Observing EFL teachers' use of formulaic language in class

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Abstract

Mastering formulaic language is said to be crucially important in second language (L2) learning as it showcases the L2 user's different levels of competency: linguistic, psycholinguistic, and communicative. Frequent use of these formulaic sequences also makes an L2 speaker sound more native–like. In a language teaching and learning context where English is a foreign language (EFL), the language teacher is the one major resource of spoken language exposure. Therefore, the quality of teacher's instructions in an EFL classroom clearly has effects on the learner's language learning process. Mercer (2001) puts it, "[a]ll […] aspects of teacher's responsibility are reflected in their use of language as the principal tool of their responsibilities" (p. 243). A great deal of research has been devoted to L2 learners and the acquisition of formulaic language, and classroom interaction, but very little attention has been paid to teachers' use of formulaic sequences in their classrooms. This paper presents a descriptive study with analytical discussion of extracts from four video–recorded lessons conducted by school teachers in different South–east Asian countries. This small-scale study attempts to explore to what extent non–native EFL teachers are familiar with and use formulaic language during class time.

Keywords: teacher talk, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, formulaic language

Introduction

Teacher talk in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is significantly different from other contexts. On the teacher's part, English is most of the time a foreign language, and a lack of fluency, especially speaking fluency, is not uncommon. On the learners' part, the language input and practice of linguistic skills depend largely on the teacher. Not only does the teacher provide various forms of language input via the use of teaching materials, classroom instructions and activities, the teacher's use of language is a source of input itself. Mercer (2001) puts it, "[a]ll […] aspects of teacher's responsibility are reflected in their use of language as the principal tool of their responsibilities" (p. 243). The quality of teacher talk in

an EFL classroom, therefore, should receive more awareness among EFL teachers and attention from researchers than it has.

Formulaic sequences, also called lexical phrases, or prefabricated patterns, have been proved to have significant contribution to mastering a language (Coulmas, 1981). In the same light, Girard and Sionis (2003) suggest that formulaic language is important in second language (L2) learning because it is "linked to many facets of language production, and is therefore likely to play a part in learner production at the linguistic, psycholinguistic and communicative levels" (2003, p. 248).

The body of research on teacher talk at different education levels and in different contexts has been growing over the years. However, there remains a dearth of empirical studies concerning actual teacher talk in EFL classroom contexts, with particular attention to the formal and functional aspects of language use in teacher talk. By presenting a descriptive study, drawing on empirical data collected from video-recorded lessons conducted by school teachers in four different South-east Asian countries, this paper hopes to raise more awareness of the quality of teacher talk, and to contribute to the literature of teacher talk in EFL learning and teaching contexts.

Literature Review

Studies on the impact of teacher's language use on second language acquisition have been conducted since the late 1970s (Gaies, 1977; Ellis, 1985; Chaudron, 1988) and continue to be a topic of interest by more recent researchers, for example, Walsh (2002) and Brandl (2008). These offer vital insights into the second/foreign language classrooms. There are at least four different approaches of these studies to teacher's language use. A *descriptive* study attempts to describe common features of teacher talk such as frequent use of certain verb forms and non-verbal information use (Wesche & Ready, 1985); whereas, a *correlational* study uses quantitative research methods to explore teacher-student interactions (Tollefson, 1988). An *experimental* study investigates certain effects of language use in teacher talk on language learning, for example, the effects of teacher's use of discourse markers on students' comprehension (Chaudron & Richards, 1986), and the effects of body language in audiovisual lectures on listening comprehension (Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). Finally, a *qualitative* study is helpful in gaining the understanding of how different types of teacher talk may cause different affective effects on students (Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000; Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor & Mackey, 2006; and Katayama, 2007).

Second language acquisition studies on formulaic language, also called formulaic sequences or lexical phrases, or prefabricated patterns, have

mainly focused on second language (L2) learners; for example, L2 learners' use of idioms (Irujo, 1993), idiomatic expressions (Foster, 2001), collocations and lexical bundles (Chen & Baker, 2010; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Laufer & Waldman, 2011), and psycholinguistic formulaic sequences (Myles & Cordier, 2017). However, as far as I am concerned, there has been little attention to the teacher's use of formulaic language during class time. Is this because teachers are either considered as advanced language learners, or merely as any non-native speakers of English? Even if it is so, a teacher's language use falls into a different category because it has more impact on language learners, rather than just an ordinary conversation between non-native speakers. A teacher's language use in class, which involves greeting, giving instructions, corrective feedback, and the like, with repetitions of frequent lexical phrases, provides a significant language resource to his/her learners. Along this line, Müller-Hartmann and Schocker-von Ditfurth (2004, p. 28) state,

> Teachers are models. […] Teachers need to be able to present language as naturalistic examples of the target language, to expose learners to examples of language currently in use, with features which are characteristic of authentic discourse in the target language.

The present study attempts to explore the extent to which these teachers of English are familiar with and use formulaic language, or lexical phrases, and to answer the following questions:

1. Do EFL teachers use formulaic language in their talking time in class?
2. Is there any significant difference in the use of formulaic language among these teachers?

Terminology and identification

There is little agreement on the terms to describe formulaic language and its identification. Wray (2002) found over 50 terms in the literature: conventionalized forms, fixed expressions, formulaic language, fossilized forms, prefabricated routines, and prefabricated patterns, just to name a few.

In her works, Wray (2002) chooses to use the term *formulaic sequences*, which she defined as:

> […] 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)

Wray also stresses that even single words and morphemes can be included in this definition of formulaic sequences.

Before Wray, Hakuta (1974) used the term "prefabricated patterns", and Krashen and Scarcella (1978) used a similar phrase, "prefabricated routines" to describe memorized utterances or phrases which are used as a whole with or without knowing their internal structure. Bohn (1986) defines formulaic speech by emphasizing the two terms: "formula", which refers to "expressions in which no part is substitutable", and "frame", referring to "expressions which contain slots for more or less extensive paradigms of lexical elements" (p. 188). Similarly, Gairns and Redman (1986, in Kecskes, 2014, p. 105) define formulaic speech as word strings occurring together, which "tend to convey holistic meanings that are either more than the sum of the individual parts, or diverge significantly from a literal or word-for-word meaning and operate as a single semantic unit."

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) refer to formulaic expressions as "lexical phrases" and suggest classifying them according to their functions in the organization of discourse: their length, continuity and variability. Other researchers distinguish formulaic expressions in terms of their semantic or pragmatic role. Cowie (1994, cited in Baigent, 1996, p. 5) uses the term "composites" to refer to phrases that have a new referential meaning as the sum of their parts, for instance, *a close shave*, and "formulae" to refer to expressions whose meaning is connected with their role in discourse, *Good morning*, for example. More recently, Wood (2010) defined "formulaic sequences" on a cognitive level: they are "multiword units of language which are stored in long-term memory as if they were single lexical units" (Wood, 2010, p. 38). This definition is very close to Schmitt's (2010) psycholinguistic approach, from which he assumes that formulaic language is "holistically stored in the mind" (p. 12).

The identification of these formulaic sequences or phrases is another source of debates among scholars. For example, Wray (2008) employs a "diagnostic approach" with diagnostic criteria to identify formulaic sequences, which can be used across various research fields relating to formulaicity such as pragmatics, statistics, and psycholinguistics. Wray's criteria include, for example, grammatical irregularity (e.g., *if I were you*), lack of semantic transparency (e.g., *kick the bucket*), and specific pragmatic function when the (formulaic sequence) is associated with a specific situation (e.g., *Happy birthday!*).

Nevertheless, Myles and Cordier (2017) notice that this diagnostic approach can be problematic "because there is a very high risk that it might lead to both the overidentification of some sequences as formulaic, and the underidentification of others" (p. 15). The authors suggest that other

conditions should be considered, for instance, fluency and a coherent intonation contour.

Based on Weinert's (1995, p. 182) definition of formulaic sequences and Wray (2002, p. 9), Liu (2014, pp. 2–3) suggests another set of criteria to identify formulaic sequences. These criteria include phonological coherence, holistic retrievability, social acceptability, situational dependence, and frequency.

Again, these criteria are questionable. Regarding "frequency" and "acceptability", Wray (2000) remarks, "there are undoubtedly some formulaic sequences that are widely accepted as such by native speakers but which are actually not very frequent in normal discourse" (p. 466).

For the purpose of this study, which looks into language use of non-native English teachers in the classroom, I will adopt Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992, p. 36) categorizations of prefabricated phrases or lexical phrases, as they cover the most fundamental formal and functional aspects of these phrases. In Nattinger and DeCarrico's words, prefabricated phrases or lexical phrases are defined as:

> […] form/function composites, lexico-grammatical units that occupy a position somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax […]. Their use is governed by principles of pragmatic competence, which also select and assign particular functions to lexical phrase units.

The teacher's utterances in the recordings were transcribed line by line, and *lexical phrases* were identified by adapting Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992) functional aspects. The functional aspects of the lexical phrases used in this study are summarized below, with two major sets of categories.

Linguistic devices:

Summoning:	*good morning; how are you?*
Nominating a topic:	*what's (last week's topic)? what did you do (yesterday)?*
Clarifying:	*really?*
Checking comprehension:	*right? Ok?* (with rising intonation); *(do you) understand?*
Shifting a topic/ turn:	*so; OK; now*
Questioning:	*do you…?*
Requesting:	Modal + pro + VP (i.e., *could you…?*)
Asserting:	*I think/ believe …*
Endorsing:	*good; good job*

Quantity: *a great deal; lots of*

Discourse devices:

Logical connectors: *because (of)…*
Temporal connectors: *after…; (and) then*
Spatial connectors: *on page …*
Fluency devices: *OK; so; like*
Exemplifiers*:*   *for example; it's like …*
Relators: *not only…but also*
Evaluators: *(not) at all*

In addition to the above functions, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) also categorize lexical phrases using structural criteria such as their length and grammatical status, their (non-)canonical shape, their variability, and their continuity. Accordingly, there are four more terms to be used to identify lexical phrases:

Polywords are those that "function very much like individual lexical items" and more importantly, "allow no variability", for example, "going to" and "gonna". *Institutional expressions* are similar to polywords but are normally of sentence length and functioning as separate utterances, for example, proverbs, aphorisms, or formulas for social interaction. *Phrasal constraints* are different from the former two in that "they allow variation of lexical and phrasal categories", for example, "a…ago" and "good (morning)". Finally, *sentence builders* are "lexical phrase that provide the framework for the whole sentences" and they allow "considerable variation of phrasal (NP, VP) and clausal (S) elements" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, *ibid*, pp. 38–43).

In addition, a few other terms will also be used in the transcription due to the specific classroom context, which calls for other uses of lexical phrases not mentioned in Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992). These include, for example, words or phrases that signal an ending or shift of an act (i.e., *okay, now*) rather than shifting turns (Nattinger & DeCarrico, *ibid*, p. 61) or summarizers (Nattinger & DeCarrico, *ibid*, p. 65).

Research Methodology

Excerpts from the 45-minute recordings were transcribed with focus being on the teacher's utterances to explore language use of EFL teachers in authentic teaching contexts. A descriptive approach was employed for a number of reasons:

1. The emphasis is on the empirical evidence, which are naturally occurring data. The collected data are the sole resource and utilized to describe the

patterns of interest (in this case, formulaic sequences) rather than the other way round, which means using preconceived patterns to apply in the data collection process.

2. Language use is regarded as "the vehicle and object of instruction" (Long, 1983, p.9), which, at least partially, reflects and determines what context is in operation. The classroom context creates in itself dynamic and changing processes, depending on various factors: different stages in the lesson, the lesson objectives, the learners, and the like. The teacher's language use is "the principal force in bringing about changes in context" (Walsh, 2006, p.6), and therefore, to understand its nature, the focus should be on a description of quality rather than quantification.

3. This approach is in line with common trends in research in language teaching, which is under the umbrella of applied linguistics, where one of the major foci emphasizes descriptive (usually discourse) analysis of language in real settings (Grabe, 2012).

The data presented and analyzed in this paper is from four English lessons that were taught by non-native English teachers from South-east Asian countries (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia). These teachers share a lot in common: three out of four teachers (all female) hold a Bachelor's degree in Education/English Language (the other having a Master's degree in Education), and all of them have more than five years of teaching experience. Moreover, in all the four teaching contexts, English is a foreign language, and is not used as a medium of instruction except in the English classroom (Kirkpatrick, 2010, cited in Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). The learners also had similar levels of English proficiency, between A2 and B1 levels in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The recordings were part of the teachers' Reading and/or Writing lessons to secondary school students. The author had their consent to use the recordings for research purposes, but they were not informed of the specific aim of the study in order to prevent them from overusing formulaic sequences in an unnatural way.

Findings and discussions

This section will describe the extracts one by one by adopting the functions and forms of lexical phrases as mentioned above. The rest of the section will discuss specific remarks from the analysis of the teachers' talk. Grammatical mistakes (if any) are not part of the research questions, and therefore, the extracts present verbatim wordings from the participants. Table 1 shows a summary of the profile of the teachers and their learners.

Table 1

Profile of teachers and learners

	Teacher M (Malaysia)	Teacher T (Thailand)	Teacher C (Cambodia)	Teacher I (Indonesia)
Qualification	MA (Education)	BA (Education)	BA (Education in English)	BA (English Education)
Teaching experience	9 years	7 years	9 years	15 years
Learners English proficiency	Secondary high CEFR B1	Secondary high CEFR A2+	Secondary high CEFR A2	Secondary high CEFR A2
Class size	28	25	10	32

In analyzing the excerpts, the lexical phrases will be identified (and numbered) according to their function, represented in uppercase at the bottom of each excerpt. The words in parentheses provide additional information of what is happening in the teacher talk in the particular situation.

Teacher M

Teacher M's video started with a greeting section. Not only did Teacher M spend time greeting her students before the lesson, she wanted to make sure that the students responded to her greeting in an appropriate way. This is showcased by her disapproval of their unenthusiastic responses: "C'mon!" followed by a request "Be energetic!", and finally repeating her greeting. This part only shows the teacher's awareness of the importance of the pragmatic role of language, and, with or without noticing it, she also indirectly teaches the students to use the (formulaic) language in an appropriate manner. Teacher M seems to be comfortable with the use of a wide range of lexical phrases, which cover almost all of the functions and forms of lexical phrases in the introductory part of her lesson. Below are extracts from Teacher M's talk.

> (M1)
> Good morning! (1)
> C'mon! (2) Please be (3) energetic.
> Good morning (4)
> Number one (5). How are you (6) today?
> Number two (7). What did you do (8) yesterday?
> Is there (9) any discuss?
> Last week (10)?

What was (11) last week's (12) topic?
Sports. What kind of (13) sports did we learn?
Olympics?
What sports (14) were concluded last two weeks (15)?
ASEAN games.
In (16)?
Jakarta.
Who's (17) our new Sports Minister?
I know (18). How is (19) he?
I thought so too (20).

(1) SUMMONING, (2) DISAPPROVING, (3) PHRASAL
CONSTRAINT, (4) SUMMONING (repeating), (5) SHIFTING
TURNS, (6) SUMMONING, (7) SHIFTING TURNS, (8)
NOMINATING A TOPIC, (9) QUESTIONING, (10) TIME, (11)
NOMINATING A TOPIC, (12) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (13)
SENTENCE BUILDER, (14) SENTENCE BUILDER, (15)
TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (16) SPATIAL CONNECTOR, (17)
SENTENCE BUILDER, (18) ACCEPTING, (19) SENTENCE
BUILDER, (20) ASSERTING

In the main part of the lesson when instructions were given, Teacher
M also used a wide range of lexical phrases. Especially, there are phrases
that function as macro–organizers, for example, "What I want you to do
is…", "What you've got to do is…" and "What I need is…" (Nattinger &
DeCarrico, *ibid*, pp. 107–109) as in the excerpts below.

(M2)
So now (21), what I want you to do is (22) I'm gonna (23) give all
of you (24) this task and you're going to (25) write. There are (26)
four here four superstitions right (27)?

(21) (falling intonation) SHIFTING TOPICS, (22) REQUESTING,
(23) POLYWORD, (24) QUANTITY, (25) POLYWORD, (26)
SENTENCE BUILDER, (27) CLARIFYING

(M3)
What you've got to do is (28) you're gonna (29) read again, each
pair and then (30) highlight three main points and three supporting
details of the online article. Is that ok (31)?

(28) REQUESTING, (29) POLYWORD, (30) TEMPORAL
CONNECTOR, (31) CHECKING COMPREHENSION

Lexical phrases seem to play a significant role in Teacher M's language performance. The fact that she made use of lexical phrases not only at a micro level but also at a macro level shows her language competency and her role as a model of a proficient English speaker, which possibly have a positive impact on her students, especially when the lexical phrases are repeated in every lesson. At least by giving her students a good exposure to the English usage of lexical phrases, Teacher M indirectly avails this kind of prefabricated language, which may lead to more exploration of a sense of language awareness and learning autonomy.

Teacher T

Teacher T's lesson started with the whole class singing the song 'Twinkle Little Stars' instead of exchanges of greetings. The first remark about Teacher T's utterances is that they were rather short, with most of them consisting of less than ten lexical items. Prefabricated lexical phrases outnumbered created ones; however, the same lexical phrases were repeated throughout the lesson. Additionally, most of them were rather simple both in function and in form, for example, to make requests, to endorse, or check comprehension.

> (T 1) Task 1: Forming groups
> This is (1) today's topic (teacher pointing at the board). Three two one (2) (Class reading the title altogether)
> I would like you to (3) study in groups. Please make (4) five groups for me. How many (5) groups do I want?
> Five groups. We are going to (6) do rock, scissors, paper to make groups. How many (7) groups do you have?
> How do you (8) make the groups?
> Three two one (9) (Whole class starting rock-paper-scissors)
> Well done (10).
> Clap your hands (11) for your class. Three two one (12) (Whole class clapping hands 10 times)

> (1) SHIFTING TOPICS, (2) POLYWORD, (3) REQUESTING, (4) REQUESTING, (5) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (6) POLYWORD, (7) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (8) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (9) POLYWORD, (10) ENDORSING, (11) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (12) POLYWORD

The good point about Teacher T's repeated utterances is that the students seemed to be able to remember entire sequences, predict what would happen next, and react promptly according to the teacher's demands.

The downside is that the simplicity of language use does not seem to match the learners' level of proficiency, which is A2+ as confirmed by Teacher T herself. It is also noticed that in this Reading lesson, as stated in Teacher T's lesson plan, there was no instruction in any form of the lesson content. Instead, all the teacher's instructions were for group activities, including, for example, drawing objects related to a Festival of Colours, adding a drawing to the other groups' work, and orally making a sentence with a key word. This explains why most of her utterances in the classroom were limited to making requests, prompting the students to actions (to form groups, start a task, and giving compliments), as illustrated in the excerpts.

> (T2) Task 2: Filling in the blanks
> Now (13). I have a lot of (14) papers about the festival of colours. I want you to (15) think about (16) the festival of colours and guess the story. Use your imagine to try to fill in the blanks (17). What are you going to (18) do now (19)?
> Do you know (20) the story before?
> How do you (21) fill in the blanks (22)?
> Use your imagination or you can (23) guess. Can you use (24) mobile phones?
> You can (25). You can use (26) your mobile phone to check the words (27) or to search more information (28).
> One each (29) (Teacher distributing the pieces of paper)
> When you have (30) the paper please put on your head (31)
> When you have (32) the paper where you put (33)?
> On your head (34). On students' head (35)
> Ok (36). Everyone, show me your paper (37).
> Put it down (38)
> Clap your hands (39) for your class three two one (40) (All students clapping hands 10 times)
> Ok. (41) Three two one (42). (Students starting to read)
> Take your time (43).
>
> (13) SHIFTING TURNS, (14) QUANTITY, (15) REQUESTING, (16) POLYWORD, (17) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (18) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (19) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (20) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (21) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (22) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (23) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (24) SENTENCE BUILDER, (25) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (26) SENTENCE BUILDER, (27) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (28) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (29) QUANTITY, (30) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (31) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (32) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR (repeating), (33)

QUESTIONING, (34) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (35) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (36) SHIFTING TURNS, (37) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (38) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (39) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (40) POLYWORD, (41) SHIFTING TURNS, (42) POLYWORD, (43) INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION

Leaving aside Teacher T's personal teaching style and her lesson's objectives, which are beyond the scope and purpose of this study, an observation of her utterances in class raises concerns about the simplicity of her language use. Lexical phrases occupied the major part of her utterances. However, as mentioned earlier, many of them are repetitions of her own instructions or short chunks of prompting words such as "Three Two One" and "Clap your hands". The class time was filled with non-stop tasks and activities, many of them were, unfortunately, not helpful in achieving the lesson's aims, with very little language teaching. Although learners are not the object in this study, it is observed that Teacher T's students used L1 while working in their groups. Taking into consideration that Teacher T's students are at level A2+ of language proficiency, again the question remains whether Teacher T's language use is too simple.

Teacher I

Teacher I is the most experienced teacher among the four in this study. In addition, her class size is the biggest, with 32 students. Teacher I, therefore, has both an advantage and a disadvantage in her teaching context.

Teacher I's class also started with exchanges of greetings. There was content teaching (i.e., how to write a summary) as well as activity instructions, and her utterances were mostly medium-to-long sentences which involved a wide range of use of lexical phrases.

(I1)
So, (1) this is what happens to somebody (2) you have bullied and see what is damaged? A lot of (3) damage a bullied have to (4) perceive and you will see you will read (5) in the reading (6) that not only to the victim but also (7) to the bullies to the violators, ok (8)?

(1) FLUENCY DEVICE, (2) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT; SUMMARIZER, (3) QUANTIFIER, (4) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (5) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (6) POLYWORD, (7) LOGICAL CONNECTOR, (8) (rising intonation) COMPREHENSION CHECK

In the excerpt above, Teacher I used rather complex lexical phrases at a macro level; for example, "**this is what happens** to somebody" and

"**not only** to the victim **but also** to the bullies to the violators". These utterances followed a demonstration activity in which she rumbled a sheet of paper and asked the students to make it as smooth as it was before. Supported by the demonstration, her language use with complex lexical phrases would make significant sense to the students.

In the following excerpts, it is interesting to notice how Teacher I repaired her own utterances, still, with frequent use of lexical phrases.

> (I2)
> Ok, guys (9). Now (10) I'd like you to (11) wait, wait, I'd like you to (12) go around (13) and read some of (14) the summaries and then (15) mark give marks to (16) the summaries. I tell you (17) something. You're going to give you're going to (18) read at least (19) two summaries, ok, (20) the ones that (21) is not yours.

> (9) SHIFTING TURNS, (10) FLUENCY DEVICE, (11) POLYWORD, (12) POLYWORD (repeating), (13) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (14) QUANTITY, (15) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (16) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (17) SENTENCE BUILDER, (18) POLYWORD, (19) QUANTITY, (20) FLUENCY DEVICE, (21) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT

As was the case with Teacher M, Teacher I sets a model of a competent language user in her language classroom. Although no explicit teaching of lexical phrases was being observed, at certain points in her instructions, she indirectly taught her students how to construct phrases by giving them examples in her own words (underlined):

> *You cannot add, for example, "I know somebody who becomes criminal because of being bullied". You cannot add to your summary because it's not there. "I have a good idea m'am." Yes, I know you have good ideas, you have good examples but you're summarising. You cannot make your own piece of writing like that, ok?*

Teacher I's frequent use of lexical phrases is an important resource and illustration for her students in an Indonesian learning context, as it is observed that her students were greatly engaged in the activities and using more competent English.

Teacher C

This lesson was conducted during school holidays in Cambodia; therefore, there were only 10 students in Teacher C's class whereas she normally has around 20. Teacher C made this video into a PowerPoint

presentation, which includes trimmed sequences of the recorded lesson together with slides. Consequently, not all of her utterances in the classroom can be retrieved.

> (C1)
> Ok (1). Time's up (2).
> What is (3) number one (4) and number two (5)?
> Ok (6). Thank you (7). Sit down (8).
> So, (9) do you have (10) same number (11)?
> Ok, (12) so (13) for the real answer it is (14) on your textbook (15) on page seventy-six (16)
> Just stay in group (17) open your textbook (18) on page seventy-six (19). Page seventy-six (20) Ok (21)? Do you see (22) the information in the box (23)?
> Then (24) find the answer (25) with the info information in the box (26) is that correct (27)? Is that correct? (28) The same (29)?
>
> (1) SHIFTING TURN, (2) INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION, (3) SENTENCE BUILDER, (4) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (5) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (6) SHIFTING TURN, (7) ENDORSING, (8) POLYWORD, (9) FLUENCY DEVICE, (10) QUESTIONING, (11) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (12) SHIFTING TURN, (13) FLUENCY DEVICE, (14) SENTENCE BUILDER, (15) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (16) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (17) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (18) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (19) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (20) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (21) (rising intonation) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (22) QUESTIONING, (23) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (24) TEMPORAL CONNECTOR, (25) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (26) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (27) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (28) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (29) INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION

It is observed that Teacher C relied quite heavily on certain lexical phrases which are situation-bound. Specifically, these phrases can mostly be found in a classroom context and not anywhere else. Examples include phrases such as "read the whole text", "answer the questions", "put the statements in the right orders", and "open your textbook on page XYZ" as illustrated in the excerpts. Excerpt (C1) occurred after Teacher C gave a task to the students. Instead of explaining and expanding the correct answers, Teacher C asked the students to check with the Answer Key in the textbook. Therefore, her language production was rather limited in terms of quantity.

In excerpt (C2), Teacher C was giving instructions for another activity. It is observed that she was struggling with her explanation, which was rather obvious through frequent pauses within her utterances (represented as • in the transcript). Again, Teacher C seems to rely a lot on the lexical phrases available in classroom practice.

> (C2)
> <u>Could you please</u> (30) <u>take •out a piece of paper</u> (31) <u>do you have</u> (32) a pa– <u>a piece of paper</u> (33)?
> <u>So,</u> (34) you work <u>here</u> (35) just only to add ••a crime activity •experience <u>or whatever</u> (36). A crime activity is • just <u>similar to</u> (37) •the story but <u>a short one</u> (38)
> <u>You got what I mean?</u> (39) <u>Got what I mean?</u> (40). <u>Just add •a story</u> (41) next to the crime but <u>only a short one</u> (42). •<u>Ok?</u> (43)
> <u>Take turn</u> (44). <u>Take turn.</u> (45)
> <u>Okay,</u> (46) <u>you have five •more minutes</u> (47). <u>You have five more minutes</u> (48). So, please •••<u>hurry up</u> (49) and <u>finish your story</u> (50).
>
> (30) REQUESTING, (31) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (32) QUESTIONING, (33) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (34) FLUENCY DEVICE, (35) SPATIAL CONNECTOR, (36) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (37) EXAMPLIFIER, (38) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (39) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (40) CHECKING COMPREHENSION (repeating), (41) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (42) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT (repeating), (43) (rising intonation) CHECKING COMPREHENSION, (44) INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION, (45) INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION (repeating), (46) SHIFTING TURN, (47) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT, (48) PHRASAL CONTRAINT (repeating), (49) REQUESTING; INSTITUTIONAL EXPRESSION , (50) PHRASAL CONSTRAINT

Similar to Teacher T, Teacher C used short utterances. Lexical phrases also occupied the major portion of her talk, and they are quite simple and high frequency phrases. Because there were only ten students attending her lesson, the assumption was that Teacher C would have spent more time to scaffold the students. Unfortunately, there was not much to observe.

Conclusion

Observation and analysis of teacher's use of language from the four video-recorded lessons lead to an overall conclusion that lexical phrases

occupy the majority of teacher talk, many of which are situation-bound. These non-native English teachers seem to be familiar with a wide range of lexical phrases, which function as either linguistic or discourse devices. All four teachers are from the countries where English is taught and learned as a foreign language. However, it happens that the teacher who has a higher qualification and the one with the most teaching experience used more complicated lexical phrases than the other two. Having said that, it is not suggested that there is a connection between qualifications or teaching experience with the familiarity of lexical phrases, and this was not the aim of the present study. The lexical phrases used by these four teachers are mostly with literal meanings, even those at a macro-level of function. No idioms or expressions with idiomatic meanings were observed, except "Take your time." (T2) and "Time's up!" (C1).

The body of literature focusing on prefabricated language and L2 acquisition has been growing, for example, a frequency-of-encounters effect of collocations on L2 learners (Boers & Webb, 2018). However, there remain questions for further investigation, starting with whether language teachers are aware of the ubiquity of formulaic language and purposefully include them either in an explicit or implicit way; whether and in what way learners are able to generalize from formulaic sequences.

Although this is only a small-scale study, it is hoped that its teacher-readers will be more reflective and might suggest effective ways to teach formulaic sequences apart from other aspects of language such as vocabulary and grammar.

Acknowledgements

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