THE USE OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE BY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
(EFL) LEARNERS IN ORAL PROFICIENCY EXAMS
A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

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To the strong women of my family who always stand firm

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Thesis Title: The Use of Formulaic Language by English as a

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE BY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE (EFL) LEARNERS IN ORAL PROFICIENCY EXAMS

Ümran Üstünbaş

M.A. Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language
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July 9, 2014

This study investigates in what ways EFL learners use formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum through course books when taking oral proficiency exams with multi-task and whether there is a relationship between their formulaic language use and their scores of fluency and overall proficiency. The study was carried out with 190 EFL learners with different proficiency levels at Bülent Ecevit University, the School of Foreign Languages. In order to examine the ways of formulaic language use by the participants, a content analysis of the course book was carried out so as to determine the target formulaic language list with the frequency of occurrence of each expression in the book. After that, a content analysis of the video recordings of oral proficiency exams was performed to see the students' formulaic language use and the results of the two content analyses were compared in order to draw conclusions. In order to relate the students' formulaic language use to their fluency and overall proficiency, the scores that the students have received for fluency and their proficiency scores at the end of the academic year were taken into consideration.

The results of the content analyses conducted by counting the number of the occurrence of each expression in the book and their accurate use by the participants revealed that the students mostly used the formulaic expressions in the book accurately while they also used expressions that are not included in the book. The data gained through the analysis of the relationship between formulaic language use and fluency and overall proficiency revealed a statistically significant relationship between the related variables implying that they are interconnected concepts. These findings suggest that the students use formulaic language taught in their curriculum through course books and their formulaic language use is related to their fluency and overall proficiency.

In light of these findings, the study sheds light on the future teaching practices for formulaic language and it offers implications for stakeholders such as instructors, administrators, curriculum and material developers in order to design curricula, develop materials and teach classes.

Key words: formulaic language, fluency, overall proficiency, oral proficiency exams, course book, curriculum

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN ÖĞRENCİLERİN

KONUŞMA SINAVLARINDA KALIP İFADELER KULLANIMI

Ümran Üstünbaş

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Deniz Ortaçtepe

9 Temmuz, 2014

Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin çoklu-görevli konuşma sınavlarında, müfredatlarında ders kitapları yoluyla yer alan kalıp ifadeleri nasıl kullandıklarını ve kullanımlarının akıcılıkları ve dil yeterlilikleriyle ilişkisini incelemektedir. Çalışma, Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda, farklı seviyede 190 İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrenciyle yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıların kalıp ifadeleri nasıl kullandığını incelemek amacıyla, ders kitaplarının içerik analizi yapılmıştır ve her bir ifadenin kitapta geçme sıklığı belirlenerek hedef ifadeler listesi oluşturulmuştur. Sonrasında, öğrencilerin kalıp ifadeler kullanımını incelemek amacıyla konuşma sınav videolarının içerik analizi yapılmıştır ve her iki içerik analizinin sonucu karşılaştırılmıştır. Öğrencilerin kalıp ifadeler kullanımını akıcılık ve dil yeterlilikleriyle ilişkilendirmek amacıyla, öğrencilerin akıcılıkları için aldıkları puanlar ve sene sonu dil yeterlilik puanları göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

Her bir ifadenin kitapta kaç kez geçtiği ve çalışmanın katılımcıları tarafından doğru bir biçimde kaç kez kullanıldığı sayılarak gerçekleştirilen içerik analizlerinin

sonuçları, öğrencilerin kitaplarında geçen ifadeleri çoğunlukla doğru bir şekilde kullandıklarını ve bu öğrencilerin ayrıca kitaplarında geçmeyen ifadeleri de kullandıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Kalıp ifade kullanımı ile akıcılık ve dil yeterliği arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi sonucu, bu değişkenler arasında istatiksel olarak önemli bir ilişki olduğu ve bu değişkenlerin birbiriyle bağlantılı kavramlar olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin ders kitapları yoluyla müfredatlarında bulunan kalıp ifadeleri kullandıklarını ve bu ifadeleri kullanmalarının akıcılıkları ve dil yeterlilikleriyle bağlantılı olduğunu belirtmektedir. Bu bulgular doğrultusunda; çalışma, gelecekteki kalıp ifadeler öğretim uygulamalarına ışık tutmakta olup; müfredat ve materyal geliştirme ve dersleri yürütme konularında öğretmenler, yöneticiler, materyal ve müfredat geliştirenler için çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: kalıp ifadeler, akıcılık, dil yeterliliği, konuşma sınavları, ders kitapları, müfredat

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Thank you all that I have in my life. I feel strong to achieve my goals thanks to your presence in this life by my side. This study is one of those goals which would not be possible without you.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing; and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak. (Ur, 1996, p. 120)

In accordance with what Ur (1996) has suggested, the latest approaches to language teaching have started to follow a new path towards competence in oral communication, which is regarded as an essential component of second language (L2) learning. As a result, learners' oral communication and the problems they encounter when speaking in L2 have been of great importance in recent years. In this sense, one of the difficulties that language learners face in L2 oral communication is the lack of idiomoticity in their speech, which is one of the qualities of native-like language use. Sinclair (1987, as cited in Prodromou, 2003, p. 44) has also stated this difficulty as follows:

(Learners) rely on larger, rarer and clumsier words which make their language sound stilted and awkward. This is certainly not their fault nor is it the fault of their teachers, who can only work within the kind of language descriptions that are available. (p. 159)

Yet, there are ways to increase idiomoticity, one of which may be formulaic language use and it has also been suggested in the literature (e.g., Yorio, 1980; Ortaçtepe, 2013).

Although formulaic language is named and defined differently by various researchers (e.g., Granger, 1998; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2002), the general idea is that they are multi-word structures that are recalled as a single unit. While these multi-word units function differently, one of their key roles is to facilitate communication (Weinert, 1995). Therefore, the use of formulaic language can enhance learners' fluency in oral communication. On the condition that formulaic language use provides benefits to communication and fluency, it is expected to be helpful to language learners in oral proficiency exams in the same way as suggested in the literature (e.g., Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006). Since formulaic language use is considered as beneficial to speech fluency, it can be assumed that learners' exposure to formulaic language is essential. However, in contexts where English is a foreign language (EFL), learners' only source of exposure to the language is their teachers and course books. In that sense, learners' knowledge of formulaic language is mainly based on their course books as it is also suggested by Meunier (2012). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the extent to which EFL learners use formulaic language in course books during multi-task oral proficiency exams and whether the use of formulaic language in these exams is related to students' fluency and overall proficiency scores.

Background of the Study

Considering the increasing importance of learners' speaking performance as well as their formulaic language use, the present study serves to take the formulaic

language use and fluency relationship a step further and investigates the extent to which students use formulaic language integrated in the curriculum in multi-task oral proficiency exams and whether the use of formulaic language is related to students' fluency and overall proficiency.

Formulaic language is commonly defined as multi-word units that are recalled as a single unit (Myles, Hooper & Mitchell, 1998; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wray, 2002). Different researchers defined formulaic language in different ways, but the most accepted one is that of Wray (2002):

> a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 9)

These expressions prove beneficial to language users. To that end, Weinert (1995) suggested they have functions for communication, production and learning strategy. In the aspect of communicative function, the use of formulaic language can be seen as timesaving and facilitative for the interaction between language learners and language users. Furthermore, in regards to communicative functions of formulaic language, Wray and Perkins (2000) have stated that it contributes to comprehension and production. In terms of comprehension, the use of formulaic language is suggested to help the listener to organize the discourse of the speaker and as for the production, it enables the speaker to shape information and provide time for processing this information.

Another effect of formulaic language on production is that it supports greater speech fluency by decreasing the processing load in the mind while speaking. As Wood (2006) has suggested formulaic language use enhances fluency by making

pauses shorter and making the runs of speech between pauses longer. Wood (2010) has defined fluency as the "effective use of a language" (p. 9). Similarly, Segalowitz (2010) has proposed various definitions of fluency such as the "ability to express any idea in the L2 that one can also express in L1, to use a large vocabulary and to speak with few grammatical errors" (p. 4). Referring to the formulaic language use and fluency relationship, Wood (2010) has explained how formulaic language is processed in the mind in order to facilitate speech fluency. More specifically, as formulaic language is processed automatically as a single unit, it helps expressions to occur fluently in a very short time. Concurring with Wood (2010), McGuire's (2009) study has also highlighted the relationship between formulaic language and fluency. In this respect, the researcher indicated that formulaic language instruction has a positive effect on increasing speech fluency. Moreover, the study of Boers' et. al., (2006) has suggested a strong relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic sequences during semi-structured (exam) interviews and the oral proficiency scores they received. The findings of that study revealed that as the number of the expressions the students used in the interviews increased, the raters tended to perceive them to be more fluent and idiomatic language users. Similarly, in a study carried out with intermediate Dutch-speaking students of English and Spanish, Stengers, Boers, Housen and Eyckmans (2011) have confirmed the findings of previous research on the relationship between the use of formulaic language and oral proficiency.

In this regard, another study, conducted by Ortaçtepe (2013), has supported the findings of the studies previously mentioned. In her study, Ortaçtepe (2013) investigated whether conceptual socialization of Turkish international students in the U.S affects their use of formulaic language through pre- and post-tests. The findings

of her study revealed that Turkish students not only increased the amount of formulaic language they used, but also they produced more native-like speech in the post-test. The overall findings suggested that the use of formulaic language is related to native-like language use to a great extent. Myles, Hooper and Mitchell (1998) have also investigated the effect of formulaic language on language learning in a longitudinal study. The study was carried out with 16 child beginner learners of French and the researchers concluded that the use of formulaic language promotes the entry to communication and increases the speed of speech production at early stages of learning. In another study, Dickinson (2012) has examined whether teaching formulaic language has an effect on the students' academic presentation skills and found that all the participants in the study improved their presentation skills regardless of their proficiency level. Overall, these studies have focused on two important components of foreign language education: measuring oral performance and teaching by putting emphasis on the importance of formulaic language instruction in language classes and the role these expressions play in oral performance which is mostly measured by oral proficiency exams.

It is widely accepted that teaching and testing are two processes that complement each other, therefore, "language testing and teaching are seen as two sides of the same coin" (Yi-Chun, 2011, p. 83). Due to the fact that they are regarded as inseparable parts of a whole, a change in either of them affects the other. Thus, one may assume that new trends and approaches in language teaching have significant influences on testing as well. As recent teaching approaches, one of which is Communicative Language Teaching, promote students' communication with varied communicative activities such as role plays, language testing also needs to be shaped in conformity with it. In this sense, oral assessment and oral proficiency exam

designs have gained increasing importance and students' speaking performances have been at the center of this shift. Hence, students' speaking performances are assessed through using various tasks which are designed appropriately for real-life communication.

Considering the increasing importance of learners' communication in the new trends in language teaching and the proposed functions of formulaic language as well as its effects on language teaching and testing, it can be assumed that exposure to formulaic language is essential for language learners. Yet, as text books are one of the main sources of input for language learners, they are often the only source of exposure to formulaic language for EFL learners (Biber, Conrad & Cortes, 2004; Meunier, 2012).

Although these learners are exposed to the same source for input, they do not use formulaic language equally. Their proficiency level may be a reason for this difference. That there is a difference in the use of formulaic language among different proficiency groups is also suggested in the literature. (e.g., Howarth, 1998; Ohlrogge, 2009; Yorio, 1989). In a study carried out with two groups of ESL learners, Yorio (1989) has proposed that "the higher the level of linguistics proficiency, the higher the level of idiomaticity" (p. 65). Similarly, Neary-Sundquist (2013) investigated the use of pragmatic markers by different proficiency level learners and concluded that the level of proficiency leads to a significant difference in the use of these expressions. Even though the level of proficiency is suggested to determine formulaic language use, as Lenko-Szymanska (2014) has suggested, there is apparently no research on formulaic language use in the early stages of learning, especially in a language learning context. Thus, this study may contribute to the

existing research by providing how formulaic language is used by language learners in a learning context.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in formulaic language which is considered to play a significant role in helping language learners acquire and improve various skills such as writing and speaking. The studies investigating the relationship between formulaic language and language skills have found that the use of formulaic language has a positive effect on improving language skills, especially writing (e.g., Ergin, 2013; O'Donnell, Römer & Ellis, 2013) and speaking (e.g., Khodadady & Shamsaee, 2012). In terms of speaking, formulaic language has been found to be influential in students' oral performance, the importance of which has increased with the new approaches and trends in language teaching (e.g., Wood, 2010). Being aware of this positive effect, publishers of course books put emphasis on formulaic language in their books through speaking activities, and language teaching programs also integrate it into their curricula. Since formulaic language use fosters speech fluency, it is also expected to be a facilitator in oral proficiency exams. This possibility has been the focus of Boers' et. al., (2006) study and the findings of the study implied the effectiveness of formulaic language in oral proficiency exams. However, as they have also stated there is still a need for understanding more about formulaic language use in multi-task oral proficiency exams.

The extent to which students use formulaic language integrated in the curriculum through course books is another issue that needs more attention since course books are the main source of exposure to language input for EFL learners. In

this regard, Biber, Conrad and Cortes (2004) have stated that little research has been conducted on formulaic language use in registers such as classroom teaching and course books. Considering the lack of research on how formulaic language is used in course books and how it can foster fluency, this study suggests that there is a need to investigate how students use formulaic language in their curriculum through the course book when taking oral proficiency exams by taking into account of variables such as fluency and overall proficiency level.

In language education programs in Turkey, as observed by the researcher, EFL learners seem to have problems in productive skills, especially in speaking. One of those problems concerning students' speaking performance in class or in oral proficiency exams is not to be a fluent speaker. Therefore, there is a need to investigate possible ways of boosting fluency, one of which may be formulaic language use. On the other hand, even though formulaic language is in the curriculum of the education programs through course books, it is observed by the researcher that most EFL learners in Turkey tend to have difficulty in using it or even they do not notice it. If formulaic language use is beneficial for speech fluency, it is significant for students to gain awareness of what formulaic language is, and to use it in order to improve speaking performance.

Research Questions

1) In what ways do EFL learners use formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum when taking oral proficiency exams?

2) In what type of tasks (individual or paired) do EFL learners use more formulaic language?

3)   Is there a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their scores of:

a) Fluency?

b) Overall proficiency?

Significance of the Study

As the importance of formulaic language has been revealed through the findings of studies(e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Kecskes, 2007; Stengers et. al., 2011; Wood, 2002), more focus has been put on searching the concepts that formulaic language is related to such as native-likeness (e.g., Ortaçtepe, 2013), and fluency (e.g., Wood, 2010). This study, which aims to evaluate the relationship between EFL learners' use of the formulaic language in their course books and their fluency when taking oral proficiency exams, may contribute to the literature by providing further support not only for understanding the connection between formulaic language use and fluency but also helping to better understand the variables in speech fluency in oral proficiency exams. The findings of the study may also shed light on whether there is a relationship between students' formulaic language use and their proficiency levels.

At the local level, the findings of the study may first offer implications for EFL learners and teachers. Turkish EFL learners tend to have difficulty in performing in oral proficiency exams and are inclined not to be fluent language speakers to the knowledge of the researcher; therefore, the study may reveal the effect of formulaic language on fluency and help students achieve greater fluency by using these multi-word structures in provided contexts through repeated practice. As for the implications, the study may offer suggestions for teachers to focus on the

teaching of formulaic language that is included in course books. Moreover, EFL teachers may provide sufficient instruction in formulaic language for different proficiency level students. Secondly, the study may be a guideline for curriculum and material development units of language programs due to the fact these units could develop ways of integrating these multi-word structures into their practices if the use of them were found effective.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief introduction to the literature on the formulaic language and fluency relationship together with other variables such as proficiency level and oral proficiency exam tasks has been provided. Moreover, four components of this chapter, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, and the significance of the study have been presented. The next chapter will review the relevant literature on formulaic language, fluency and oral proficiency exams.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study addresses the questions of how EFL learners use formulaic language in oral proficiency exams and whether formulaic language use has an effect on students' fluency in these exams. Therefore, this chapter attempts to review the literature for the related issues and provide a comprehensive overview of them. To achieve this purpose, related literature will be presented in two main sections. In the first section, an introduction for formulaic language will be provided with its terms, and varied definitions. The chapter will also explain functions and classifications of formulaic language and how formulaic language is included in teaching. In the second section, fluency will be introduced with its definition and measures accompanied by the studies in the literature. This section will conclude with studies on the relationship between formulaic language and fluency.

Formulaic Language

Various Terms and Definitions of Formulaic Language

Formulaic language has been the interest of many researchers and defined in different ways under various terms in the literature. One of the basic terms used for it is *formula.* Wood (2006) has defined *formula* as "fixed strings or chunks of words that have a range of functions and uses in speech production and communication and seem to be cognitively stored and retrieved by speakers as if they were single words" (p. 14). The other common term is *formulaic language.* Although it has been used by various researchers to define these multi-word structures, the most accepted definition is that of Wray (2002):

> a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements,
> which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved
> whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to
> generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 9)

Kecskes (2007) has also used the term *formulaic language* and defined it as "multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than being generated de novo with each use." (p. 3) Apart from *formula* and *formulaic language*, the other commonly used terms are *formulaic sequences* (e.g., Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2002), *lexical bundles* (Biber & Barbieri, 2007), *recurrent word combinations* (Ädel & Erman, 2012), *prefab* (Erman & Warren, 2000), *prefabricated patterns* (Granger, 1998), and *lexical phrases* (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). In a definition provided by Wood (2002), *formulaic sequences* have been described as "multi-word or multi-word strings produced and recalled as a chunk, like a single lexical item, rather than being generated from individual items and rules" (p. 3). Similarly, Stengers, Boers, Housen, and Eyckmans (2011) have preferred to use the term of *formulaic sequences* and described them

> as a cover term for a variety of related phenomena also referred to as
> *lexical phrases* or *chunks*, including collocations (e.g., *tell a lie;*
> *heavy traffic*), idioms (e.g., *turn the tide; back to square one*),
> binomials (e.g., *cuts and bruises; research and development*),
> standardized similes (e.g*., clear as crystal; dry as dust*), proverbs
> and clichés (e.g., *When the cat's away…; That's the way the cookie*
> *crumbles*), discourse organizers (e.g., *On the other hand; Having*
> *said that*) and social routine formulae (e.g., *Nice to meet you; Have a*
> *nice day*). (p. 322)

Likewise, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) have defined *lexical phrases* as "multi-word lexical phenomena that exist somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax, conventionalized form/function composites that occur more frequently and have more idiomatically determined meaning than language that is put together each time" (p. 1) Last but not the least, Erman and Warren (2000) have used the term *prefab,* defined as "a combination of at least two words favored by native speakers in preference to an alternative combination which could have been equivalent had there been no conventionalization" (pp. 31–32). As seen from the examples in the literature, there is no fixed definition of these word units, instead there is a wide range of terms used as illustrated in Table 1 provided by Wray (2000):

Table 1

*Terms Used to Describe Aspects of Formulaicity in the Literature (*Adopted from Wray, 2000, p. 465)

Amalgams	Gambits	Preassembled speech
Automatic	Gestalt	Prefabricated routines and
Chunks	Holistic	Patterns
Cliches	Holophrases	Ready-made expressions
Composites	Idiomatic	Ready-made utterances
Co-ordinate constructions	Idioms	Routine formulae
Collocations	Irregular	Schemata
Conventionalized forms	Lexical (ised) phrases	Semi-preconstructed phrases
*FEIsa	Lexicalised	sentence stems
Fixed expressions	Multiword units	Sentence builders
Formulaic language	Non-compositional	that constitute single choices
Formulaic speech	Non-computational	Stable and familiar expressions
Formulas/formulae	Non-productive	with specialized substances
Fossilized forms	Petrification	Synthetic
Frozen phrases	Praxons	Unanalysed chunks of speech

*Fixed expressions including idioms (Moon, 1998).

Among these varied terms, *formulaic language* has been used for this study in order to describe these word combinations which have different characteristics.

Characteristics, Identification and Classification of Formulaic Language

   Characteristics of formulaic language. The existence of various definitions and forms makes it hard to provide a single definition of formulaic language.

However, some qualities of formulaic language have been emphasized in order to determine what constitutes formulaic language and what characteristics a word combination needs to have in order to be classified as formulaic language. In this respect, researchers have pointed out some characteristics of formulaic language in their criteria for classification (e.g., Coulmas, 1979; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Weinert, 1995; Wray & Namba, 2003). To start with, according to Coulmas (1979), the two qualities of formulaic language are that word phrases must consist of multi-morphemes and they must be uttered without pauses and hesitation. Moreover, these word combinations might be more complex than the production of a language learner. Apart from these characteristics, *institutionalization*, *fixedness* and *non-compositionality* have been proposed for *multi-word items* by Moon (1997, p. 44, as cited in Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Additionally, *phonological coherence*, *greater length and complexity of sequences*, *community-wide use of a sequence*, *situation dependence* have been stressed by Weinert (1995, pp. 182-183). Furthermore, *frequency of occurrence* has been emphasized by Schmitt and Carter (2004) as a characteristic of formulaic language and they have stated that high frequency of an expression in a corpus is an indicator of its being adopted by language users.

The other characteristics of formulaic language are as follows (Schmitt & Carter, 2004):

- Formulaic sequences appear to be stored in the mind as holistic units, but they may not be acquired in an all-or nothing manner (p. 4);

- Formulaic sequences can have slots to enable flexibility of use, but the slots typically have semantic constraints (p. 6);

- Formulaic sequences can have semantic prosody (p. 7);

- Formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use (p. 9).

Nevertheless, since these characteristics may be insufficient to identify formulaic language, more comprehensive criteria have been proposed by researchers in the literature.

Identification and classification of formulaic language. Many scholars have set out criteria for the identification of formulaic language and they have focused on either a form-based or a functional-based classification. One of the first names to make form-based classification is Becker (1975, as cited in Nattinger, 1980, pp. 339 - 340). He has identified formulaic language as a) *polywords (e.g., the powder room, my old man);*b) *phrasal constraints (e.g., by pure coincidence, down with the king);*c)*deictic locutions (e.g., as far as I know; don't you think; if I were you; for that matter; frankly);*d) *sentence builders (e.g., A gave B a long song and dance about C; Not only A but also B);* e) *situational utterances (e.g., cold enough for you; how can I ever repay you);* f) *verbatim texts (e.g., better late than never; Cheers; a watched pot never boils).* Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) have also developed a similar form-based taxonomy to identify lexical phrases as they refer. However, Wray and Perkins (2000) have opposed this kind of classification as they believe there is no clear distinction between form and function in the taxonomies of Becker (1975) and Nattinger and DeCarrio (1992). In terms of form-based classification, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) also categorize formulaic language as collocations (e.g., *blow your nose, running water*; and complex verbs (e.g., *give up, talk it over);* exclamations: (e.g., *What the heck, no kidding)*; idioms: (e.g., *get an even break, jump the gun);* pragmatic formulae such as *See you later* and *I'm so sorry to hear that* and discourse organizers: (e.g., *on the other hand, having said that).*

In terms of functional-based classification, one of these classifications belongs to Yorio (1980). According to Yorio (1980), there are four main categories of formulaic language namely *situational formulas* (e.g., *how are you*?), *stylistic formulas* (e.g., *in conclusion*), *ceremonial formulas* (e.g., *ladies and gentlemen*), and *gambits* (e.g., *what do you think*). Besides, a detailed description has been provided by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992). They have underlined three main categories: *social interactions, necessary topics* and *discourse devices.* Under the title of *social interaction,* there are *a) conversational maintenance (including summoning: excuse me, nominating a topic: by the way, do you know, shifting a topic: oh, that reminds me of, b) conversational purpose, including questioning: do you X, responding: yes, that's so/right/correct, asserting: I think, I believe.* The second category is *necessary topics including autobiography:* my name is __*, time:* what time x? ; a __ ago,) *location:* what part of the __?,*weather:* it's (very) __ today. The last category is *discourse devices temporal connectors: the day/week/month/year before/after __, exemplifiers: in other words; it's like X. (*Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992, pp. 60-66).

Another dimension of the formulaic language classification is based on usage. The scholars who have suggested a usage-based classification focus on the frequency of utterances and corpus-based studies (e.g., Altenberg, 1993; Sinclair, 1991). The frequency of words that occur in native-speakers' speech and idiomacity play important roles in this classification. However, there are scholars who reject computerized identification of formulaic language. For instance, Wray and Perkins (2000) have declared that the frequency of occurrence of word combinations may be related to other issues such as cultural familiarity. Furthermore, Hickey (1993) has stated that "we must not rule out the possibility that an utterance which does not occur repeatedly is a formula" (p.33). From a similar point of view, Howarth (1998)

has stated that "phraseological significance means something more complex and possibly less tangible than what any computer algorithm can reveal" (p. 27).

Apart from form, function and usage based classifications; Wray and Perkins (2000) have proposed three more classification types which are *semantic irregularity*, *syntactic irregularity* and *continua of formulaicity*. With regards to *continua of formulaicity*, the fixedness of the expressions is necessary for the classification. One of the scholars who favor a continuum categorization is Howarth (1998). According to him, the components of a continuum are as follows:

-*functional expressions* (sequences with a discourse role such as openers; proverbs, slogans and so on);

- *composite units* (which retain a syntactic function);

- *lexical collocations* (consisting of two open class items, such as ulterior motive);

- *grammatical collocations* (consisting of one open and one closed class item, such as in advance) (Howarth, 1998, as cited in Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 5).

Kecskes (2007) also categorizes formulaic language as a continuum. See Table 2 for Kecskes' (2007) formulaic continuum.

Table 2

*Formulaic Continuum (*Adopted from Kecskes, 2007, p. 193)

Gramm. Units	Fixed Sem. units	Phrasal verbs	Speech formulas	Situation-bound utterances	Idioms
be going to	*as a matter of fact*	*put up with*	*going shopping*	*welcome aboard*	*kick the bucket*
have to	*suffice it to say*	*get along with*	*not bad*	*help yourself*	*spill the beans*

Speech formulas and situation-bound utterances. In this study, speech formulas and situation-bound utterances of Kecskes' (2007) formulaic continuum was used as a framework. In the study conducted by Kecskes (2007) with 13 adult nonnative speakers on the use of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances, the findings revealed that speech formulas were among the most frequently used type of formulaic language by the participants. According to Kecskes (2007), the difference between these two types is that while speech formulas can be used anywhere in speech as long as speakers find them appropriate for the use, situation-bound utterances can only be used for specific situations. In other words, the use of situation-bound utterances is based on the interaction of speakers in a social situation. On the use of situation-bound utterances, Kecskes (2000) has stated that "SBUs often receive their 'charge' from the situation they are used in." (p. 607) Furthermore, Kecskes' (2007) statement on the use of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances is parallel to what has been proposed by Cowie (2001) who defines these types as speech formulae and routine formulae.

Overall, even though the identification of formulaic language is problematic due to various classifications, there is a common thought that formulaic language provides important benefits for language users and learners.

Functions of Formulaic Language

As Wray (2012) has stated, in the absence of formulaic language, there would be a lack of idiomaticity in languages, which is related to how speakers and hearers apply the elements of the language to real life situations. Therefore, it may be considered that "formulaicity shapes languages" (Wray, 2012, p. 234). The evidence for the prevalence of formulaicity comes from varied estimates in the literature. For

instance, Erman and Warren (2000) have indicated that almost sixty percent of the language they analyzed is formulaic. Due to the fact that formulaic language constitutes most of the languages, it has important functions including basically cognitive and pragmatic matters. In terms of cognitive functions, the use of formulaic language decreases the processing overload for speech production by making pauses shorter. As for the pragmatic function, it is a well-known fact that formulaic language facilitates communication, which is essential to survive in a society. A number of scholars in the literature have emphasized the functions of formulaic language. For instance, Weinert (1995) has suggested three different functions of formulaic language, which are *communicative*, *production*, and *learning strategy*. According to *communicative strategy*, formulaic language ranging from multi-word units to smaller single units that may not be considered as formulaic facilitates language learners' getting in at least minimal communication in simple terms by making appropriate sounds in conversation. In terms of *production strategy*, Raupach (1984) has stated that the use of formulaic language enables learners to process and produce faster fluent speech (Raupach, 1984, in Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998) and as a *learning strategy*, formulaic language benefits language learners by helping improve language skills and sub-skills. Therefore, it might be useful to give details of these functions.

Formulaic language and processing load. One of the main functions of formulaic language is to decrease the effort of language processing (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Ellis & Sinclair, 1996; Wray, 2002). Formulaicity cuts the processing time in mind short. Because formulaic language consists of multi-word units that are considered as a whole, it is much easier for the brain to recall a ready-made chunk in real time language use (Wei &Ying, 2011). Due to the fact that formulaic

expressions are repeatedly used with high frequency in languages, they are presumably stored in our long-term memory. Ellis and Sinclair (1996) have explained this phenomena as "if one major function of working memory concerns the retention of sequences of language, and if language acquisition heavily involves sequence learning, then it seems likely that language acquisition is one of the things that working memory is for" (pp. 234-235). The fact that these ready-made sequences are retrieved automatically from the long term memory in real life situations considerably reduces the speaker's burden in processing, and therefore, helps the speaker to fulfill other communicative tasks such as planning larger units of discourse to produce. Studies provide support for this function of formulaic expressions. As an example, Conklin and Schmitt (2008) have investigated whether the formulaic sequences have benefits for language users in regards to reducing processing load by comparing the time spent by native and non-native speakers for reading formulaic sequences with their non-formulaic equivalents. The researchers have found that formulaic sequences were processed more quickly than non-formulaic language by both groups. These findings have indicated that formulaic language has remarkable advantage over non-formulaic language in terms of language processing. The study which Underwood, Schmitt, and Galpin (2004) have carried out to examine how formulaic sequences are processed through eye-movement during reading texts also supported the claim that formulaic sequences accelerate language processing.

Formulaic language and social interaction. Common functions of formulaic language in social interaction can be considered as shown in Figure 1:
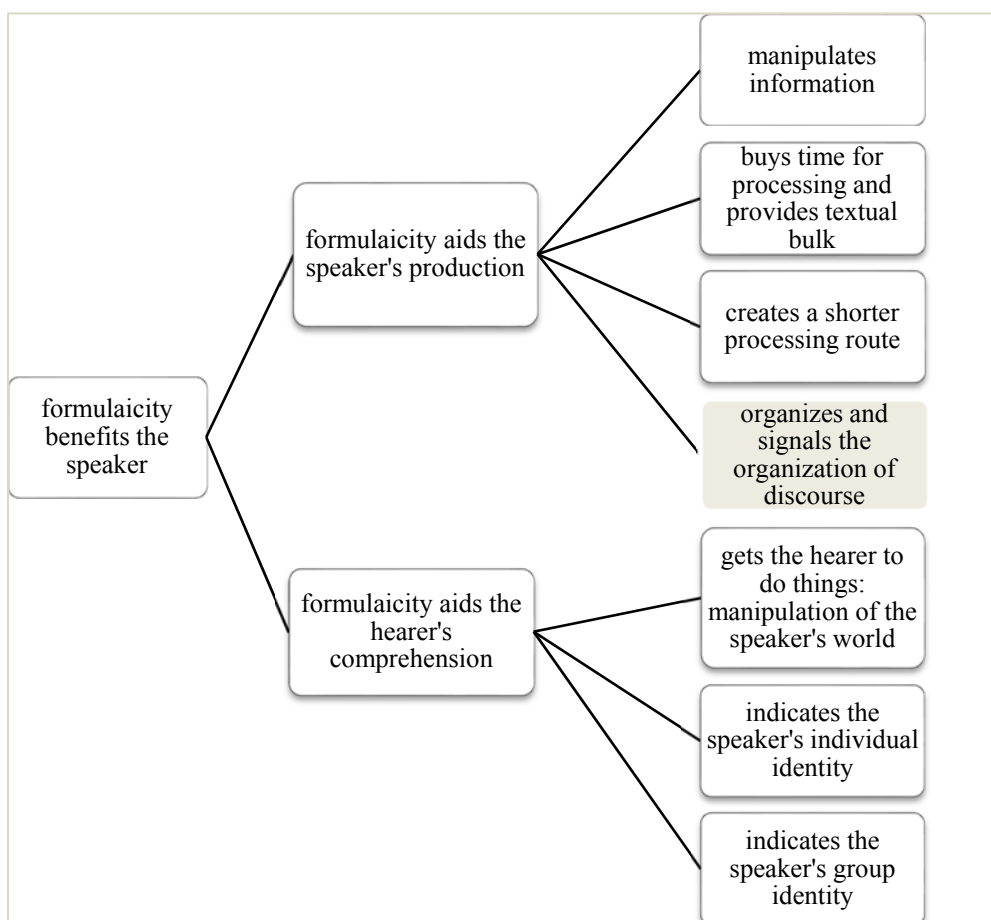
Figure 1. The role of formulaic sequences in benefiting the speaker (Adopted from
      Wray, 2000, p. 478)

As can be seen in Figure1, formulaic language benefits both speakers and
hearers. Apart from these functions, there are more proposed functions of formulaic
language. To start with, according to Wray (2000), the use of formulaic language not
only reduces the processing load of the speaker but also the hearer. In a social
context, formulaic language is used for various speech acts such as greetings,
requesting, giving comments, apologizing, etc. Schmitt and Carter (2004) have
pointed out the functions of formulaic language as

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 takeoff =permission to enter a runway and commence take-off) signaling discourse organization (on the other hand= conversely (Schmitt & Carter, 2012, p. 46)

Furthermore, as Wray and Perkins (2000) have indicated, formulaic language has communicative functions such as *manipulation of others*, *asserting separate and group identity* (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 14). These functions have a great value in maintaining group dynamics in a society and are effective in determining how a speaker wants to be viewed or regarded by others in a social context. The word choice of the speaker is determined by the characteristics of the context; and according to the context, the qualities of speech such as politeness or being assertive are chosen. In terms of asserting individual or group identities, formulaic language indicates similarities or differences of individuals in a society.

In terms of pragmatic issues, Wray and Perkins (2000) have also suggested that particular cultural situations provide suitable contexts for the use of specific formulas, and to understand varied dimensions and value of social situations helps understand the meanings of the related formulas. Likewise, Wood (2002) has suggested that since the use of formulas is bound to a particular social context, understanding the nature of those contexts enables access to the pragmatic/figurative meaning of formulas. These fixed expressions help individuals handle complex social situations and achieve a clear and smooth communication (Wood, 2002).

Additionally, Schmitt and Carter (2004) have stated, "formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use." (p. 9). In that sense, in order to interact in different social situations, the use of specific language forms attached to those particular situations is required (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). These formulas not only facilitate dealing with the many complex social situations but also prevent ambiguous communication, forming a sense of group identity. Moreover, the use of formulaic language provides conceptual socialization which is another dimension of social interaction (e.g., Kecskes, 2002; Ortaçtepe, 2012) and will be discussed in the next section.

Formulaic language and language development. Regarding language development, the evidence from previous studies has suggested that formulaic language plays an important role in both first and second language acquisition (e.g., Bannard & Lieven, 2012; Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Weinert, 1995, Wood, 2002; Wray, 2000). According to Barnard and Lieven (2012), children's formulaic language use is based on a usage-based principle. By using word sequences that are taken directly without analyzing from the input repeatedly, children gain competence in the language. Moreover, Barnard and Lieven (2012) have stated that children's development of grammatical structures starts with distinguishing communicative functions in the speeches of others as a whole. According to these researchers, "by identifying such form-meaning mappings, they (children) begin to build representations for phonologically and semantically overlapping sequences that become entrenched through repeated exposure and use." (Barnard & Lieven, 2012, p. 14) As the process continues, formulas are reformulated and start to sound adult-like language use which is based on formulaicity and idiomaticity. Thus, children are bound to less input in time.

The issue of how formulaic language is effective in the development of a second language has also been the interest of several researchers (e.g., Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Ellis, 2002; Weinert, 1995; Wray, 2000; Wood, 2002; 2006; 2009). These researchers have concluded that since first language formulaicity is based on frequency of usage, exposure to frequent utterances affects the acquisition of a second language and language learners' interlanguage. Additionally, the use of formulaic language helps them to gain insight into how the language works for native speakers and makes their speech sound more native-like. (e.g., Ortaçtepe, 2012; Yorio, 1980) In other words, formulaicity enables language learners to achieve native-like word selection and fluency which are the two puzzles for the theory of Pawley and Syder (1983). While native-like selection is related to how native speakers choose what is natural and idiomatic in their speeches, fluency is related to how native speakers produce continuous language in a context. As the use of formulaic language leads to processing short-cuts, it facilitates speaker's production being fluent because information can be reached easily when needed. Thus, fluency makes the speech more native-like. Kecskes (2007) has described this situation as "Formulaic language is the heart and soul of native-like language use. In fact, this is what makes language use native-like" (Kecskes, 2007, p. 4).

One other dimension of the relationship between formulaic language and pragmatics is that the use of formulaic language enables conceptualized fluency and socialization (Ortaçtepe, 2012). According to Ortaçtepe (2012), conceptualized socialization includes both understanding the social practices of the new community and establishing a bond with respect to linguistic and social aspects. In that sense, Ortaçtepe (2012) has examined whether conceptualized socialization in the U.S. played a role in Turkish international students' formulaic language use. The

participants were seven American and seven Turkish students; and discourse completion test, role-enactments, and picture description were used as instruments in order to compare the performances of both groups. As a result of a pre and post-test, the researcher has revealed that the use of formulaic language by Turkish students increased in the post-test, though it could not reach the use of American students'. Moreover, the language use of Turkish students was considered as more native-like in the post-test. As a whole, the findings of the study suggested that the use of formulaic language is connected to native-like use of language.

Functions of formulaic language in language teaching. Considering the role of formulaic language in language development, it is of little surprise that formulaic language is included in the curriculum of language programs since the main goal of language teaching is to make learners understand how linguistic items are used in communicative discourses (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Wood (2002) has also highlighted the importance of formulaic language being a part of curriculum:

> if formulaic sequences are a key element of natural language production, it would seem that a large amount of exposure to natural, native-like discourse, be it oral or written, would be an important part of a pedagogy designed to promote their acquisition. (p. 9)

Another reason for why formulaic language needs to be a part of teaching is that considering the functions of formulaic language, it seems obvious that formulaic language is of great importance in accomplishing pragmatic goals and native-like fluency. Furthermore, exposure to authentic native-like input is vital to acquire these significant fixed expressions and to retain them as single units in long-term memory. Wood (2002) has stated the importance of exposure as "…Repeated exposure to such

input over time would encourage learners to achieve a certain level of comfort with natural expression in English" (p. 10). In order to use formulaic language appropriately, learners first need to get exposed to these expressions as well as to notice them. The studies on whether noticing formulaic language benefits to language learners revealed different findings. For instance, Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers and Demecheleer (2006) have explored whether noticing of formulaic language affects the proficiency in oral proficiency exams and found out that learners who were exposed to a wide range of noticing activities focusing on formulaic language used more formulaic language in conversations and were judged as more proficient in oral skills such as fluency. It may indicate that noticing and the use of formulaic language have a positive effect on oral proficiency. Therefore, it can be concluded that learners need to be exposed to large amount of input on formulaic language in classroom activities. However, the only sources of exposure for foreign/second language learners are teachers, course books and classroom activities.

While course books are regarded as one of the sources of exposure to real language use, there are different views on the effectiveness of them. In this respect, as Gouverneur (2008, as cited in Meunier, 2012) has stated, the number of vocabulary exercises about formulaicity in course books is limited and the available course books do not complement each other in regards to the included patterns. Furthermore, as Boultan (2010) and Burton (2012) have suggested, textbooks are not effective in representing the real language use since they offer a very limited number of frequently used expressions. Nevertheless, Meunier (2012) has suggested that the materials provided by Cambridge University Press can be given as an example for using corpus data which is important as it represents real language use and provides many authentic examples related to how language is used in a speech community.

With regard to formulaic expressions as vocabulary items in course books, Ellis, Simpson-Vilach and Maynard (2008) have stated that learners are likely to know the words which they encounter more than the others. Besides, in their study, Newton and Chang (2013) have suggested that collocations can be acquired after 15 times encounters; therefore, much and repeated exposure is required. Tekmen and Daloglu (2006) have also emphasized the significance of the frequency of encounters and incidental learning for vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading in their study. Thus, it can be assumed that the frequencies of occurrence of these expressions in course books also shape the expectation from the learners in oral proficiency exams regarding their frequencies since teaching and testing correspond with each other.

Formulaic Language Use in Oral Assessment

In recent years, the focus of language teaching has shifted from language-based teaching to communication-based teaching. Since the learners and their needs have become the center of the language teaching, the design of the lessons and classroom activities have been shaped in accordance with the new trends. One of the approaches that emerged is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the aim of which is "to develop a functional communicative L2 competence in the learner" (Dornyei, 2009, p. 33). With this approach, learners' interaction with each other and their communication have been of great importance.

Following this shift, new principles of CLT have been proposed by considering the components of communication in recent years and fluency has been a part of the new CLT. In the *fluency* principle, the significance of form-focused instruction accompanied by fluency and automatization were emphasized (Dornyei,

2009). Referring to fluency and automatization, formulaic language also takes place in the new principles. The importance of formulaic language in communication has been indicated as follows: "Communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks." (Widdowson, 1989, p. 135, as cited in Dornyei, 2009, pp. 39-40).

As teaching and testing are two inseparable parts of language programs, the changes in teaching have stimulated shifts in testing as well. Since the new focus is on communication, the assessment procedures have been also rearranged accordingly. In terms of speaking assessment, oral proficiency exams are designed according to communicative needs. Different tasks are provided in these exams in order to evaluate students' oral proficiency because as also suggested in the literature, task type affects learners' performances. (e.g., Ellis, 2000; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wood, 2002; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) In this respect, Ellis (2000) has suggested that task design can determine what language will be used. However, the study of Neary-Sundquist (2013) which was carried out with 47 native and nonnative participants by using four tasks has suggested that there is no positive relationship between the use of *pragmatic markers,* which is a sub-category of formulaic language and the administered task type.

Fluency plays an important role as a variable in this assessment process. Therefore, with respect to the fluency enhancing function of formulaic language, it can be presumed that formulaic language contributes to testing outcomes as well as teaching. Analyzing students' oral proficiency exams may provide further insight into the connection between fluency and the use of formulaic language also by including multi-task into the research. As Wood (2009) has suggested;

a very limited body of research exists which examines the link between the use of formulaic sequences in speech and effectiveness of oral communication. In research in second language acquisition in particular, there have been few attempts to uncover how learners may use formulaic sequences to facilitate fluent speech and how learners may employ formulaic sequences for particular discourse purposes. (p. 40)

Thus, more research is needed to explore the relationship between formulaic language and fluency, but initially, it may be of major importance to explain what fluency is and how this speech variable is measured.

Fluency

Definitions of Fluency

One of the aspects of native-like speech is fluency, which has been defined in many ways in the literature, and these definitions emphasize different qualities of fluency. The reason for this diversity is that there is no certain mutual understanding of what fluency is and how it is measured. Chambers (1997) has stated that it is hard to find an exact definition of fluency for two reasons. First, fluency is always confused with overall language proficiency. In that respect, if a speaker has a good command in language use, it might not be suitable to generalize that he or she is also a fluent speaker. Second, "fluency" definition differs in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which attaches great importance to fluency. In CLT, the significant issue is to maintain real language use regardless of proficiency level.

Even though it may be difficult to define fluency in one generally acceptable way, the literature provides different definitions of it. For instance, according to

Wood (2010), besides using the language effectively, fluency is "a naturalness of flow of speech, or speed of oral performance" (p. 9). Similarly, in the definitions provided by Segalowitz (2010), fluency is described as the "ability to express any idea in the L2 that one can also express in L1, to use a large vocabulary and to speak with few grammatical errors" (p. 4). This speech element was also defined in the earlier studies. One of the first definitions of second language fluency was provided by Pawley and Syder (1983), who have regarded native-like fluency as "the native speaker's ability to produce fluent stretches of discourse" (p. 191). Another definition was provided by Fillmore (1979, in Kormos & Denes, 2004) who defined fluency as "the ability to talk at length with few pauses and to be able to fill the time with talk" (Fillmore, 1979, in Kormos & Denes, 2004, p. 147). Therefore, a fluent speaker is the one who is able to talk without hesitations, express his/her message in a coherent, "reasoned" and "semantically densed" way, and to know what to say in a wide of range of contexts (Kormos & Denes, 2004, p. 147). Moreover, Lennon (1990, 2000, as cited in Kormos & Denes, 2004) defined fluency from two different perspectives. From a broad perspective, fluency seems to be defined as global oral proficiency which means that a fluent speaker has high competence of the foreign/second language. From a narrower perspective, fluency can be regarded as one element of oral proficiency, one of the scores in evaluating learners' oral language performance in an oral proficiency exam considering the factors of proficiency such as *correctness, idiomaticness, relevance, appropriateness, pronunciation, lexical range* (Lennon, 1990, as cited in Kormos & Denes, 2004). Another view about fluency as expressed by McCarthy (2006) is:

> the notion of fluency has its roots in linguistic qualities related to
>
> lexico-grammatical and phonological flow accompanied by apparently

effortless accurate selection of elements, created by individual speakers, and in the ability of participants to converse appropriately on topics, but also, crucially, in the ability to retrieve chunks, and in the degree of interactive support each speaker gives to the flow of talk, helping one another to be fluent and creating a confluence in the conversation. (p. 5)

As suggested above, the notion of speech fluency depends on some temporal variables such as automaticity, correctness and speech rate; therefore, measurement of fluency is provided by considering these variables.

Measurement of Fluency

While different definitions of fluency have been proposed, the other controversial point on fluency is what makes speech fluent. Various scholars have suggested their fluency criteria to measure fluency (e.g., Lennon, 1990; Möhle, 1984; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Towell, Hawkins & Bazergui, 1996). For instance, Möhle (1984, as cited in Wood, 2010, p. 14) has pointed out the variables such as *speech and articulation rate, length and position of silent pauses, length and quality of speech units* and *number, type and position of hesitation phenomena in the text such as filled pauses* for fluent speech (p. 27). Apart from these variables, Skehan and Foster (1999) have used the variables such as *reformulations, false starts, repetitions, replacements, pauses, silence total* in order to measure fluency in their task-based study (p. 230).

Another approach to fluency is proposed by Segalowitz (2010) who has regarded the issue from a cognitive perspective. According to Segalowitz (2010), sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and physiological issues are also related to fluency.

Segalowitz (2010) has stated that these three aspects of fluency are classified as *cognitive fluency, utterance fluency* and *perceived fluency. Cognitive fluency* can be defined as "the efficiency of operation of the underlying processes responsible for the production of utterances" and "*utterance fluency*" refers to "the features of utterances that reflect the speaker's cognitive fluency". Lastly, *perceived fluency is* "the inferences listeners make about speakers' cognitive fluency based on their perceptions of their utterance fluency" (Segalowitz, 2010, p. 165).

As fluency is a significant quality of language use, it has been the interest of researchers for many years. (e.g., Fillmore, 1979; Kormos & Denes, 2004; Lennon, 1990; 2000; Möhle, 1984; Segalowitz, 2010; Towell et. al., 1996; Wood, 2010)To start with, Towell et. al., (1996) has examined the fluency and the use of formulaic language, which is the focus of the current study. They have investigated what kinds of changes occur in the use of formulaic language accompanied by increased fluency after spending a year in the target language environment. The findings revealed that spending particular time in where the target language is spoken improves the use of formulaic language. Moreover, Dahlman and Adolphs (2007) have investigated the role of the placement of pauses in automatically extracted multi-word expression (MWE) candidates from a learner corpus and concluded that the placement of pauses might be valuable as an additional criterion for the identification of holistically stored MWEs.

Apart from these studies, there are more studies on the relationship between formulaic language and fluency in the literature.

Recent Studies on Formulaic Language and Fluency

As formulaic language and fluent language use are two interconnected concepts, many studies have addressed this connection from different perspectives and many scholars have focused on this relationship (e.g., Boers et. al., 2006; Ellis, 2008; Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Kormos & Denes, 2004; McGuire, 2009; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Raupach, 1984, as cited in, Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998; Stengers et. al., 2011; Wood, 2006; 2010). For instance, Kormos and Denes (2004) have investigated the differences between fluent and non-fluent language learners in their studies and concluded that one of the reasons for raters' judgments of fluent speaker is that they use automatized chunks which made their speech novel. Moreover, Hsu and Chiu (2008) suggested in their study which examined the relationship between the use of lexical collocations and speaking proficiency that these variables are highly related to each other.

In another study, McGuire (2009) examined whether explicit teaching of formulaic language through a task-based lesson has an effect on learners' fluency. The study was conducted with 19 mid-intermediate and advanced students in a control and experimental group. The findings of the study revealed that most of the participants in the experimental group increased their formulaic language use and fluency at the end of the treatment. In another study examining the effect of formulaic language in language production, Wood (2006) aimed to find out whether the use of formulaic language has an effect on fluent language production. The participants of the study were 11 intermediate ESL learners at a college in Canada with three different backgrounds: Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese. The data were collected from speech samples through narratives that they retold after watching silent animated films. The findings of the study indicated that different kinds of

formulaic sequences were used by the participants and the use of these sequences led to increased fluency. In their study with L2 learners of English and Spanish, Stengers et. al., (2011), have examined whether there is a relationship between the use of formulaic sequences and oral proficiency. In the same way, the results revealed that the use of formulaic sequences improves L2 oral proficiency by helping learners to produce fluent speech. In light of this study, Stengers et. al., (2011) suggested that "Future research will have to confirm whether the same trends are observed in other (real-time) speaking activities, such as conversation, where pragmatic formulae or interaction routines play a greater part" (p. 339). Therefore, this study may shed light on how formulaic language is used in individual and paired tasks.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the relevant literature about formulaic language with its varied definitions, terms and characteristics. Next, the identification, classification and functions of the formulaic language have been explained. Then, the connection between formulaic language and teaching has been discussed. Moreover, the chapter has introduced fluency, one of the speech variables, with its definitions and ways of measurement. Finally, studies on the relationship between formulaic language and fluency have been presented. The next chapter will provide information about the methodology of the study including the setting and participants, the research design, materials and instruments, and finally procedures and data analysis.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this descriptive study is to investigate the extent to which Turkish EFL learners use formulaic language in oral proficiency exams that include multi-tasks. The study also attempts to examine whether there is a relationship between their use of formulaic language, and their fluency and language proficiency. In this respect, the study addresses the following research questions:

1) In what ways do EFL learners use the formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum when taking oral proficiency exams?

2) In what type of tasks (individual or paired) do EFL learners use more formulaic language?

3) Is there a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their scores of:

a) Fluency?

b) Overall proficiency?

This chapter consists of five main sections: the setting and participants, the research design, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. In the first section, the setting and participants of the study are described in detail. In the second section, the research design of this study is explained. In the third section, the instruments and materials used in the study are presented. In the fourth section, the data collection procedure is explained step by step. In the last section, the procedure for data analysis is provided.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages of Bülent Ecevit University which is located in Zonguldak, Turkey. This state university provides one-year compulsory English preparatory courses for undergraduate students at the Department of Basic English of the School of Foreign Languages. A proficiency test is administered at the beginning of each academic year in order to evaluate students' knowledge of English and those who score 60 or above out of 100 pass the exam and go on their studies at their departments. Students who fail the exam are placed in classes appropriate for their proficiency level and study intensive English for a year. There are three proficiency levels at the Department of Basic English: B, C and D levels (from highest to the lowest) and students are supposed to have the same exit level of proficiency, which is A2 level according to the description of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), at the end of an academic year. The success of students is mostly determined by the final proficiency exam which is designed to assess students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge as well as their oral and written performances. The students are required to take and pass this exam in order to complete the preparatory program. The rationale for choosing this particular school is both its eligibility and convenience since it provides sampling to the researcher and it is one of the few state universities to conduct oral proficiency exams as part of their proficiency exam and these oral proficiency exams are recorded in order to be saved in the archives of the school. Moreover, a corpus-based course book which includes numerous formulaic expressions is used at this school (See Appendix A). The book presents examples of how these expressions are used in communication through dialogues, role plays and exercises. Therefore, the students see the expressions in a context; practice the use of

them and conduct plentiful role play activities to produce the language that they are exposed to in the classes.

The participants of the study were 190 students from different proficiency levels who took the final proficiency exam at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. The researcher never met the participants in person because the study was conducted on the basis of archival data. After receiving the required permissions from the university, the researcher used the school archives for oral proficiency exam recordings and grading sheets. She was the only person allowed to use the archive of the school at the time of data collection and had access to no personal information of the students. The participants were selected randomly for the study. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the effects of any other variables that might intervene, the only selection criterion was related to the role play tasks administered for the pair work. There were ten different communication tasks in the oral proficiency exam and two of them were chosen since they were similar in terms of speech act (see Appendix B). The participants of the study consisted of the students who performed these two role play tasks.

Research Design

This study is based on a descriptive research design of quantitative studies since it aims to investigate the ways EFL learners use formulaic language that is integrated into their curriculum in oral proficiency exams. Hence, a content-analysis of the course book was employed as the first step in order to determine the extent to which formulaic language was part of the curriculum through the course book. Video analysis was conducted in order to observe students' formulaic language use. The collected data from videos and oral performance evaluation sheets were analyzed in

order to make connections between variables related to the research. The materials used for this research design will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Instruments and Materials

The course book that is used at the school, students' oral proficiency exam recordings and grading sheets were employed in the study.

The course book. In order to determine the extent to which formulaic language is included in the curriculum through course books, a content analysis was conducted. For this purpose, Kecskes' (2007) framework of formulaic language continuum[1] was employed due to the fact that *speech formulas* and *situation-bound utterances* outnumber other types of formulaic expressions in the content of the book. Therefore, the study focused on these two categories and the study of Ortaçtepe (2012) was referred to identify formulaic expressions in the books. Since the curriculum of the school is based on communicative approach, Touchstone (2009) by Cambridge University Press, which provides numerous communicative practices, has been used for three years. It is a corpus-based course book that has been written in light of the corpus of North American English in the Cambridge International Corpus. Most frequent words and phrases, word combinations, and conversation strategies from the corpus are included in the book. The book consists of four series, but first three series are used in the school till the end of an academic year. While two series are taught for B level students, C and D level students are taught all three series.

Oral proficiency exam materials. The oral proficiency exams have been developed in accordance with the principles of communicative approach and the

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[1]See Chapter III: Literature review p. 18 for detailed information

curriculum taught at the institution. Thus, students' oral performances are assessed at regular intervals in the mid-term and final exams and students are administered various individual and paired tasks in these exams. In terms of final exam, students are mixed as they have the same exit level and they perform individual and paired tasks during the assessment. Two raters assess the oral performances in every exam room through different sessions according to a rubric and the exams are video recorded to be saved in the archive. The oral proficiency exam constitutes 40% of overall proficiency evaluation at this institution.

Rubric/Evaluation sheets. In this study, the archival data of evaluation sheets which were used by the raters in order to assess students' oral performances during the oral proficiency exams were employed. The rubric was developed by the Speaking Office coordinator of the same institution in line with CEFR A2 level description and it included five items which are *Fluency and Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, Task Completion* and *Comprehension* (see Appendix C). The lowest score that can be assigned for each item is 1 point while the highest score is 5 points. As a *Total Score,* the raters can assign up to 25 points and the average grades of two raters for each student is assigned as the final grade. In order to ensure the inter-reliability of the raters, a norming session before the oral proficiency exams is conducted and as a result of the negotiation in one of these sessions, a principle has been set out: The accepted difference between the grades of the raters may be up to 3 points. If the difference is more than three, the assessors have to negotiate to determine the final grade.

Video recordings. Students' oral proficiency exams are recorded and saved in the archive as they are part of assessment procedure in the institution where the study was conducted. In this study 95 video recordings of final exam which belong to

students from 2012-2013 academic year were chosen in order to analyze students' formulaic language use. The duration of each video was approximately 15 minutes and they included interviews of two preparatory school students during the oral proficiency exam that consists of two parts. In the first part, each student performed a task individually with the guidance of the interlocutor, and in the second part, the two students interacted with each other to complete a communicative task which was based on a real life situation. Specifically, the tasks administered in the final oral proficiency exam consisted of a picture description task for the individual task and a role play activity for the paired task. In each exam session, there were two different pictures for each pair for the individual task and one communication task for the paired task. As the participants of the current study were students who took the exam in two different sessions, there were four pictures for the individual tasks and two role-play tasks for the paired one in total (see Appendix D).

Overall, 95 videos of 190 students with different proficiency levels were used in the research. Students were randomly paired either with a student from the same proficiency level or from a higher or lower proficiency level. Since these videos were saved in archives, the students' consent for participation in the study was not taken.

Data Collection Procedures

After determining the research design, the researcher first requested permission of the directorate of the School of Foreign Languages at Bülent Ecevit University in order to use the archival data for the study. When the required permission was gained, the researcher looked through the archive for the evaluation sheets and video recordings of the 2012-2013 academic year final exam.

Once the instruments and materials for the study were collected, video recordings were chosen randomly to determine the number of participants. In order to keep track of the participants' use of formulaic language, a chart was developed by the researcher for each student using Kecskes' (2007) framework of formulaic continuum (see Appendix E). Following this process, the students' three course books were analyzed to list the formulaic expressions in the books. The rationale for this procedure was to determine whether students used the target expressions to which they had been exposed in their books or not. After the selection of the participants, the proficiency scores (i.e., the total scores of the language proficiency exam administered at the end of the academic year), were also noted in the evaluation chart in order to relate the data to one of the research questions. The next step was to analyze video recordings in light of these purposes.

The researcher listened to the video recordings for each and every student and wrote down the expressions they produced. This process was repeated for the two tasks-individual and paired- for each student so as to answer the second research question. In order to ensure the reliability of the video analysis, another researcher who was trained for this type of analysis analyzed 10% of the 95 videos used in this study. The comparison of these analyses showed that two researchers agreed on the students' formulaic language use. After the content analysis of the videos, the target formulaic language list (the frequency of the expressions in the book) and the evaluation chart (the frequency of expressions used by the students) were compared and the ways students used the formulaic language were noted. Then, the data gathered from this analysis were used in reference to the grades out of 5 that students received for fluency section in the rubric so as to relate the use of formulaic language to fluency. For the second part of the same research question, students' proficiency

scores they received for their ability in language use at the end of the academic year were taken into consideration regarding the relationship between the use of formulaic language and language proficiency. Thus, quantitative data were provided for data analysis. Figure 2 shows the data collection procedures.
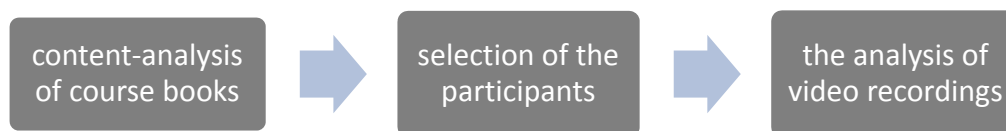
Figure 2. Data Collection Procedures

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data analysis was used in order to determine the extent to which students used formulaic language in oral proficiency exams and the relationship between their use of formulaic language and their scores of fluency and language proficiency. The data collected from video recordings and evaluation sheets were analyzed quantitatively by using version 20 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).First, the researcher conducted the content analysis of formulaic language in the course books and compared the data with the expressions that students used in the exam in order to examine whether there was a match in their frequencies. The researcher also analyzed the students' accurate and inaccurate use of the expressions in the books. Secondly, the same data were used to analyze the participants' formulaic language use in the individual and paired tasks; therefore, the task type in which the students used more formulaic language was determined.

Finally, students' formulaic language use and the scores assigned by the raters for each student for *Fluency and Pronunciation* component of the rubric was used so as to address the first part of the third research question. For the second part

of the same research question, the use of formulaic language and the scores that were assigned for each student as final language proficiency scores to determine whether they passed or failed were taken into consideration. The scores were analyzed quantitatively in order to see whether there is a relationship between the formulaic language use and fluency and proficiency scores by using SPSS.

Conclusion

In this methodology chapter, the setting and participants, research design, instruments and the procedure of data collection and analysis were described in detail. The next chapter will present detailed analysis of the quantitative data gathered from the 190 participants through video recordings and evaluation sheets.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The aim of this descriptive study was to investigate EFL learners' formulaic language use in oral proficiency exams and the relationship between their formulaic language use and their fluency and overall proficiency scores. In this respect, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. In what ways do EFL learners use the formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum when taking oral proficiency exams?

2. In what type of tasks (individual or paired) do EFL learners use more formulaic language?

3. Is there a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their scores of:

   a) Fluency?

   b) Overall proficiency?

In order to answer the research questions, the data were gathered from 190 students studying at the School of Foreign Languages of Bülent Ecevit University in the 2012-2013 academic year. The data collection procedure included the content analysis of the students' course book and the oral proficiency exam recordings to determine the students' formulaic language use in individual and paired tasks. As a result of the content analysis, formulaic expressions in the book were listed with the frequencies of their occurrences in the three series of the course book. The same procedure was repeated to determine the formulaic expressions used by the students in the exam and these expressions were also listed with their frequencies. Therefore, the collected data were

analyzed quantitatively by comparing the frequencies of the occurrences of formulaic expressions in the course book to the frequency of formulaic language used by students.

The same data were used in order to determine the task type in which students used more formulaic language. In addition to this, the number of the expressions used by the students and their fluency and overall proficiency scores were analyzed quantitatively by using Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20) for their correlations. Thus, the aim of this procedure was to determine whether there is a relationship between these three variables. In this calculation, fluency scores referred to the grades that the students received for the fluency section of the grading sheet of the oral proficiency exam and proficiency scores referred to the average success scores that students received at the end of the academic year according to their language proficiency.

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis procedures will be presented in accordance with the research questions in three sections. First, the results of the content analysis of the course book and video recordings will be explained referring to EFL learners' formulaic language in oral proficiency exams. In the second section, the data emerging from the same content analysis will be used in order to determine the task type in which EFL learners use more formulaic language. In the last section, the relationship between formulaic language use and the scores of fluency and overall proficiency will be discussed in light of the correlation analysis results.

Results

Research Question 1: The Ways EFL Learners Use the Formulaic Language that is Taught in Their Curriculum When Taking Oral Proficiency Exams

In order to see how formulaic language that is taught in the curriculum is used by the students, first, a content analysis of the course book was conducted by counting

the number of formulaic expressions which consisted of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances. Therefore, the frequency of the occurrence of each expression was calculated. Then, students' oral proficiency exam recordings were analyzed and the students' formulaic language use was identified by counting the frequency of formulaic language used by the students. Finally, the results of both content analyses were compared by testing their correlations.

The findings revealed that in terms of the type of formulaic language, students used more speech formulas than situation-bound utterances in the exam. The reason for the difference in the use of these two types is that since speech formulas are not context-specific, the students were exposed to them more frequently than situation-bound utterances which are context-specific. More specifically, students used 87 different speech formulas with the frequency of 1010. The book contained 112 different speech formulas with the total frequency of 1745 and the frequencies of 87 speech formulas that the students used were 1165 in the book. They also used 47 different situation-bound utterances with the frequency of 288. The book contained 116 different situation-bound utterances with the total frequency of 338. The frequencies of 47 expressions that the students used were 165 in the book. These results indicate that while the use of speech formulas by the students was lower than their occurrences in the course book, it was emerged that the use of situation-bound utterances by the students was higher than the frequencies of them in the course book. Another finding about the use of situation-bound utterances is that the students made a preference among 116 situation-bound utterances and used the expressions which were appropriate for the administered situation. On the other hand, even though the students used formulaic language in the exam to a certain extent, they did not use them to the same degree. Tables 3 and 4 show frequencies of 30 speech formulas and 30 situation-bound utterances taught in the course book and the frequency of students' use of these expressions.

Table 3

The Comparison of the Frequencies of Speech Formulas

	Frequency of occurrence	
Type Speech formulas	Token The book	Token Students' use
OK	64	189
Maybe	18	150
I think	35	124
Hi	27	73
That's all	-	35
Hello	18	34
I was wondering..	6	28
I don't know	25	27
Actually	49	23
Yes	46	23
I'm sorry	13	22
I guess	38	19
Thanks	31	17
All right	21	13
You know	22	12
Sorry	11	12
Well…	107	11
So…	75	11
Yes, of course	-	11
Really	55	10
Sure	29	10
What can I do for you?	2	9
Would it be OK with you	2	8
Of course	4	8
I wanted to…	2	8
I mean	63	7
Anyway	19	6
I'm not sure	10	5
I know	27	4
I see	4	4

It was also revealed that the most frequently used speech formulas *Maybe* and *I think* were mostly used in the individual task and *OK* was used in the paired task. There are the examples of the use of these expressions by the students below:

Individual task- picture description

By looking at a picture of a bazaar (see Appendix D)

S74: There are a lot of people in the bazaar. Two men are looking around. Two of them wearing white T-shirts. One of them wearing bag and there is a girl. **I think** she has not much vegetables in the house because she is buying a lot of vegetables and she is the woman by the table. **I think** she is the buyer, customer I mean and she looks tired. She must be tired.

Interlocutor: How do they feel?

S74: **I think** she is the buyer with the table feel tired and the other woman look the same, nervous because she bought a lot of things. **Maybe,** she is feeling tired. He must be relaxed, **I think**…this man because he is wearing short and T-shirt. He looks relaxed, **I think.** At the same time, there are two boys behind the girl, I mean the customer girl. They are just looking around and they are doing anything.

Interlocutor: What are they going to do next?

S74: **I think** men are going to go to house. **Maybe** they will have party and she will make meal for children, **maybe** for her children

Interlocutor: for the party?

S74: for her children, not party. **I think** she is dreaming earning money.

Interlocutor: OK

S74: Yes, that's all

Figure 3. Examples of the use of *I think* and *Maybe*

Paired task- role play activity about asking for permission (see Appendix B)

S26: I'm sorry. Could I come in?

S25: Yes, **OK** but I'm sorry you have just a minute.

S26: **OK**

S25: **OK**. I send a message

S 26: Yes

S 25: **OK.** I'm listening to you.

S26: Could I ask something for tomorrow? I have a wedding party. My best friend…so

I want permission for tomorrow. Would it be OK if I leave early tomorrow?

S25: That's OK I can't understand but I see, I know. You know we are busy these days,

but if you finish your article, maybe you will go.

S26: You know I am a hardworking worker Err…I'll try to finish my article. Thank you

to give me permission for tomorrow

S25: If I were you, I don't go that party and finish my article, but you know

S26: I bet certainly I finish that. I bring you.

S25: Actually, I don't want to give permission to you, but this time it is OK.

S26: Thank you… I don't want permission so far, but I want now.

S25: **OK.**I hope that marriage be good so say good luck for me **OK.** You'll go.

S26: Thank you.

Figure 4. An example of the use of OK

As seen in the examples above, while S 74 used *I think* and *maybe* in order to

express her thoughts, S25 and S26 used *OK* as part of their communication.

Table 4

The Comparison of the Frequencies of Situation-bound Utterances

	Frequency of occurrence	
Type SBU	Token The book	Token Students' use
See you	12	38
Thank you/so much/very much	9	36
See you later	8	22
How are you?	18	22
Excuse me	10	17
I'm fine	8	16
Good luck	5	11
Is this a good time to talk?	2	9
(I'll) call you back	-	9
(I'll) call you later	2	8
Hi, it's…(on the phone)	5	8
I'd better go	4	8
I have to go	-	7
How about you?	13	6
You're welcome	6	5
Talk to you later	4	5
Call me later please	-	5
I have got to go	4	4
Just a minute	3	4
Congratulations	5	4
Call you back later	-	4
Just a second	2	3
Catch you later	2	3
Could I call you back later?	-	2
Can I call you in twenty minutes?	1	2
Goodbye	7	2
See you soon	-	2
Fine, thanks and you?	-	2
Have a nice day	4	2
Can I call you back later?	1	2

As can be seen in the Table 3 and 4, students used a certain amount of the formulaic language in the book in the exam. Moreover, the participants used formulaic language derived from the expressions in the book even though these expressions were not included in the book (e.g., *Yes, of course, See you soon, Call me later, please, Call me back later, Fine, thanks and you*?). It was revealed that they combined the expressions and created new expressions or they used previously learned expressions *(e.g., Fine, thanks and you?)* For instance, even though *Yes, of* course is not included in the book, *Of course* and Yes are the two existing expressions. Similarly*, call me back later* is not included in the book, but (*I'll) call you later is* presented twice in the book. Furthermore*,* upon looking at the target formulaic language list, the researcher deduced that they did not use some of them. Table 5 presents a sample of the formulaic language with their frequencies of occurrence in the book that students did not use in the oral proficiency exam.

Table 5

The Sample List of Formulaic Language that Students did not Use in the Oral Proficiency Exam

		Frequency of occurrence		
Type Speech formulas	Token The book	Type Situation-bound utterances	Token The book
Oh…	73	No, not at all	11
Um..	33	Nice to meet you	7
Uh..	20	Thanks anyway	6
kind of…	18	Good morning	5
Oh, no!	14	What's your name?	5
You mean	14	Let me think	5
Right	11	You're kidding!	4
Let's see	11	That's a good idea	4
Do you mind if..?	9	Here you go	4
Did you say..?	8	You poor thing	4
I'd like to…	8	Thank goodness!	3
I agree (with you)	7	Good, thanks	3
By the way,	7	Either one is fine	3
I'm good at…	7	Whatever you are having	3
How do you spell…?	6	It really is.	3
That's for sure	5	You know what?	3
Well, at least…	5	See you tomorrow	2
Can I borrow…?	5	My name is..	2
No, go ahead	4	How is it going?	2
Are you sure?	4	Give me a call	2
Don't you think?	4	Can I call you back?	2
Exactly!	4	How are you doing?	2
I'd like to, but…	3	Good to see you	2
Can you repeat that, please?	3	Are you kidding?	2
		I've got to get going	2
I guess we could, but…	2	What were you saying?	2
Not exactly	2	Nice talking to you	2
I can't stand	2	Guess what?	2
I am into…	2	Make yourself at home	2
How can I help?	1	Do one's best	1
Sorry about that	1	It is a deal	1

As it is clear in Table 5, the students did not prefer to use some of the expressions to which they are exposed in the book frequently. While speech formulas in the list above consist of expressions which are presented in different parts of the book, situation-bound utterances are presented in a specific context. For instance, *What is your name?* and *Nice to meet you* are included in the first unit of the first book for the function of introducing. Similarly, *Either one is fine* is included in the fifth unit of the third book for the function of responding to suggestions by letting the other person decide. Therefore, it can be referred that the students did not use these expressions since they were not relevant to the context they were administered. Moreover, it was emerged from the findings represented in Tables 3 and 4 that the students used formulaic language which is underrepresented in the book frequently in the oral proficiency exam. Thus, there is a need for a more in-depth analysis about the relationship between frequencies of students' use of formulaic language and its occurrence in the course book. In order to explore a possible relationship, Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted. First, the descriptive statistics of the two variables were analyzed and a normality test was conducted to see whether the variables had normal distribution. Descriptive statistics revealed that the two variables were non-normally distributed, with skewness of 3.78 (*SE*= 0.20) for the frequency in the book and 5.44 (*SE*=0.20) for the frequency of the students' use and kurtosis of 17 (*SE*=0.41) for the frequency in the book and 32.7 (*SE*= 0.41) for the frequency of the students' use. (see Appendix F.1) The Shapiro-Wilk normality test confirmed the non-normality as the significance level was .000 (see Appendix F.2).

As a result, a nonparametric Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted in order to analyze the correlation of the frequencies. The results of this test revealed a

significant relationship between frequencies of the expressions in the book and students'

use (r (132) = .467, p <.01). Figure 5 also demonstrates this correlation.
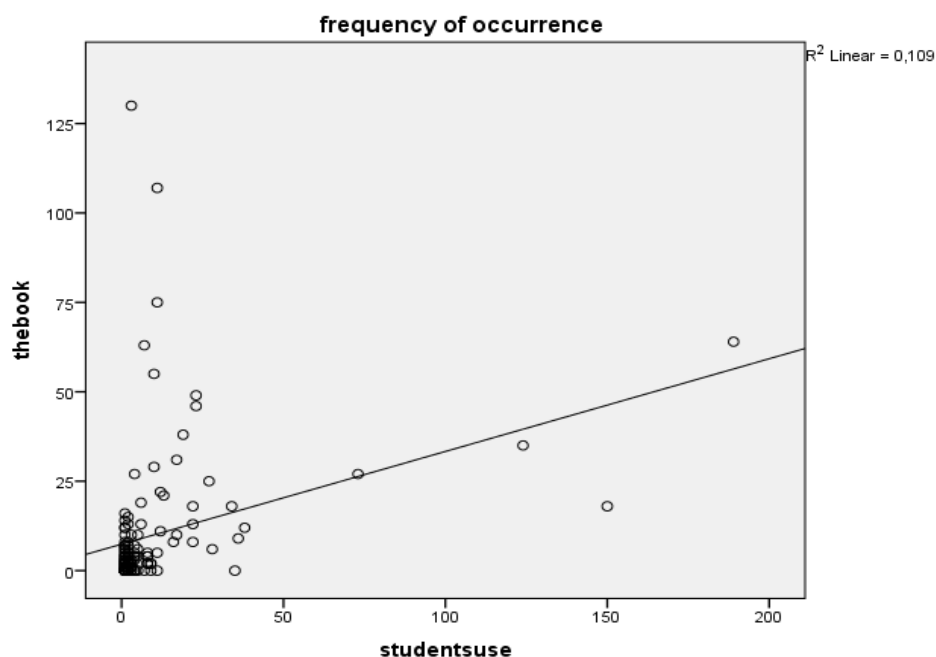
Figure 5. The correlation of the frequencies in the book and the students' use

This significant correlation may imply that the frequency of occurrence of each

expression in the book results in frequent or infrequent students' use. In this sense, that

the students mostly preferred to use the expressions they were most frequently exposed

to can be explained with this relationship. On the other hand, even though the students

used these expressions, they used them either correctly or incorrectly.

Accurate/Inaccurate use of formulaic language. As a result of the content

analysis of the video recordings, it was revealed by the researcher that all 190 students

whose oral proficiency exams were analyzed in this study used formulaic language.

Table 6 shows the number of the students who used formulaic language in the exam.

Table 6

Formulaic Language Use by the Students

Formulaic language	Group 1	Group 2
	The number of the students	The number of the students
Speech Formulas	97	92
Situation bound utterances	46	89
No formulaic language	0	0
Total	98	92

As seen in Table 6, all 190 participants used formulaic language in the exam. While 134 of them used both speech formulas and situation-bound utterances in the exam, 56 students used either speech formulas or situation-bound utterances. However, not all the students used formulaic language in a correct way. In terms of speech formulas, the students used most of them correctly. Some of the most frequent speech formulas used correctly in the oral proficiency exam were *Well*, *Actually, I think*, *I guess*, *You know, Thanks* and *Sure* which were also presented frequently in the book (see Table 3). On the other hand, five students in Task 1 used the speech formulas *Can I ask you a favor*, *Would you mind if...*, *No way* incorrectly. While the expression of *Would you mind if…*is presented seven times, *No way* is presented five times in the course book. Nevertheless, the expression of *Can I ask you a favor?* is not presented in the book. It is one of the expressions that students derived from the existing ones. *I wanted to ask a favor* is presented twice in the book. Therefore, students used *Can I ask you a favor,* but five students used it incorrectly.

There are examples of how the students used the expressions correctly and incorrectly on the next page:

Paired task- role play activity about ending phone conversations (see Appendix B)

(on the phone)

S76: **Hello**, there is a concert tonight. Do you want to join me?

S75: **Hello**, **I am sorry**, but I have an exam…

S 76: Which exam?

S75: English exam because I am a student at preparatory school. **You know what I mean**.

S76: When does the exam start?

S75: **Actually**, **I do not know**, but…

S76**: OK.** I'll call you later…

S75: **OK**… How many people did you invite to the concert?

S76: **Actually**, I invited a lot of people…

S 75: **OK**, if it is no problem for you, I am going to invite my best friend, **I mean** my roommate.

S 76:…..

Figure 6. An example of the correct use of formulaic language

S56: Hi, boss. **Can I ask for a favor?** I want to take tomorrow off because my best friend is getting married. Would it be OK with you?

S55: I listened to you, but I cannot give permission because my worker is ill and we must a lot of work and we will finish tomorrow.

Figure 7. An example of accurate use of *Can I ask a favor*?

Paired task- role play activity about asking for permission (see Appendix B)

S81: Hi, **I ask a favor**? (Can I ask you a favor?)

S82: Yes, of course

S81:……

S60: Excuse me; do you have time to talk?

S59: Yes, sure

S60: You know I work at a company, but my friend is getting married tomorrow. So,

would I ask a favor?

S 59:….

Figure 8. Examples of inaccurate use of *Can I ask a favor?*

Paired task

S 68: **Would you want if take tomorrow off?** (Would you mind if I take tomorrow

off?)

S67: Why?

S68: because my best friend is married.

S67: I understand you, but I do not give permission you….

Figure 9. An example of inaccurate use of *Would you mind if…?*

Paired task

S7: Hi, boss. I was wondering if I could talk to you for a second.

S8: Sure, what happened?

S7: I wanted to get married tomorrow, so would it be all right with you if I leave

tomorrow?

S8: **No anyway!** (No way!)

Figure 10. An example of inaccurate use of *No way!*

Regarding the use of situation-bound utterances, the findings indicated that most students used accurate and appropriate situation-bound utterances to the given situation. Some of the most frequently used situation-bound utterances were *Excuse me*, *Congratulations*, *I had better go*, *See you*, *Good luck* and *How about you?* which were also presented frequently in the course book (see Table 4). Furthermore, it emerged from the findings that the students used the situation-bound utterances merely in paired task in which they were expected to pursue a conversation according to the given task. However, two students in the first task used the expression *Excuse me* inaccurately to mean *Sorry*. The other situation-bound utterance that was used in a wrong way was *Where were we?* *One* student used it incorrectly and one student used the situation-bound utterance *How about you?* unnecessarily in the same task.

Below are examples of accurate and inaccurate use of these expressions:

Paired task

S90: **Excuse me**, boss. I want to ask a favor.

S89: What can I do for you?

S90: Would it be OK if I took tomorrow off?

S89: Why?

S90: Because my best friends are going to get married tomorrow.

S89: OK, but we are very busy, so I do not give.

S90: but I might finish my work today.

S89: Of course, if you finish your work

S90: OK, I will finish and then I am not going to work.

S89: OK, see you.

Figure 11. An example of accurate use of *Excuse me*

Pair work- a role play activity about ending phone conversations

S189: Hi,….

S188: Hi,….**How are you**?

S189: **I am OK**. **How about you**?

S188: **I am OK**. **Thank you**.

S189: What are you doing?

S188: I am going to have an exam in twenty minutes.

S189: Really? What exam?

S188: I have English speaking exam.

S189: OK. **Good luck**. Do you want to go to….

S188: (interrupts) Listen … I want to listen to you, but I have an English exam. It is

very important. If you want to talk me, **I will call you later**. OK?

S189: OK. I understand. **Good luck**.

S188: **Thank you**… **I will call you later**. **See you**

Figure 12. An example of accurate use of other situation-bound utterances

Individual task picture description

By looking at a picture of an accident on the street (see Appendix D)

S11:….. He must be his daughter…Err.. **Excuse me**, he must be his son.

 Individual task   (*The same picture)*

S13: …. Maybe the problem is… **Excuse me**, I do not know what the problem is.

Figure 13. Examples of inaccurate use of *Excuse me*

Paired task about asking for permission

S58: I was wondering if I can go to my best friend's wedding?

S57: OK, Well, I check e-mail now. …. (after some time) **What were we**? (where were we?)

Figure 14. An example of inaccurate use of *Where were we?*

Paired task about asking for permission

S61: Excuse me, I want to ask a question.

S62: Yes, of course.

S61: I have my best friend's vacation, but I have a lot of work, so I cannot go vacation. **How about you?**

Figure 15. An example of unnecessary use of *How about you?*

All in all, it emerged from the findings that the use of formulaic language by the students differed in terms of variation of the expressions and accurate/inaccurate use. Another difference related to the use of formulaic language was observed in task types.

Research Question 2: The Task Type that EFL Learners Use More Formulaic Language

As mentioned earlier, there were individual and paired tasks in the oral proficiency exam administered to the students. For individual task, the students were expected to describe a given picture which was different in each session and for each student in the same session. For the paired task, they were given a conversation task in which they were expected to communicate with their partners. While different pictures and conversation tasks were provided for each session in the exam for the purposes of this study, four pictures which were administered in the two selected sessions and two

conversation tasks were used in this study. Therefore, in order to address the related research question, both tasks were examined in terms of students' formulaic language use categorized as speech formulas and situation-bound utterances. Each expression used by the students for the individual task and paired task was noted down by the researcher. Figures 16 and 17 demonstrate students' formulaic language use in individual and paired tasks.
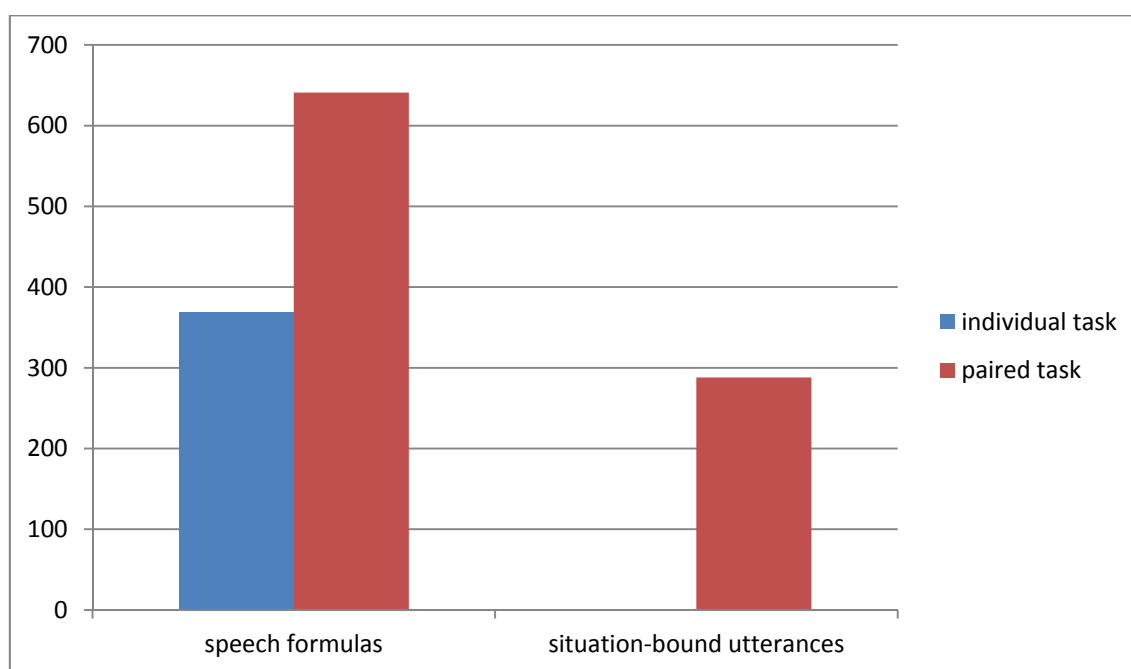
Figure 16. The use of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances for individual and paired tasks

As illustrated in Figure 16, the students used speech formulas in both of the tasks. However, they used the situation-bound utterances only in the paired tasks. Due to the fact that students were expected to describe a picture for the individual task, they did not use any situation bound-utterances in this task. Overall, they had a tendency to use speech formulas.

As for the second task which required them to engage in a conversation with another test-taker, the students used both speech formulas and situation-bound

utterances. Their formulaic language use consisted of the expressions which were either presented in different parts of their course books or in the related unit to the assigned task in the oral proficiency exam. Table 7 demonstrates some examples related to part of the occurrence of the expressions in the book.

Table 7

Occurrences of Some Expressions in the Course Book

Formulaic expressions	Book/Unit	Topic / occurrence
See you (SBU)	Touchstone 1 Unit 1	Everyday expressions
Thank you (SBU)	Touchstone 1 Unit 1	Everyday expressions
Thanks (SF)	Touchstone1 Unit 1	Everyday expressions
Really? (SF)	Touchstone 1 Unit 3	Showing interest
Well (SF)	Touchstone 1 Unit 4	Saying more than yes or no
I mean (SF)	Touchstone 1 Unit 5	Asking questions in two ways
Congratulations (SBU)	Touchstone 1 Unit 10	Appropriate responses
Good luck (SBU)	Touchstone 1 Unit 10	Appropriate responses
Actually (SF)	Touchstone 2 Unit 1	Starting a conversation
I don't know (SF)	Touchstone 1,2,3	in different dialogues
So… (SF)	Touchstone 1,2,3	in different dialogues
Sorry (SF)	Touchstone 1, 2,3	in different dialogues
Is this a good time to talk? (SBU)	Touchstone 3 Unit 6	Ending phone conversations
I'd better go (SBU)	Touchstone 3 Unit 6	Ending phone conversations
I've got to get going (SBU)	Touchstone 3 Unit 6	Ending phone conversations
Talk to you later (SBU)	Touchstone 3 Unit 6	Ending phone conversations
I was wondering if…(SF)	Touchstone 3 Unit 10	Asking for a favor politely
I wanted to…. (SF)	Touchstone 3 Unit 10	Asking for a favor politely
Would it be OK with you..? (SF)	Touchstone 3 Unit 10	Asking for a favor politely
OK/ All right (SF)	Touchstone 3 Unit 10	Asking for a favor politely

These findings indicate that students used more formulaic language in the paired tasks. The variation in the expressions was also higher in the paired tasks than individual task. While the individual task consisted of 25 different formulaic expressions all of which were speech formulas, the paired task had 122 formulaic expressions, 75 of which were speech formulas and 47 of which were situation-bound utterances. Figure 17 shows the amount of formulaic language used in individual and paired tasks.
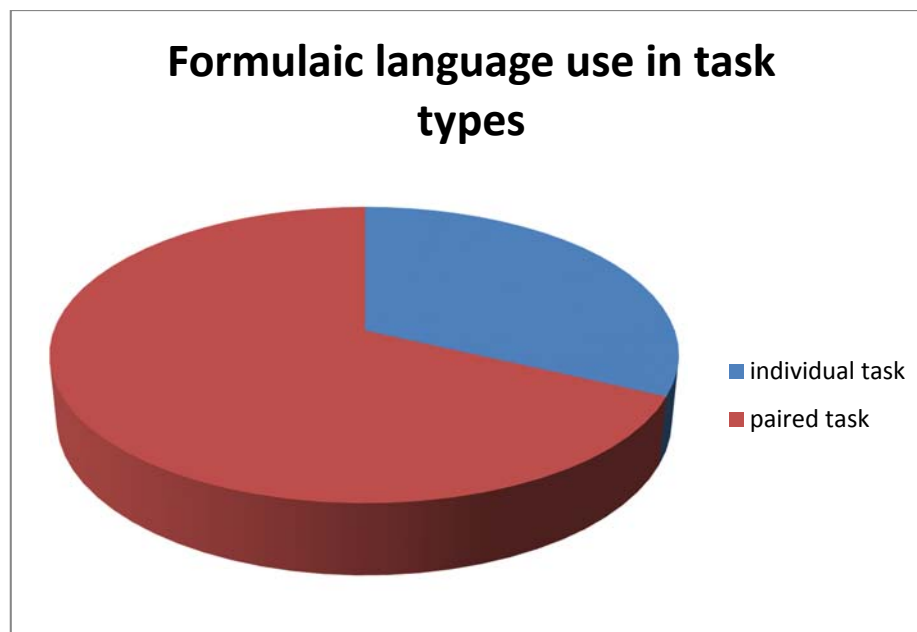
Figure 17. Formulaic language use in individual and paired tasks

As seen in Figure 17, the students used more formulaic language in the paired task. More specifically, 68% of overall use of formulaic language was in the paired task and 32 % of the overall use was in the individual task.

Research Question 3a: The Relationship between EFL Learners' Use of Formulaic Language and Their Fluency Scores

Students' speaking performances were assessed by two assessors using the criteria developed according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The criteria/rubric included *Vocabulary Range, Grammatical Range & Accuracy, Task Completion* and *Comprehension* as well as *Fluency* (see Appendix C). Therefore, the grades students received for this section of the criteria were taken into consideration in order to answer this research question. The maximum grade assigned for this section was 5. A correlation test was conducted by using SPSS to see whether there was a relationship between students' formulaic language use and their fluency scores. First, descriptive statistics were calculated for the related variables and a

normality test was conducted in order to see whether the distributions of the variables are normal as a result of the descriptive statistics. It was concluded that both variables had significant values; therefore, they were non-normally distributed, with skewness of 1.36 (*SE*=0.17) for formulaic language use and -0.63 (*SE*=0.17) for fluency and kurtosis of 2.44 (*SE*= 0.35) for formulaic language use and 0.55 (*SE*= 0.35) for fluency (see Appendix G.1). The Shapiro-Wilk normality test confirmed the non-normality as the significance level was .000 (see Appendix G.2).

As a result of the Skewness and Kurtosis values and as well as the normality test, a nonparametric test was conducted in order to see the correlations of the variables. Therefore, their correlations were calculated by Spearman rank order correlation test and the results revealed a significant relationship between students' formulaic language use and their fluency scores (r (188) =.406, p < .01). The result of this correlation test shows that formulaic language use of the students contributed to their fluency scores in the exam to a certain extent. Figure 18 also illustrates the correlation of formulaic language use and fluency.
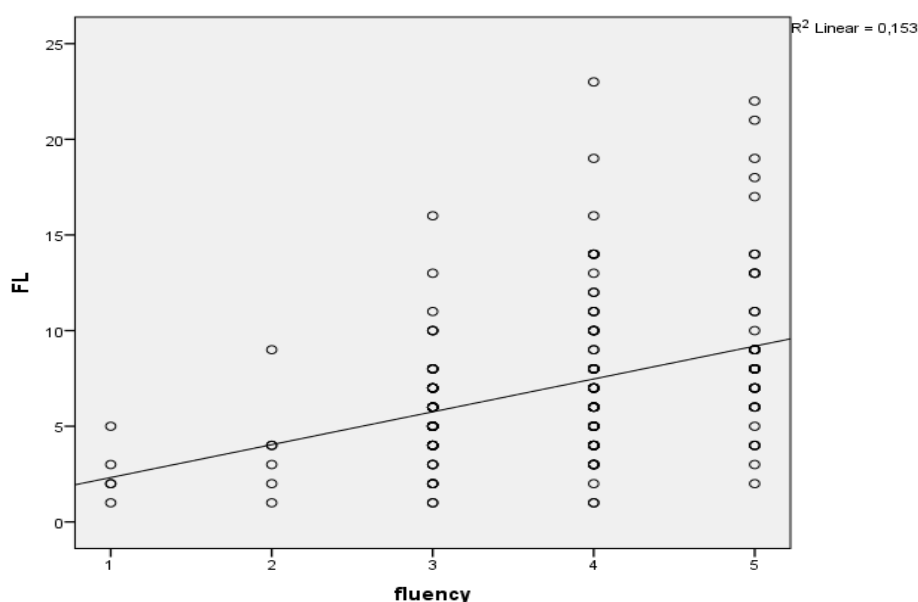
Figure 18. The correlation of formulaic language use and fluency

Research Question 3b: The Relationship between EFL Learners' Use of Formulaic Language and Their Proficiency Scores

In order to see whether there is a relationship between students' formulaic language use and their proficiency scores, a correlation test was conducted by using SPSS. For this purpose, the amount of formulaic language used by each student and their overall proficiency scores, in other words, students' success scores at the end of the academic year, were taken into consideration. In order to see whether the variables have a normal distribution, first, their descriptive statistics were calculated and a normality test was conducted. The output of descriptive statistics revealed that both variables were non-normally distributed, with skewness of 1.36 (*SE*=0.17) for formulaic language use and -0.49 (*SE*= 0.17) for proficiency and kurtosis of 2.44 (*SE*= 0.35) for formulaic language use and 0.68 (*SE*= 0.35) for proficiency (see Appendix H.1).

The results of Shapiro-Wilk normality test confirmed the non-normality of the variables as the significance level was .000 for formulaic language use and .015 for proficiency level (see Appendix H.2).

As a result of the descriptive statistics, Skewness and Kurtosis values and the normality test, it was seen that related variables did not have normal distributions, so Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted in order to calculate their correlations. The results of this non-parametric test revealed a significant relationship between students' formulaic language use and their proficiency scores (r (188) =. 455, p < .01). Figure 19 demonstrates the strength of this correlation.
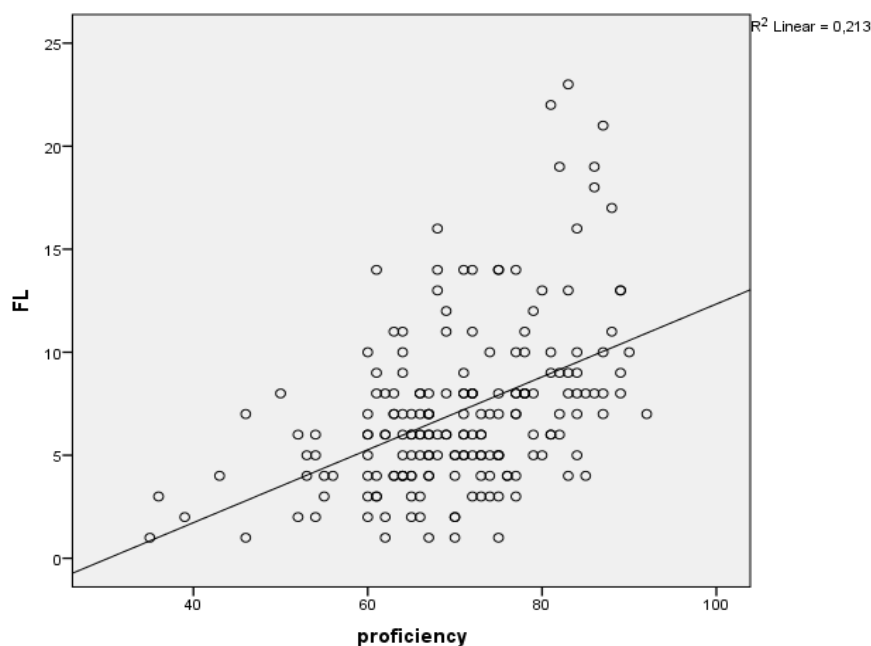
Figure 19. The correlation of formulaic language use and overall proficiency

This significant correlation indicates that the use of formulaic language is considerably related to the overall language proficiency.

All in all, the results of correlations tests which were aimed to examine the relationship between the variables indicated that there is a positive relationship between formulaic language use and students' fluency and overall proficiency scores.

Conclusion

In this chapter the data gained from the content analysis of the course books used at the School of Foreign Languages of Bülent Ecevit University and 190 EFL learners' oral proficiency exam recordings were analyzed quantitatively and discussed in three sections. In the first section, in order to answer the first research question, the content analyses of students' course book and their formulaic language use in the oral proficiency exam were presented along with tables and figures showing their frequencies and the ways the students used formulaic language. The accurate and

inaccurate use of formulaic language by the students was also explained in this section. In the second section, the comparison of students' formulaic language use for individual and paired tasks were reported in order to answer the second research question that aims to determine the task type in which EFL learners use more formulaic language. In the last section, the result of two correlation tests were presented in order to find out if there is a relationship between EFL learners' formulaic language and their fluency and overall proficiency scores. The next chapter will present an overview of the study, the findings and discussions, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL learners' formulaic language use in oral proficiency exams and the relationship between their formulaic language use and their fluency and overall proficiency scores. In this respect, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. In what ways do EFL learners use the formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum when taking oral proficiency exams?

2. In what type of tasks (individual or paired) do EFL learners use more formulaic language?

3. Is there a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their scores of:

   a) Fluency?

   b) Overall proficiency?

This chapter consists of two main sections. In the first section, the findings of this study will be discussed in light of the relevant literature. In the second section, pedagogical implications will be introduced; the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will be presented.

Findings and Discussion

The Ways EFL Learners Use Formulaic Language that is Taught in Their Curriculum when Taking Oral Proficiency Exams

Since formulaic language plays a significant role in pragmatic development and speech production, authentic sources of native-like input is crucial for the acquisition of these word structures (Wood, 2002). The sources of input for real language use in SLA are instructed contexts, authentic documents, text books and teacher-talk, and textbooks are particularly used as a primary source of input for learners by teachers (Meunier, 2012). Nevertheless, there are different views on the effectiveness of course books as a source of exposure to real language use. While some scholars (e.g., Boultan, 2010; Burton, 2012; Meunier & Gouverneur, 2007) have suggested that textbooks are not effective in representing the real language use as they offer a very limited number of the frequently used expressions, Meunier (2012) has suggested that the materials provided by Cambridge University Press can be given as an example for using corpus data which is important as it represents real language use and provides many authentic examples related to how language is used in a speech community.

Considering the importance of course books as one of the main sources of exposure to input, the first research question aimed to investigate EFL learners' use of formulaic language that is taught in the curriculum through their course book. In this respect, one of those materials, a corpus-informed course book, Touchstone (2009) is used at the institution where the study was conducted. Regarding the first research question, content analyses of students' course book and the video recordings were conducted on the basis of the frequencies of occurrences of each expression in the book and their use by the students. The results of the content analysis of the course book indicated that the book included a high number of expressions which are also used by

native speakers as they are corpus-driven. More specifically, the book contained 112 speech formulas with the total frequency of 1745 and it contained 116 situation-bound utterances with the total frequency of 338. Furthermore, it was concluded that while the speech formulas are presented in different parts of the course book, particularly in dialogues throughout the book since they are not context-specific, situation-bound utterances are presented in related sections of units which aim to teach expressions used for specific situations such as saying more than yes or no and asking questions in two ways.

The results of the video analysis indicated that all 190 participants used formulaic language in the exam. While 134 of them used both speech formulas and situation-bound utterances in the exam, 56 students used either speech formulas or situation-bound utterances. Moreover, the students used 87 of 112 speech formulas with frequency of 1010 compared to 1165 number of their occurrences in the book. They also used 47 out of 116 situation-bound utterances with the frequency of 288 compared to 165 number of their occurrences in the book. In this sense, it is concluded that the students used more speech formulas as they are not context-specific while situation-bound-utterances are. Moreover, overall use of these expressions suggested that while the students' use of speech formulas was lower than their occurrences in the book, the use of situation-bound utterances was higher than their occurrences in the book. Findings also indicated that there were differences in the frequencies of the expressions in the book and their use by the students. In general, the students tended to use the most frequent expressions in the book such as *I think, Maybe, OK*. However, they also used expressions that were less frequently presented or even not presented in the book. Another important finding that emerged from these analyses was that the participants tended to integrate some of the expressions that did not occur in the course book even

though they used some of these expressions in accurately and infrequently. These findings indicate that the students' knowledge and the use of formulaic language are mostly based on the frequencies of occurrences of the expressions in the book. Nevertheless, they are not totally restricted to what is presented in the course book.

The findings of the study are in line with what is proposed in the literature with regards to the significance of formulaic language in language teaching and the frequencies of exposure to formulaic language (e.g., Ellis, 2002; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2000). To start with, Wood (2002) has suggested that regarding the significance of formulaic language in fluent language use and pragmatic issues, one can conclude that repeated exposure to authentic materials is of great importance for the acquisition of formulaic language. Therefore, the fact that the book presents many formulaic expressions which are also commonly used in natural language use and the students used these expressions more frequently than the others can support what Wood (2002) suggested. In terms of the frequency of occurrence, the findings are in harmony with what is suggested in the literature. (e.g., Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Tekmen & Daloglu, 2006; Webb, Newton & Chang, 2013). For instance, Ellis, Simpson-Vilach and Maynard (2008) have stated that learners are likely to know the words which they encounter more than the others. In this sense, the findings are in line with what they have suggested. Moreover, the study confirmed what Webb, Newton and Chang (2013) have indicated in their study. They revealed that collocations can be acquired after 15 times encounters, therefore, much and repeated exposure is required. Thus, language selection of the students might be related to the frequency of their exposure to specific expressions. On the other hand, that the students also used less frequently presented expressions in the book may be attributed to pragmatic functions

of formulaic language, which will be presented in relation to the task type in the following pages.

It can be concluded that it may be possible for EFL learners to learn formulaic language in the classroom through their course books, which provides them exposure to these expressions that enable them to cope with various social situations and acquire native-like word selection.

The Task Type in which EFL Learners Use More Formulaic Language

The second research question aimed to examine EFL learners' formulaic language use in individual and paired tasks and determine in which task these learners use more formulaic expressions. Therefore, video recordings of the oral proficiency exam were analyzed in order to answer this research question. The content analysis was conducted by counting the formulaic expressions used by each participant in the individual and paired tasks. The findings of this analysis revealed that the participants used more formulaic language in the paired task in which students were expected to communicate with their partners and conduct a dialogue for the administered situation.

The findings are in harmony with the literature related to the effect of task type (e.g., Ellis, 2000; Neary-Sundquist, 2013; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wood, 2002; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). To start with, Skehan and Foster (1999) have suggested that the features of a task type affect learners' performances. In the same way, Ellis (2000) has stated that the design of a task has the potential to determine what language will be used. In this respect, it could be implied that task type determined the amount and type of formulaic language used in the oral proficiency exam.

In this study, the type of task has been influential in such a way that the participants may have made a choice among the expressions to make them relevant to

the context of their speech and it might indicate that learners use formulaic language which serves to the purpose and context of their speech and this result is in line with the pragmatic functions of formulaic language. As Wood (2002) has suggested, since the use of formulas is bound to a particular social context, understanding the nature of those contexts enables access to the pragmatic/figurative meaning of formulas. These fixed expressions help individuals handle complex social situations and achieve a clear and smooth communication (Wood, 2002). Likewise, as Schmitt and Carter (2004) have stated, "formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use." (p. 9). In that sense, in order to interact in different social situations, the use of specific language forms attached to those particular situations is required (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). The findings of the present study revealed that the students used more formulaic language in the paired task and they made a preference among the expressions in the book. Therefore, it may be possible to relate word selections of participants to these functions.

On the other hand, the result that the students used formulaic language differently in two tasks contradicted the findings of a study conducted by Neary-Sundquist (2013) who examined the use of *pragmatic markers,* which is a term used for a sub-category of formulaic language in different task types. In her study, there were four selected tasks, two of which included more structures and two which included fewer structures. The data were collected from the oral proficiency test of 47 native and nonnative participants who had different proficiency levels. The results of the study indicated that the use of *pragmatic markers* is not related to the task type. However, the findings of the current study indicated that the amount of formulaic language use in two different task types (individual and paired) is distinct from each other. While the students used a limited number of formulaic expressions in the first task, they used more

and various expressions in the second task in which they communicated with their partner. This finding suggests that task type had an effect on their language use.

The use of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances. Another finding of this study provides evidence for varied use of expressions in different task types. While the participants used speech formulas in both individual and paired tasks, they used situation-bound utterances only in the paired task. As a result, it might be suggested once again that the task type determines what type of formulaic expression to be used.

Since the students were administered a paired task in which there was a social situation to communicate, situation-bound utterances were used by the students in this task type. Kecskes (2000) has also suggested that the use of these expressions is determined mainly by a situation and "SBUs often receive their 'charge' from the situation they are used in" (Kecskes, 2000, p. 607). Thus, the students' use of situation-bound utterances in the paired task can be attributed to the nature of the task and the situation that was presented in the task to the students since the task required negotiation of meaning, interaction, the use of communicative functions.

This finding is also consistent with what is proposed about the use of speech formulas and situation-bound utterances in the study of Kecskes (2007). The participants of the study were 13 adult nonnative speakers in two groups. The data were gathered through their recorded communication in a 30-minute discussion on various topics and after a week, the participants had a chance of listening and evaluating their own speech through think-aloud protocol. The results indicated that the speech formulas were among the most frequently used type of formulaic language by the participants. Considering the findings of this study, Kecskes (2007) has stated that the difference between speech formulas and situation-bound utterances is that while the former can be

used anywhere in the speech as long as speakers find them appropriate for the use, the latter are only used for specific situations. In other words, the use of situation-bound utterances is bound to the interaction of the speakers in a social situation, which has also been proposed by Cowie (2001) who defines these types as *speech formulae* and *routine formulae*. Thus, it is possible to expect the participants to use situation-bound utterances solely in the paired task as there was a speech act and interaction in this task type.

The findings of the current study may also be further support for what Stengers et. al., (2011) have suggested in their study on formulaic language and perceived oral proficiency. As one of the instruments of their study, the researchers used a speaking task (a re-tell task) and they suggested that new studies might collect data from extensive sources. According to Stengers et. al., (2011), "Future research will have to confirm whether the same trends are observed in other (real-time) speaking activities, such as conversation, where pragmatic formulae or interaction routines play a greater part" (p. 339).Thus, the findings of this study may contribute to the existing research on formulaic expressions by providing insights into how language learners use these expressions in both individual and paired tasks in which they conducted monologic and dialogic conversations, respectively.

The Relationship between EFL Learners' Formulaic Language Use and Their Scores of Fluency and Overall Proficiency

The third research question aimed to investigate whether there is a relationship between students' formulaic language use and their fluency and overall proficiency scores. In order to address this research question, first, a correlation test was conducted for formulaic language use and fluency scores. The same procedure was repeated for formulaic language use and scores of overall proficiency. The findings of these analyses

suggested a significant relationship between formulaic language use and fluency and overall proficiency scores.

The fact that there is a relationship between formulaic language use and fluency is also suggested by many studies and scholars in the literature(e.g., Boers et. al., 2006; Ellis, Simpson-Vlach & Maynard, 2008; Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Khodadady & Shamsaee, 2012; Kormos & Denes, 2004; McGuire, 2009; Ortaçtepe, 2013; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wood, 2002; 2006; 2010). Hence, the findings of the present study are in line with previous research on the subject. For instance, Wood (2006) aimed to investigate whether the use of formulaic language plays a role in the production of fluent speech in a study which was carried out with 11 intermediate ESL learners. The findings indicated that different types of formulaic expressions were used by the participants and the use of these expressions led to increased fluency. The findings of the present study are also in harmony with what Hsu and Chiu (2008) suggested in their study which examined the relationship between the use of lexical collocations and speaking proficiency. The findings indicated a significant relationship between these two variables. Furthermore, the current study also confirmed the findings of the study of McGuire (2009) in which the researcher explored the possible effect of a task-based teaching of formulaic language on the fluency of 19 mid-intermediate and advanced students. The findings of that study suggested that formulaic language teaching has an effect on the increase of fluency level. All in all, the findings of the present study in terms of formulaic language and fluency relationship have confirmed the previous research which suggested that they are two interrelated concepts. As the research design of the study was related to how formulaic language is used in EFL context by including curriculum and oral proficiency exams into the research area, the

study may provide more insights into the relationship between formulaic language and speech fluency. As Wood (2009) has suggested;

> a very limited body of research exists which examines the link between the use of formulaic sequences in speech and effectiveness of oral communication.   In research in second language acquisition in particular, there have been few attempts to uncover how learners may use formulaic sequences to facilitate fluent speech and how learners may employ formulaic sequences for particular discourse purposes. (p. 40)

Therefore, this study might contribute to the literature by revealing more evidence of how formulaic language is used by language learners in different task types and how the use of formulaic language is related to fluency.

As part of this research, one of the research questions was related to the possible relationship between formulaic language use and EFL learners' overall language proficiency. In order to examine whether there is a relationship between the use of formulaic language and overall proficiency scores, a correlation test was conducted by analyzing the number of each formulaic expression by the participants and their overall proficiency scores. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between formulaic language use and overall proficiency.

The findings of this study might be supported by the previous studies in the literature (e.g., Howarth, 1998; Ohlrogge, 2009; Yorio, 1989). For instance, as a result of a study which was carried out with two groups of ESL learners, Yorio (1989) has suggested that "the higher the level of linguistic proficiency, the higher the level of idiomaticity" (p. 65). Therefore, the findings of this study may confirm what Yorio (1989) has suggested since there was a difference in formulaic language use of the

students with different proficiency levels. The analysis of the data revealed similar findings to the study of Neary-Sundquist (2013). The researcher examined the use of *pragmatic markers* by native and nonnative participants who had different proficiency levels. The findings indicated that proficiency levels led to a marked difference in the use of these expressions by the participants.

To conclude, the findings revealed a relationship between the students' use of formulaic language and their overall proficiency levels. This finding is in accordance with the findings of the studies in the literature. (e.g.,Yorio, 1989; Lenko-Szymanska, 2014) and the current study might help researchers gain more insight into the use of formulaic language in the speech of EFL learners who have different proficiency levels as the study was carried out with 190 EFL learners who have different speech fluency scores. The findings of the study might also be useful since most studies related to the use of formulaic language and language proficiency focused on either adult learners or young learners (e.g., Lenko-Szymanska, 2014; Ohlrogge, 2009). To this end, this study contributes to the understanding of how adult learners with different proficiency levels and ages use formulaic language. Moreover, Lenko-Szymanska (2014) has stated that there is apparently no research on formulaic language use in the early stages of learning, especially in a language learning context. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by providing insights into how formulaic language is used by EFL learners whose exit proficiency level is expected to be pre-intermediate. Considering what Lenko-Szymanska (2014) has suggested; that the research was conducted in language learning context through oral proficiency exams may be regarded as another contribution of the study.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the study suggested that EFL learners use formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum through course books when taking oral proficiency exams and there is a relationship between these learners' formulaic language use and their fluency and overall proficiency scores. In that sense, the present study points out important pedagogical implications that can provide insights into the future teaching practices regarding formulaic language.

One of the implications that emerged from these findings might be for curriculum developers. To this end, it may be inferred that formulaic language teaching should be a part of language programs, so curriculum developers can include formulaic language teaching in their curriculum since the findings also suggest that formulaic language use provides benefits to language learners. Moreover, curriculum developers might adapt the existing curriculum by including materials or teaching practices that focus on formulaic language as well as they may design a new curriculum in which students' exposure to formulaic language is increased since repeated exposure is needed to acquire these multi-word structures.

Another implication that might be inferred from the findings can be for material developers. They may design supplementary materials for EFL learners which include examples of how formulaic expressions can be used in particular contexts. Therefore, the exposure to this input can be increased with supplementary materials. As a result, these learners might see and understand the use of formulaic language better and they can make use of it in their speaking.

Apart from curriculum and material developers, administrators and instructors may also benefit from the findings of this study. Referring to the findings, administrators and other people who are in charge of course book selection at a

language program might prefer corpus-based course books that show language learners how language is used in real life communication. Hence, the use of formulaic language can enable language learners to produce native-like language and fluent speeches. Oral proficiency exams can also be redesigned in a way that encourages students to use native-like language by providing them real life tasks in the exam and formulaic language use may be considered while evaluating students' speaking performance in the exam.

As for the implications for instructors, they are the main stakeholders who can act upon the findings and implications of this research since teaching and learning take place primarily in a classroom. In this respect, instructors can either focus on formulaic language teaching and provide opportunities and situations for learners to practice the use of formulaic expressions in spoken language or they may draw language learners' attention to the use of formulaic expressions as noticing is a significant process of language acquisition which is also suggested by the study of Boers et. al., (2006).

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of the present study indicating that findings might be interpreted with caution. One of the limitations of the study was that it was carried out with 190 EFL learners at Bülent Ecevit University through the content analyses of the course book used at this school and video recordings of oral proficiency exams in terms of formulaic language use. Yet, since the results can change in different settings with a different course book, it may not be possible to generalize the findings of the study.

Another limitation of the study is that even though the participants were exposed to the formulaic expressions in the course book through dialogues and role plays, it is

not obvious whether the expressions are taught by the teacher in the classroom. Therefore, the use of expressions by the participants may not be based on the assumption that they are taught in the classroom.

The reliability of scores could also be considered as a limitation of the study. In order to address one of the research questions, the grades administered for fluency section of the grading sheet was taken into consideration and some of the findings relied on these grades. Even though norming session was conducted for raters before the oral proficiency exam and standardization of grades was provided on the basis of a principle at the school in order to provide inter-reliability, the raters could have been subjective in their grades.

Suggestions for Further Research

Depending on the findings and the limitations of the study, suggestions can be made for further research. To begin with, oral proficiency exams were analyzed in order to examine the students' use of formulaic language that is taught in their curriculum through a course book in this study. Classroom teaching can also be a part of the research.

Considering the need for students' exposure to formulaic language in order to enhance their speaking performance, classroom observations can also be made to see whether formulaic language is taught in the classroom by the teacher. Moreover, a treatment on formulaic language use for oral communication can be conducted in classroom teaching and whether the treatment was effective or not can be determined by pre and post tests.

In the study, speech formulas and situation-bound utterances were focused on as formulaic expressions since the course book mostly includes these expressions and the

ways of how EFL learners use them were investigated. As further studies, the other categories of formulaic language such as idioms can also be used in order to collect comprehensive data.

Referring to the findings of the study, it was revealed that the participants preferred to use particular expressions more frequently than the others. As the study did not focus on the expressions students use more frequently, a follow-up study may be conducted in order to see which expressions are used more frequently and why they are preferred by the participants.

Conclusion

The present study which was carried out with 190 EFL learners aimed to investigate the ways EFL learners use formulaic language when taking multi-task oral proficiency exam and whether there is a relationship between the use of formulaic language and fluency and overall proficiency scores. The findings revealed that EFL learners use formulaic language that is taught in the curriculum through their course book when taking oral proficiency exams and their use is mostly accurate. The findings also suggested that these learners make a choice in what expressions to use according to an administered situation and a task and their use differs in different task types. The findings also indicated that students' formulaic language use is significantly related to both their fluency and overall proficiency scores. The findings of the study are also in accordance with the literature which highlights the significance of formulaic language in language teaching and its functions for language development (e.g., Weinert, 1995; Wray, 2000; Wray & Perkins, 2000; Wood, 2002, 2006; Meunier, 2012; Ortaçtepe, 2013).

As suggested in the literature, speaking is the most important skill for language learners (Ur, 1996, in Gündoğdu, 2008). Therefore; there is a need to help learners to make it easier for them. In th isregard, the use of formulaic language may be useful, which is also suggested in the literature (e.g., Weinert, 1995; Wood, 2006; Ortaçtepe, 2013). However, to the knowledge of the researcher, there are not many studies on how the use of formulaic language provides benefit to language learners in their speech. Thus, this study might contribute to the literature by shedding light on the benefits of formulaic language use to Turkish EFL learners' speaking performance. To conclude, it is to be hoped that findings of this study and the emerging pedagogical implications of the findings will contribute to the knowledge of the effectiveness of formulaic language teaching and its use in speaking and they will help learners overcome the difficulties they have in this language skill.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: A SNAPSHOT OF THE COURSE BOOK

APPENDIX B: ROLE-PLAY TASKS

TASK 1	TASK 1
Student A	**Student B**
You work at a company and you want to take tomorrow off because your best friend is getting married. Ask your boss for a favor politely.	You are the boss of a company. One of your employees asks for a favor to take tomorrow off. Say "no" to him/her and give a reason.

TASK 10	TASK 10
Student A	**Student B**
Your girlfriend/boyfriend and you are students. You are waiting in front of your exam room because a few minutes later, you have a speaking exam. Your phone rings and your girlfriend/boyfriend is calling you. Tell your girlfriend/boyfriend you are busy and your exam is about to start right now, so you are going to be free about 20 minutes later.	Your girlfriend/boyfriend and you are students. There is a concert tonight at the campus, so you call and invite him/her to the concert. However, s/he has an exam right now, so you can't talk about the details. Ask a couple of questions about his/her exam quickly, and say that you are going to call him/her 20 minutes later.

APPENDIX C: RUBRIC

B /C & D GROUPS FINAL SPEAKING EXAMINATION
Evaluation Sheet for the Assessor

ST'S NAME: ………………………… **DATE:** ……. / 06 /2013 **F2:** ………………

CLASS: ……/…….

	Fluency &Pronunciation		Vocabulary Range		Grammatical Range & Accuracy		Task Completion		Comprehension		TOTAL: (Assessor 1)		TOTAL: (Assessor 2)		AVERAGE:	
GRADE	………	5	……..	5	………	5	…….	5	….	5	……..	25	……..	25	………	25

	Fluency &Pronunciation	**VocabularyRange**	**Grammatical Range & Accuracy**	**Task Completion**	**Comprehension**
A2 **5**	*Adequate oral production* Cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction Uses a limited range of pronunciation features	*Adequate range* Is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice Rarely attempts paraphrase	*Adequate range* Produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare Errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstandings	Both tasks dealt with comprehensively & relevantly with appropriate details	Student understands most everything said, yet repetition & clarification necessary
3	*Limited oral production* Speaks with long pauses. Has limited ability to link simple sentences Mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener	*Limited range* Uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information Has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	*Limited range* Attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorized utterances. Makes numerous errors except in memorized expressions.	Moderate success in at least one task & limited success in the other task, some irrelevant data/ideas	Student has difficulty in understanding what is said & requires frequent repetition
1	*Very limited oral production* Pauses lengthily before most words Little communication possible Mispronunciations are frequent	*Little knowledge of English Vocabulary* Communication impaired from inadequate vocabulary	*Little knowledge of sentence construction rules, does not communicate* Cannot produce basic sentence forms	Limited success in both tasks, very few details; no effort to complete both tasks. Both tasks include irrelevant data.	Student barely understands instructions and simple utterances

APPENDIX D: PICTURE DESCRIPTION TASKS

APPENDIX E: EVALUATION SHEET

Individual task

Student: S 75 Fluency score : 4.out of 5 Overall proficiency : 75	**Speech Formulas**	**Situation bound utterances**
	I'm not sure x2 *I don't know x2* *Maybe x 3*	--------

Student: S76 Fluency score : 4.out of 5 Overall proficiency : 83	**Speech Formulas**	**Situation bound utterances**
	I think x4 *Maybe x4* *Yes, of course* *I don't know x3* *I guess* *If you ask me,...*	*Excuse me (wrong use)*

Paired task

Student: S75 Fluency score : 4.out of 5 Overall proficiency : 75	**Speech Formulas**	**Situation bound utterances**
	Hello, *OK* *Actually,...*	*(I'll) call you later* *No problem* *You're welcome*
Student: S76 Fluency score : 4.out of 5 Overall proficiency : 83	**Speech Formulas**	**Situation bound utterances**
	Hello, *I'm sorry* *You know* *Actually* *OK* *I mean*	*Thank you*

APPENDIX F.1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FREQUENCIES

DescriptiveStatistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Thebook	134	3,773	,209	17,089	,416
Studentsuse	134	5,432	,209	32,740	,416
Valid N (listwise)	134				

APPENDIX F.2: THE VALUES OF NORMALITY TEST FOR FREQUENCIES

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Freginthebook	,302	134	,000	,536	134	,000
Freqssuse	,361	134	,000	,362	134	,000

a. LillieforsSignificanceCorrection

APPENDIX G.1: DESCRIPTIVES OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE USE AND
FLUENCY

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
FL	190	1,350	,176	2,432	,351
Fluency	190	-,624	,176	,546	,351
Valid N (listwise)	190				

APPENDIX G.2: THE VALUES OF NORMALITY TEST FOR FORMULAIC
LANGUAGE USE AND FLUENCY

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
FL	,171	190	,000	,899	190	,000
fluency	,232	190	,000	,860	190	,000

a. LillieforsSignificanceCorrection

APPENDIX H.1: DESCRIPTIVES OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE USE AND OVERALL PROFICIENCY

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
FL	190	1,350	,176	2,432	,351
Proficiency	190	-,488	,176	,670	,351
Valid N (listwise)	190				

a. LillieforsSignificanceCorrection

APPENDIX H.2: THE VALUES OF NORMALITY TEST FOR FORMULAIC LANGUAGE USE AND OVERALL PROFICIENCY

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
FL	,171	190	,000	,899	190	,000
proficiency	,073	190	,015	,975	190	,002

a. LillieforsSignificanceCorrection