Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the context and purpose of research, sample, tools designed to carry out the research, and the procedure followed to collect data. This study was undertaken to better facilitate the learning of academic writing through genre analysis and corpus exploration tools such as concordances. Academic writing is a complex process and it demands in a country like India where it is not taught explicitly, additional attention of teachers as well as researchers. It is extremely important for learners as they need to meet high academic in pursuit of higher education. For L2 learners the challenge does not stop at the level of genre recognition, it further extends at the level of appropriate use of language. Although, it is already established that process-genre approach to writing (Badger, Richard & White, Goodith, 2000) helps learners master writing in a better way, yet for ESL learners language use remains a serious constraint in producing acceptable texts. Corpus, being a bank of authentic language can help learners overcome some of these problems. Usefulness of corpus in language learning has also been well established. Although genre and corpus together have not been used together for language learning till date, it is assumed that providing learners with adequate scaffolding in the form of textual and contextual patterns at both genre and corpus levels will enable them to produce texts that can meet various academic demands. With this viewpoint in mind, this experimental research has been taken up. It aims to observe how far genre and corpus studies together help L2 learners in improving their academic writing. Two groups of learners were selected for this study. First group is a set of learners who joined the Proficiency Course at an Indian university to improve their English for general purposes. Second group, includes students who finished their post-graduation in English and were studying a diploma course at an Indian university. Although these students have finished their post-graduation in English from colleges across
the country, they were not confident and proficient enough meeting higher education demands. Therefore, a new arena of learning academic writing, on which they are mostly evaluated, was opened to learners. The main focus of the investigation was to observe:

* how genre analysis helps learners in improving their writing
* how learners react to this kind of learning process
* how corpus helps learners solve their language and writing problems and learners’ views on the use of corpus as a learning tool mainly for writing.
* how genre and corpus use addresses the English language needs of learners for both general and academic purposes.

In addition to this, as the second sample group members were all potential teachers, the usefulness of corpus from a teacher's perspective was also investigated.

### 3.2 Aims of the experiment

The main aim of the research is to make learners become independent in their attempts to produce acceptable texts. It is deemed essential because it is practically not possible for teachers to guide, evaluate and provide feedback to learners for every text they write and specifically after they finish a formal course at a college or university. The guidance then becomes limited but the requirements of learners such as - secure a seat in higher education, to get a job, to publish articles remains same. To help learners meet these real world as well as their present proficiency and diploma course demands a course was designed to help them improve their writing and to make them self-dependent. Thus the aims of the course were to:

- introduce learners to the concept of genre analysis;
- enable them analyze genres and their moves and lexico-grammatical patterns;
- introduce learners to corpus tools;
- enable learners acquire corpus search techniques;
- enable learners to critically evaluate expert texts and use corpus to modify and improvise their own writing;
- enabling learners become self-dependent through this process.

Thus, this course targets to assist learners in understanding conventions of discourse communities, the purpose of writing a text, the expected readers, and context of writing. Understanding all these aspects, it is assumed, would assist learners produce texts which are acceptable in target discourse communities.

3.3 Sample

This experimental study first started with students of the Proficiency Course in English at a reputed university in Hyderabad. These students were placed at an intermediate level by the university authorities based on the entry level test conducted by the university. However, the results obtained from the test have not been taken into consideration for this study. There were a total of 35 students in the class which includes a few foreign nationals; but for this study data provided by 21 students are used because of attrition and irregular attendance to the classes. Data provided by students who have been present for all the sessions throughout the programme have been selected. Hence this was a convenient sample. The details of the sample are given in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation</td>
<td>1 (Arabic)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not done post-graduation yet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Sample details of COP group
As shown in the table, there were twelve male and nine female participants. Except three male students, all other participants were from urban areas. However they studied mostly in regional medium education system. Although there were quite a few who studied in English medium throughout their studies; a large number though falls in the other category. Another striking feature observed is that it was a heterogeneous ethnic group as they were at various stages of their education and career: Some of them were undergraduate students, some were post graduate and some were doing jobs. Their age groups also varied drastically while youngest being 20 year old and the eldest being 43 years old. This group, as the name suggests wanted to be proficient in English for general purposes – day to day life requirements of writing, reading, speaking and listening. But they also wanted to know the technicalities of academic language as many of them wanted to pursue their study at some stage of their life.

The second group, selected for the study, was a group of Post Graduate Diploma of Teaching English (PGDTE) students studying at the University in Hyderabad. All the students who opted to take a corpus linguistics course were inducted as sample of this study thus a convenient and non-probabilistic sample. There were a total of 17 students. The details of these students are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Sample details of PGDTE group
As the table shows, nine male and eight female students were part of this study. Although the students are from urban areas, most of them had education in the regional medium rather than in English. The shift from regional medium to English medium education, in most cases, has happened at the graduation level. This sudden shift leaves most students in lurch as they have to compete with students whose education from childhood has been in English medium.

This experimental research was first initiated with the Proficiency Course students, henceforth Group 1 learners. During the intervention, the researcher had a few discussions with students, and realized that grasping genre analysis was easy for them. However it was noticed that the corpus data was relatively challenging for them to comprehend. Nonetheless, after a few sessions they started observing language patterns observable through concordances. The Group 2, post-graduation diploma, students were selected for this study based on the assumption that they would have adequate knowledge of language and could act as researchers.

A reason for selecting these groups was that they had regular and unhampered access to computers and internet. Although the learners were not aware of the terms genre analysis and corpus, yet an idea about the processes of writing was helpful for them in understanding these concepts in detail.

### 3.4 Genres selection for the study

The students of both the groups 1 and 2 hailed from various socio-cultural, economic, linguistic and educational backgrounds. These students were not offered any course on academic writing during their formal education; hence they faced problems in meeting the requirements of academic standards of higher education and varied demands of work place. The main reason behind these problems was that they needed to produce a variety of academic genres which they were not aware of. An analysis of the proficiency course students' course book revealed that they needed to produce function based texts such as:

- Description paragraphs
• Narrative texts
• Planning texts
• Classification paragraphs
• Formal letters of invitation and reply letters
• Process and product related paragraphs
• Opinion paragraphs
• Argumentative paragraphs
• Covering letters
• Resume writing

It was not possible for the researcher to address all the aspects given above within the given time, hence after informal interactions with students, only three genres were selected based on learners interest. The functions chosen for intervention were as follows

• Description paragraph
• Classification paragraph
• Opinion paragraph

For the group 2, an analysis of their assignments, term papers, and question papers for the last five years was taken up. The analysis showed that these students required the following genres to be successful academically.

• Research reports or projects
• Article reviews
• Research proposals
• Bibliographies
• Glossaries
• Research Abstracts
• Summaries of concepts, articles and books
• Critical analysis of concepts, articles and books.
• Personal essays or recounting of personal experiences
• Descriptions
• Analysis of literary texts
• Essays
• Debate position papers (papers that are turned in to show research after a verbal debate).
• Editorial pieces (i.e. "letters to the editor").
• Book reviews
• Literary recount of parts of books.
• Examine features/characteristics of various literary concepts.
• Critique of texts
• Small notes on literary concepts

Besides these requirements, these students join PGDTE course with various career goals in mind, hence their requirements and needs differ from each other. Few of the future goals of these students are:

• To join higher studies (for this they need to write tests and research proposals)
• To start a career in teaching field (for this they need to succeed in state and national level tests)
• To prepare for competitive exams (for this they need to write various tests consisting of various genres)
• To become editors in newspapers among others (this requires adequate knowledge of language and genres)

Guided by both, their need to produce various texts while studying PGDTE as well their future career and study goals, three genres were selected for intervention purposes. The selected genres are:

1. Abstract writing
2. Summary and conclusion of a research article
3. Book review
3.5 Process of Intervention

Research in the application of genre analysis and corpus linguistics is rich and has yielded reliable results regarding their effectiveness in language learning. On one hand, genre analysis has been argued to be a valuable approach and can help the learners achieve specific social purposes through wiring rather than plain text templates (Myskow, Gordon & Gordon, Kana, 2010). On the other hand, corpus incorporation for writing has been suggested to have improved naturalness in learners’ writing in a short period of 90 minutes training sessions (Gilmore, Alex, 2009). Therefore, the intervention programme here aimed at making the best use of both the approaches both genre and corpus, at different stages in the process of writing. Both genre analysis and corpus exploration requires learners to become avid researchers, and observe analyse, hypothesize, and critically evaluate the language in use. Thus learners play a major role in identifying and using appropriate language in the process while teachers facilitate the exploration processes. The details of the context, situation, plan of intervention, materials used and classroom planning are discussed in next section.

3.6 Classroom Arrangements

The study was conducted in two classrooms – one was to provide the relevant theoretical input with reference to genre activities and the use of corpus tools, and second was to provide hands-on experience in using computers for personalized corpus explorations. The first classroom selected for the study was on the first floor of a four storey building. This room was used for both the groups. This classroom has a capacity to accommodate 30 to 35 students with one LCD projector with an access to internet. Eight fans in the room make it airy and ten windows provide enough light for learners. It also has eight tube lights and a double broad green board to write on. The course was offered in the winter semester from January to April so it was neither too cold nor too hot. The computer lab selected for the study was on the second floor of the same building. Its seating capacity was nearly forty, each system with internet access enabled desktop. It has 4 air-conditioners in it. As the weather was not harsh only two of
them were used during study hours. The computer lab facility was used only for the PGDTE students. Learners of proficiency course were provided with paper based concordances in the beginning stages. They were made aware of the exploration techniques through the use of LCD projector in the classroom. Because of time constraints, at the request of learners, they were allowed to carry their texts with them to return them next day after consulting a corpus.

3.7 Plan of Course Schedule

The course of intervention was divided into two parts – theoretical background and practical writing sessions. In the theoretical background sessions learners were made aware of corpus and its concordance tools, its features, size, its use, exploration techniques through simple texts, sample paragraphs, books, research articles, lectures and discussions. It also included sessions on genre awareness, and genre analysis. The details of the session conducted with both the groups are given below.

Group 1: Proficiency Course students

As the needs of these learners were more general purpose oriented, simple and familiar texts for analysis and limited concordances were used in the early stages. In the later classes, they were exposed to online corpus with teacher’s help and gradually they were allowed to use corpus independently. With this group, each session was of 2 hours and the classes were twice a week – Mondays and Wednesdays.

Theoretical Background sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction to genres and genre analysis tasks</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Input in analyzing genres through tasks</td>
<td>2 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Introduction to Corpus through a lecture, LCD projector and discussion</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Introduction to paper based concordances and activities</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Additional paper based concordances and activities 2 hour
6. Exploring Corpus to learn search techniques on personal computers 4 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Second Discussion and demonstration of corpus search techniques through LCD projector to clear learners' doubts.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Analysis and Modification of a sample task for practice</td>
<td>1 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1st draft of description paragraph and analysis and discussion of expert written text. (used LCD projector)</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre. Learners modify their draft using paper based concordances</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>Take home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1st draft of classification paragraph and analysis and discussion of expert written text. (used LCD projector)</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre. Learners modify their draft using paper based concordances</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>Take home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1st draft of opinion paragraph and analysis and discussion of expert written text. (used LCD projector)</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Theoretical session details of COP group

At the end of first fourteen hours, learners were mentally prepared to work on the selected genres. Hence, the course was introduced to them. The details of the second phase schedule are as follows.
Response of learners to genre checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>Take home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Discussion about the use of corpus and learners respond to corpus checklist</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response of learners to corpus checklist

| Total | 15 hours |

Table 3.4 Practical session details of COP group

Group 2: Post-graduation diploma students

With these students most of the sessions were of 1 hour. Classes were taken thrice a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The details of these sessions are as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction to Corpus through a lecture and discussion</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Discussion on Randi Reppen’s book ‘Using corpora in language classroom’</td>
<td>3 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Discussion on research articles on corpus and writing</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Introduction to genre analysis</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Discussion and demonstration of corpus search techniques through LCD projector</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 Theoretical session details of PGDTE group

At the end of this first part of the course, learners were confident about the use of corpus and its possibilities. At this point the second part of the intervention was launched. The second part of the intervention was the actual practical writing sessions where genre and corpus was included to enhance students’ understanding of genres, their requirements, conventions, patterns and the use of language in real contexts. The details of these sessions are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Discussion and demonstration of corpus search techniques through LCD projector to clear learners’ doubts.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Exploring Corpus to learn search techniques in Computer Lab.</td>
<td>1 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Introduction to genre analysis and sample genre analysis tasks</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Modification of task using corpus</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1st draft of Abstract writing</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Analysis and discussion of expert written abstract. (used LCD projector also)</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1st draft of summary and conclusion writing</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Analysis and discussion of expert written summary and conclusion. (used LCD projector also)</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>1st draft of book review writing.</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Analysis and discussion of expert book review (used LCD Projector)</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre</td>
<td>2 Hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft</td>
<td>2 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responses of learners to genre checklist**

- Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre
- Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft
- Learners modify their 1st draft based on their understanding of genre
- Learners take their draft for final review and explore corpus for language help and write third /final draft

**Response of learners to corpus checklist**

| Total | 22 hours |

Table 3.6 Practical session details of PGDTE group
3.8 Texts for intervention

The expert genre samples were selected from all published and well established sources. For the first group the texts were selected from books on Academic English, whereas for the second group texts were chosen from English Language Education journals and books. It was made sure that only easy, simple and short texts and articles were selected for the course. Proficiency students were taught all three functions mentioned in their regular classes before the intervention programme began; hence they were aware of the basics of the function selected. For the PGDTE learners, the chosen texts were discussed in the class during the theoretical background sessions so that they were fairly familiar with the demands. Corpus related texts were used to enable them access the background knowledge required and also to keep the material challenging and useful. As stated earlier, most of the learners wanted to join research programmes after completing their diploma and they needed to write research articles, abstracts, reviews as part of their coursework as well as to secure a seat for higher studies. Hence, materials which were of immediate relevance to both the groups were selected. All the texts were embedded in oral activities as well as discussions. More details about the texts can be found in next chapter.

3.9 Process of Classroom Instruction

Classroom instruction during the intervention was mainly based on the framework designed for the research work. Hence, same classroom processes were used for both the groups. As mentioned in the plan of the course schedule, the first part of the intervention programme was mainly reading, lecture, and discussion oriented. In the second part of the course, from sample genre task the researcher followed a specific plan for each genre teaching. Learners read and understood the texts in first phase of the research, so the generic discussion was taken up in the second phase. Hence, the plan followed in the second phase was as follows:
Step 1: Context: Learners in collaboration with the teacher discussed the context in which the texts (Paragraphs and Research based texts) selected for the study were written. A few examples of the questions discussed are as following:

a. What type of description is presented?
b. Which area is the paragraph/article from? science/arts?
c. Who wrote the article?
d. What is the cultural and social background of the writer?
e. Is the paragraph/article acceptable by the discourse community it is written for? How is the article different from the articles written in their (sample’s) country?

The discussion generated through these questions helped learners understand the contextual identities a text exhibits and how writer’s understanding of the discourse community has effects on his/her writing.

Step 2: Purpose and Audience: While contextual variations are key to selecting genre types and in making linguistic choices, issues such as the purpose of the article and for whom it is written for were also crucial. In stage 2 these issues were taken up. What if the article would have been written in a different way and not in the way it is written, what effect that would have had on the readers? And how do the readers’ expectations shape writers ideas in a specific form and are presented through a few selected patterns? were some issues discussed. These are the recognized discourse patterns of a community. This step helped learners understand the purpose behind writing a text and understanding the need to make texts appropriate for the target readers.

Step 3: Learners write 1st draft of selected genre: At this step learners establish the context of writing, purpose of writing and expected readers and then start the real process of writing and producing a text. Teachers did not interfere in this process of writing. Learners were given freedom to write target texts in the form they thought was appropriate.
Step 4: Sample genre text analysis and discussion: Teacher provided learners with expert written sample genre text. Learners read the text and analyzed it for generic moves and for language patterns and expressions. After deliberating over learners’ analysis, teacher showed moves analysis of the same genre based on the theory of John Swales (1990) and learners were asked to observe similarities and differences in the analysis and the reasons for writing the genre the way it was written.

Step 5: Learners write 2nd draft: Based on their understanding of the sample text analysis (step 4), learners modified their text and produced the second draft.

Step 6: Learners write 3rd draft: Teacher helped them only in the beginning stages, learners were asked to observe style and language related problems in their texts in turn were asked to explore corpus based concordances to improvise their write ups. They had to do it once, twice or may be even thrice until they felt satisfied with their end products.

3.10 Tools used for the study

The tools used for this study are of two kinds:

1. Checklists
   a. Genre Checklist
   b. Corpus Checklist

2. Instructional tools
   a. Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) Concordances
   b. Word and Phrase. info

Detailed description and purpose of each tool is discussed below.
3.10.1 Checklist

a. Genre Checklist

When aimed at making our learners critical thinkers and readers, it becomes essential for us to capture the processes and ideas learners involve with when they analyze a text. Sometimes, learners may not articulate their inner-self in terms of what they are or not aware of. Direct questions and statements that reflect their observations and strategies make them recognize their ideas clearly. The genre checklist designed for this study aims to do the same. The checklist has 30 statements each containing a five point scale (5 strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree). The respondents were instructed to check the statements after they became comfortable in analyzing genres. These statements are also meant to increase the thinking process of learners and enable them observe language features that they learn by analyzing a genre text. The checklist used in this study is designed by the researcher to capture every possible aspect of learning process. It focuses on statements about genre differences and similarities, purposes, use of verbs, words and other language patterns, text organization and so on. This checklist was divided into two parts – first part focuses on the personal and educational background of the learners and second part contains statements about the usefulness of genre analysis for learning various aspects of English language.

A few samples statements asked in both parts of the checklist are given below:

**Part A: Personal Information**

Name: .......................... Date of birth (Year) .................

Course/Occupation: ......................................................

Urban/Rural .................................................................
Part B: Genre Analysis helped learners in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning the importance of author's perspective and point of view in writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the purpose of various types of writing such as- to entertain, to persuade, to inform.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the techniques of analyzing a text for its organizational patterns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning the genre specific vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7 Sample statements of genre checklist

**Purpose of the tool**

- To enable learners understand the ways in which genre analysis can help them
- To enable learners observe their own processes and the learning outcomes
- To make learners aware of the potential of genre analysis in improving their writing in particular.

**b. Corpus Checklist**

Corpus based materials and tasks are not new to the English teaching fraternity. Research has shown several ways in which corpus can be used directly and indirectly in language classes. Corpus data, when used indirectly through tasks and activities, lowers risks of confusion as well as difficulty. But when corpus data is introduced in classrooms as raw material for learners to explore and learn from it, it becomes essential to capture their understanding of corpus use inhibitions, problems, attitudes, and learning outcomes. It is for this reason that corpus checklist was designed and administered to gain insights their responses and reactions to corpus data. Although the focus of this research is on writing skills, reading, vocabulary and grammar related aspects are also included in the checklist because when learners get exposure to vast language data resources,
learning cannot be limited to just one aspect; it goes beyond skills to the level of language as a whole. The corpus checklist used for this study is an adapted version of the checklist used by Hyunsook Yoon and Alan Hirvela (2004). The checklist was modified as per the needs of the study. It is divided into two parts: the focus of the first part is to collect personal information about the learners and his/her access and use of computers, internet, and language used for communication, dictionary used while reading or writing and so on, and the focus of the second part of the checklist consists of forty five statements seeking information regarding the usefulness of corpus for writing, modifying texts, editing texts, reading, solving vocabulary and grammar problems and problems faced while using the corpus and so on.

The statements in the checklist are to be responded on a six point scale that is:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree
N. No opinion

A few sample statements asked in both parts of the checklist are given below:

**Part A. Background information**

1. In general, do you like to use a computer? Yes_________ No _____________

2. When you use computer for personal purposes, do you use English or your native language?

   English _____ Native language _____ Both _____ Others (list):
   __________
Part B. Reactions while using Corpus

| Using the corpus helped me in using different forms of words in sentences. | 5 4 3 2 1 N |
| Using the corpus helped me in improving the use of register specific words in my wiring. | 5 4 3 2 1 N |
| Using corpus helped me in using synonyms rather than same words several times. | 5 4 3 2 1 N |
| Using corpus helped me in learning the use of a word in different genres. | 5 4 3 2 1 N |

Table 3.8 Sample statements of corpus checklist

Purpose of the tool

- To understand the background of the learners and the resources available to them.
- To examine the attitude of learners while using corpus-based concordances for writing.
- To observe the problems faced by learners while using corpus-based concordances.
- To understand learners' perspectives about the usefulness of corpus for modifying and editing their writing samples.
- To observe the learning items and patterns learners observe and learn while exploring corpus.

3.10.2 Instructional tools

c. Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)
COCA is the largest freely available online corpus which contains a wide array of texts from different genres. It is a 450 million word corpus divided between
spoken, fiction, academic, magazine and newspaper texts. The design and search process of the corpus is user friendly and that contributes to the large usage of the corpus. The search engine processes data in the form of lists, charts, tables and Key Word in Context (KWIC) as per the option chosen. It allows the user to search for exact words, word forms, phrases and word combinations. Another remarkable feature is the POS tagging of words that surround the search word in concordances. At least 2 words on either side are colour coded to facilitate our observation of the word categories such as yellow for prepositions, blue for nouns, green for adjectives and soon. This kind of tagging and highlighting helps even basic learners to process data with ease. For specific requirements, the search process can be limited by using frequency counts, genres, and time period options. A snapshot of the corpus page is given below for reference.

![Figure 3.1 Snapshot of COCA](image)

d. **Word and Phrase.info**

This is an interface that is based on Corpus of Contemporary American English. It is designed to analyse texts for word frequency and word counts and also analyze texts for their use of language. It also provides concordances, synonyms and phrases for target words. This section helps learners to also see sample genre texts. A snapshot of this is given below
The purpose of instructional tools includes:

- To provide authentic language exposure to learners
- To enable learners search their language problems individually
- To enable learners become researchers and take responsibility for their own learning
- To make learners observe language patterns and use them to improve their writing
- To enable learners analyze their texts in order for them to understand the frequency count of the words used by them.
- To make learners observe various uses of a single word or phrases in different genres.

Problems faced during data collection

Enormity of corpus data

A corpus presents enormous amount of language data in the form of concordances. For each search word, there are more than 1000 concordances.
displayed on the screen. In such situation it becomes difficult for a teacher to identify the concordance instance referred by a learner. Thus, research can only decode the learning process through the responses provide by learners in writing tasks and checklists.

**Student Attrition**

This has been a problem during the data collection procedure. Since the intervention continued for nearly 4 months some students were found to be absent on certain days. This has had an effect on the size of the sample used for this study. Therefore, at the end of the study, data of only those students who were regular and present for all the sessions is taken for this study.

**3.12 Conclusion**

Data collection procedure was designed with precision to suit the requirements of learners and their availability. It was made sure that learners knew the concepts and the purpose of the course designed before the courses were offered to them. All the tools used for collecting data were administered towards the end of the programme when learners have recognized the use of both genre and corpus processes and also of the tools. The next chapter presents a detailed analysis of the data collected and its interpretation.