ADVANTAGES OF USING FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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Abstract: The ability to recognize and use formulaic items appropriately increases the efficiency of independent learning, and developing an awareness of the functionality of lexical bundles proves to be a great asset in laying a solid foundation for language competence. Besides that, the study investigated the relationship between knowledge of formulaic sequences and language proficiency. Formulaic language is pervasive in language use, and the research reported in this article shows that it is easier to process.

Keywords: Formulaic sequences, ready-made utterances, collocations, conversation corpus, vocabulary acquisition, spoken discourse, written discourse, language proficiency

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM STATEMENT

Formulaic expressions are essential for productive mastery and they can be retrieved automatically from memory, which makes them a prolific source of lexical input already at the early stages of the learning process. Such expressions help to increase fluency and understanding, which in turn boosts the learners' self-confidence. For instance, ready-made utterances like “How are you? Where are you from?” help the learner to cope with a simple conversation without having yet gained the knowledge of the basic grammar rules concerning the word order in questions. Having certain formulaic sequences at their fingertips gives beginners as well as more advanced learners a sense of accomplishment and may strengthen language learning motivation. Although contemporary language teaching lays great emphasis on the development of communicative skills through a wide range of eclectic but carefully chosen activities covering all the four basic skills and much attention has been paid to active learning methods to boost learners' performance in real life situations, vocabulary instruction and acquisition do not seem to have kept abreast of those latest trends. There is still an overwhelming tendency in vocabulary learning and teaching to concentrate on the memorization of isolated words in lists, while formulaic language, which forms the foundation of efficient communication, is not brought into focus as often as it could be. The popularity of the so-called single word approach can probably be explained by convenience as individual words can easily be grouped into thematic lists and spread out on semantic mind maps, be acquired by flashcard method, and tested accordingly. This approach is based on the dual form-meaning relationship, which is the first

association any language learner makes when coming into contact with a new word and it is therefore considered an efficient way of decoding an unknown item and making the first acquaintance with foreign lexis. However, in the active use of vocabulary, single words seldom form a meaning that is self-sufficient and independent from the context. Single words are fragmentary elements and when taught as such, the students will still have difficulties in understanding texts and speech and may ultimately lose their interest in the acquisition of a new language. Thus, the traditional single word approach may not be in accordance with the contemporary learner's needs and goals, in which more and more emphasis is being laid on efficient communication. To convey a message, the language user has to rely on a diverse repertoire of language from simpler expressions, verb patterns and collocations (to miss a bus, to get on a bus) to more complicated speech formulas (I'm not really bothered about…; It's got great memories for me). Such expressions and word combinations deserve more attention in communicative activities and tasks since they provide useful ready-made lexical units worth regular exposure, reiteration and memorisation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is becoming increasingly clear that formulaic language is an important element of language learning and use. Perhaps the best evidence for this is simply it subiquity. Normal discourse, both written and spoken, contains large (but not yet fully determined) percentages of formulaic language. Oppenheim counted the multiword stretches of talk that occurred identically in practice and final renderings of a short speech on the same topic and found between 48 percent and 80 percent (overall mean of 66 percent) consisted of identical strings. Sorhus calculated that speakers in her corpus of spontaneous English Canadian speech used an item of formulaic language once every five words. Erman and Warren calculated that 52–58 percent of the language they analyzed was formulaic, and Foster came up with a figure of 32 percent using different procedures and criteria. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan found that around 30 percent of the words in their conversation corpus consisted of lexical bundles, and about 21 percent of their academic prose corpus. Howart looked at frequent verbs in a social science/academic corpus and found that they occurred in either restricted collocations or in idioms in 31–40 percent of the cases. Rayson found that 15 percent of text is formulaic according to a Wmatrix analysis. Overall, these studies suggest that formulaic language makes up between one third and one half of discourse. For formulaic language to be so widespread, it must provide some useful purpose in communication. Schmitt and Carter listed a number of these purposes:

- Expressing a message or idea (The early bird gets the worm = do not procrastinate)
- Realizing functions ([I'm] just looking [thanks] = declining an offer of assistance from a shopkeeper)

- Expressing social solidarity (Yeah it is = expressing agreement)
- Transacting specific information in a precise and understandable way (Cleared for take off = permission to enter a runway and commence take off)
- Signaling discourse organization (on the other hand = conversely)

In addition to this list, it has been suggested that formulaic language has another benefit: It helps language users be more fluent. This idea was first outlined by Pawley and Syder. They argued that native speakers have cognitive limitations in how quickly they can process language, presenting evidence that the largest unit of novel discourse that native speakers can process is a single clause of 8–10 words. Nevertheless, these speakers are also able to produce language seemingly beyond this limitation, for example:

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.

This phrase is clearly beyond the limit of 8–10 words, yet native speakers can say it without hesitation. This kind of evidence led to Pawley and Syder's argument that the storage of formulaic language in abundant or unconstrained long-term memory can compensate for limited working memory. Some of the earliest empirical evidence supporting Pawley and Syder's assertions came from Dechert who found that the spoken output of a German learner of English was smoother and more fluent when she used formulaic language. These formulaic sequences were so useful in providing a platform for more fluent and accurate output that Dechert called them "islands of reliability", suggesting that they may anchor the processes necessary for planning and executing speech in real time. There is now converging evidence that formulaic language is processed both more quickly and potentially differently from nonformulaic language, which makes the processing of formulaic language an increasingly interesting topic. This article will survey recent research (largely drawn from the field of psychology) into how both native and nonnative speakers process various types of formulaic language. In particular, we will focus on literal and figurative meanings of formulaic language, processing of various types of formulaic language, the relationship between corpus-extracted formulaic language and its psycholinguistic processing, and the processing/storage of individual words versus formulaic language. Language is a form of communication in which the message is primarily conveyed by lexical means and therefore a good command of vocabulary has received a great deal of attention in a language using.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Vocabulary mastery is an overarching competence that underlies the learner's success in the four basic language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A good performance in any of the skills would be unattainable without a sufficient grasp of lexis. To become an active user of a foreign language, the productive skills (speaking and writing) are often given precedence over the receptive ones (listening and reading),

and it is in the productive skills that language learners most often do not seem to have a big enough vocabulary to enable communication. It is a broad term that covers various lexical units including idioms, proverbs, collocations, lexical bundles, and conventionalized expressions. Research suggests that at least one third to one-half of language is composed of formulaic sequences calculated that formulaic sequences of various classes constituted 58.6% of the spoken English discourse they analyzed and 52.3% of the written discourse. Foster had raters look for formulaic sequences in transcripts of unplanned English native speech, and these raters judged that 32.3% of the speech was made up of formulaic sequences. The ubiquity of formulaic sequences in language indicates that their mastery is a key determiner of language proficiency. A number of researchers also claim that appropriate use of formulaic sequences can help language learners reach a higher level of language proficiency not only in terms of fluency, but also in terms of range of expression and accuracy.

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