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TURKISH EFL ENGLISH MAJORS` PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF “INTRODUCTION TO CORPUS LINGUISTICS” COURSE IN AN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to measure the effect of implementing a new course into the curriculum of English majors in an English Department in Turkey. The name of the course is “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics”. Following the implementation of this selective course into the curriculum, there emerged an urgent need to investigate the possible effects of this integration on the students. This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and aims to explore tertiary level EFL students’ perceptions of corpus linguistics as an undergraduate course. Following the implementation of the course for a term (Fall-2016-2017) with 50 students in an English Department of a middle size university in Turkey, the students (n:50) who selected this course were asked to exchange their opinions on the corpus experience through a questionnaire and an open-ended interview designed to measure their perceptions towards the new course. The preliminary findings suggested that tertiary level EFL students favoured selecting this course for several reasons such as practicality, authenticity and inclusion of rich lexical content. They also claimed that working with the native and non-native corpora and corpus concordances provided them with several skills such as making appropriate decisions in the use of grammar rules, words and lexical combinations as well as developing their awareness towards the semantic prosodic differences between the lexical items. Raising their awareness towards the lexical and grammar issues, the students also seized the opportunity to fill the gap between idealized native English standards and the EFL English.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

The use of corpora has become very popular in many areas and it is largely used by linguists, translators, foreign and second language teachers and learners all over the globe for similar purposes. The growing popularity of corpus and corpus tools are due to several reasons such as

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providing authentic, objective, verifiable data for linguistics investigations. The authenticity of corpora allows the users to reach original texts written or spoken by the natives of the target language. Therefore, they are also called as reference corpora that provide the data of standard norms of language. According to Sinclair (1991, p 24) “although the term authenticity is a controversial concept in linguistics in the context of corpus linguistics authentic texts are defined as those that are used for a genuine communicative purpose rather than written especially for teaching purposes”. These texts are originated by naturally occurring language and this naturally occurring language data has an objective structure that does not contain any limitation or specific utterance on purpose unlike dictionaries, course books or grammar books which limit the learners with their unreal language. When Williams (1988) analysed the texts, which are taught in business English classrooms, he found many sentences that are actually never used in real business life. Instead of the business discourse, he found complete fabricated sentences. Barnbrook (1996, p 140) also describes corpora as “the tireless native-speaker informant, with rather greater potential knowledge of the language than the average native speaker”.

Purpose of the Study

The popularity of corpora is largely due to the fact that it is used by linguists, translators, foreign and second language teachers and learners all over the globe for a wide-ranging of purposes as a tool which provides authentic, objective, verifiable data for further investigation. Referring to the authenticity, Sinclair (1991, p 24) argued that despite being a controversial concept in linguistics, authenticity and authentic texts which are originated from naturally occurring language are used for a genuine communicative purpose. Barnbrook (1996, p 140) also describes corpora as “the tireless native-speaker informant, with rather greater potential knowledge of the language than the average native speaker”. The online availability of corpora makes it an ideal tool for language students who feel free to make self-discoveries related to the nature of English language thanks to the corpus concordances. This self-discovery process may help EFL students increase motivation and confidence as well as control their learning process and foster self-development. According to Leech (1997, p. 3) “a corpus is a rich resource of authentic data containing structures, patterns and predictable features waiting to be unlocked by the human intelligence”. This also proves that students as the researchers of corpus are able to make discoveries on topics of their interest and which may have never noticed by others; thereby, it, in a parallel fashion, enhances their motivations for language and linguistic studies. Finally, the unlimited capacity of text files forces the users to access to a large amount of data at one time and this may be difficult to grasp for some.

Method

The study is quantitative and qualitative in nature. Questionnaire and open-ended interviews were used in the study. The study was carried out with 50 third-year students in a middle size university in Turkey in the academic year 2016/2017. 37 participants were female and 13 were male students (37 F, 13 M) The participants were all tertiary level Turkish

EFL learners who all majored in English and who enrolled in the elective “ELL3036: Introduction to Corpus Linguistics” course for a semester. This was a new elective course for the students and their perceptions of this course at the end of the term (12 weeks) were measured through questionnaires and open-ended interviews.

Each of the experimental classes made use of sets of printed concordances from a native speaker corpus (the British National Corpus – the BNC, Davies 2004) and the other instrument employed in the study includes one academic written native reference corpus; KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English) the learner corpus created by the author. Two similar function concordance tools were also introduced to the students, these being Sketch Engine online corpus interface and AntConc 3.4.4 offline corpus software. The learner academic corpus (KTUCALE) contains argumentative essays written by the tertiary level EFL learners in a Turkish university. All the essays are academic in character and the selected sample for the present comparative study consists of a total of 500.045 words. All the experimental lessons depended strongly on various forms of concordances from native and non-native learner corpora. In some cases, other corpus data were also included such as word lists and graphs, collocate frequency lists, syntactic frames and patterns, as well as word frequency data across different sections of a corpus representing different styles.

Results

The *perceptions* of tertiary level EFL majors towards the integration of a corpus course into the departmental courses were given based on the questionnaire data. Firstly, questionnaire findings are presented in frequencies and percentages and the relevant conclusions were drawn based on the data collected through questionnaires. In this study, I explored tertiary level EFL student attitudes toward a new course named as “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics”, hoping to achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of its value for EFL learners. The findings of the survey study which employed qualitative and quantitative methods indicated that the students perceived corpus course to be beneficial for their English writing, lexical and grammar investigations as well as being exposed to authentic language with greater confidence and new discoveries. One important point emerging from the questionnaire and interview data is that the potential of corpus to reveal authentic and real language data is an important issue, deserving immediate pedagogical focus and special consideration before deciding to what extent corpus data should be used before fostering the students' attempts for more linguistic explorations. Another important finding is that a limited number of students who selected this course seemed to have needed more time and practice to become familiar with the corpus-based explorations. The possible reason why they do not find the use of corpus and corpus-based activities all the way useful and preferred to study in more traditional ways may be due to the fact that corpus-based activities foster the analysis of data and inductive thinking, which may be less frequently used by these students during their language-related studies. Based on the data obtained, it is also obvious that corpus activities which were done with the students for a term and summarized

in this study may be a good example of how EFL English majors were able to use corpora as a tool for various linguistics investigations.

Keywords: Corpus, EFL, perception, tertiary level

TÜRKİYE`DE İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ÖĞRENİMİ GÖREN VE İNGİLİZCE`Yİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN “DERLEM BİLİMİNE GİRİŞ” DERSİNE KARŞI GELİŞTİRDİKLERİ ALGILAR

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye`de İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı öğrenimi gören ve İngilizce`yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin “Derlem Bilime Giriş” dersine karşı geliştirdikleri algıları tespit etmektir. Bu dersin seçmeli olarak açılmasını takiben dersin öğrenciler üzerindeki olası etkilerini tespit etmek gereği doğmuştur. Hem nicel ve hemde nitel veriler ile yapılan bu çalışma Türkiye`de ilk kez lisans düzeyinde okutulacak olan “Derlem Bilime Giriş” dersinin bu dersi alan öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. 2016-2017 güz döneminde dersin orta ölçekli bir üniversitemizde 50 öğrenci ile okutulmaya başlamasının ardından, öğrencilere anket ve açık uçlu mülakatlar yoluyla edindikleri derlem bilim tecrübesini faydalı bulup bulmadıkları konusundaki düşünceleri sorulmuştur. Elde edilen veriler ışığında öğrencilerin bu dersi “pratiklik, “otantik” ve “zengin kelime içeriği sunması” açılarından faydalı buldukları tespit edilmiştir. Öğrenciler aynı zamanda yerli ve yabancı derlemler ile çalışmanın kendilerine “dilbilgisi kurallarının doğru kullanımı”, “kelimeler ve kelime kombinasyonlarının doğru tespiti” ve “kelimelerin anlamsal prozodilerine karşı farkındalık gelişimi” gibi alanlarda faydalı olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Kelime ve dilbilgisi konularına karşı farkındalıklarının artması ile birlikte öğrenciler kendi İngilizceleri ile ana dil İngilizce yazarların dil kullanımları arasındaki farklılıkları bir miktar giderme fırsatını bulmuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Derlem, Algılar, Üniversite öğrencileri

INTRODUCTION

The use of corpora has become very popular in many areas and it is largely used by linguists, translators, foreign and second language teachers and learners all over the globe for similar purposes. The growing popularity of corpus and corpus tools are due to several reasons such as providing authentic, objective, verifiable data for linguistics investigations.

The authenticity of corpora allows the users to reach original texts written or spoken by the natives of the target language. Therefore, they are also called as reference corpora that provide the data of standard norms of language. According to Sinclair (1991, p 24) “although the term authenticity is a controversial concept in linguistics in the context of corpus linguistics authentic texts are defined as those that are used for a genuine communicative purpose rather than written especially for teaching purposes”. These texts are originated by naturally occurring language. On the other hand, the naturally occurring language of corpora has an objective structure that does not contain any limitation or specific utterance on purpose unlike dictionaries, course books or grammar books which

limit the learners with their unreal language. When Williams (1988) analysed the texts, which are taught in business English classrooms, he found many sentences that are actually never used in real business life. Instead of the business discourse, he found complete fabricated sentences. Barnbrook (1996, p 140) also describes corpora as “the tireless native-speaker informant, with rather greater potential knowledge of the language than the average native speaker”.

Verifiability is another important feature of corpora. Statistically speaking the corpus data may not always give the same exact outputs, though it does provide the potential or possible correct use of language.

The online availability of corpora makes it an ideal tool for language students who feel free to make self-discoveries related to the nature of English language thanks to the corpus concordances. This self-discovery process may help EFL students increase motivation and confidence as well as control their learning process and foster self-development.

A similar benefit of corpus-based investigations is that they help foster student-centred teaching method and turns the students into language detectives. While doing so, however, students need to search for their pre-assigned topics, and then based on the data obtained and their observations on repeated language patterns in the concordances, they are supposed to make some generalisations. According to Leech (1997, p. 3) “a corpus is a rich resource of authentic data containing structures, patterns and predictable features waiting to be unlocked by the human intelligence”. This also proves that students as the researchers of corpus are able to make discoveries on topics of their interest and which may have never been noticed by others; thereby, it in a parallel fashion enhances their motivations for language and linguistic studies. Finally, the unlimited capacity of text files forces the users to access to a large amount of data at one time and this may be difficult to grasp for some. Similarly, the large amount of data may sometimes be too complicated to investigate and the discovery process may be hampered.

It is also the case that the potentials of corpus investigations to provide linguistic data related to the semantic prosodic aspects of the lexical items, their lexical priming relations and collocations, word counts, frequencies, language patterns should be considered important. Moreover, distinctive meanings of a word or near-synonym words can be discovered by the help of corpora quite unlike dictionaries which present limited contextual information. Corpus frequencies provide the researchers to make implications and generalisations by using their intuitions about the output data. There is a need for using intuition after the corpus data is obtained through frequencies and percentages and the observation of concordance patterns. According to Sinclair (1991, p 4) “human intuition about language is highly specific and not at all a good guide to what actually happens when the same people actually use the language”.

The use of corpus is not without problems either. First of all, the fact that some linguistic items may not exist corpora don't necessarily mean that they do not exist in English. Moreover, corpus concordance searches do not give us reasons for the patterns and it only provides raw data for the researcher to analyse and interpret. Without a logical and conscious interpretation, the findings may cause the failure of a study. Finally, the contextual data may differ in corpora so that computers are not able to recognise the intuitions of any utterance.

Widdowson (2000) criticises the use of corpus with the idea of individual utterances of the texts by focusing on the limitations of corpus linguistics. He distinguishes the data into three different perspectives as first-person, second-person and third-person discourse. The context of the texts may include the expressions of the third-person utterance while it does not represent the first-person or second-person reality.

The aim of this mixed method survey study is to investigate the perceptions of tertiary level EFL English majors towards the conduct of a new course named as “*ELL3036: Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*” course in an English Department in Turkey. The rationale behind the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection was to better understand the perceptions of the subject towards the new course. The data was collected through questionnaire and open-ended interviews. Moreover, in order to fulfil the aim of this study, the following research questions needed to be addressed

1. What are the general perceptions of tertiary level EFL learners towards the implementation of “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics” undergraduate course in an English department in Turkey?
2. To what extent did EFL learners exploit corpus tools efficiently in this course?
3. What kind of problems did they encounter while working with the native and non-native corpora?

METHOD

The study is quantitative and qualitative in nature. Questionnaire and open-ended interviews were used in the study. The study was carried out with 50 third-year students in a middle size university in Turkey in the academic year 2016/2017. 37 participants were female and 13 were male students (37 F, 13 M) The participants were all tertiary level Turkish EFL learners who all majored in English and who enrolled in the elective “*ELL3036: Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*” course for a semester. This was a new elective course for the students and their perceptions of this course at the end of the term (12 weeks) were measured through questionnaires and open-ended interviews. The researcher introduced the students with BNC Corpus from the Web, which has a user-friendly interface that allows for a detailed search for every word or word chunks.

For this study, two native and two non-native corpora were used for SVC content investigation. BAWE (British Academic Written English), KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English), TICLE (Turkish International Corpus of Learner English) and LOCNESS (The Louvain Corpus of English Essays) are used.

Table 1: Profiles of the three corpora used in the study

	KTUCALE	BAWE (Linguistics)	TICLE
Tokens	500,045	529,149	203,923
L1	Turkish	English	Turkish
Genre	Academic	Academic Argumentative	Expository Argumentative
Number of Topics	133	50	34
Number of texts	220	223	280

KTUCALE consists of academic argumentative essays written by the tertiary level EFL students at Karadeniz Technical University. All the essays are academic in character and the selected sample for the present comparative study is a total of 500.045 words. The reference and control corpus of similar writing was taken from the British Academic Written English (BAWE) database.

BAWE corpus was built at the Universities of Warwick, Reading and Oxford Brookes under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Sheena Daer, Paul Thompson and Paul Wickens. BAWE was released in 2008. This corpus contains approximately 3000 pieces and approximately 6,5 million words of proficient student writing from British universities.

TICLE corpus contains approximately 200.000 words and 280 argumentative essays that are written by 3rd and 4th grade proficient university students of Çukurova University, Mersin University

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and Mustafa Kemal University.

Procedure

The course was designed into a sequence of corpus based activities in an attempt to familiarise the students with a series of corpus applications and to enable them benefit from the corpus experience through a range of corpus based concordance searches. The students who selected this elective course have had no opportunity so far to become familiar with corpora available online. For this reason, the teacher who is also the researcher first presented them with a series of various sample queries, telling them exactly what settings to apply and what to write in the search window. Later in the session, they were supposed to define their own questions on English lexicogrammar, and try to answer them by using a corpus. The teacher was there to advise them on how to formulate their queries in order to obtain the most relevant corpus data. The aim of the session was to let students understand how a corpus works, and what types of information can be retrieved from it. Some guidance was offered in interpreting the results and reading concordances. The researcher then introduced the students with BNC Corpus from the Web, which has a user friendly interface that allows for detailed search for every word or word chunks. The sample group students received a week long instructions from the researcher teacher related to the use of BNC corpus including the use of different registers, POS and KWIC analysis and the search for collocations. The students were given instruction about the ways they can conduct concordance searches as well as interpret the results. For the purpose of teaching this corpus use process, the students were arranged in groups of two or three people and asked to create tables showing the prototype strings for key words found on a separate page. For the next ten weeks, the classes were done in the computer lab and the each student used the computer allocated to her use as well as used BNC corpus at home. At the end of this twelve weeks corpus experience, the students were delivered a questionnaire which contained semi structured interview questions regarding their corpus use and perceptions.

Each of the experimental classes made use of sets of printed concordances from a native speaker corpus (the British National Corpus – the BNC, Davies 2004) and the other instrument employed in the study includes one academic written native reference corpus; KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English) the learner corpus created by the author. Two similar function concordance tools were also introduced to the students, these being Sketch Engine online corpus interface, and AntConc 3.4.4 offline corpus software. The learner academic corpus (KTUCALE) contains argumentative essays written by the tertiary level EFL learners in a Turkish university. All the essays are academic in character and the selected sample for the present comparative study consists of a total of 500.045 words. All the experimental lessons depended strongly on various forms of concordances from native and non-native learner corpora (error analysis). In some cases, other corpus data were also included, such as word lists and graphs, collocate frequency lists, syntactic frames and patterns, as well as word frequency data across different sections of a corpus representing different styles. Working with such materials requires students to modify their approach to learning.

Table 2: Topics Assigned to the students during the Course for Comparative Analysis

Topics	Source	
1	September 11	Newspapers
2	Islamophobia	Newspapers
3	Coup 2016 in Turkey	Newspapers -Media
4	French attacks	News Columns
5	Marriage programs (if any)	Media-Tv
6	Courtrooms	Court Documents
7	Lectures	Classrooms
8	Friday-Sunday Sermon	Mosques-Churches
9	Advertisements	Media-Tv
10	Recipes	Cooking books
12	Scientific research papers	Online library-google
11	Two comparative Novels	Literature sources
12	Letters by/to Ataturk	http://www.ataturksociety.org/category/letters/
13	USA Clinton v. Trump candidacy speeches (convention speeches)	Media,newspapers
14	Gulf war-1990	Newspapers
15	Marriage words or quotes (I now pronounce you husband and wife)	Internet-tv-books
16	Violence in South Africa	Newspapers
17	USA presidency speeches	http://millercenter.org/president/speechs

Table 1 above shows some of the topics assigned to the students who hastakeb this course during the term. Topics were allocated to the students on the basis of their selection and they were asked to find relevant texts of no more than ten thousand words from the sourcess indicated according to a strict design criteria. The students were then asked to create small corpora from the texts they collected for further investigation.

Table 2 below shows some of the search topics for grammar and lexical investigation from the small the copora the subject students created from the sources just indicated. These small corpora compiled by the students were made based on a design criteria and the each student submitted their design criteria to the course instructor (researcher) before initiating his/her investigation.

Table 3: Criteria for Investigation

Topics for Investigation
1. Presupposition
2. Modality
3. Noun clauses
4. Reductions (adjective and adverbial)
5. Active-passive constructions
6. Transitive and intransitive words
7. Lexical semantics and Lexical combinations
8. Complexity of the language used
9. Recurrent word combinations and formulaic language
10. Collocations & Colligations
11. The use of pronouns
12. The use of adjectives, adverbs with their prosodic nature
13. Phraseological preferences
14. Keywords and their cultural loads (master and mistress)(British and English)
15. Culturally loaded terms

Table 3 below shows the weekly timetable that was prepared to meet each group of students for the discussion of the assigned topics for regular and evening students together. These meetings

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were held once every week for ten weeks of course time and the students seem to have benefited from the discussions related to the nature of the search topics they are responsible from. The discussions with the students focused on the investigation of the search topics with emphasis on the potential uses of native and non native learner corpora for the purpose of conducting corpus concordance searches for the assigned final topics. One groups of students investigated the use prepositions by the Turkish EFL learners from the KTUCALE corpus designed for this purpose and compared these findings with the native corpora findings in an attempt to reveal overuse and underuse patterns in non-native corpora. Several interesting overuse and underuse patterns were observed and noted by the learners and they reported these patterns in their final exam papers with the help of tables and graphics.

Table 4: Sample timetable for meeting each student group for final assignments and their assigned topics

REGULAR STUDENTS	EVENING STUDENTS	ASSIGNED FINAL TOPICS	DAY	HOUR	MEETING PLACE
BK +DC	OY+ AY	Lexical priming and Turkish learners of Eng.	04.11.16	16.00	Office 310
EA+VA	GÖ+ YZ	A corpus based comparative study on Turkish learners' writing	04.11.16	16.30	Office 310
YG+ÖCY	HY+AD	A corpus based study on Turkish EFL learners usage of Prepositions.	04.11.16	17.00	Office 310
BCT+EH	TT+KK	A Corpus Based Study on the Use of Preposition of Time 'on' and 'at' in argumentative essays	04.11.16	17.30	Office 310
HSY+MA	AK+OU	A corpus driven study of the use of linking adverbials.	04.11.16	18.00	Office 310
HY+Z K	EE+ MU	ACorpus-based Analysis of Create and Produce.	04.11.16	18.30	Office 310

One of the corpus investigations of the students` lessons focused on the problems that Turkish EFL students have had so far regarding the use of prepositions of place. The sample sentence in the non native corpus was one that have been often encountered in the students` argumentative texts:

“I was not responsible *from* what happened *at* the school building when the announcement related to the late comers were made.”

Learner corpus analysis proved that Turkish EFL learners have produced problematic adjective+ prepositions and prepositions of place even at an upper intermediate level. It is possible to consider such errors as L1 transfer errors. Through comparing and contrasting such sentence types

with the contents of the reference native corpus, the new corpus students made new discoveries, which seemed to have affected them positively. Classroom work with corpus-based concordances resulted in several new discoveries related to the nature of English language. The learners in the scope of this survey study gained more experience and confidence, appreciation and awareness to the potential benefits of corpus so that they could perform similar investigations of the predetermined topics that provoke their interest between the reference and non native learner corpora.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *perceptions* of tertiary level EFL majors towards the integration of a corpus course into the departmental courses were given based on the questionnaire data. Firstly, questionnaire findings are presented in frequencies and percentages and the relevant conclusions were drawn based on the data collected through questionnaires.

Questionnaire Data

Question 1: What are the general perceptions of tertiary level EFL learners towards the implementation of “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics” undergraduate course in an English department in Turkey?

The students` responses for the first research questions were related to the perceptions concerning the implementation of “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics” undergraduate course in an English department. The responses given by the students indicate that their perceptions were influenced by various factors such as the practical, effective and authentic features of corpus concordances as well as the variety of research topics corpus techniques are compatible with.

Table 5: Perceptions towards corpora

General perceptions about using corpora:	D	N	A
I think corpora are easy to use.	2	7	37
I can use corpora effectively.	3	7	36
I think corpora are useful for translation.	3	9	34
I think corpora can be useful for other aspects of learning English (vocabulary, grammar, style, etc.)	1	2	43
I think corpora can be useful for other courses (literature, civilisation, linguistics, etc.).	1	12	33
I think corpora can be useful outside my studies.	2	11	33

Based on Table 5 above it is possible to assume that the students are mostly positive about the general aspects of corpora they have used during the course duration. Their perceptions were mostly centered on the idea that corpus may be used for other language investigations as well (80%). Almost an equal number of students also favour the use of corpus in other courses as well. It`s easy and user-friendly (82%) interface enables many corpus user freely and easily surf through the concordances and carry out relevant investigations (74%). However, a small number of the students (4%) who took this selective course think that corpus may be of no use outside the scope of their studies.

Table 6 below consists of items that are directed to the technical issues related to the use of corpora. First of all it is interesting to note that almost 86% of the learners believe that they have enough knowledge about using corpora for research purposes but 20 % of them state that think they would have liked more theoretical background. While 44% of students remained neutral on

demonstration of how to use corpora, 70% of them prefer practice on their own. Based on these responses to this part of the questionnaire it is possible to conclude that general perceptions of EFL majors who selected this course were mostly positive though there is a small number of student group who need more practice and another group who need more information about using corpora tools for any perpose.

Table 6:Perceptions towards the technicality of using corpora

To use these corpora:	D	N	A
On the whole, I think I have enough information.	3	5	43
I would have liked more theoretical background.	10	12	26
I would have liked more methodological explanation.	7	14	29
I would have liked more demonstrations.	6	26	18
I would have liked more concrete exercises to practice on my own.	4	11	36

Table 7is based on the questions that measure the perceptions of the learners in terms of functionality of corpus and corpus tools. Perhaps the most striking aspect of corpus tools according to the learners is their ability to show if a word or an expression exists and if a word or an expression is appropriate. All the learners (100%) believe that corpus tools are fully functional in these aspects. Almost equal number of learners also belives that (96%) corpus and corpus tools can be used to check an idea, meaning of a word and the grammatical aspects of the words or expressions. A huige majority (95%) also believe that they use corpus to compare two or more words or expressions.

When it comes to spelling though, 24% of learners believe that corpora don't help them to check spelling, 30% remained neutral and 56% of them believed that it is also useful for this purpose.

Table 7: Fuctionality of corpus tools

I think corpora can be useful to...	D	N	A
find an idea.	7	4	39
check an idea.	1	4	45
see if a word / an expression exists.	0	0	50
check the meaning of a word / an expression.	1	3	46
see if a word / an expression is appropriate.	0	2	48
see how a word / an expression is used grammatically.	1	3	46
compare two words / expressions.	3	2	45
check spelling.	12	15	23

Tha data regarding the functionality issues of corpus tools were almost positive in all aspects. It is a fact that corpus tools also present some functional limitations to the users in some limited ways, though in the scope of the study the learners did not point to these limitations. One obvious functional limitation of corpus tools, for example, is their inability to present the user no data other than the frequenci y-based concordance lines, which give hardly any room for selecting the specific usage-based or context-based specific usages and meanings of the words under search. This naturally requires on the part of the learners to use their intuitive knowledge regarding the different usage based forms of the words.

Table 8: Knowledge about corpus tools

With these corpora, I know how to formulate queries:	D	N	A
to find an individual word.	3	5	42
to find an expression.	3	9	38
to find collocates.	1	2	47
to find synonyms.	2	8	40
by part of speech, such as [v*] for verbs.	0	8	42
for lemmas, such as [work] for <i>work, works, worked, working</i> .	3	6	41
for a single register sub-register or the time period.	2	18	30

Table 8 indicates the learners' knowledge of corpus concordances. Formulating search items is generally regarded as an important skill and our learners who received "Introduction to Corpus Linguistics" course reported a very good level of mastery in this issue. The researcher's contention at this point is that knowing all such features of corpus concordances as well as employing various corpora all by themselves seem to have provided a good advantage for corpus users to develop positive feelings and appreciation towards the corpus tools.

Table 9: I use corpus to see

I use corpus to see the	D	N	A		D	N	A
general frequency in corpus.	3	10	37	information about the usages of specific words	5	10	35
usages in different registers.	0	21	29	collocations	6	27	17
concordance lines	2	23	25	comparison of two words	6	21	23
coincidental examples in concordance lines.	4	13	37	comparison of the usages of the words in different regis.	7	15	28
more context for some concordance lines	1	12	37				

It is clear from Table 9 that the learners (75%) mostly use corpus to check for general frequency as well as to find extended context for the search items and observe coincidental examples in concordance lines. 70 % of the learners use concordances in order to obtain information about the usages of specific words and 56% of them uses these information in order to compare the usages of different words in different registers.

In the questionnaire data, the degree of corpus familiarity was the final question for the learners who took this selective course for a term. Since the questionnaire was made at the end of the term and the students naturally developed various levels familiarities with the corpus and corpus tools their responses were generally positive towards various corpora and corpus tools. A considerable percentage of them (76%) learn to use several corpora (TICLE, BAWE, KTUCALE) with relative ease. The percentage of those who used COCA and BNC Davies were relatively lower (62 % and 51%). This may be because both reference corpora contained a huge amount of concordance data and this data may have been difficult to grasp for the learners who have only been studying corpus data for a term. They must have been lost in the data that these corpora presented to them at one time. This tendency of learners to avoid dealing with a huge amount of data at one time can be understood. Especially considering the huge structure of COCA corpus data, the students may have overwhelmed and even felt a sense of isolation and hard-to-deal-with-data.

Table 10: Corpus familiarity

I use these sites...	YES	NO	I can use Corpus tools such as ...	YES	NO
BNC DAVIES	51%	49%	Ant Conc	93%	7%
TICLE,	76%	24%	Sketch Engine:	88%	2%
BAWE,	76%	24%	Wordsmith:	6%	94%
KTUCLE	76%	24%	Others....	-	-
COCA	62%	38%			

Interview Data

The first interview question was asking the students` perceptions of the possible benefits of corpus use in their studies and their overall considerations of corpus. In the interview, many students reflected positive perceptions towards the addition of a selective corpus course in the curriculum.

S2: “I can reach the inf. about how I use the sentences, how I bring together the words...”.

S4: “I can easily obtain correct form of any word or structure...”.

S5: “It saves my time in my studies and I easily get the reliable information...”.

S8: “Corpus has to be effective tool in teaching vocabulary, grammar and language”.

S11: “It gives me number and numbers are so important for me”.

S13: “Patterns of language use we get and the contextual factors that influence variability...”.

S20: “It is useful in the right use of collocations and other words in contexts”.

S22: “Beneficial to see misusages of words, structures and collocations. Many phrases that we accept as correct may come out as misusages...”.

S29: “It shows us the sentence pattern and we can compare and contrast between two words. We can look for collocations”.

S31: “Using corpus is beneficial in my vocabulary and grammar studies”

S37: “It helps us discover overuse and underuse patters and the right contexts every word belongs to”.

S41: “Corpus can be useful to find the new words and collocation for me”.

S46: “We can only learn the real language from native people”.

S50: “Of course it is beneficial in many ways. You can learn new vocabulary and how to use them in language”.

The second interview question was asking what difficulties (limitations) the students have had so far while using several corpora and corpus tools us for corpus-based investigations. The interview results indicate almost similar difficulties and limitations in the use of corpus concordances and corpus tools. It is hardly surprising that seemingly complicated nature of corpus concordances and corpus tools may have overwhelmed some students to develop negative feelings. However, most of these difficulties seem to result from technical issues and can be handled by the students after a careful reconsideration of the technical issues.

S4: “It may be difficult to study with big numbers of a great amount of words”.

S7: “The data sometimes may be misleading so requires careful consideration”.

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S12: “I feel I lost in the middle”.

S22: “It takes time to be familiar with all the features”

S17: “Some technical issues make it difficult”.

S19: “The website is complicated and hard to understand”.

S45: “Corpus is very complicated for me”.

S46: “It is like a world where you can be lost easily.”

S47: “If I am working with small corpus I cannot find collocations”.

The third interview question was asking what they feel while using a corpus and corpus tools for language discoveries. The contents of the responses to this question indicated that nearly all the students felt that they would profit in one way or another from the use of corpus concordances and tools.

S31: “I think it is a pleasure”.

S41: “I feel safe and it is beneficial”.

Moreover, the participants were found to believe that the use of corpus concordances would be beneficial in many other skills other than writing.

S5: “It is incredibly enjoyable and surprising”.

S16: “It keeps me motivated to use corpus”

S21: “It is highly beneficial but so complex”

S47: “I think it is helpful for us”

Several other responses to this question indicate the high level of awareness, confidence and excitement by the students who selected this elective course.

S8: “I feel chance since I can find any information”.

S10: “It is like a math! After you get the point it is flowing”

S29: “I feel like I am a real university student making my own research”.

S39: “Corpus is an excitement and troublesome”

S42: “I feel pleased using corpus”.

S44: “Feel more confident when I use it”

S46: “It became a habit for me”.

S51: “I feel good and comfortable”

The final interview question was asking the students opinions about the addition of “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics” course into the curriculum. A considerable number of interview data results indicate that the students have very positive opinions towards having received this course in their third years.

S14: “For some, it may be an unnecessary course but it may help everyone with writing especially academic writing and research paper writing minimizing lexical errors”.

S15: “It is a useful course for students who like research”.

S17: “All the students in this department should take it compulsory subject before graduation”

S19: “It must be selective since it needs a lot of work and one must be voluntary for all such huge work”

S20: “It will be very useful in other courses as well”.

S21: “It must be compulsory because we should know which words go well with what adjectives so on...”

S22: “This course is important for it gives us many language examples in their original contexts...”

S29: “With this course, our old beliefs related to the language changed greatly ...”.

S30: “This course is very useful and especially in terms of determining the order of the target words to be taught”.

S36: “I am so happy selecting this course”.

S37: “It must be compulsory because it gives us how to collect data and where and how we can use these data”.

S41: “Corpus must be introduced to the students earlier and they should know how to use it”.

S44: “It must compulsory. The more we discover things the more I love it and my curiosity arises”.

S46: “I would have liked it more in the earlier years of my study at a university”.

S47: “I think it must be compulsory since everybody needs to use it while writing ...”

S48: “I think I learned a lot and I am thinking of using corpus methods in my graduation thesis”.

S50: “I think it is a good idea to offer this course as a selective one since not everybody would be equally interested in it but I liked it”

General tendency in the interview responses indicated a positive opinion of the integration of the corpus into the school curriculum. Based on the students` opinions given above, it is possible to conclude that this course seems to be perceived useful in terms of several dimensions stated above.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I explored tertiary level EFL student attitudes toward a new course named as “Introduction to Corpus Linguistics”, hoping to achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of its value for EFL learners. The findings of the survey study which employed qualitative and quantitative methods indicated that the students perceived corpus course to be beneficial for their English writing, lexical and grammar investigations as well as being exposed to authentic language with greater confidence and new discoveries.

One important point emerging from the questionnaire and interview data is that the potential of corpus to reveal authentic and real language data is an important issue, deserving immediate pedagogical focus and special consideration before deciding to what extent corpus data should be used before fostering the students` attempts for more linguistic explorations. Another important finding is that a limited number of students who selected this course seemed to have needed more

time and practice to become familiar with the corpus-based explorations. The possible reason why they do not find the use of corpus and corpus-based activities all the way useful and preferred to study in more traditional ways may be due to the fact that corpus-based activities foster the analysis of data and inductive thinking, which may be less frequently used by these students during their language-related studies. Based on the data obtained, it is also obvious that corpus activities which were done with the students for a term and summarized in this study may be a good example of how EFL English majors were able to use corpora as a tool for various linguistics investigations.

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