language acquisition and no individual can learn second language without any input of some sort. In fact, "no model of second language acquisition does not avail itself of input in trying to explain how learners create second language grammars" (Susan Gass, 1997:1). Toady, all theories in SLA research accord input an important role in how learners create linguistic systems (Van Pattern, 2003). As one of the important theoretical constructs in SLA, input has been considered an important explanatory variable in second language development. Several aspects of input have been investigated in the SLA literature: comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), incomprehensible input (White L., 1987), apperceived input and comprehended input (Susan Gass, 1988), revealing the importance of input comprehension in SLA.

With respect to input research in SLA, it is the Input Hypothesis, proposed by Stephen Krashen that has been most influential and received most attention.

In 1980s, American linguistic Krashen put forward the "Input Hypothesis" claiming that "humans acquire language in only one way----by understanding messages or by

receiving comprehensible input"(Krashen, 1985). To be useful to the language learner, the input must be neither too difficult to understand nor too easy. This is conceptualized by Krashen in terms of the learner's current level, called i, and the level that the learner will get to next, called i +1.Learners acquire by understanding language that contains structure a little beyond their current level of competence, i.e. i+1. He suggests that we acquired language by understanding input that is only slightly beyond our current level of acquired competence. According to him, "the best methods are therefore those that supply "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. " He attaches so much importance to language input that he insists that the most important thing is to make it possible for the learner to be exposed to as much comprehensible input as possible and implies that communicative approach we have been pursuing can be rally fulfilled with exposure to great amount of comprehensible input(ibid.).

Greatly influenced by Krashen(1985), Michael Lewis (1993) believes that exposing learners to the right amounts of the correct input of lexical items will lead to acquisition, which fits in Krashen's language acquisition and input hypothesis.

Like the Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981) initially viewed input as the source of acquisition (Ellis, 1999:286). Long (1981) also argues that, when learners negotiate meaning by means of requests for clarification or confirmation checks, they can obtain interactionally modified input that both helps them to comprehend the input and focuses their attention on new or partially learnt linguistic forms, thus enabling their acquisition (Ellis, 1999:286). Namely, in light of making input comprehensible, to modify the interactional structure of the conversation between proficient and less proficient users of a language is none possible way. When formal second language features potentially available for SLA in a text are made comprehensible through modification, second language learners are expected to acquire them incidentally through exposures.

Chapter 3 Research Design

3.1 Objectives

In the study, some hypotheses regarding the effects of the lexical chunks input on IELTS writing are formulated. These hypotheses will be tested by the experiment of the participants' compositions. The overriding hypothesis is that the input of lexical chunks has some positive effects on IELTS writing. This general claim can be broken down into several more detailed questions:

(1) What relationship between the input of lexical chunks and the quality of the learners' IELTS writing?

(2) What correlation between the number of lexical chunks used by the learners and the quality of their IELTS writing?

(3) What the effects of input on the learners' mastering of lexical chunks?

Due to the limit of time and restriction of conditions the author can only carry out a small-scale experiment to testify the hypotheses instead of longitudinal experiment lasting for a much longer time. Admittedly, in the experiment there is no denying of the fact that there are many factors which affect the quality of writings, however, the effects of lexical chunks input on the quality of writing are discussed in the study is only confined to the following factors, that is, the completeness of the essay, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources, fluency, accuracy and grammatical range.

3.2 Participants

The participants are 60 students in the author's IELTS writing class, who are chosen after the pre-tests with their scores almost at the same level and at the ages from 16 to 18. The author divided them randomly into two groups, one appointed as the Experimental

Group consisting of 21 female and 9 male students and the other as the Control Group including 22 female and 8 male students. (EG stands for Experimental Group and CG for Control Group below).

3.3 Experimental Design

Experiment, lasting for about 8 weeks (form October 15 to December 15, 2008), was carried out in the author's IELTS writing class. In order to testify whether input of lexical chunks has effects on IELTS writing, the author of this experiment gave both the EG and the CG English writing classes with different ways of vocabulary teaching while the two groups used the same text books and have the same English writing classes every week.

In order to make sure that the students in EG and CG did not differ significantly in using lexical chunks before the instruction, independent-samples tests were used to make comparisons about both the score and number of lexical chums in the pretests, from which we can see that students in EG and CG were nearly at the same level in both score and the number of lexical chunks used in IELTS writing. From the pretests, it is seen that participants tend to use frequently some simple lexical chunks like "I think", "There are...", "for example" and so on. This shows that the participants have not mastered a wide range of lexical chunks and use the limited lexical chunks stored over and over again. It is also the case that a certain lexical chunk is repeated for several times in a single composition. Some of the lexical chunks may be overused, which make the essays less idiomatic. In a word, there is no significantly difference in the scores and the number of lexical chunks used in the pretest between the two groups.

During the experiment, the participants of the two groups were taught in different ways. In the CG, the participants are taught in the traditional teaching method, that is, students mainly learn discrete words by means of bilingual word lists and rote learning and the teacher put high emphasis on the meaning of single words during the whole process. The instruction of new words was limited to pronunciation, spelling and corresponding Chinese meaning, especially the literal meanings.

According to Krashen (1985), "the best methods are those that supply "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear". Therefore, for the EG the teacher give the instructions of lexical chunks and provide various interesting activities and exercises related to the lexical chunks in classroom, such as making sentences, translation exercises, dictation, blanking-filling exercises and cloze exercises as well as means of keeping learner's attention and interest in English learning. All these activities practiced in this empirical study aim at aiding participants in establishing the concept of chunks and making them use lexical chunks consciously.

During the experiment, in order to present the specific procedures of teaching lexical chunks in the EG, the author took the lexical chunks as an example to provide a detailed description of the teaching design, accompanied by a varied of awareness-raising and reinforcing activities and exercises. After 8 weeks, four tests of the same paper were carried out in the two groups at the end of the experiment and statistic analyses of the scores and the numbers of lexical chunks used in the compositions are collected and analyzed.

3.4 Teaching Procedures

Step One: Consciousness-raising of Lexical Chunks

In the Lexical Approach, the most important activity is to raise the learner's awareness of the lexical nature of language and its component chunks, for Michael Lewis (1997) believes that conscious awareness of what constitutes a possible chunk provides learners with a tool that enables them to process input more effectively. By developing students' conscious awareness of the language form and meaning, this approach is expected to cultivate there language awareness of all-rounded aspects of language. The comprehensive development of language awareness of lexical chunks will lead to success in language output.

Since students were not familiar with the concept of lexical chunks, the starting point should be to tell the participants of the EG what lexical chunks are. The teacher introduced

them the notion, classifications and importance of lexical chunks as well as different kinds of examples in simple way and paid more attention to inform students what kind of strings of words should be treated as chunks.

Step Two: Input of Lexical Chunks by Various Activities

The written discourse is full of words and multi-word expressions which are the first thing to be tackled for the learners during their writings. Traditionally, the teaching of vocabulary in writing class is mostly incidental, limited to presenting new items as they appear in writing. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other languages skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion. As a result, most of the students fell puzzled and lose confidence when they memorize large quantities of isolated words.

Lexical chunks exist in written text, and different genres have their own specific sets of typical chunks. In writing, important and common lexical chunks are a must for struggling readers. As teachers of English, we should give students opportunities to identify, organized and record lexical chunks to enlarge their vocabulary. Identifying chunks is not always easy and at least in the beginning. Apart from identifying chunks, it is important to establish clear ways of organizing and recording vocabulary.

Vocabulary learning should not be limited to the learning of single-word definition and usage. Instead, learners should be taught the various aspects of a word such as its common collocations and related grammatical patterns. Therefore, in the EG, special attention is directed to polywords, phrase constrains, collocations and expressions. As Lewis (1997) maintains "instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations and to present these in expressions, rather than trying to break things into ever smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in large, more holistic ways". It is reasonable to think that the inputting of lexical chunks to students comply with the cognitive law and can make the memorizing of vocabulary more efficiently. According these views, the author made various practices below to enhance the input of the lexical chunks to the participants in the EG.

1) Making Sentences

Make your own sentences with the following structures:

Categories	Examples
Polywords	to name but a few
	to begin with
	in the first place
	in the second place
Institutionalized Expressions	Many anthropogenic activities foul the air, contaminate the water and devastate the forests.
Phrasal Constrains	Given the
	dispose of
	in pursuit of
Sentence Builders	It is manifest that
	It is a fact that
	We have no....but to...

This is the easiest way to test whether students understand, memory the lexical chucks and use it correctly and appropriately in the real practice.

2) Substituting Exercises

In order to make the students understand the usage of frequently-appearing expressions in English, the teacher could ask the students to substitute the words appearing in the chunks. As a result, students gradually realized that these lexical chunks, which were normally ignored, are actually frequently used by native speakers. For example, when a sentence *"we have no alternative but to take immediate steps to address this situation"*, is given to students, the teacher will ask students to pick out the whole chunk "We have no...but to ..." from the sentence. Then, the participants were assigned to do some substitution drills in class, such as *We have no choice but to walk home at last* , which indicated that the participants began to use them consciously.

3) Translation Exercises

The practice of translating sentences was also assigned, which is closely related to the lexical chunks the students had just learned. The students were advised to do these exercises chunk-for chunk rather than word-for-word.

Translate the following sentences into English. Pay attention to the language expressions in the brackets.

1. 首先我们要必须尽最大努力提高公众意识。（in the first place）

2. 广告不要努力倡导使用环境友好型的容器。(spare no effort in ....)

3. 如果政府对白色塑料袋的生产和使用进行征税，那我们的白色污染就会少一点。

   (Provided that...)

4. 生态问题正在被恶化，因此，我们必须采取措施解决环境问题。

   (It is imperative that ...)

5. 如果政府提高公众的环境保护意识以促进环境的可持续发展可能会更好。

   (It is probably better if...)

4) Blanking-filling Exercises

Fill the blanks with the expressions given below, change the form when necessary.

Each sentence has a missing constituent. It is the participants' job to fill in the blanks with the appropriate lexical chunks through some context clues.

in performance   embark upon   take immediate steps to

1. Plastic containers are lighter in weight, cheaper in price and water-resistant _____.

2. We have _____ a "throw-away" era when plastic trash in dumped indiscriminately and irresponsibly.

3. We must _____ to address the situation.

5) Dictation

Sound as a kind of input can also reinforce the study of lexical chunks. Play the tape of the text and ask the participants in Experimental Group to pay attention to and write down the lexical chunks they hear.

6) Cloze Exercises

Gaps are made which must be filled with the correct lexical chunks.

_____the severity of this phenomenon, we have no _____ but to take immediate steps to address this situation. _____, we must _____to enhance people's awareness of how persistent and devastating non-biodegradable trash can be to our environment and our descendants'. The government and the technologists should _____ in advocating the use of environmentally-friendly containers._____, biochemical research must be launched here and now _____ effective means of converting non-biodegradable refuse to biodegradable refuse. And the government should allocate enough funding to such research on the corporate level. _____, retail stores and restaurants should strive to encourage their customers to reuse plastic packing items. A tax levied by the government on the use of plastic bags in businesses will, doubtless, help to curb this massive "white pollution".

Step Three: Inputting the Framework with Lexical Chunks

When writing a text, a mental representation of the information on a specific topic in text should be built. One important way to build a coherent mental representation for encoding and retrieving information from text is to utilize the structure in text (Grimes, 1975; Meyer, 1975; Man & Thompson, 1986). Because of limited processing capacity, readers can not remember and learn everything in a text, so some information more than others must be selected for deeper encoding and more cycles of processing or elaboration. Focusing on the super ordinate or top levels of the structure of text can help readers select the most important information for through encoding. Readers who use the structure strategy tend to remember more of what they read and to remember more of the important information than do those who do not use the strategy. Instructions about text structure have yielded positive effects on understanding and remembering information from text with children, young adults, and older adults (Gordon, 1990; Meyer, 1999; Polley, 1994). As the writing task is confined to argumentation in IELTS test, the structures and the functional lexical chunks frequently used for argument essays in the IELTS writing are given to the participants of EG as follows:

1. Opening or introduction: the main purpose of this part is to prime and state a topic. Polywords and sentence builders are frequently used for opening or introduction such as *At present/Currently/Recently/Nowadays/ over the last several years, a critical problem/ issue/ phenomenon has become the concern/the attention of the public; For a long time, it has been the case that X; It has been asserted/believed/noted that X; With the rapid/eye-catching/amazing/remarkable/steady development of/advance of/ improvement of/ progress of economy/ society/industry/ living standards, great changes have taken place in.......;At present/currently/recently/nowadays, there is/there has sprung up a heated/ a public/a general/ debate/discussion over/on /concerning the issue of/the problem of......*and so on.

2. Body: The body consists of the argument and the proof that demonstrate the argument points. There are different lexical chunks mainly the sentence builders with different functions to express assertion, agreement and disagreement. For example, for assertion, there are sentence builders used frequently used such as *It can be claimed/said/assumed that X; it seems certain /like/doubtfully that X; I /we maintain/ claim that X;* For agreement, *As far as I am concerned, I am in favor of......; To my mind, I strongly approve the ban.......;From my point of view/For my part/, I completely agree with that statement.; As to me, I am in favor of the former/the latter view.* For disagreement, sentence builders like *The statement sounds correct that......but after weighing in mind carefully, I disagree with it.; As far as I am concerned, I have to disagree with this because......; I don not think their argument can bear much analysis.; In my opinion, the answer to this question is definitely "no".; In my opinion, this proposal seems a bit absurd and goes to the extreme, I certainly disagree with this statement.*

3. Closing: lexical chunks for closing such as *in sum/in conclusion/on the whole/from all the evidence; On the whole, the pros outweigh the cons; There is probably some truth on both sides, consequently it is hard to come to an absolute conclusion. Although......results in some problems, I still believe that......; The demerits of ......should by no means make us blind to their merits. Therefore, what we must do is make sure that their positive effects are enhanced and their negative ones are eliminated as far as possible; Owing to the above-mentioned reasons, I strongly commit to the notion that....../we may arrive at/reach*

the conclusion that... ...; So if we take a careful consideration, it is not difficult to get to conclusion... ...; All in all, I would say the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. With the advance of society, if we encourage the merits and eliminate the drawbacks, we will ... ...

For some lexical chunks especially polywords have structural functions, the table below showing the lexical chunks of different functions used frequently in the IELTS writings was required to memorize by the participants in the Experimental Group.

Function	Lexical Chunks
Conditions	Providing that/Supposing/Supposed that/As long as/If not/If so
Purpose	So that/For fear that/In case/In order to/In order for...to.../So as to
Cause	Because of/Due to/Owing to/Now that/Seeing that/For that reason
Effect	As a result/As a consequence/In consequence
Alternative	On the other hand/Rather than
Rewording	In other words/In brief/In short/In actual fact/that is to say/To put it simply
Conceding	Even if/ Even though/In spite of/Except for/In any case/After all
Concluding	In conclusion/In summary/In sum/All in all/To conclude/To sum up
Listing	First of all/In the first Place/To begin with
Adding	In addition/As well/As well as/ What is more
Exampling	Such as/For example/For instance/As an illustration/In particular
Comparing	Similar to/Identical with/In like manner/In the same way
Contrasting	Different from/In contrast/By comparison/On the other hand/On the contrary
Emphasizing	In fact/No doubt/Above all/More important/Most important
Adding	In addition/ As well/As well as/What is more

During the experiment, the author provided sentence-completion exercises for participants of EG to practice and memorize some basic invariable or less variable lexical chunks during the inputting period. Then the author gave variations of these phrases as these participants had made progresses. And the basic outline of written discourse is shown to these participants, which are commonly used to express the function of each section, in

which way the lexical phrases can be systematically presented. Then, these participants began to practice piecing together the lexical phrases that are characteristic of particular sections and discovered effective ways of joining lexical phrases to create the structure of a written discourse. Finally, these participants can fill in the specific arguments to complete the whole essay with the functional structures received before.

Step Four: Assignment

After each class, the author assigned the participants of EG to write argumentation on the given topics.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Discussion

As described before, the purpose of the empirical study is to explore the relationship between the input of lexical chunks and the quality of writing by the IELTS learners, the correlation between the number of lexical chunks used by the learners and the quality of their writing and the effects of input on the mastering of lexical chunks, for which four writing tests were applied at the end of the experiment and the data of which is presented below:

4.1 Data Collection

4.1.1 The Proportion of Every Standard' Score to the Total Score

In the tests, the participants in both EG and CG were required to write argumentations by using the four different kinds of chunks respectively as possibly as they can. Table 4.1.1 shows the proportion of the score of every standard to the total score in the four tests.

Table 4.1.1 The proportion of the score of every standard to the total score in the four tests

Test	Group	Task Response	Coherence & Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
Test 1	EG	0.215	0.282	0.274	0.226
	CG	0.265	0.220	0.220	0.271
Test 2	EG	0.216	0.283	0.275	0.224
	CG	0.265	0.211	0.241	0.268
Test 3	EG	0.217	0.286	0.269	0.228
	CG	0.275	0.228	0.250	0.278
Test 4	EG	0.219	0.281	0.270	0.230
	CG	0.264	0.226	0.241	0.264

4.1.2 The Percentage of Each Category of Lexical Chunks at Three Levels

In order to examine which type of lexical chunks used mostly by IELTS learners, within-group comparison on four structural categories of lexical chunks is made by collecting the data from the EG at three different levels, that is, levels of low, intermediate and high score with 30 participants chosen from the EG for each level according to their bands. The band ranging from 0 to 4.5 is classified as low score, 5.0 to 6.5 as intermediate score and 7.0 to 9.0 as high score. Two independent variables are involved in the process. One is the IELTS learner's total words of their compositions and the other is the type of lexical chunks. The dependent variable is the percentage of each type of lexical chunks to the total words of each position.

Table 4.1.2 The percentage of each type of lexical chunks at three levels

Levels	Polywords	Institutionalized Expressions	Phrasal Constrains	Sentence Builders	Number of Participants
Low Score (0--4.5)	0.55%	0.20%	0.64%	0.84%	30
Intermediate Score(5.0--6.5)	0.59%	0.24%	0.83%	1.22%	30
High Score (7.0—9.0)	0.71%	0.36%	1.05%	1.36%	30

4.1.3 The Mean Number of the Four Categories of Lexical Chunks

Table 4.1.3 The mean number of the four categories of lexical chunks

Categories	Experimental Group	Control Group
Polywords	47	31
Institutionalized Expressions	23	11
Phrasal Constrains	70	36
Sentence Builders	93	48

Total Lexical Chunks	227	126
Total Words	6802	5673
Number of Participants	30	30

4.2 Data Analysis and Discussion

4.2.1 The Effects of Lexical Chunks Input on the Quality of Learners' IELTS Writing

4.2.1.1The Correlation between the Lexical Chunks Input and the Quality of Learners' IELTS Writing

As Table 4.1.1 shows that the proportions for coherence and lexical resources in EG are significantly different from those of in CG, that is, the proportions for coherence & cohesion and lexical resources in EG are higher than those of in CG (for coherence & cohesion 0.282 > 0.220; 0.283 > 0.211; 0.286 > 0.228; 0.281 > 0.226; for lexical resources 0.274 > 0.220; 0.275 > 0.241; 0.269 > 0.250; 0.270 > 0.241), it implies that the scores of the EG are higher than those of the CG in each test.

The reason why the percentages of coherence and lexical resources in EG are higher than those of in CG is that a great amount of lexical chunks with structural functions are used in the EG to make the compositions more logical and cohesive. For example, the participants in the EG can use various functional expressions and sentence builders as framework such as *in addition, what's more , further more, apart from, in the same way, as well as, it seems to me..., it is clear to me that..., as far as I am concerned ....* From Table 4.1.2 we also find that for each category of lexical chunks, the percentage of high level is higher than that of the intermediate level(1.36% > 1.22%; 1.05% > 0.83%; 0.36% > 0.24%; 0.71% > 0.59%) and the percentage of intermediate level is higher than that of low level(1.22% > 0.84%; 0.83% > 0.64%; 0.24% > 0.20%; 0.59% > 0.55%). This means that in the four tests, after the participants in the EG were input different types of lexical chunks

respectively, they are consciously aware of lexical chunks, which provide them with a tool that enables them to process input more effectively, and they tend to express their ideas by using of lexical chunks consciously instead of individual word.

Another obvious difference between the two groups found during the evaluation is that a great amount of lexical chunks such as plolywords, phrasal constrains and sentence builder provided in the class are used in the compositions of EG, that is to say, the participants in EG use more lexical chunks which received in the class, more accurate and precise than those in CG and the expressions in the compositions of EG are shown in variety, which lead to relatively higher scores.

While in the CG, the proportions of task response and grammatical range rate highly (0.265 / 0.271 > 0.220 / 0.220; 0.265 / 0.268 > 0.211 / 0.241; 0.278 / 0.275 > 0.228 / 0.250; 0.264 / 0.264 > 0.226 / 0.241). It is obviously shown that participants in CG tend to repeat the same word to express the same opinion due to the less input. As Krashen (1985) insists that the most important thing is to make it possible for the learner to be exposed to as much comprehensible input as possible and implies that communicative approach we have been pursuing can be rally fulfilled with exposure to great amount of comprehensible input. For the EG, the teacher deliberately gave a various practices to enhance the input of lexical chunks and these methods do not force early production, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input. However, for CG the participants had no the concept of lexical chunks in their minds, thus when they hang an expression of ideas, they have to go through the labor of generating an utterance word by word due to the less input.

From the contrast analysis above, we find that the input of lexical chunks do positively affect the quality of IELTS learners' writings. Lexical chunks contribute distinctly to IELTS learners of varied levels, improving more to learners of relatively higher level. It can be found that there is much variability in the forms of lexical chunks expressing the same function in high-score compositions as the participants have a diversity of lexical chunks. However, the participants at low score level are characterized by the monotony in expressions, for a limited number of lexical chunks are used and repetition occurs as the participants mastered only a limited number of lexical chunks. This may be due to the fact

that the participants at low level tend to construct sentences only based on direct translation from what they thought, but ignore the conventionality of expressions. However, most of the participants at high level tend to consider lexical chunks to be whole prefabricated strings stored in their brains and use them more flexibly and natively in writing when they retrieved from their brains after input.

4.2.1.2 The Correlation between the Number of Lexical Chunks Used by the Learners and the Score of Their IELTS Writing

As shown in the Table 4.1.3 the average number of words in the EG is larger than those of in the CG(6802 > 5673) as well as the four categories of the lexical chunks in the case(for polywords 47 > 31; institutionalized expressions 23 > 11; phrasal constrains70 > 36; sentence builders 93 > 48), which indicate that the participants in EG are able to produce longer texts than those in CG on average.

We can testify that there is significant difference in the number of lexical chunks between EG and CG after different teaching approaches. The proportions of phrasal constraints, sentence builders and polywords in EG are larger than those in CG due to the fact that the participants in EG have cultivated the language awareness of all-rounded aspects of language such as syntactic rules and culture and are more proficient in employing them than those in CG.

In a word, having awareness of using lexical chunks, the participants in EG can obtain interactionally modified input that not only helps them to comprehend the input but also focuses their attention on new or partially learnt linguistic forms, thus enabling their acquisition. Consequently they have made significant progress in the composition grades compared with the participants in CG. However, no significant difference was found in the CG in the pretest and the last posttest. That is to say, the two groups, which were at the same level before the experiment, now belong to different levels in IELTS writing. Meanwhile, it is clear that there is positive correlation between the number of lexical chunks used in the compositions and scores of the compositions.

This statistic significantly proves that inputting lexical chunks appropriately in the writing can facilitate the development of learners' abilities in good language use and provides learners with a tool that enables them to process input more effectively, thus enhancing IELTS writing performance.

4.2.2 The Effects of Four Types of Lexical Chunks Input on the Quality of Learners' IELTS Writing

From Table 4.1.2 we can find that the percentage of sentence builders at three levels are higher than that of phrasal constrains (0.84% > 0.64%; 1.22% > 0.83%; 1.36% > 1.05%), percentage of phrasal constrains higher than that of polywords (0.64% > 0.55%; 0.83% > 0.59%; 1.05% > 0.71%) and percentage of polywords higher than that of institutionalized expression (0.55% > 0.20%; 0.59% > 0.24%; 0.71% > 0.36%). As shown in Table 4.1.3, different types of lexical chunks have different effects on the quality of the writings by IELTS learners in either EG or CG, the largest proportion of lexical chunks is sentence builders, which is followed by phrases constrains and polywords with institutionalized expressions ranks last.

According to Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000), variability and discontinuity increase as the lexical chunks move form polywords through phrasal constraints, sentence builders and institutionalized expressions. This result above might be attributed to the different degree of variability and discontinuity of each type of lexical chunks.

The percentage of sentence builders is statistically significant, which contribute most to the improvement of IELTS learners' writing. Sentence builders provide the framework for a discourse with their greatest possibility of framing. At the same time, sentence builders, highly variable, allow considerable variation of phrasal and clausal elements to fill in the slots.

Ranking the second, lexical phrases appearing in the composition are those that signal the overall direction and organization of discourse. By nature, lexical and phrasal substitutions allow for less variation than those at the clausal level.

Polywords, quite short and simple, allowing less and no flexibility, are associated with a wide variety of functions such as discourse devices to signal contrast, addition, exemplification, summarizing, shifting topics and so on. Though a wide variety of functions, Polywords are used few in writing.

Finally, institutionalized expressions are of clausal length, fixed and continuous, consisting of an unbroken sequence of words and including proverbs and formulas in the speech. As institutionalized expressions allow no variability, they used less by the IELTS learners.

4.2.3 The Effects of Input on the Learners' Mastering of Lexical Chunks

From Table 4.1.3 we find that the EG use more lexical chunks in their compositions than the CG. In other word, the participants in EG have mastered more lexical chunks after the teacher's inputting of lexical chunks. Thus the inputting of lexical chunks has positive effects on the mastering of the lexical chunks. Firstly, we can find that the participants in EG can use lexical chunks consciously in their composition as the awareness of the lexical chunks of EG is cultivated and developed after the input they received. Secondly, as the awareness of the lexical chunks is increasingly enhanced, self-learning become possible for the learners, which can promote them to observe, recognize and learn the lexical chunks by themselves. Thirdly, the inputting of lexical chunks could cultivate the learners' collocation competence as the Lexical Approach stresses the function of lexical chunks and the process of language learning is characteristic of the awareness of these fixed, semi-fixed or free lexical chunks. With the Lexical Approach in mind, learners remind themselves of the possible collocation of any new lexical items whenever these lexical items appear in the discourse and consequently learn about how the collocated pairs of lexical items are actually used in real context. Fourthly, as Nattinger and DeCarrico (2000) suggested that language is retained in "chunks" or "lexical phrase" which appears to be much more numerous than has previously been suggested. They suggest that fluency is based precisely on these lexical phrases:

It is our ability to use lexical phrase that helps use to speak with fluency. This prefabricated speech has both the advantages of more efficient retrieval and of permitting speakers (and learners) to direct their attention to the larger structure of the discourse, rather that keeping it narrowly focused on individual words as they are produced. All this fits very neatly with the results of computational and language acquisition research (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 2000).

Many early researchers thought these prefabricated chunks were distinct and somewhat peripheral to the main body of language, but more recent research puts this formulaic speech at the very center of language acquisition and sees it as basic to the creative rule forming processed which follow (ibid.).

Since native speakers retain many lexical chunks and fluency is achieved mainly by combining these chunks, reducing processing difficulty, the way the native speakers naturally store and retrieve language reveals enormous implications for second language teaching and learning. "If students break up the language to which they are exposed in unhelpful ways, and store the wrong bits the advantage of storing chunks will be lost and tremendous processing demands will be made upon them as they attempt to re-created from scratch" (Lewis, 1993). For foreign speakers, the frequent use of lexical chunks, including sentence heads, frames and institutionalized utterances, is a survival strategy even though inappropriate on some occasions. It will help learners to deal with communicative situations unmanageable with their own competence. Without rich resources of formulaic language, L2 speakers would feel tongue-tied or frequently pause and hesitate in conversations (Schmidt, 1983). As has been mentioned above, Widdowson (1978) suggests that native speakers can better understand ungrammatical utterances with accurate vocabulary than those with accurate grammar and inaccurate vocabulary. There are good reasons for us to believe, with more accurate chunks, students can express themselves more fluently, at least in the early and intermediate stages.

To sum up, the input of lexical chunks results in the considerable differences between the EG and the CG and improves the quality of language acquisition.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief conclusion of the major finding is given first, and then followed by pedagogical implications and suggestions for further investigations. At last, several limitations of the present study are presented to end this thesis.

5.1 Major Findings in the Present Study

The experiment focuses on the effects of lexical chunks input on the quality of the IELTS writings, that is, to examine whether the participants of EG could incorporate the lexical chunks got from the input to the reconstruction of their writings and the comparisons between the EG and the CG about the number of lexical chunks used by the participants. Finally the effect of input on the learners' mastering of lexical chunks is discussed. Based on the data collected and results, several findings are listed below:

(1)There is a positive effect of input of lexical chunks on the quality of IELTS learners' language output in their writings. In the present study, the participants in the EG could notice more target lexical chunks during the process of input, consequently they could use more lexical chunks compared with the participants in the CG. In other words, during the production of language, participants who had sufficient input of lexical chunks can consciously retrieve those chunks which are input before. As a result, these lexical chunks promote them to write high quality of compositions. However, participants in the CG did not grasp more target lexical chunks. Therefore, the lexical chunks did not effectively help them to improve the quality of their compositions.

(2) The participants in EG are able to produce longer compositions than those in CG on average, who aware of the importance of these three categories of lexical chunks in composition writing and more proficient in employing them than those in CG. Consequently they have made significant progress in the composition grades in contrast with the participants in CG. This statistic significantly proves that inputting lexical chunks

appropriately in the writing can facilitate the development of learners' abilities in good language use and provides learners with a tool that enables them to process input more effectively, thus enhancing IELTS writing performance.

(3) Different types of lexical chunks have different effects on the quality of writing by IELTS learners in either EG and CG, the largest proportion of lexical chunks is sentence builders, which is followed by phrases constrains and polywords with institutionalized expressions used least. The percentage of sentence builders is statistically significant, which contribute most to the improvement of IELTS learners' writing. Sentence builders provide the framework for a discourse with their greatest possibility of framing. At the same time, sentence builders, highly variable, allow considerable variation of phrasal and clausal elements to fill in the slots. Ranking the second, lexical phrases appearing in the composition are those that signal the overall direction and organization of discourse. By nature, lexical and phrasal substitutions allow for less variation than those at the clausal level. Polywords, quite short and simple, allowing less and no flexibility, are associated with a wide variety of functions such as discourse devices to signal contrast, addition, exemplification, summarizing, shifting topics and so on. Though a wide variety of functions, Polywords are used few in writing. Finally, institutionalized expressions are of clausal length, fixed and continuous, consisting of an unbroken sequence of words and including proverbs and formulas in the speech. As institutionalized expressions allow no variability, they used less by the IELTS learners.

(4) For the effects of input on the learners' mastering of lexical chunks, we find that the EG use more lexical chunks in their compositions than the CG. In other word, the participants in EG have mastered more lexical chunks after the teacher's inputting of lexical chunks. That is to say, the inputting of lexical chunks has positive effects on the mastering of the lexical chunks. Firstly, we can find the participants in EG can use lexical chunks consciously in their composition as the awareness of the lexical chunks of EG is cultivated and developed after the input they received, which lead to the awareness of the many aspects of language, such as syntactic rules and culture and enable the participants' process input more effectively. Secondly, as the awareness of the lexical chunks is increasingly enhanced, self-learning become possible for the learners, which can promote them to observe,

recognize and learn the lexical chunks by themselves. Thirdly, the inputting of lexical chunks could cultivate the learners' collocation competence as the Lexical Approach stresses the function of lexical chunks and the process of language learning is characteristic of the awareness of these fixed, semi-fixed or free lexical chunks. With the Lexical Approach in mind, learners remind themselves of the possible collocate of any new lexical items whenever these lexical items appear in the discourse and consequently learn about how the collocated pairs of lexical items are actually used in real context. Fourthly, the input of lexical chunks promotes the fluency of the composition.

In a word, the effects of inputting of lexical chunks resulted in the considerable differences between the EG and the CG, which improved the quality of language acquisition.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions

More recent researches and instructors put the formulaic speech--lexical chunks at the very center of language acquisition and sees it as basic to the creative rule-forming processes which follow"(Nattinger & DeCarrico, 2000). From the cognitive review of language processing, it is known that storing and using lexical chunks may ease processing to improve language acquisition. At the same time, it saves the writer time to organize the discourse or plan the new information. On the other hand, because lexical chunks are conventionalized forms of a certain community, they are more efficient to learn than individual words to improve accuracy and idiomaticity of written discourse. From the conventional dimension of the definition for lexical chunks, it may be clear that formulaic language contributes to idiomaticity and accuracy of learner's output. Therefore lexical chunks play a very important role in second language acquisition. Learners may produce better compositions by using lexical chunks than what they can construct by scratching according to syntactic rules.

Since there are so many advantages of using lexical chunks in written discourses, instruction should not only focus on the input of individual words but also lexical chunks by drilling and frequency or salience in the input. Our teaching would center on the ready-made

units and the ways they can be pieced together, along with the ways they vary and the situations in which they occur. Researchers pointed out the importance of creating situations for learners to learn lexical chunks in contexts because the appropriate use of lexical chunks relies heavily on situations in which they occur.

What is more, more emphasis on different categories of lexical chunks should be put so that it make students more aware of lexical items, and provide ample opportunities for them to practice such language in the classroom.

As for the teachers, they need to make the lexical chunks in the input salient enough as salience is one of the important factors that contribute to acquisition from a cognitive point of view. In addition, the learning of lexical chunks may be complemented by the application of syntactic rules, as formulaic sequences are in fact combinations of smaller recombine elements (Wray, 2000:479). Wray claims that "when the number of prefabs in memory is large enough, syntactic rules are derived as help for the memory economized and rationalized process" (ibid.). Therefore, it is necessary to know a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns and a kit of rules to make whatever adjustment necessary according to contextualized demands (Widdowson, 1989).

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study is still elementary and experimental. There exist some limitations. Firstly, the period of the experiment is short. Secondly, this study included only 60 participants, which was considered a small sample and they have special purpose and the number of samples cases is not big enough to produce more meaningful results. In future research, sample cases could be selected on basis of L2 learners on a large scale with a larger size of participants, more reliable conclusions can be drawn and generalizability of the research is guaranteed.

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Appendix

Appendix I: The total scores and the scores of every standard in Experimental Group and Control Group in Test 1

Test 1

EG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
2	6.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.0
3	6.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
4	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0
5	8.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
6	5.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0
7	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
8	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
9	4.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	0.5
10	5.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5
11	6.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
12	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
13	6.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.5
14	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
15	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
16	5.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.5
17	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
18	5.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
19	7.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	1.0
20	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
21	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
22	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
23	7.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
24	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
25	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
26	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
27	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
28	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
29	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
30	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0

CG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	5.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
2	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
3	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
4	6.5	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.0
5	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
6	6.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
7	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.0
8	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
9	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
10	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
11	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
12	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
13	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
14	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
15	6.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
16	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
17	6.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
18	6.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
19	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
20	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
21	4.5	1.5	1.0 ..	1.0	1.5
22	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
23	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
24	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
25	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
26	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
27	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
28	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
29	6.5 .	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
30	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5

Appendix II: The total scores and the scores of every standard in Experimental Group and Control Group in Test 2

Test 2

EG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
2	5.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
3	5.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.5
4	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
5	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
6	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
7	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
8	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
9	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
10	7.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
11	6.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.0
12	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
13	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
14	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
15	7.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	1.0
16	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
17	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
18	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
19	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
20	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
21	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0
22	4.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	0.5
23	6.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
24	6.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
25	6.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.5
26	7.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
27	5.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5
28	5.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0
29	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
30	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5

CG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
2	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
3	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
4	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
5	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
6	6.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
7	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
8	6.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
9	6.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
10	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
11	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
12	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
13	6.5	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.0
14	6.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
15	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
16	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.0
17	5.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
18	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
19	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
20	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
21	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
22	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
23	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
24	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
25	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
26	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
27	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
28	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
29	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
30	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5

Appendix III: The total scores and the scores of every standard in Experimental Group and Control Group in Test 3

Test 3

EG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	5.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0
2	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
3	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
4	4.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	0.5
5	5.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5
6	6.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
7	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
8	6.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
9	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0
10	7.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
11	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
12	7.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
13	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
14	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
15	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
16	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
17	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
18	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
19	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
20	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
21	7.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
22	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
23	6.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	2.0
24	6.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.5
25	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
26	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
27	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
28	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
29	5.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
30	7.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	1.0

CG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	6.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
2	6.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
3	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
4	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
5	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
6	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
7	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
8	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
9	6.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
10	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
11	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
12	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
13	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
14	5.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
15	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
16	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
17	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
18	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
19	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.0
20	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
21	7.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
22	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
23	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
24	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
25	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
26	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
27	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
28	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
29	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
30	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5

Appendix IV: The total scores and the scores of every standard in Experimental Group and Control Group in Test 4

Test 4

EG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	6.5	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
2	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
3	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0
4	7.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	1.0
5	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
6	8.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
7	6.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
8	7.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0
9	5.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
10	6.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
11	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
12	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
13	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
14	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0
15	6.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.0
16	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
17	6.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
18	7.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
19	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
20	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
21	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
22	6.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.5
23	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
24	5.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0
25	5.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0.5
26	4.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0
27	7.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.5
28	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
29	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
30	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0

CG	Total Score	Task Response	Coherence& Cohesion	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range & Accuracy
1	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0
2	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
3	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
4	5.5	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.0
5	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
6	4.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
7	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
8	8.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
9	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
10	5.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
11	7.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.5
12	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
13	6.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.0
14	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
15	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
16	6.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	1.5
17	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
18	7.5	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.0
19	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
20	6.5	2.0	1.5	1.5	1.5
21	7.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5
22	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.0
23	5.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5
24	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
25	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
26	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5
27	5.5	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5
28	6.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
29	6.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
30	5.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5

Appendix V: The numbers of each structural category of lexical chunks In EG in four tests at three levels of low (0—4.5), intermediate (5.0--6.5) and high score (7.0—9.0)

Levels	Number of Students	Polywords	Institutionalized Expressions	Phrasal Constrains	Sentence Builders	Total Words
Low score (0--4.5)	17	17	6	20	26	3111
Intermediate (5.0--6.5)	74	89	37	125	185	15170
High score (7.0—9.0)	29	44	23	66	87	6380

Appendix VI: The criteria of scoring for IELTS writing

Band 9	fully operational command of the language, appropriate, accurate, fluent, with complete understanding.
Band 8	fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
Band 7	has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
Band 6	has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstands. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
Band 5	has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
Band 4	basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Have frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

Band 3	extremely limited user: conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
Band 2	no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situation and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
Band 1	essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possible a few isolated words.

Appendix VII: The four tests in the experiment

Test 1

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

> *Some people believe that visitors to other countries should follow local customs and behavior.*
>
> *Others disagree and think that the host country should welcome cultural differences.*
>
> Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experiences.

Write at least 250 words.

Test 2

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

> *Today, the high sales of popular consumer goods reflect the power of advertising and not the real*
>
> *needs of the society in which they are sold.*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experiences.

Write at least 250 words.

Test 3

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

In many countries school have severe problems with student behavior.

What do you think are the causes of this?

What solutions can you suggest?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experiences.

Write at least 250 words.

Test 4

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Creative artists should always be given the freedom to express their own ideas (in words, pictures, music or film) in whichever way they wish. There should be no government restrictions on what they do.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experiences.

Write at least 250 words.

Acknowledgements

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