ESL LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES WITH WEB-BASED CONCORDANCE IN FACILITATING PHRASAL VERBS ACQUISITION

KHAZAILA BINTI ZAINI

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2021

ESL LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES WITH WEB-BASED CONCORDANCE IN FACILITATING PHRASAL VERBS ACQUISITION

by

KHAZAILA BINTI ZAINI

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

April 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my highest gratitude to Allah SWT for giving me the opportunity and the endless help in completing my dissertation. First of all, I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Prof Dr Aswati Hamzah and Prof Dato Dr Abdul Rashid Mohamed. This dissertation would not have been possible without their patience in guiding me, the invaluable advices, and the insightful comments. Their understanding, kindness and support made the pursuit of my doctorate truly an exceptional experience. I truly thank them for imparting me so much knowledge during the completion of this dissertation. A very special gratitude goes next to my husband, Mohd Hisyam Hatimtai, for his support, patience, and enthusiasm all through my doctoral studies. His assistance made this all possible. I would really like to thank my children, Muhammad Khaliq Danial, Khairunnisa and Muhammad Khawarizmi. They make getting this degree much more meaningful. I especially would like to thank my father, Hj Zaini Hj Hashim, my in-laws and to my late mother Hjh Khairaton Mat Dali, dua and prayers to her, may Allah SWT shines mercy on her soul and grant her Jannah, Amin. Without their unconditional love and belief in me I would not be the person I am today. I owe a debt of gratitude to the students who participated in this study as well. And finally, I would like to thank all my family and friends who have showed untiring support over the course of my studies, and to that I am very grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNC   British National Corpus

BEPR   Bachelor in English and Public Relations

CALL   Computer-assisted Language Learning

DDL   Data-driven Approach to Learning

ESL   English as Second Language

FL   First Language

NS   Native Speaker

NNS   Non-native Speaker

SLA   Second Language Acquisition

L1   First Language

L2   Second Language

LAD   Language Acquisition Device

PVs   Phrasal Verbs

LIST OF APPENDICES

PENGALAMAN PEMBELAJARAN PELAJAR ESL BERASASKAN KONKORDANS WEB DALAM MEMUDAHKAN PEMEROLEHAN KATA KERJA

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini berusaha untuk meneroka kegunaan kesesuaian berdasarkan web dalam memperoleh kata kerja frasa bahasa Inggeris. Keseluruhan tesis ini dijalankan terutamanya dalam kaedah kualitatif tetapi melibatkan ujian kuantitatif pada tahap pertama untuk mendapatkan pemahaman umum tahap kecekapan kata kerja frasa siswa yang kemudian diikuti dengan pendekatan kualitatif menggunakan protokol berfikir-keras dan analisis tematik. Kajian itu mendedahkan aspek penggunaan korpus oleh tiga puluh pelajar di sebuah universiti swasta di Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Para pelajar diminta untuk berunding dengan konkordans berasaskan web selama sepuluh minggu intervensi konkordans berasaskan web. Pertama, perbezaan prestasi pelajar dalam pemahaman kata kerja frasa diperiksa antara ujian pra dan pasca mereka. Kedua, proses penyelesaian masalah dan strategi berfikir pelajar diterokai semasa menganalisis data mengenai kesesuaian berasaskan web. Ketiga, pengalaman pelajar menggunakan kesesuaian berdasarkan web pada pemerolehan dan penulisan kata kerja frasa diterokai. Dua belas pelajar fokus dari tiga tahap bahasa Inggeris yang berbeza: menengah atas, menengah dan menengah rendah dipilih sebagai pelajar fokus. Ujian pra dan ujian pasca menunjukkan bahawa kira-kira 92% pelajar menunjukkan peningkatan markah mereka. Hasil keseluruhan menunjukkan bahawa para pelajar mengesahkan faedah menggunakan konkordans web. Akhirnya, kajian ini memberikan cadangan penyelidikan pedagogi dan masa depan untuk memasukkan penggunaan konkordans berasaskan web dalam memperoleh kata kerja frasa.

ESL LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES WITH WEB-BASED CONCORDANCE IN FACILITATING PHRASAL VERBS ACQUISITION

ABSTRACT

This study endeavours to explore the usefulness of web-based concordance in acquiring English phrasal verbs. The whole thesis was primarily conducted in the qualitative method but it involved a quantitative test in the first stage to get the general understanding of students' phrasal verbs proficiency level which later followed by a qualitative approach using think-aloud protocol and thematic analysis. The study reveals aspects of corpus use by thirty students at a private university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The students were asked to consult the web-based concordance during the ten weeks of web-based concordance intervention. Firstly, students' performance differences in phrasal verbs comprehension were examined between their pre-and post-tests. Secondly, students' problem-solving processes and thinking strategies were explored while analysing data on the web-based concordance. Thirdly, the students' experiences using web-based concordance on phrasal verbs acquisition and writing were explored. Twelve focal students from three different English levels: upper-intermediate, intermediate and lower-intermediate were selected as focal students. Pre-test and post-test tests show that approximately 92% of students showed an increase in their scores. Overall results indicated that the participants validated the benefits of using web-based concordance. Finally, the study provides pedagogical and future research recommendations for incorporating the use of web-based concordance in acquiring phrasal verbs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

English is a global language that is universally acknowledged as one of the major lingua franca of the world. In the Malaysian educational context, English is taught as a second language. It has been observed that although Malaysian students have between 11 to 13 years of exposure to formal English lessons in schools, their command of the language is still far from satisfactory. Chong, Tan, and Mardziah (2011) revealed in their study that a growing number of Malaysian students are unable to produce coherent utterances or written text in English. Institutions of higher learning in Malaysia who are the main receptors of these students are facing the problem of helping these students improve their English language proficiency to a level required for successful academic pursuits (Chan & Yap, 2010). This is an alarming situation that needs to be addressed, as Malaysia is a developing nation aspiring to be a key player in the global business world. The inadequate standard of English language does not end at the school level of their education because their lack of proficiency in the language later affects their performance at the tertiary level (Suhaily Abdullah & Faizah Abd Majid, 2013). This situation indirectly leads to several challenges to be faced by the students during their internship with potential employers (Ahmad Yasruddin Md Yasin et al., 2010). In order to strengthen English language proficiency, various transformation measures have been announced by the government to strengthen the command of English among the students.

At the university level, the English language is essential for the graduates to secure a job as it holds the key towards driving the engine of industrial and economic growth in the competitive global market" (The Star, 2017:1). This is very likely to impact the teachers or instructors as more responsibility is deemed necessary to upgrade the teaching methods which can enhance the students' English language proficiency. However, prior to developing various teaching techniques that might help to improve the command of the language, it is deemed crucial to analyse the source of the problem which makes the students face difficulties in using the English language that turns them to be unable to perform. It is not only the grammar of the language which is problematic to the students, but the limited vocabulary items in the inventory of mental lexicon of the learners to become the source of deficiencies to the students' performance or proficiency in the language. Hence, both form and meaning need emphasis in any language instruction (Ellis, 2006). One of the lexical categories that poses difficulty in the English language of L2 learners is phrasal verbs. Languages that originate from the Germanic language family such as English, Dutch, and German are classified as satellite-framed languages where the lexical phrase of the verb is followed by a particle that expresses the path of motion. On the other hand, the non-Germanic languages such as Japanese, Tamil, Malay (Polynesian), Korean and Turkish are categorised as verb-framed that do not have particle combination as the verb directly encode the path of motion (Cadierno, 2008 cited in Yasuda, 2010). For Malaysian learners, the inappropriate use of phrasal verbs might make the learning of the English language difficult. Bieber et al. (1999) cited in Waibel (2007), find the use of phrasal verbs is not only frequent in conversation, fiction, and news but also in academic writing. Although the presence of phrasal verbs denotes creativity in language expressions, it "does not necessarily make ESL learners' English more native-like but

understanding and being able to use these constructions correctly especially in written English is essential if the learner is to develop a decent level of writing skill" (Sargeant, 1996:vii cited in Waibel, 2007, p.34). In view of the above problem, researchers have been trying to come up with new pedagogical approaches to help improve the standard of English among students.

In the Malaysian context to date, there are few studies that used a corpus-based analysis to highlight the Malaysian students' inappropriate use of phrasal verbs and strategies they adopt in avoiding the use of phrasal verbs in their writings (Akbari, 2009; Rafidah Kamarudin, 2013; Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014). Corpus-based studies that were carried out using the Malaysian learner corpus indicated that students tend to avoid using phrasal verbs in their writings and opt for a single word equivalent than a multi-word expression (Akbari, 2009; Rafidah Kamarudin & Azmi Abdul Latiff, 2011). For Malaysian learners, the students' lack of lexical knowledge in L2, unawareness of the idiomatic expressions of phrasal verbs (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014) as well as influence of learners' L1 to a certain extent, have been reported as the reasons for the occurrence of inappropriate uses of phrasal verbs in their English writings (Rafidah Kamarudin & Azmi Abdul Latiff, 2011).

In light of the aforementioned statement and because the nature of the information in this study was very detailed, therefore it needed to apply qualitative research methods. The aim of the study, thus, was to qualitatively explore and understand the acquisition of phrasal verbs using web-based concordancing that was experienced by the ESL students. These aspects were worth explored and understood so that web-based concordancing could be suitably looked into as another alternative pedagogical approach to aid the acquisition of phrasal verbs learning.

1.1   Background of Study

English is taught as a second language in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The mastery of English is essential for pupils to gain access to information and knowledge written in English. The Malaysia Ministry of Education (MOE) in its efforts to improve the Malaysian Education Curriculum came up with the "Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025" (MOE, 2012). In line with the government's policy on strengthening English, which sees additional time allotted for English subjects (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009). English is taught through reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Writing is an integral and necessary skill when learning a second language as communication is not only done orally. Writing is necessary if a person is looking to study or work in a particular country and also results in increased practice using the language. This is due to the fact that writing skills are interrelated to other language skills.

Writing is a comprehensive skill that helps strengthen vocabulary, grammar, thinking, planning, editing, revising, and other elements. According to Saed and Al-Omari (2014), writing also helps to improve all the other skills of listening, speaking, and reading as they are all interconnected. Writing stimulates thinking, compel students to concentrate and organise their ideas and cultivate their abilities to summarize, analyze, and criticize. It also gives emphasis to constant learning in, thinking in, and doing reflection in the English language (Maghsoudi & Haririan, 2013). Riswanto and Putra (2012) stated that writing is one of the language skills that will never become obsolete in education. It is both essentially important in a language class and other classes of other subjects. Ahangari and Behzady (2011) mentioned that writing is one of the best ways to keep track of learning. Writing is also one of the most difficult skills for the students to acquire as writing requires a number of skills

and conventions like organizing and developing ideas and information, choosing the right vocabulary accurately to eradicate the ambiguity of meaning, and also the practice of accurate grammatical devices to focus and emphasize ideas (Nik et al., 2010, Yunus et al., 2013). Furthermore, writing demands the writer to choose the choice of vocabulary carefully and have a comprehensive knowledge of grammatical patterns in order to be able to write sentence structures that are pertinent to the subject matter (Ali & Yunus, 2004). In addition, writing also involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing (Myles, 2002). As stated by Dunsmuir et al. (2014), the key domains of writing reflect a focus on ideas development (rhetorical skills), vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar (writing processes), spelling, punctuation, and handwriting (mechanics). Therefore, ESL students should practice frequently in their writing.

At the tertiary level, the students must understand and be proficient in the English language since the majority of the subjects are taught in English. It is important to note that most ESL tertiary students viewed writing as difficult and become apprehensive when presented with a writing task and thus, often refuse to spend time on writing, (Rankin-Brown, 2006) and this group of students was of no exception. It was found that the problems of writing difficulty can become more intense at the tertiary level whereby students are expected to write with more maturity and sophistication to match their perceived level of intellect. However, it is not easy to learn to write and ESL students do need a lot of practice to master the skill. This is because being able to write well in English demands good linguistic competence (Saadiyah Darus, 2008).

In this study, it is being observed that most ESL tertiary students experience crucial problems in using and understanding phrasal verbs. The researcher believes that this area has become increasingly prominent with the increasing influence of the English language. In order to understand, speak, read, and write correct English, it is important to learn phrasal verbs. Nowadays, phrasal verbs are very frequently used in spoken and written English. The meaning of some phrasal verbs is pretty obvious, but for many verbs, the meaning is not what it seems and that is why some students commit mistakes. It is crucial to analyses the source of the problem which hinders students from performing well especially in writing as it is an important skill for Malaysian students to gain access to better jobs and admission to a better learning institution. The main concern lies in the limited vocabulary items in the inventory of mental lexicon of the learners which become the source of deficiencies and problematic to the students' proficiency in the language, and not only the grammar of the language. Hence, both form and meaning need emphasis in any language instruction (Ellis, 2006). The notion of lexical language is widely recognized, but the terminology thereof is much less so. Wray (2002) identified 48 different terms in the literature denoting this linguistic phenomenon, of which phrasal verbs are one.

In its simplest form, a phrasal verb is a verb made up of the main verb together with an adverb or a preposition, or both adverb and preposition. Typically, their meaning is not obvious from the meanings of the individual words themselves. For example, I have always *looked up* to my father. Phrasal verbs are a very specific trait of the English language. Bryson (2002) noted that phrasal verbs are 'one of the most versatile features of English'. The ability to use phrasal verbs poses a great deal of difficulty for non-native speakers of English but is something intrinsic for native speakers of English. Thus, phrasal verbs seem necessary to be taught to second

6

language learners since their significance has been highlighted in many books. Kawaguchi, Minegishi, and Durand (2009) in the book Corpus Analysis and Variation in Linguistic explained among the reason for its significance was the widespread use of phrasal verbs in conversation, news, and fiction. Not only that, Bieber et al. (1999) cited in Waibel (2007) find the use of phrasal verbs is also frequent in academic writing. This is also supported by Hart (2009) which stated that phrasal verbs are common in everyday formal and informal speech as well as in writing. Thus it would be difficult to define a word without the use of phrasal verbs. Mohammad Khatib and Minoo Ghannadi (2011) opined that the insertion of phrasal verbs results in naturally well spoken English language and therefore, it is compulsory for an ESL learner to know its meaning to maximise its use in daily discourse. Although the presence of phrasal verbs denotes creativity in language expression, it "does not necessarily make ESL learners' English more native-like but understanding and being able to use these constructions correctly in spoken and written English is essential if the learner is to develop a complete command of the language" (Sargeant, 1996 cited in Waibel, 2007, p.34). Many lexical lessons in the Malaysian learning context, have only gone so far as to teach word meaning, word form, and grammatical function which rarely has phrasal verbs been given due attention.

The importance of mastering good writing skills cannot be underestimated but still, we can see an absence of linguistic or lexical understanding in the aspect of language acquisition which can be a significant issue for L2 scholars" (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). While L2 writers are all around prepared in building up their thoughts, the etymological aspect is frequently a significant test for many. Apparently, a more centered sentence structure is not enough to set them up for the semantic requests. Along these lines, the concept of second language learning is also being

addressed in this study to assist the comprehension of students' understanding of phrasal verbs acquisition. In the early 1980s, Stephen Krashen articulated a model of second language acquisition called the '*monitor model.*' One of the hypotheses which he claimed explains the process of second language acquisition is the '*acquisition-learning hypothesis'* where he claims that there are basically two ways for adult second language (L2) learners to obtain knowledge of a language, through consciously focusing on the 'rules' of the language (learning) or through intuitively acquiring knowledge of the language, much in the way children learn their first language (acquisition). According to Krashen, only the second way leads to real fluency in the L2. The 'acquisition-learning hypotheses. The 'acquired system' or 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, giving a more natural communication, an inductive approach of a student-centered setting which leads to acquisition.

In the Malaysian context, as far as the researcher is concerned, to date, there are few studies that have used a corpus-based analysis to highlight the Malaysian students' inappropriate use of phrasal verbs and strategies they adopt in avoiding the use of phrasal verbs in their writings (Akbari, 2009; Rafidah Kamarudin, 2013; Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014). For Malaysian learners, the students' lack of lexical knowledge in L2, unawareness of the idiomatic expressions of phrasal verbs (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014) as well as influence of learners' L1 to a certain extent, have been reported as the reasons for the occurrence of inappropriate uses of phrasal verbs (Rafidah Kamarudin & Azmi Abdul Latiff, 2011). Given such emphases, the use of corpus data has become increasingly appealing in the context of L2 writing instruction, where the simultaneous focus on vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns provides second language

writers with the kinds of target language input they especially need to achieve high levels of proficiency as L2 writers. Along with the lexico-grammatical aspect, corpus-based activity has also been considered beneficial to L2 writing by offering learners a rich experience of real language use (Thurstun & Candlin, 1998). Corpora, which are, as noted earlier, databases of authentic language uses culled from multiple sources, provide learners with large quantities of real-life target language discourse.

The online learning has rapidly grown in demand. This is due to the greater awareness of the importance of higher education. Cotterall (2004) claims that as more and more tertiary learners come with some knowledge in IT or technology, most traditional institutions struggle to implement a more advanced set of 'learning modules' to accurately and successfully satisfy these unique educational needs. Moreover, according to Supyan Hussin (2008), ESL students need some kind of social support or scaffolding and become more self-directed and this can be achieved through suitable online learning tools or facilities provided to the students (Supyan Hussin, 2008). Thus to provide more input, the web-based concordance is believed to play an important role in exposing learners to a wide variety of language phrases and expressions as they are commonly used by native speakers (Chang & Sun, 2009; Sinclair, 1997; Sun, 2003; Varley, 2008; Yoon, 2008). Researchers of both native and non-native language learning have also paid close attention to how computers have transformed the writing process in the classroom (New, 1999; Otlowski, 1998). Students who consult a web-based concordance by entering a keyword on the search input page will receive concordance lines displaying how the word is used by native speakers. The process is known in the corpus linguistic field as "concordancing". For instance, a learner of English who wants to use the word ''access'' in an essay might be confused about which words best link with that word. By connecting to a corpus

database and then typing in the word ''access,'' also known as a keyword because it activates a search procedure and called a ''concordance program,'' the student would eventually see a long list of actual uses of the word with a different use. These uses occur in the form of portions of sentences, with the keyword positioned in the middle of them. The purpose of the concordance program is to produce such a list.

Therefore, it is imperative that the study must look into the students' experiences using online web-based concordance to see how it facilitate the phrasal verbs acquisition in order to improve writing skill.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Writing has become a key determinant in academic opportunities awarded to students beyond tertiary education. Educators usually face challenges in adopting and developing a wide range of methods in teaching skills of writing in the target language. Most Malaysian students do not seem to be able to attain reasonable English literacy even after going through 11 years of learning the English language in school (Naginder, 2006; Nor Hashimah Jalaludin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar, 2008, as cited in Normazidah, Koo & Hazita, 2012). It is more alarming to learn that many Form Five students, including those from international schools, struggle with even Basic English grammar. This has indirectly caused many of these students to struggle with sentences making during writing tasks.

At the tertiary level, the ability to generate well organised and coherent essays are expected. Most of the coursework assessments and examinations are in the form of essays. Therefore, effective writing skills are essential to students. In fact, mastering the basic structure of an essay with its emphasis on a clear point and well organised,

logical support, will help almost every kind of writing that a person does. As many of these students who are studying in the institutions of higher learning are not sure how to first generate and organise their ideas, how to express themselves fluently or to be able to write grammatically correct sentences. Notwithstanding, students studying at different levels generally confine their revisions to local problems at the word and sentence level (McCutchen, Francis & Kerr, 1997; Ferris, 1995; Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998, as cited in Mohd Sahandri & Saifuddin, 2009).

The English language has always played a dominant role as a compulsory subject and medium of instruction in most tertiary institutions. Level. "Writing is such an important learning tool because it helps students to understand ideas and concepts better" (Voon Foo, 2007). But writing has always been a difficult task for individuals especially for ESL students, even ESL teachers in Malaysia has confirmed the problems in writing development. "There, is therefore, a considerable need for the future generations of Malaysians to master the language. Thus, based on the importance of writing, all Malaysian policymakers have decided to emphasize it in their mainstream courses.

As observed from previous literature, L2 learners' problems in writing might occur due to many factors. One of the causes of the challenge will be the misuse of phrasal verbs in writing. They are difficult to learn which causes learners to avoid them (Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Jahedi and Mukundan, 2015). Phrasal verbs are the interface of lexis and grammar "that has important ramifications for second language acquisition" (Gardner & Davis, 2007; Gas & Selinker, 1992; Howarth, 1998), they are typical of spoken and informal English, but also widely used in written and formal English (Fletcher, 2005; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004). According to Barekat & Baniasady (2014), there is a close relationship between phrasal verbs avoidance and

learners' writing performance. The more receptive students are in using phrasal verbs, the more their writing ability can improve.

The use of concordance according to many research (Chang & Sun, 2009); Sinclair, 1997; Sun, 2003; Varley, 2008; Yoon, 2008) is an invaluable source for the acquisition of phrasal verbs to take place and help to improve writing performance. There is a large volume of real language data in a concordance and the resource can be usefully exploited to aid phrasal verbs learning in ESL contexts where naturalistic exposure to the target language is scarce. Concordance consultation has been attested to facilitate various aspects of language including grammar, vocabulary, discourse analysis, and writing. The considerable appeal of concordance to language professionals lies in their ability 'to make the invisible visible' (Tribble & Jones, 1990) by aligning multiple contexts of occurrences of a particular form. Relatively, few studies have examined students' experiences in association with concordance use and incorporating it to facilitate phrasal verbs acquisition, resulting in an improvement in writing ability.

Thus, learning to write effectively has become a major significance in academia. Writing is a complex process and skills which cannot be learned overnight. It requires practice and strategies as students need to explore ideas and thoughts as well as the language. Chow (2007) has stressed that writing is an important key skill that tertiary students should master than any other key components. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to look into students' experiences in using web-based concordance in facilitating students' phrasal verbs acquisition. This study is carried out among undergraduates in a local private university. Through this, it is hoped to shed some light on learning pedagogy and to contribute to the furthering of knowledge in this field.

1.3   Research Objectives

This study is developed under three research objectives:

1.   to determine if there are any significant differences between students' phrasal verbs pre-test and post-test scores.

2.   to look into and understand the thinking strategies and problem-solving processes of phrasal verbs acquisition mediated by web-based concordance.

3.   to gain insights into ESL students' experiences and views of web-based concordance use on phrasal verbs and L2 writing.

1.4   Research Questions

The study attempts to address the following research questions:

1.   Are there any significant differences between the pre-test and post-test performances of the phrasal verbs acquisition?

2.   How do the focal students describe their thinking strategies and problem-solving processes during web-based concordancing?

3.   How do the focal students describe their experiences using web-based concordance as a tool to facilitate phrasal verbs acquisition and improve writing skill?

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study is anticipated to be significant in a few aspects. One of them is its attempt at broadening the scope of web-based concordance phrasal verbs unit research. Although the existing literature provides a general understanding of the web-based concordance language learning process, the impact web-based concordance has on phrasal verbs learning especially among Malaysian ESL students has been very limited. Therefore, the undertaking to better understand web-based concordance phrasal verbs makes this study unique in the existing research field. In order to better understand the role of web-based concordance in phrasal verbs acquisition, this study aims to focus on the voices of individual students, while combining multiple data sources. Due to their efforts to discover underlying language patterns on their own during their corpus searches, the students could become active learners while they are analysing corpus data (Brown, 2001; Johns, 1997; Sun, 1999). The process of phrasal verbs understanding from the perspectives of students and the role of web-based concordance play will provide both pedagogical findings and research implications.

1.6   Limitations of the Study

There existed a few limitations and shortcomings in the study although it has been carefully outlined. Firstly, since the study involves collecting and analysing data only on one class consisted of students from a type of an English base course enrolling in their second year attending language class at the university, the findings obtained from this case study are going to be specific to the particular group studied within the specific contexts that will be taken into account. The result of the study will be interpreted carefully considering the relatively small members of participants. As a result, the findings can only be used to describe the pattern that emerges in the

description or information provided by the participants involved in the study. The second limitation was that even though it was an in-depth investigation it may produce short-term effects due to the time limit. Because of the time limit, the data from the research was only collected during one single semester and is only conducted on one class consisted of students from the English and Public Relation course enrolling in their respective semester at the university campus. Therefore, to generalize the results for all types of the course, the study should have involved more participants from different courses and semesters. With respect to data interpretation, the study of human beings and their experiences in a new environment is a complex issue. Since the researcher's role was that of a participant-observer throughout the research study, being unbiased will be very challenging. Therefore, the researcher will be using member-checking with the participants to be allowed to represent the voice of the participants.

Another limitation of the study is the duration, the 30-minute time slot for each student's think-aloud was sufficient for the focal students in the pilot study, but turned out to be insufficient for the students in the main study. This discrepancy might come from the fact that the students in the pilot study were more mature and experienced than the students in the main study. Even Dilky a student in the highest group, made a mistake on the last item. Part of the reason for this might be that the student was running out of time and had to make hasty decisions. It is anticipated that the lower-level groups will even require more time. The researcher recognizes that insufficient time might affect the students' concentration on the task, as they might have been concerned about running out of time. If more time had been allocated, the results of the think-aloud task might have been different.

Limited training might have had an impact on how the web-based concordance exercises were handled. The students should go through more training sessions on how to operate the web-based concordance, in which they learned rudimentary aspects of how to read the concordance lines. As a result, some students encountered some situations in which they felt did not completely understand how to do web concordance exercises, and this might have affected students' learning and altered the findings.

This study primarily chosen only one general corpora, the Corpus Concordance English rather than a specialized corpus. The study aimed to deal with only phrasal verbs, it would also be interesting to explore how students use specialized corpora. It would be worthwhile to investigate students experiences and how they would do and exhibit patterns, attitude, perceptions and corpus use towards using specific corpora.

Lastly, the study could use a larger number of sampling, however, the qualitative approach enables the process of learning to be well explained and understood that are not easily identifiable through quantitative method. In future, a larger number of participants can be further examined in quantitative studies to examine the applicability over web-based concordance use.

1.7   Definitions of Terms

1.7.1   Web-based Concordance

A web-based concordance is a software program that allows the user to consider the context of a specific word by taking into account the words preceding and following it from a collection of texts (called a corpus) (Allan, 1999). The "keyword in context (KWIC)" presents multiple instances of the keyword, allowing textual

patterns to be observed. Cross-referencing helps provide students with examples, rules, and correct patterns.

1.7.2 Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs (PVs) are verbs followed by a particle (certain prepositions and short adverbs) which seem to function as a single verb. There are intransitive phrasal verbs (e.g. "to break down", "to come in") and transitive phrasal verbs. Transitive phrasal verbs are further divided into two categories: separable phrasal verbs, e.g. "to put in", "to pick up", where the direct object can, and sometimes must be inserted between the verb and its particle, and inseparable phrasal verbs, among which are phrasal verbs like "to put up with", "to wind up with", and "to check up on", which are always followed by another preposition. Phrasal verbs are distinguished from (1) prepositional verbs (e.g. "to rely on", "to think about", "to agree to"), where the preposition adds no semantic information to the verb and where many syntactic properties associated with phrasal verbs are lacking; and (2), simple verb +preposition combinations (e.g. "The spider climbed up the wall").

1.7.3 Corpus/corpora

A corpus generally means any collection of more than one text. But from the corpus linguistics viewpoint, it refers to a large collection of natural texts sampled to be representative of a variety or a genre of a language, which is now almost always in machine-readable form (Biber et al., 1998; McEnery & Wilson, 2001; Sinclair, 1991). Because a corpus is inevitably drawn from a sample of people using the language, the issue of representation is a crucial concern in corpus production. The purpose of the corpus production determines the compiling sources, size, and design of the corpus. In

17

terms of size and design, corpora can be divided into two kinds: general corpora and specialized corpora (Flowerdew, 2002). General corpora are designed for general descriptive purposes of language, so they are often extensive databases of the texts (e.g., Bank of English and British National Corpus). In contrast, specialized corpora, often lesser in volume, are compiled from certain types of genres for specific research or teaching purposes.

1.7.4 CALL

Computer Assisted Language Learning refers to the use of a computer in the teaching or learning of a second or foreign language (Levy, 1997).

1.7.5 ESL Learners (English as Second Language)

In this study, English as Second Language learners are students studying English in countries where English is used commonly and may have official recognition (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore). A distinction has been made between EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language). EFL learners are those in countries (such as Japan) where English is taught as a subject in schools but has no officially recognized status (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985).

1.7.6 Writing Process

The writing process is often associated with multiple stages of writing such as drafting, composing, revising, and editing (Zamel, 1983). It refers to a continuous process of writing activities that produce the final piece of writing rather than looking at the final product as an isolated outcome from the continuum. In this study, the

writing process means not only a process-oriented approach to writing but also any series of actions involved in the accomplishment of final written texts.

1.7.7 Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations." O'Malley and Chamot (1990) draw from the cognitive theory of language learning and argue that language learning strategies are cognitive skills. Griffiths (2013) describes language learning strategies as conscious activities learners take to manage their learning. In this study, the language strategies that were discussed: metacognitive, cognitive, and compensation strategies.

1.7.8 Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are strategies for learners to monitor and direct their learning processes (Rubin 1987). Oxford (1990) describes metacognitive strategies as helping students coordinate their learning process and helping them focus when they encounter large amounts of new information. The strategy which learners use to focus on a specific learning task by choosing to look for specific words or phrases is called selective attention by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Oxford (1990) includes selective attention in a group of strategies which learners can use to centre their learning and she argues that it is connected to how learners recall and associate prior knowledge with a new activity and how learners choose to focus on listening over speech production while developing their comprehension skills. The ability to plan one's learning helps learners achieve their goals. Planning as a language learning strategy

includes learning about language learning as a concept, organising conditions for learning, setting goals, identifying the purpose of and preparing for language tasks, and looking for opportunities for practice (Oxford, 1990).

1.7.9 Cognitive Strategy

Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define cognitive strategies as strategies that involve the learner manipulating the target language and input to enhance their learning. The use of cognitive strategies can be limited the specific learning tasks. Oxford (1990) argues that strategies employed for practising the target language are among the most important cognitive strategies. Practice strategies include repeating words and structures and grouping and recombining language input. Learners also use deduction and reasoning by recognising and using rules to better understand language (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Rubin 1987). Oxford (1990) also classifies using note-taking, summarizing, and highlighting to manage input and output as cognitive strategies. Learners utilise a wide array of cognitive strategies, but these strategies are all characterised by their relation to target language input and learners manipulating this input to enhance their learning.

1.7.10 Compensation Strategy

According to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies help learners overcome the limitation in knowledge and use a new language for production and comprehension. She divides these strategies into two categories: guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. By using these strategies, learners are able to engage in communication despite their limitations, which further improves their learning. She defines guessing strategies as using both linguistic and non-

linguistic clues to make educated guesses. Linguistic clues may come from the learner's prior knowledge of the target language, their first language, or other languages, which the learner uses to deduct the meaning of an unknown word or expression. Rubin (1987) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990), however, classify guessing as part of cognitive strategies. This categorisation is also possible, as guessing involves a direct analysis of language. While this strategy is useful when the learner is familiar with a language similar to the target language, it is also prone to mistaken guesses if similar words in two languages have different meanings. Oxford (1990) presents a wide variety of non-linguistic clues that learners can use to make more accurate guesses, such as context and situation, topic, the structure of a text, as well as "general knowledge". Using non-linguistic clues with linguistic clues, learners can make more accurate guesses. Oxford (1990) notes that guessing strategies are also used by more advanced learners and native speakers in situations where they encounter new words or fail to hear something well enough.

1.7.11 Acquisition

"Acquisition" is considered an important part to understand the language. Language acquisition is more central than language learning in second language performance. Language acquisition comes from the 'intake', that subset of linguistic input that helps the acquirer acquire language. The major function of the second language classroom is to provide intake for acquisition.

1.8   Summary

This study is interested in understanding how does the web-based concordance affect the students' phrasal verbs acquisition in order for them to improve their writing ability. It is also hoped to offer some insights into students' engagement in the thinking processes while undergoing the study. This study seeks to find out what changes occur during the intervention of the concordance tool used and how it affects students' thinking processes and perspectives, thus quantitative and qualitative research is being employed to study some identified upper intermediate, intermediate, and lower intermediate level learners among the English & Public Relation students. With this, it is hoped that this research can warrant these students to share their experiences and deeper thoughts with the web-based concordance approach as well as offer some enrichments and new insight.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Scope of study   │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                    ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                    │  Problem statement  │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
```

| Not enough exploitation of corpus | Low proficiency in writing skill | Uncertainty about thinking processes | Low knowledge of phrasal verbs among ESL learners |

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │     Suggestion      │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
            ┌──────────────────┴──────────────────┐
            │   Web concordance intervention      │
            └──────────────────┬──────────────────┘
            ┌──────────────────┴──────────────────┐
            │        Research objectives          │
            └──────────────────┬──────────────────┘
```

| To determine changes in tests | To discover students problem-solving process | To look into students views and experiences |

| Significance of study statement | | Limitation of study |

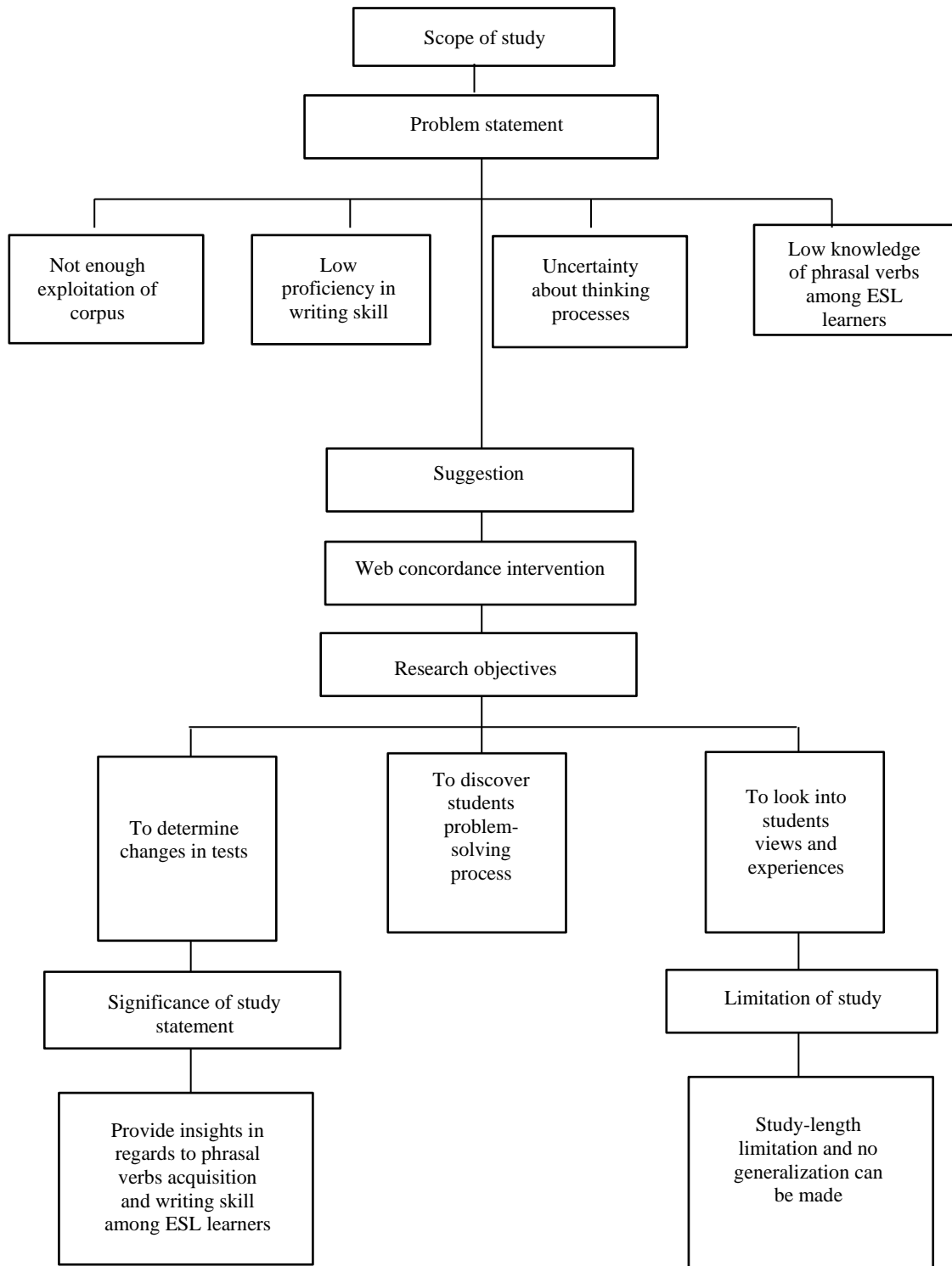| Provide insights in regards to phrasal verbs acquisition and writing skill among ESL learners | | Study-length limitation and no generalization can be made |

Figure 1.1   The schematic diagram of study

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

The existing literature on the key concepts of this study is address in this chapter such as the Krashen's second language acquisition, the language learning strategies which leads to the thinking strategies used by ESL learners, the influence of the web-based concordance on phrasal verbs acquisition and writing, and the cognitive-linguistic aspects of the problem- solving processes done by the learners. The chapter opens with the explication of Krashen's second language acquisition theory. Previous studies on web-based concordance and its benefits in relation to phrasal verbs acquisition and writing are discussed. The chapter ends with a theoretical and conceptual framework showing the relationships of all key concepts, such as language learning strategies, web-based concordance criteria, cognitive linguistic theory, and phrasal verbs criteria, which will be investigated in the study.

2.1   Second Language Acquisition: The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen has proposed and established five hypotheses: (1) The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis, (2) The Natural Order Hypothesis, (3) The Monitor Hypothesis, (4) The Input Hypothesis, and (5) The Affective-Filter Hypothesis. These hypotheses have since revolutionized modern language pedagogy. The literature shall then discussed the first hypothesis which sets the foundation of the study.

Krashen's first hypothesis is the foundation for his other four hypotheses, and therefore the foundation of his theory behind second language acquisition. This

hypothesis states that adults have two distinct ways by which they can become competent in another language. First, adults can learn a language. This process consists of explicit instruction where students are required to memorize vocabulary lists and grammar rules. The hope is that by doing these mental procedures, students will eventually be able to fit vocabulary into the proper grammatical structure and create communication. This method makes students talk about language in order to help students talk in language. For a long time, teaching pedagogy was designed to help students learn a language.

However, teaching pedagogy nowadays has changed and many discoveries are made since, to make students more competent in the language. The second way Krashen argues humans can become competent in a language is by acquiring a language. Acquiring a language is what happens when learners almost sub-consciously seem to pick-up language. They may never be explicitly taught the vocabulary and grammar of the target language, but through being exposed to the language, they eventually start to correctly understand and use the target language. Every competent native speaker ultimately became competent in their first language through acquisition. Children do not memorize vocabulary charts and grammar rules but rather they simply listen, speak, and make mistakes. Krashen argues that children never lose this ability and that even adults are able to acquire language.

The acquisition-learning hypothesis is also based on works by the world-renowned linguist, Noam Chomsky, who noticed that children are able to become competent in a language with very little input. The only language they hear is lacking both in quantity and quality, yet they are able to learn a language very quickly. Chomsky hypothesized that these children are pre-programmed with a Language