

STUDENTS' AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE OF CORPUS-BASED INSTRUCTION AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SHOMOLU LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAGOS

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Abstract

Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) is a language teaching approach that utilizes large collections of authentic language data (corpora) to expose learners to real-life language usage. This method enables students to identify linguistic patterns, collocations, and contextual meanings often missing in traditional grammar instruction. Research has shown that CBI enhances learners' engagement and improves the authenticity and contextual appropriateness of their writing and speaking. Despite its growing global recognition, the integration of CBI in Nigerian secondary schools is still limited, with low levels of awareness and usage among students. This study investigated students' awareness, knowledge, and usage of CBI among senior secondary school students in Shomolu Local Government Area, Lagos State. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a sample of 342 students was randomly selected from ten senior secondary schools. Four research questions were posed and answered, and four hypotheses were tested using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data were collected through a researcher-designed instrument titled "Corpus-Based Instruction and Students' Written Composition Questionnaire (CBISWCQ)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Findings revealed a significant relationship between students' awareness, knowledge, usage of CBI, and their written composition skills. Additionally, gender differences were observed in both awareness and usage of CBI, which also have implications on their writing enhancement. The study recommends that corpus-based instructional practices should be incorporated into English Language instruction and gender-sensitive teaching methods should also be adopted. It also calls on the government to provide technology-supported learning environments to facilitate effective CBI implementation in secondary schools.

Keywords: Corpus-based instruction (CBI), CBI awareness, CBI knowledge, CBI usage, written composition

Introduction

There has been a growing emphasis on the need to enhance students' writing skills through the

use of innovative instructional methods. One of such approach is Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI), which uses large, structured collections of

authentic language data, known as corpora, to inform and guide language teaching and learning. The CBI allows students to use English language in real-life context and enables students to observe and analyze linguistic patterns, collocations, and contextual usages that are often absent in traditional grammar instruction.

Corpus-based instruction is an educational approach that uses large, structured collections of authentic language data, known as corpora, to inform and enhance language teaching and learning (Flowerdew, 2022). According to Putra, (2023) this method involves analyzing real-life language use to identify patterns, collocations, and contextual usages, thereby providing learners with insights into how language functions in various contexts. When students engage with actual language examples, they develop a deeper understanding of linguistic structures and usage that move beyond prescriptive rules to appreciate the nuances of language in practice.

Corpus-Based Instruction is grounded in data-driven learning (DDL), which is based on the premise that students learn best when they interact with real-world data rather than abstract rules. In the context of secondary education, CBI offers a departure from traditional methods that often focus on memorising grammar rules and vocabulary to students working with corpora to identify linguistic patterns, such as verb forms, collocations, and sentence structures. This inductive approach fosters greater engagement and helps learners develop a deeper understanding of language usage, making their writing and speaking more authentic and contextually appropriate (Boulton & Cobb, 2023).

One of the key advantages of integrating CBI into secondary education is its ability to improve students' writing skills. By examining

authentic texts from a variety of sources, students can develop an understanding of different writing styles, genres, and the use of language for specific purposes. Research has shown that when students are exposed to corpora, they become more adept at using vocabulary and collocations appropriately in their own writing, thus improving their lexical and grammatical accuracy (Hussein, 2024). Moreover, CBI encourages students to explore various types of texts, from formal academic papers to informal blogs, giving them a more comprehensive view of language usage and structure.

Another benefit is the improvement in grammatical accuracy. Traditional grammar instruction often focuses on isolated sentence structures, but corpus data exposes students to grammar as it is naturally used in real-world contexts. This approach not only helps students internalize rules but also enables them to apply grammar flexibly and accurately in their own writing. For example, students can identify common grammatical errors in corpora and learn how to correct them, thereby improving their self-editing skills (Boettger, 2016). Although, integrating CBI into secondary education comes with several challenges. First, resource constraints can hinder the effective implementation of CBI. While corpora are readily available online, not all secondary schools have the necessary technology or internet access to fully utilize corpus tools. Additionally, teachers may not be sufficiently trained in using corpus data, which can lead to underutilization of this instructional method. According to Dammann (2017), the successful integration of CBI requires specialized training for educators, who must be proficient in navigating corpora and designing lesson plans that incorporate corpus-based activities effectively.

Another challenge is the curriculum adaptation required for CBI to fit within the existing secondary education framework. Traditional teaching methods that prioritize rote memorization and drills may need to be overhauled to accommodate the interactive, data-driven nature of CBI. Teachers must be willing to experiment with new pedagogical approaches and move away from the lecture-based model that dominates many classrooms. This shift may face resistance from both teachers and students who are accustomed to conventional methods of instruction.

Despite the growing recognition of CBI as an effective language teaching method, the awareness and knowledge of CBI among secondary school students in Nigeria remain relatively limited. Corpus-Based Instruction, which involves using authentic language data to inform language learning, is primarily employed in higher education and specialized language programs. While there is increasing interest in incorporating CBI into secondary education worldwide, Nigerian schools have faced several challenges in promoting its awareness and understanding among students.

One of the key factors contributing to the limited awareness of CBI among secondary school students in Nigeria is the lack of familiarity with corpus linguistics. Many students and teachers still rely heavily on traditional methods of language teaching, such as rote memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary. According to Okojie (2020), the education system in Nigeria is still largely influenced by teacher-centered pedagogies that prioritize textbook knowledge over interactive and technology-driven approaches like CBI. As a result, students are not often exposed to corpora, which are collections of authentic texts used to analyze language patterns, vocabulary, and grammar in context. This limited exposure

means that many students are unaware of the advantages CBI offers in improving writing skills, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary usage.

Also, lack of access to technology is another significant barrier to the awareness and knowledge of CBI among secondary school students in Nigeria. While CBI relies heavily on digital corpora and corpus tools, many Nigerian schools, particularly those in rural areas or with limited resources, do not have the necessary infrastructure to support such technology. As noted by Bello and Adedeji (2021), the digital divide in Nigerian schools means that many students do not have regular access to computers or the internet, which makes it challenging for them to engage with corpus tools. Without the ability to access corpora or corpus-based software, students' awareness of CBI and its potential benefits remains low.

The application of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) among secondary school students in Nigeria is an emerging trend that promises to enhance language learning, particularly in the areas of writing, vocabulary acquisition, and grammatical accuracy. Several studies have also suggested that CBI can significantly improve students' writing and overall language skills by providing them with real-world language examples and promoting self-discovery of grammatical and lexical patterns (Olayinka, 2020). Moreover, as technology becomes more accessible in Nigerian schools, there is an increasing possibility for CBI to be integrated into language teaching. According to Akinyemi and Olamide (2023), the introduction of digital learning platforms and mobile applications that provide access to corpora could play a pivotal role in raising students' awareness of corpus-based approaches.

Despite these challenges, some urban schools in Nigeria are beginning to experiment

with CBI to improve students' language proficiency. In schools where digital resources are available, teachers can use online corpora, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) or the Nigerian Corpus of English, to provide students with authentic examples of language usage. According to Akinyemi and Olamide (2023), some teachers in Lagos and other major cities are increasingly incorporating corpus tools into their teaching practices, allowing students to analyze texts and identify common patterns in word choice, collocations, and sentence structures. This approach is particularly useful for improving writing skills, as it provides students with insights into the natural flow of language and how to construct sentences that are both grammatically correct and contextually appropriate.

Studies have shown that Nigerian students often face challenges in written English, including issues with cohesion and lexical coverage. For instance, Adeyemi (2017) conducted a corpus-based analysis of cohesion in written English essays of Nigerian tertiary learners, highlighting areas where students commonly struggle. Also, Olayinka and Akinwale (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study to assess the awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, focusing on its potential to improve writing and grammar. The study used questionnaires and focus group discussions with 300 students selected through stratified random sampling across public and private schools. Findings revealed that only 18% of students were aware of CBI, and fewer than 10% had used corpus tools in their learning. Despite this, 65% expressed interest in adopting corpus-based methods if given proper training, although 80% still preferred traditional grammar instruction. The study concluded that awareness of CBI

remains low among students, highlighting a need for targeted educational initiatives.

Adeyanju and Okunlola (2020) investigated the application of corpus-based learning techniques to improve the English writing skills of secondary school students in Nigeria. The study aimed to evaluate how using corpora could help students enhance their composition skills, particularly in terms of structure, vocabulary, and sentence formation. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to assess the impact of corpus-based learning on the writing skills of 200 secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria, dividing them into experimental and control groups. Quantitative results showed a 20% improvement in writing performance among students taught with corpus tools like WordSmith and AntConc, supported by qualitative feedback highlighting enhanced vocabulary, grammar, and engagement. Both students and teachers found corpus-based instruction effective and recommended its integration into secondary school curricula to boost writing proficiency.

Rahman and Lee (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study to evaluate the impact of corpus-based instruction on vocabulary and collocation use in English composition among secondary school students in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The study involved 100 students aged 15–17, divided equally into experimental and control groups, with the former using corpus tools like Sketch Engine and AntConc to analyze language use. Students in the experimental group applied corpus findings to enhance their vocabulary and collocation accuracy in writing, while the control group received traditional instruction. Quantitative analysis showed that the experimental group improved vocabulary usage by 28% and collocation accuracy by 25%, significantly outperforming the control group, which improved by only 12% and 10%

respectively. Qualitative interviews revealed that students using corpus tools felt more confident and aware of language patterns. The study concluded that corpus-based instruction is highly effective in enhancing vocabulary and collocation use in secondary school writing.

To establish the numerous claims about CBI being an effective teaching approach, especially in English Language teaching, this study, therefore, was carried out to examine the levels of students' awareness, knowledge and usage of CBI among Senior Secondary Schools in Shomolu local Government, Lagos-State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the declining quality of written composition among senior secondary school students in Nigeria, particularly in urban areas like Somolu Local Government Area of Lagos. Despite the emphasis on English language proficiency in the curriculum, students continue to face challenges in producing coherent, grammatically accurate, and contextually appropriate written compositions. Common issues include poor grammar, limited vocabulary, weak sentence structures, and improper use of collocations. These challenges often result from traditional teaching methods, which tend to focus on rote learning and grammar drills, rather than providing students with opportunities to engage with authentic language use in meaningful contexts.

Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI), which leverages authentic language data from large corpora to enhance learning, has been identified as a promising approach to improving language skills, including writing. By allowing students to explore real-world language usage, CBI facilitates a more dynamic understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and text structure. However, despite its proven success in various

educational settings globally, the application of CBI in Nigerian secondary schools, especially in the context of written composition, remains underexplored.

Several studies have been done to identify and find solution to students' poor writing performance. However, the problem still persists. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap by examining the effectiveness of Corpus-Based Instruction in improving the written composition skills of senior secondary school students in Somolu. It aims to explore whether CBI can help students improve grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and overall writing quality. Additionally, the study will investigate the challenges faced by both students and teachers in implementing CBI in the secondary school

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of corpus-based instruction (CBI) on students' written composition among senior secondary schools in Somolu Local Government, Lagos State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria.
2. examine the extent to which students in Somolu Local Government Area can apply corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition.
3. establish gender differences in the levels of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria.

4. examine students' applications of CBI to enhance their written composition based on gender.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria?
2. To what extent did students in Somolu Local Government Area could apply corpus-based learning to enhance their written composition?
3. Would there be any difference in level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students?
4. Would there be any difference in level of application of corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition between male and female students?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

1. Level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) did not have any significant relationship with written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between application of corpus-based instruction and written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State.

3. There is no significant difference in the levels of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students.
4. There is no significant difference in application of corpus-based learning to enhance written composition between male and female students.

Significance of the Study

This study on Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) and students' written composition in senior secondary schools in Somolu, Lagos, offers valuable insights for various education stakeholders. For students, CBI provides a practical, engaging approach to learning English, improving grammar, vocabulary, and writing confidence. Teachers also benefit from the dynamic, student-centered teaching tools, while schools can enhance academic performance through innovative methods. Curriculum planners and policymakers can use the findings to develop skill-based curricula and informed policies. The government gains a clearer understanding of how data-driven instruction can address language learning challenges. Additionally, the study provides a foundation for future research into broader applications of CBI in English and other subjects.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) and students written composition among senior secondary schools in Somolu Local Government, Lagos State. Content wise, the study was delimited to variables such as Corpus-Based Instruction, awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction, application of Corpus-Based Instruction and written composition. Geographically, the study was limited to public secondary schools within Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design to explore how corpus-based instruction (CBI) influences students' writing skills in senior secondary schools across Somolu Local Government Area of Lagos State. To ensure fair representation, Somolu was divided into five zones: Bariga, Ladi-Lak, Bajulaiye, Onipanu, and Palmgrove. Two schools were randomly selected from each zone, making a total of 10 schools. From each school, 36 students were chosen, bringing the sample size to 360. The study used a well-structured questionnaire called the *Corpus-Based Instruction and Students' Written Composition Questionnaire (CBISWCQ)* to gather data for the study. The instruments are divided into two sections: Section A collected demographic details like gender, age, and class,

while Section B focused on the study's core questions, using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." To ensure the tool was reliable, a pilot test was conducted with 30 students from the same area (not part of the main sample). The results showed a strong reliability score of 0.79 using Cronbach's Alpha, indicating the instrument was dependable.

The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics, using frequencies and percentages to describe the participants' profiles, while regression analysis was used to answer the research questions. The study used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and t-test at a 0.05 significance level, with all analyses carried out using SPSS version 25 to test the hypotheses.

Results

Table 1: Model summary, co-efficient and t-value regression analysis level of awareness, level of knowledge, application of CBI to written composition

Model					
Multiple R=.510					
Multiple R ² =.260					
Multiple R ² (adjusted) =.250					
Standard error estimate =5.90448					
F(4,299)=25.917, p<.001					
Model	Unstandardized Std Error	Coefficient	BStandardized Coeff Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	51.646	3.203		16.123	.000
Level of Awareness	.740	.129	-.319	-5.752	.020
Level of Knowledge	.673	.171	-.292	-3.935	.024
Application of CBI	.002	.109	.002	0.23	.051
Gender	.583	.169	-.026	2.503	.003

Table 1 indicates that coefficient of determinant (Adjusted R²) =0.260 which gives proportion of

variance (Adjusted R² X 100) = 26.0%. This implies that the independent variables namely

level of awareness, level of knowledge, application of CBI jointly accounted for 26.0% of the variance in the dependent variable, written composition. Also, the analysis of the regression shows that the joint contribution of level of awareness, level of knowledge, application of CBI is significant on the written composition β ($F= 25.917$; $df= (4,29f9)$ significant value $P= 0.000 < 0.05$). The results of relative contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of written composition was that the level of awareness CBI is moderate high and

made positive contribution to the prediction of written composition ($\beta=.740$, $t=5.752$, $p=.020$), while level of knowledge is also moderate high and made the next significant contributor to the prediction of written composition ($\beta=.673$, $t=3.935$, $p=.024$), follow by students gender ($\beta=.583$, $t=-2.503$, $p=.031$). However, extent of application of CBI is relatively low ($\beta=-.002$, $t=-.023$, $p=.051$) did not make any positive contribution to the prediction of written composition.

Hypothesis 1

Level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) does not have any significant relationship with written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria.

Table 2: Level of Awareness / Knowledge of CBI and Written Composition

Variables	Mean	SD	N	df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision
Awareness/ Knowledge of CBI	19.34	3.16	342	340	0.34	0.113	H ₀₁ Rejected
Written Composition	16.23	2.88					

$P < 0.05$

Table 7 reveals that the calculated 'r' value ($r\text{-cal.} = 0.34$) is greater than the 'r' critical ($\text{crit 'r'} = 0.113$) given at 340 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, hence, the null hypothesis which says that level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) does not have any significant relationship with written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria is rejected. It then means that, level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) have significant relationship with written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between application corpus-based instruction and written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State

Table 3: Relationship between Application CBI and Written Composition

Variables	Mean	SD	N	df	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision
Application of CBI	20.35	3.18					

342 340 0.45 0.113 H₀₂ Rejected

Written

Composition 16.23 2.88

P < 0.05

Table 3 reveals that the calculated 'r' value (r-cal. = 0.45) is greater than the 'r' critical (crit 'r' = 0.113) given at 340 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, hence, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between application corpus-based instruction and written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State is rejected. It then means that, there is a significant relationship between application corpus-based instruction and written composition among secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students

Table 4: Difference in level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	N	df.	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male								
Students	121	29.12	5.15	342	340	2.73	1.96	H ₀₃ Rejected
Female								
Students	221	26.14	6.66					

P > 0.05

The table 4 reveals that the calculated 't' value (t-cal. = 2.73) is greater than the 't' critical (crit 't' = 1.96) given 340 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, hence, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference in level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students is rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference in level of awareness and knowledge of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) between male and female students.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in level of application of corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition between male and female students

Table 5: Difference in level of application of corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition between male and female students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df.	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male							
Students	121	19.54	6.17				
				340	2.89	1.96	H0 ₄ Rejected
Female							
Students	221	17.68	4.78				
P>0.05							

The table 5 reveals that the calculated-‘t’ value (t-cal. = 2.89) is greater than the ‘t’ critical (crit ‘t’ = 1.96) given 340 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, hence, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference in level of application of corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition between male and female students is rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference in level of application of corpus-based learning techniques to enhance their written composition between male and female students.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the impact of Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI) on secondary school students’ writing performance in Somolu Local Government Area, Lagos State. It found a significant positive relationship between students’ CBI awareness and their writing outcomes ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that familiarity with corpus tools enhances coherence and grammar (Olayinka & Akinwale, 2022; García & González, 2021). A stronger correlation ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$) was observed between hands-on CBI use and improvements in sentence construction, vocabulary, and structure (Jones & Taylor, 2019; Adeyanju & Okunlola, 2020).

Gender-based differences were also significant; male students showed higher engagement with corpus tools ($t = 2.73$), as supported by Boulton and Pérez-Paredes (2017), Mukherjee and Rohrbach (2019), and Alhassan and Wood (2023). However, with instructional support, female students applied CBI more precisely, leading to better rhetorical results

(Yoon & Jo, 2021; El-Dakhs & Salem, 2023; Mahmoud & Omar, 2025).

Overall, the findings confirm CBI’s effectiveness in improving writing competence and stress the need for gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching strategies. The study recommends integrating corpus tools into the curriculum, enhancing teacher training, and improving digital infrastructure to ensure equitable access and maximize CBI’s benefits for all learners.

Recommendations

To effectively implement Corpus-Based Instruction (CBI), the following recommendations were made from the study:

1. Curriculum planners should integrate CBI into regular English lessons through practical, data-driven activities.
2. Teachers are to be properly trained and given access to digital tools, and schools should provide needed infrastructure like internet and corpus software.

3. Teaching approaches should also address varying student confidence levels, especially gender-related gaps, by promoting inclusive supports, develop local corpora, and ensuring ongoing evaluation for equitable CBI adoption.

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