An Overview of Formulaic Language and its Possible Role in L2 Fluency Development

Michael James DAVIES

Introduction

In recent years more attention has been drawn to the area of formulaic language, or "multiple word phraseological units" (Schmitt, 2010, p. 117), that appear to occur to a certain degree in the language that we use. In other words, along with the generation of language from single lexical items connected by syntax, belongs another category, that consisting of almost 'ready-made' strings through which generative grammar can be supposedly by-passed. It has been estimated that such formulaic language can occupy a great deal of our productive language; indeed, research on conversation has put the figure variously between 30-60%. In recent years, the more widespread introduction of computerized corpora has enabled linguists to adopt a more scientific approach to assessing the ubiquity of such language. The large-scale analysis of the spoken and written word has given us new insights into the nature of language and formulaic language has been a salient characteristic of such research. Indeed, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finnegan (1999) found that "in both conversation and academic prose, an important proportion of discourse is made up of recurrent lexical bundles" (p. 995). This exhaustive work, six years in the making, took as its criteria multiple word phrases that included at least three words and found they occurred 30% of the time in conversational corpuses and 21% in academic prose. The former figure actually rose to 45% if the criterion was reduced to two-word bundles such as "I don't", "don't know" and "that's what". Clearly then, formulaic language plays an important role in the language that we use. However, until fairly recently the bulk of research in this area has focused on the acquisition and use of formulaic language in the first language (L1); indeed, Wood (2010) states that "a growing body of work suggests that ready-made chunks or preferred sequences of words play a significant part in language acquisition and production" (p. 38). Moreover, in recent years there has been a growing interest in how such a phenomenon may have implications in the teaching and acquisition of a second language, particularly amongst adult learners. In particular, the role of formulaic language in helping adults achieve greater fluency and native-like mastery of their second language (L2) has been the focus of several research studies such as those conducted by Wray (2002, 2008), Schmitt (2004, 2010), and Wood (2010) to name a few.

The primary aim of this paper is to raise awareness of the ubiquity of formulaic language in

our L1 as well as draw together some of the more recent research into its applicability in the L2 classroom with emphasis on its possible role in developing second language fluency. Naturally, before such research can be presented and discussed, it is necessary to provide some essential background information in order to minimize confusion and lay some ground rules. First of all, what actually is formulaic language and how does it manifest itself? If indeed formulaic language is so central a feature of our L1, what implications might this have for L2 teaching and acquisition? After these areas have been covered it will then be useful to focus on and critically examine some of the more recent research findings in this particular area.

A Definition of Formulaic Language

Before there can be any discussion on the introduction and use of formulaic language as an aid to L2 fluency in the English language classroom, there has to be a satisfactory definition as to what one actually means by formulaic language. Regrettably, this has proved far from easy and a number of applied linguists have grappled with providing a definition that is both practical to use as well as all-encompassing. It is certainly not a homogeneous category (Schmitt, 2010, p. 118), and this is partly due to the fact that there is such great diversity on show. Indeed, the sheer ubiquity and variety of formulaic language makes it very difficult to arrive at a simple definition. As Nation and Webb (2011) point out, "this is directly reflected in the enormous number of different terms used to describe multiword units, which include collocations, formulaic sequences, lexical bundles, idioms, core idioms, lexicalized sentence stems and so on" (p. 176). Thus, linguists have attempted to categorize formulaic language in a number of different ways. For example, some might focus on the purpose for which the language is being used, such as for transactional, functional, or social interactional reasons. Others have categorized formulaic language in terms of transparency of meaning: core idioms ("by and large"; "touch and go") displaying no clear meaning to the uninitiated; figuratives ("when the cat's away"; "play second fiddle") where the meaning can be both figurative and literal; and literals ("I know the way"; "Once in a while") which show compositionality in that they can be broken down and analyzed in their composite parts (Grant & Bauer 2004). Further to this, according to Schmitt and Carter (2004), "these sequences [of formulaic language] can be totally fixed or can have a number of slots which can be filled with appropriate words or strings of words" (p. 3). They can be grammatically fixed or variable, lexically variable or invariable, even grammatically incomplete. Indeed, the list goes on and helps to explain why linguists have had such trouble in even agreeing on what formulaic language is. Nation and Webb (2011) seem to have reached the conclusion that the definitions may necessarily change according to the focus of the particular study at hand and that all that matters is that criteria used be "(1) clearly described and (2) consistently applied" throughout any particular study (p. 179). On a cognitive level, the term formulaic sequence has been coined in order to describe "multiword units of language which are stored in long-term memory as if they were single lexical units" (Wood, 2010, p. 38). The

following definition by Wray (2008) has been quoted in much of the literature:

> *A word or word string, whether incomplete or including gaps for inserted variable items, that is processed like a morpheme, that is, without recourse to any form-meaning matching of any of the subparts it may have.*
>
> (p. 12)

Schmitt (2010) points out that this is an example of the "'psycholinguistic approach' where formulaic language is assumed to be holistically stored in the mind" (p. 121). Indeed, Schmitt, who edited a book entitled *Formulaic Sequences*, considered the following two criteria as essential in defining formulaic language: sequences of lexis and the proposition that "the mind handles, or appears to handle, these sequences at some level of representation as wholes" (Schmitt & Carter, 2010, p. 3). As this paper is more concerned with the handling of formulaic language as a pedagogical tool rather than as a cognitive phenomenon, the expression *formulaic sequence* will be used throughout this paper to describe any of the myriad terms mentioned above.

The Role of Formulaic Language

If it is indeed the case that formulaic language is so widespread, then the question has to arise as to why this is the case. Although it is clear that we are more than capable of creating novel sentences from a generative grammar, formulaic language not only persists in our language production, but positively thrives. Formulaic language can therefore not merely be seen as an evolutionary throwback, the echoes of some protolanguage that existed between humans before the capacity to generate novel sentences existed. If this were the case then we would expect its demise to be apparent in favor of more generative speech. Contrary to this, corpus linguistics has thrown light on the ubiquity of formulaic language and numerous researchers have postulated very plausible reasons for this ubiquity. First and foremost amongst these is the facility with which memorized chunks can be drawn from the long-term memory store and slotted into our speech. The use of formulaic phrasal expressions in such cases "eases the cognitive burden" (Schmitt, 2010, p. 136) on the part of both the speaker and listener. In other words, the storing and use of universally-accepted chunks of language obviates the need to generate novel phrases and this in turn frees up the short-term memory to process the nonformulaic parts of speech. In addition to this, the use of familiar, culturally embedded phrases can also smooth understanding by reducing ambiguity in the message; it is no surprise that much of our day-to-day language in terms of greetings, requests, apologies, excuses, and so on uses highly conventionalized formulae. The use of formulaic language has been seen to enhance the fluency of speech. Indeed, as explained by Wood (2010), studies in this area "have revealed a strong facilitative role of formulaic sequences in the production of fluent, running speech under the time and attention constraints of real life communication" (p.

54). Dechert (as cited in Wray, 2002) called these strings of formulaic language 'islands of reliability' that helped to link areas of generative language. Further to this, it is often the case that formulaic sequences with a high frequency in the spoken language display phonological reduction such as "phonological fusion, reduction of syllables, [and] deletion of schwa" (Wood, 2010, p. 59). Such phenomena are not as apparent in novel sequences and lend further support to the idea that such sequences are prefabricated and stored holistically. Another related function of formulaic language, discussed by Wray (2002), is that it is sometimes easier to use the single lexical item than the formulaic phrase that we choose. Therefore, it may seem counterintuitive for us to plump for the more formulaic expression which comprises more syllables. For instance, the expression 'take a decision' may be favored over the simpler 'decide'. This, Wray (2002) puts down to a useful function of formulaic language in that it buys us time, or as she puts it, the processing of language includes "the struggle to retain fluency, and the sustaining of output while planning what to say next" (p. 75). Thus, the use of formulaic language is not always a shortcut but may at times be a useful gambit to better manage our speech production, particularly when under pressure.

A second major role of formulaic language, as proposed by Wray, is that of situational manipulation. For example, the speaker can choose formulaic phrases as a way of narrowing down the range of possible interpretations made by the hearer than may be the case where a more novel phrase has been used. Furthermore, as Wray (2002) stresses, the phrase can aid the speaker in getting the listener "to do something, feel something or think something" to the benefit of the speaker's needs (p. 88). An expression such as 'Would you be so good as to…" marks out the speaker as politely requesting something of the listener without any ambiguity at all. This pre-association with nuance, or undertones, lends the formulaic sequence a power that would be missing if the speaker were to employ a novel expression to achieve the same end; therefore, the use of formulae allows the speaker to manipulate the situation to their advantage. This only holds true, of course, if the phrase is commonly shared and understood and this is why confusion may arise where speakers from two different speech communities converse. Wray (2002) extends her thoughts on situational manipulation by proposing a common denominator linking all the suggested roles for formulaic language. That is, the use of such language seeks the "promotion of the speaker's interests" (p.95). Wood (2010) continues this thought by stating that this is the case where such phrases "help one cope with the complexity of many social situations, help structure orderly and unambiguous communication, and help with a sense of group identity" (p. 52).

The question then arises that if formulaic language is so central to the acquisition of L1, how important could its role be in the teaching and acquisition of L2? Schmitt (2004) informs us that "the course of formulaic sequence development is more difficult to chart in L2 learners" (p. 13) and this is mainly down to the sheer variety of L2 learners. With regards to adults learning an L2, Wood (2010) asserts that "the established cognitive and learning styles of adults, their diverse acquisition

contexts, knowledge of L1, and other factors make for more variety in the route of language acquisition generally, and with regard to use of formulaic sequences specifically" (p. 50). The input of formulaic sequences in L2 acquisition probably occurs naturally in young children who have immature cognitive development and a greater willingness to take chances with strings of language that could sound inappropriate or out of context in certain situations. Research seems to suggest that the acquisition of an L2 in young learners runs along similar lines to the L1. On the other hand, adult learners of L2, for the aforementioned reasons cited by Wood, probably undergo quite a different process. To wit, adults are often guilty of overanalyzing formulaic sequences and displaying a need to find grammatical patterns within such sequences. This may be reflected by the more traditional approach of presenting grammar rules and single lexical items to adult learners as well as a more 'mature' and analytical approach to their studies. Wray (2008) also raises the issue of self-consciousness, metaphorically likening such formulaic sequences to a "gift purchased pre-wrapped – you pass it on and hope it is what it is supposed to be". A child has little hesitation in passing such sequences on and "the child's freedom to make faux pas in first language acquisition extends sufficiently for it to apply in early second language acquisition too" (p. 224). On the other hand, the adult learner may feel intimidated by the potential for social ridicule and embarrassment in using such strings of language. The upshot could well be that an adult would opt for a more novel, transparent utterance and thus play it safe at the cost of sounding non-native like. However, recent research in formulaic language and its role in adult L2 acquisition seems to support the importance of its role, particularly with regards to the enhancement of fluency and native-like production.

If formulaic language is so central, then it would seem important to address such issues in the ESL and EFL classrooms. This has become my specific interest of late and I will attempt to justify this interest during the remainder of this paper. In order to make a case for explicitly teaching formulaic language in the classroom, it was necessary to firstly emphasize the importance of such language in natural language; hence the overview of defining what formulaic language is, and how it manifests itself in the L1. As a language teacher, I believe that in terms of helping students attain greater fluency, particularly in regards to the productive skills of speaking and writing, the implicit or explicit teaching of formulaic language has some merit. To date, there has been comparatively little empirical research carried out in this area, but interest is growing within the applied linguistic community and studies are beginning to emerge that shore up the proposition that the teaching of formulaic language plays a role to some degree in improving such fluency in speaking and writing. So far, this research has tended to focus on two main areas: speech and academic writing.

A Review of Recent Research

First of all, some of the evidence linking formulaic language with greater speech fluency will be addressed. When it comes to L2 acquisition, Wood (2010) proposes that by utilizing formulaic

language, a learner can come across as sounding more native-like as well as take advantage of the other benefits that formulaic phrases provide for the speaker. Wood's study involved analyzing the speech content of eleven overseas students studying on an intensive six-month English program at a Canadian university. The students took a number of classes including content-based and skills-based instruction. Wood's study was carried out alongside the prescribed classes and involved the watching and retelling of three silent movies. The students watched the three movies two times, each viewing three months apart. Each student then attempted to retell the story depicted in the film and their speech was recorded, transcribed and analyzed by three expert judges. Overall, the spoken fluency of the students was seen to improve over the course of the six-month program. This was determined both quantitatively and qualitatively. The former used certain tried and tested temporal variables in order to see if there was any significant statistical difference in the two accounts of the silent film. These temporal variables consisted of collecting data on the following criteria: speech rate; articulation rate; phonation/time ratio; mean length of runs; and formula/run ratio. According to Wood (2010), "it is clear from these data that the participants improved significantly in fluency as measured by the temporal variables" (p.129). There is nothing new in the idea of linking these temporal variables with increased spoken fluency; what sets Wood's study apart is the subsequent qualitative discourse analysis of the transcribed retellings. It is from this analysis that a link can be seen between use of formulaic language and the development of fluency. Indeed, in the words of Wood (2010), "the evidence that increased use of formulaic expressions paralleled the changes in temporal measures in this study is a new contribution to knowledge about fluency" (p. 173). It must be pointed out that formulaic language was not explicitly taught during the intensive English program on which the students were enrolled. Any increase in the awareness and use of formulaic language was therefore put down to incidental learning either within the classroom, or outside (the students were all living in homestay situations that would have provided a rich source of formulaic language). Wood therefore makes the case that the utilization of formulaic language increases speech fluency both perceptively and empirically. His landmark work is admittedly open to discussion as it took as its base certain definitions of formulaic language and speech fluency that could be debated. However, as a first major work in this direction, its findings are thought-provoking and should inspire further research in this area. From an EFL perspective it is probably the case that formulaic language needs to be explicitly taught, or at least drawn attention to within the classroom. In such a situation one cannot rely on rich input outside of the classroom and therefore it would appear to be the case that compensations do have to be made.

It is worth remembering that one of the proposed primary roles of formulaic language is its role in promoting fluency and enabling the speaker to 'hold the floor' so to speak. Indeed, Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers and Demecheler (2006) put forward three distinct reasons why a command of formulaic language is so beneficial to learners of an L2. First, many such formulaic sequences ignore the taught grammar rules and are highly unpredictable, yet knowledge and use of these phrases can increase the ability of the speaker to come across as native-like. Second, as

noted above, the use of formulaic phrases is thought to aid the production of language in real time (Boers et al., 2006, p. 247). Finally, as these formulaic sequences represent 'zones of safety', they can increase a learner's linguistic accuracy; indeed, they can be used with confidence due to their holistic nature.　Thus, armed with these three solid reasons, Boers et al. designed and carried out research to determine whether raising learners' awareness of formulaic language actually increased their use in speech and furthermore, whether this had a positive impact on perceived oral fluency. The research was rather limited in its scope in that the number of students was relatively small and the teaching hours only numbered around 20, spread out over several months. The experimental group was exposed to authentic transcriptions of listening texts as well as reading texts. After the initial tasks that were designed to elucidate meaning from the texts, the role of the teacher "was to raise learners' awareness of the pervasiveness of formulaic sequences in (the English) language and to encourage 'noticing' them during an 'exploration' stage" when analyzing the aforementioned texts (Boers et al., 2006, p. 250). A control group was taught in an identical manner, differing only in that the final analyses of the texts dealt more with traditional grammar and lexis issues than the formulaic aspects of the language. As a result of oral interviews conducted at the end of the course, the members of the experimental group did show a statistically higher use of formulaic language than those in the control group. Furthermore, this increase in the use of formulaic language was perceived by experienced, outside judges to have improved oral proficiency when compared with the control group. There are, as always, certain caveats in that the experimental group only showed increased oral proficiency in the first half of the interview which was based on a text the students had been shown just prior to the test. It was also the case that a fair proportion of the formulaic language used by the experimental group members had been simply recycled from this text. However, the point is that they had been made aware of these sequences of language and were willing and often able to use them in their spoken production. That they were not significantly able to employ such formulaic language in the second half of the interview, which was of a more spontaneous nature, may well have reflected the limited amount of practice they had been able to undertake in the classroom. All in all, however, the results of this work have to be seen as encouraging.

　　With regards to the role of formulaic language in the development of academic writing fluency, two studies deserve mention. Schmitt, Dornyei, Adolphs and Durow (2004) implemented a longitudinal study to determine how well learners on two professional EAP programs dealt with acquiring a number of targeted formulaic sequences under semi-controlled conditions (Schmitt et al., 2004, p. 55). Using a variety of sources, including the previously mentioned Biber et al. (1999), seven textbooks on academic writing, and discussions with the instructors, twenty formulaic phrases were agreed upon for use in the study. The phrases were embedded in texts for elicitation purposes and introduced to the students during the course of their respective programs (one of two months duration, the other of three months). A battery of pretests in the first week of each course and posttests towards the end of each course tested learners' receptive and productive use of the

chosen formulaic phrases. One of the interesting findings from the initial pretests was just how much knowledge of formulaic phrases the learners already possessed even if they had not consciously studied them beforehand. Indeed, as far as receptive knowledge is concerned, the participants in this study already knew an average of 17 out of the 20 set phrases at the beginning of the study. It seems that once students have vocabulary sizes in excess of 2000 words, their knowledge of formulaic sequences will likely be high although the researchers admitted that no direct correlation could be discerned between size of vocabulary and knowledge of formulaic language. As a result of the posttests, the study did find that the participants had enhanced their knowledge of the set formulaic sequences. Schmitt et al. (2004) claimed that "this enhancement took the form of both learning new formulaic sequences and of improving mastery of receptively-known sequences to a productive level" (p. 69). However, in the absence of a control group, it is difficult to judge whether this enhancement was due to the explicit instruction of the set of formulaic sequences or due to the large amount of input the participants would have been exposed to anyway as part of such an intensive program. Hence, the researchers suggest any subsequent studies should more closely control input in order to determine the most effective manner of helping learners enhance their knowledge of formulaic language.

Another approach to the teaching of formulaic language in an EAP context was studied by Jones and Haywood (2004). They analyzed a number of the more popular textbooks used to teach academic writing and came to the conclusion that they failed to deal sufficiently with key vocabulary (single words as well as formulaic phrases) that would enable learners to produce essays in a more conventional, academic manner. Where such vocabulary was presented it was often decontextualized with little explanation as to its appropriate use. In addition, there seemed little, if any, attention paid to learning strategies or opportunities for learners to practice these new items. All in all, it was the feeling of the two researchers that the responsibility lay with the teacher to plug these gaps. Jones and Haywood (2004) argue that as well as a sound knowledge of their academic field it is important that students become able to express their thoughts and opinions in a more conventional style. Hence, the use of formulaic sequences "enables them, for example, to express technical ideas economically, to signal stages in their discourse and to display the necessary level of formality" (p. 273). Again, the researchers relied heavily on Biber et al. (1999) in order to select formulaic sequences that they determined would be useful to the 21 participants who came from a variety of academic disciplines. The formulaic sequences were presented through the study of academic reading texts; once the usual practices of determining main points, scanning for detail and so on had been accomplished, attention was drawn to the target sequences in the text. It is also quite clear that the participants were then given a lot of support with the study of the sequences, allowing them plenty of opportunity to analyze their meanings in a number of contexts with the aim of equipping them "with the strategies which would enable them to acquire the knowledge needed to use formulaic sequences accurately and appropriately in their own work" (Jones & Haywood, 2004, p. 277). However, one of the main difficulties experienced by these

researchers was in helping their students make the jump from constructing sentences on a word-by-word basis to integrating holistic phrases in their writing. This was reflected in the results of the study that showed a definite increase in participant awareness of formulaic sequences but a barely noticeable increase in their use of these sentences in essays. It must be pointed out that this was a ten-week study and the researchers do stress that this was rather too short to provide any conclusive evidence as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the explicit instruction of formulaic sequences. Indeed, to overturn such ingrained habits as reading and writing at the level of the individual word would probably require more time and attention than was accorded the participants in this study. Still, as the main purpose of the study was to raise awareness of formulaic sequences then it can be deemed a success, even if the adoption and use of these sequences in the participants' essays was rather disappointing.

Discussion

In light of the aforementioned studies, I would like to add some comments and suggestions. It is probably true to say that many of the more recent studies into the effect of formulaic language on L2 fluency have met with only qualified success. This has mainly been due to the studies being rather limited in scope, both in terms of the length of time the studies ran for, and the number of language learners they included. This is not to say that the initial findings of such studies have not been promising. In fact, from some of the initial studies, we can see potential for the explicit teaching of formulaic language in the EFL classroom. There may even be an argument for the presentation of such expressions in an implicit manner through the study of texts that contain such language. As a language teacher I am extremely interested in this potential, and have already taken preliminary steps in introducing such formulaic language into my own classroom activities. Indeed, I have explicitly taught a number of phrases as part of a content-based class by way of introducing a vocabulary analysis component at the end of more traditional reading comprehension exercises during class. I had to rework several class readings in order to embed target sequences that could then be used for further study. This further study included the inputting of such sequences in various cloze activities, progressing to the students attempting to utilize the sequences in their own sentences. I felt that this level of support was necessary in order for the students to display a facility with the new language. As a result of such awareness-raising, I have witnessed an increase in the use of such phrases in both the written work and oral presentations of a number of my students. If I compare a control essay that students wrote at the beginning of the semester with that which they wrote at the end, there does appear to be a marked increase in the use of such formulae in a number of students' work. This does not just include the substitutions of simple words at the beginnings of sentences with phrases such as 'In addition to', and 'As a result', but the correct use of such phrases as 'it is clear that', 'to a certain extent', 'at this stage' and so on, that one could argue are more difficult for students to use appropriately and with confidence. Such use of these phrases

has, in my own opinion, raised the level of these students' language fluency by adding a more natural feel to their writing. I also believe that it has lent their language more authority in that it reads in a more fluent and familiar manner.

My findings came as part of a preliminary study in which I decided to explore the possibility of a more scientific, longitudinal study in the near future. If the case is going to be made to introduce more formulaic language teaching into the curriculum, studies of greater depth and breadth are going to be necessary to produce reliable data. In addition to this, concrete proposals as to how best to teach such language in the classroom are equally vital. As is often the case in the field of applied linguistics, replication of studies is seldom carried out, and as a result, we are left with data and conclusions from studies which although promising, have not been more fully tested or scrutinized. I am keen to see the effect of teaching formulaic language on students not only in terms of raising their proficiency level in academic language but also in more day-to-day communication. After all, our everyday speech and writing is replete with such language and it would be interesting to see how more explicit teaching of it in the classroom could be of benefit to students' overall language production. More research in this field could be of interest to teachers and textbook writers alike with regards to introducing students to more authentic language.

Naturally, there are a number of challenges to carrying out such research and as I have already said, a number of the aforementioned studies have suffered from various limitations. In addition to this, I am working at a Japanese university, in which students have little opportunity to use and familiarize themselves with the target language outside of the classroom. This, however, could be used to advantage, as the learning of any formulaic language would be solely down to its explicit instruction. It may therefore actually underscore the effectiveness of teaching formulaic language in the classroom. Moreover, programs that encourage extensive reading and extensive listening to authentic material outside of the classroom could be of great benefit to students who have learned formulaic language in the classroom and require exposure to the same language in order to consolidate this knowledge. Such programs could well be useful in aiding production, especially in an EFL setting. I believe that such support needs serious consideration in order to optimize the effect of explicit teaching.

This paper has attempted to tentatively set out the case for raising the profile of formulaic language in the development of fluency, particularly in the realms of adult L2. It is an area of applied linguistics that has until recently attracted little attention, and due to this, it was deemed necessary in setting out this case, to provide brief details surrounding the definition of what actually constitutes formulaic language as well as its possible functions in native language production. In building the foundation for the case, examples of contemporary research in the areas of L2 speech and writing fluency were provided and discussed. It is the argument of this paper that the role of formulaic language in the development of L2 fluency is one that requires further research. The ubiquity and importance of formulaic language in L1 has been recognized for some time, but greater attention is long overdue in the field of L2 teaching and acquisition. Indeed,

it would seem to be a particularly important factor in providing learners with the means to develop their L2 to a more effective level. However, for this argument to gain greater currency there has to be more empirical research carried out in order to provide hard evidence. This means more longitudinal studies, involving more participants. It also means a greater convergence in the understanding of what constitutes formulaic language as well as fixed criteria as to how we can accurately and reliably measure spoken and written fluency. This is important to provide a base from which researchers can work and ensure direct comparability between studies. When such requirements have been satisfied then perhaps educators, language program developers as well as textbook writers will have greater confidence in introducing and utilizing formulaic language as an important component of any curriculum. In conclusion, this is still a young field of applied linguistics and much has still to be learned. However, it is an area that could very well make a real, qualitative difference to how educators and learners alike approach the area of language teaching and acquisition in general, and fluency development in particular.

References

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S. & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Edinburgh: Longman.

Boers, F., Eyckmans, J.,Kappel, J., Stengers, H. & Demecheleer, M. (2006). Formulaic sequences and perceived oral proficiency: putting a lexical approach to the test. *Language Teaching Research.* 10, (3) pp. 245 - 261.

Grant & Bauer (2004). Criteria for redefining idioms: Are we barking up the wrong tree? *Applied Linguistics* 25 (1), 38 - 61

Jones, M. & Haywood, S. (2004). 'Facilitating the acquisition of formulaic sequences: An exploratory study in an EAP context' in N. Schmitt (Ed.) *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing and Use.* Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Nation, I.S.P., & Webb, S. (2011). *Researching and analyzing vocabulary*. Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.

Schmitt, N. (Ed.) (2004). *Formulaic sequences: Acquisition, processing and use*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research Manual*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmitt, N. & Carter, R. (2004). 'Formulaic sequences in action: An introduction' in N. Schmitt (ed) *Formulaic sequences: Acquisition, processing and use.* Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Wood, D. (2010). *Formulaic language and second language speech fluency*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Wray, A. (2002). *Formulaic language: Pushing the boundaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wray, A. (2008). *Formulaic language and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.