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TITLE: Perceptions of EFL learners towards a 'word hunting' experience in oral communication skills course

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PAGES: 322-336

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/395986>



Available online at:  
<http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/eltrj/>  
*International Association of Research  
in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics*  
ELT Research Journal  
2017, 6(4), 322-336  
ISSN: 2146-9814

## Perceptions of EFL learners towards a ‘word hunting’ experience in oral communication skills course

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### Abstract

This study aims at investigating language learners’ perceptions regarding the ‘word hunting’ experience through which learners have been exposed to a wide range of authentic resources with formulaic chunks as a requirement for oral communication skills course. Data were collected through reflection reports before and after the intervention. Participants were selected randomly among the students who took Oral Communication Skills course at the Department of English Language Teaching. The collected data were analyzed through content analysis approach on N.Vivo 10.0. The themes that emerged during content analysis were utilized to draw conclusions about students’ attitudes and beliefs. Findings generally indicate that most of the learners had positive attitudes towards the use of formulaic language and its effect on their speaking skills. It is also concluded that students gained awareness about the use and the significance of formulaic language and about the effect of lexical practices on their further language studies.

**Keywords:** vocabulary teaching, lexical syllabus, formulaic sequences

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## Introduction

Individual lexis has been the focus of most research conducted on 'vocabulary'. (Scmitt, 2008). However, formulaic vocabulary is widely used in spoken and written language (Wray, 2002) and used for several purposes such as conveying a message, realizing functions, establishing social support among people and expressing specific information in an understandable way (Schmit & Carter, 2004). Moreover, Wood (2006) claims formulaic language allows more fluency in production.

Zimmerman (1997), on the one hand, claims that producing a language is retrieving fixed phrasal units from memory rather than making a syntactic expression of an idea, on the other hand, he adds, radical methodological changes will not occur when the approach to vocabulary teaching is changed and a lexical approach is integrated in the language course. He also describes the significance of adapting lexical approach in a language course as creating a change in the teachers' mindset and raising awareness of the lexical nature of language (p. 17).

This study is of significance as it took the prospective language teachers as the target group of the study. Student teachers, who, in particular, study at the department of English language teaching at a public university, spend a very long and tiring a period of time getting prepared for the language exam for university entrance. They have a training at syntactic and morphological levels of the language and very little importance is attached to productive skills, speaking and writing. This generally results in insecure learners in oral communication and writing courses. Taking these assumptions into consideration, the researchers aimed to investigate whether student teachers' awareness regarding the use of formulaic language increases and whether there is a change in their mindset towards using formulaic language in their speech as language teachers of the next generations. The researchers also got inspiration from Lewis' (2002) principles while taking actions towards formulaic language use:

- \*Grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language involves phrasal vocabulary.
- \*The primacy of speech over writing is recognized.
- \*Task and process are more important than exercise and product.
- \*Reading and listening are given prior status (p.vi).

The basic motive behind this study was to benefit from learners' intrinsic motivation to watch foreign series or movies outside the class. To this end, the researchers decided to make the most of this situation and benefit from learners' already formed habits and attitudes towards being exposed to authentic language outside the class.

Student teachers had to fulfil a task 'word hunt' that would increase their motivation and awareness while watching their movies, series, etc in the oral communication skills course. The content of the task and the whole training procedure will be discussed in the methodology part of the study.

It is hoped that this study would be beneficial for language teachers and researchers in terms of inspiring them to use 'formulaic language tasks' in current language courses and it is hoped that this study would contribute to the field of foreign language learning as it depicts a picture of prospective language teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards the formulaic language confronted in authentic resources.

## Theoretical Background

### *Lexical Approach and Formulaic Language*

*'Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar'.*

The strong proposition above might be accepted as a turning point in language teaching when Michael Lewis (1992) introduced 'Lexical Approach' in his book *'The Lexical Approach: the state of ELT and a new way forward'*. Basic Principles of Lexical Approach. To understand the proposition above, it is significant to define what a 'lexis' is. According to Lewis (1993) lexis is the core of the language and hence, the lexical approach concentrates on developing learners' command of language with lexis, and phrasal vocabulary. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical chunks and formulaic language. (Lewis, 2002, p. 95).

Moudraia (2001) focuses on the lexical sets that are stored in our minds and reports common opinions of lexical approach advocates arguing that language consists of meaningful chunks and when these chunks make a coherent text, a minority of spoken sentences are entirely novel (p. 2). According to the writer, the widespread use of meaningful chunks justifies the popularity of Lexical Approach and leads to various research done in the field of language teaching.

Formulaic language is put under a variety of labels by first (L1) and second (L2) language learning researchers. These labels are gambits (Keller, 1979), "lexicalized stems" (Pawley & Syder, 1983), institutionalized utterances (Lewis, 1997), formulaic sequences (Wray & Perkins, 2000), "lexical phrases" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992), situation-bound utterances (Kecskes, 2000), Myles et al. (1998) expand the list and add a variety of labels used for lexical chunks such as 'prefabricated routines and patterns, imitated utterances, formulas, formulaic units' (p.324).

As there is abundance of terminology for formulaic language, one might have difficulty in determining which term to be used for a certain study. Wray and Perkins (2000) conducted studies regarding the use of formulaic sequences both in adult first language use and second language learning. Taking this broad vision into account, their term 'formulaic sequence' will be used for the rest of the study. In this respect, it is significant to mention how they define formulaic sequences. Wray and Perkins (2000) state that a sequence of words and other meaning elements, which are fixed and prefabricated, are stored and then retrieved from memory at the time of use (p.1).

Researchers have categorized formulaic sequences in many ways so far. Wray and Perkins (2000) adapted Becker's (1975) categorization of formulaic phrases and took basic six categories for formulaic language of adult native speakers as a reference point. The categorization is listed below:

*"Poly Words: e.g to blow up, for good..*

*Phrasal Constraints: e.g by sheer coincidence*

*Meta Messages: e.g ...for that matter (I just thought of a better way of making my own point.)*

*Sentence Builders: e.g (person A) gave (person B) a long and song dance about (a topic)*

*Situational Utterances: e.g how can I ever repay you?*

*Verbatim Texts: e.g better late than never, How you gonna keep 'em down on the farm?" (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 4).*

There are many researchers who advocate the benefits of using formulaic sequences while producing an oral or written text. In particular, Lewis (2002) claims that using expressions in their speech help non-native learners as they are an immediate practical utility and they help to increase the communicative resources of learners rapidly (p.95). Likewise, Wray and Perkins (2000) state there are mainly two uses of formulaic sequences. The first one is the improvement in social interaction, the other is avoiding the processing overload (p. 18). They also consider these two facts as the two sides of the same coin, which means they complement each other. When a learner uses formulaic sequences in his speech, he does not spend too much time to think what to say so he avoids a heavy processing overload. Moreover, one can express many ideas using fewer words and phrases, which also contributes to his/her social interaction with others because as Wray and Perkins (2000) state that a speaker could understand a message if it's in a form she/he has heard before, and which he/she can process without being obliged to full analytic decoding (p. 18). For instance, soldiers have to obey army commands quickly; therefore, formulaic use of army commands increase the comprehensibility by the hearer as it does not cause any confusion. Thus, both speaker and the hearer benefit from using formulaic language as the former one does not have to use several phrases to express himself/herself and the latter does not have to do too much decoding as the formulaic language is in the form he/she has stored before.

### ***Inspiring studies on formulaic language***

The most prominent studies have been done by Michael Lewis and his colleagues (1992), who have designed a language teaching methodology. However, a small amount of research suggests that teaching formulaic language has an effect on students' learning. (Schmitt, 2008, p.340). The research done by Jones & Haywood (2004) might be an evidence for Schmitt's (2008) claim. They taught phrasal vocabulary in an EAP class for 10 weeks, and found that learners had gained more insights about the use of the phrasal vocabulary by the end of the course. There was slight difference in their performances in C-tests; however, they could not show improvement in the use of phrasal vocabulary in their composition writing.

Yakışık & Disli (2011) conducted a study with a group of Turkish students attending an intensive language program at tertiary level and non-native speakers of English living in the USA and studying at tertiary level, as well. A number of situations were given to the participants and they were expected to respond to these situations using formulaic language. The results of the study displayed that both groups displayed similar performances at realizing functions such as declining an offer, or inviting someone to a party, and at establishing social solidarity such as agreeing with an interlocutor. However, non-native speakers of English studying at US universities outperformed Turkish students while giving a message or idea with lexical chunks and using idiomatic expressions. The results depicted that Turkish learners of English language benefited from the formal instruction in academic setting as realizing functions is a natural consequence of communicative methods. However, when it comes to using everyday language and giving messages or expressing ideas using daily lexical chunks, Turkish students' performance fell below that of non-native speakers of English language living in the US as the latter group were exposed to the language both in academic and non-academic settings. The studies above demonstrate a gap in systematic corpus studies, which might offer principled training for the language learners to fill in those gaps. In this respect, the study conducted by Aşık et al. (2016) can be inspiring for researchers, language teachers, material designers and teacher trainers as they displayed how DDL (Data-driven Learning) could be embedded in a lexical course to carry on corpus studies. The results showed that participants' awareness towards lexical items was increased and DDL was effective for learning synonyms (p. 92).

## ***Input and Pragmatic Use***

The prominent researchers Lewis (1997) and Willis (1990), suggest lexis-based syllabuses, which focus on collocations and other types of formulaic language; however, there is still work to be done when the situation is evaluated by a researcher's eye. Wood (2002) suggests a way to integrate input and interaction into classroom activities to foster the use of formulaic language (p. 9).

If natural language production necessitates the use of formulaic sequences, the learners, then, should be exposed to natural, nativelike oral and written discourse so that their language acquisition can be promoted (Wood, 2002, p.10). His view is also consistent with that of Krashen (1981) as his SLA research has shown the importance of input and interaction to develop second language competence. This evidence, once more, leads us to the importance of exposure to authentic native like input to accomplish pragmatic goals. Wood (2002) also draws attention to the notion of extensive studies where spontaneous input is found in spontaneous communication (p.10). Repeated exposure to such input would enable the learners to convey the meaning expressing themselves naturally in the target language. (Scmitt, 2008, p.313; Wood, 2002, p. 10).

Scmitt (2008), highlighting the importance of extensive studies for incidental vocabulary learning, raises a quite related issue to the significance of 'input'. He claims that both intentional and incidental approaches to vocabulary learning are required in language learning as it is impossible to teach all the contextual types of lexis in intentional teaching. This may be because teaching formulaic sequences may take more time in classroom environment. Hence, exposure to a lot of reading and listening is essential for vocabulary enrichment. Conversely, words required by incidental learning cannot be displayed at productive level, so communicative/productive activities can be presented to the learners to push them the level of mastery. In sum, these two aspects, incidental and intentional vocabulary learning are complementary (p. 352).

Taking the above discussions into consideration, the researchers used 'authentic oral and written input' as the core resource for extensive studies. Besides, researchers used incidental vocabulary teaching and aimed at promoting the relation with intentional learning activities.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Questions***

The current study was conducted with the aim of understanding EFL learners' perceptions towards the task '*hunting formulaic language in authentic texts*' as a part of their extensive studies for *Oral Communication Skills* course. Participants' opinions about the tasks for practicing formulaic language are also asked. Additionally, the study investigated the most frequently used authentic resources which EFL learners engage with so that the integration of these resources could be planned as a part of their extensive studies in *Oral Communication Skills* course. To achieve these, following questions were proposed:

1. What are the basic resources that students learn new lexical chunks?
2. What are the students' opinions about the effectiveness of their 'word hunt' assignments?
3. Can they use the knowledge they have acquired in other courses?

### ***Participants and Research site***

The study was designed as a qualitative case study. To reach the research objectives, convenience sampling was employed in the process of selecting participants (Creswell, 2005). The participants of the study are 26 freshman students enrolled in a course called "Oral Communication Skills" at a large state university in Turkey. The ages of the participants range from 18 to 56.

The reason why 'Oral Communication Skills Course' was chosen as the research context lies in Lewis' (2002) principles such as 'The primacy of speech over writing is recognized, and receptive skills, particularly listening, is given enhanced status (p.vi)'. To this end, students can find the opportunity to do lots of listening exercise and can take part in speaking activities in this course.

### **Data Collection**

Students taking this course were required to conduct a task named 'Word hunting'. The researchers got inspired by Scmitt's (2008) emphasis on extensive studies for the incidental vocabulary learning. However, the task name was given by the researchers to make the procedure exciting and fun.

Pre-intervention questionnaire was delivered to the students before they got their assignments. In the questionnaire background information such as age or school of graduation was obtained.

Participants had a session on the importance of lexical chunks, formulaic expressions and idiomatic expressions before they start 'word hunting'. The students were weekly assigned with a project work 'word hunt'. This was an individual study which led them to search for lexical chunks/formulaic sequences used in authentic contexts such as novels, films, TV series, reality shows. Since they spend a lot of time in front of TV and watch these programs the researchers aimed at making them aware of lexical patterns that native speakers use. The participants were asked to hunt 4 or 5 expressions every week. They were asked to write the expressions in a specific format. Learners were asked to write the expression its meaning, source and the context on a piece of clip card. The cards were collected, and words and expressions were combined and re-distributed to the class so that every participant could see the other's expressions. Learners were also provided with speaking tasks where they could use those formulaic expressions.

At the end of the term participants were asked to fill in a reflection report in which they reflected their opinions about the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed through content analysis approach on N.Vivo 10.0. In the content analysis approach, participants' quotations were analyzed and the data were arranged so that themes and categories were created. After this coding stage, the findings were interpreted. The main aim of these stages is to present the concepts that could explain the collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In this process, firstly, the significant parts were coded. The coded sections were examined to reveal the similarities and differences. Then, the related codes were thematized. Finally, the deduced themes were supported by participants' quotations.

### **Results and Discussion**

The findings on the Students opinions about Word hunt experience in Oral communication skills course are as follows:

### 1. Students' responses for the basic authentic resources where they learn new lexical chunks:

Students were asked to write the authentic resources which they often used. Those resources serve as a treasure for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). The results were significant as the findings shed light onto the plan of the 'word hunt' assignment. The resources and the frequencies are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Authentic resources where students learn lexical chunks*

Themes	(n)	Themes	(n)
TV series	12	Newspapers	6
Films	10	Coursebooks	5
Novels	9	Magazines	4
Web Blogs	7	Computer games	2
Dictionaries	7	Reality shows	2
Songs	6	Teachers	1
Stories	6		

Table 1 displays that foreign TV series and films are frequently used resources for comprehensible input. Novels and web blogs are the third and fourth major references for students to learn formulaic sequences. In the related literature, Lewis (2002) asserts, receptive skills, especially listening skill, is given enhanced status in lexical approach. To this end, the findings in Table 1 are compatible with Lewis' principle.

### 2. Students' beliefs about the benefits of the studies on 'lexical chunks' for their speaking skills:

All the 26 participants agreed that the assignments on 'formulaic sequences' have been beneficial. The findings explaining the reasons why they find it effective are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*The Reasons why students found the process of hunting for 'lexical chunks' effective for their vocabulary knowledge.*

Themes	(n)
can use a variety of words, expressions and idioms in speaking.	17
improved my speaking.	14
can understand authentic language better.	12
can use daily language.	8
led to self-development.	6
sound as native speakers.	2
made fluent speakers.	2
need for a quiz	1



Most of the participant students agreed that taking part in speaking activities, they could learn a variety of words, expressions and idioms. Additionally, most participants agreed that there had been improvement in their speaking. Some of them stated that they could understand authentic language better after having completed the whole task. Some participants shared the idea that they could use daily language in their speech and learning formulaic sequences led to self-development. Very few participants declared they sounded as native speakers. A student highlighted a need for a formal test. However, the researchers considered the whole procedure as a process-oriented one rather than a product-oriented task.

Some examples related to this issue are as follows:

*"I do believe it has been beneficial for my vocabulary knowledge because with these studies I've learned wide range of proverbs and idioms which I find very interesting."* (ST 2)

*"Of course, they have been. The studies made a huge contribution to my vocabulary. But I keep a vocabulary book to develop my lexical competence. The topic affects my speech a lot. You cannot even stop me from talking. To make it short, yea! It made a contribution."* (ST 5)

*"There may be a need for quiz to check our learning".* (ST 24)

### 3. Students' opinions about the effectiveness of the studies on 'lexical chunks' for their vocabulary knowledge:

When students were asked their opinions about the effectiveness of the task, most of them agreed that the task had a positive impact on their vocabulary knowledge. Table 3 presents the themes and frequencies about this issue.

**Table 3**

*Reasons why students found the process of hunting for 'lexical chunks' effective for their vocabulary knowledge*

Themes	(n)
use variety of vocabulary	17
acquired different idiomatic expressions	12
can guess the meaning of an expression or a word from the context	4
are in my passive vocabulary	3
inspired me to study etymology of the words	1

Most of the participants highlighted the 'variety' in their vocabulary usage, which meant there was an increase in the range of the vocabulary they used for productive skills. Some of the participants stated they acquired different idiomatic expressions. Few students emphasized that after the process of 'formulaic sequence' hunting, they could guess the meaning of an expression or a word from the context more easily. Additionally, few students made a criticism about the effectiveness of the whole process on their vocabulary knowledge. They stated that the expressions were in their passive vocabulary, which meant they needed more practice to transfer those words in their long term memory so that their depth of vocabulary could be

increased. The findings also display that a student associated the task with learning the etymology of the words and s/he was inspired to study on this issue more.

Some of the examples taken from students' quotations are presented below:

*"It helped me a lot. By this way I can understand TV series clearly. For instance, if there is a joke, containing stereotypical expressions that I've learned, I can understand them now better."* (ST3)

*"It absolutely expanded my vocabulary range so much so that my friends who are native speakers didn't know the meaning of most words and idioms I've learnt."* (ST7)

*"I feel words are still in my passive vocabulary"* (ST 19)

*"...I really believe that while speaking or writing it shows my proficiency level and people as what those idioms mean..."* (ST12)

*"I have enjoyed working on words. I have been also inspired to learn their etymology, their roots, suffixes, and prefixes etc...."* (ST16)

Considering the findings presented above, it can be claimed that most students found the process of hunting for 'formulaic sequences' claimed some positive aspects of the word hunting project such as expanding their vocabulary range and learning stereotypical expressions. A student mentioned that using formulaic expressions while speaking or writing displayed his/her proficiency level.

#### **4. Students' opinions about the impact of the tasks on 'lexical chunks' on the comprehension of authentic materials dealt with after the study.**

The impact of the task 'hunting for formulaic sequences' on the participants' further studies was one of the concerns of this research. Hence, the opinions of the students about this issue were collected and presented in the table below.

**Table 4**

*Students' opinions about the comprehension of the authentic materials after the study*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>(n)</b>
comprehend authentic materials more easily now	12
still have problems comprehending authentic materials	7
improved guessing strategy	4
still have problems in understanding figurative meaning	4

Table 4 clearly presents that more than half of the students declared positive effects of the study they engaged in. They used the terms 'comprehending more easily' and used 'vocabulary guessing strategy' more effectively when confronted with a novel authentic material. On the other hand, a few of them mentioned difficulty in understanding figurative meaning, which might be overcome by dealing with idiomatic expressions more often.

Some examples from students' opinions are indicated below:

*"As I became familiar with these idiomatic expressions, I can understand authentic texts on varied topics better."* (ST14)

*"Yes, they got easier for me to understand. Especially, while reading my magazines which have a wide range of vocabulary." (ST5)*

*"I think I need to study more...I still have problems understanding figurative meaning." (ST 19)*

### **5. Students' opinions about the impact of 'Word hunting experience' on maintaining the habit of searching lexical chunks in novel authentic materials**

Taking Zimmerman's (1997) suggestions for creating a change in the teachers' mindset and raising awareness of the lexical nature of language into consideration, the researchers aimed at investigating their level of awareness and motivation to search for new formulaic sequences. Opinions of students are indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Students' opinions about the newly-formed habits about searching lexical chunks*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>(n)</b>
watch TV series or read books more attentively	14
still note down the expressions in my notebook	11
improved my vocabulary study skills	4
improved self-study skills	4
regularly search for new words through online dictionaries	3
It's not a habit yet	2

The most frequently mentioned opinion was watching TV series or reading books more attentively. This shows students' increased awareness towards the use of formulaic language in authentic texts. Some students mentioned noting down the expressions in a vocabulary notebook, which proves keeping an agenda for recording brand-new formulaic sequences. Additionally, some students improved self-study skills which indicates the effectiveness of the task on learner autonomy. Two of the students mentioned they hadn't formed a habit of searching novel formulaic sequences from the authentic resources.

Two of the quotations from students' post-intervention reports are displayed below:

*"I search for them even if it's not obligatory." (ST13)*

*"Yes yes yes. At first we had hardship to do homework in each week but now we can do those with a great enjoy and we feel we learn something useful for our later years for English teaching. We all have habit of searching vocabulary." (ST20)*

*"To be honest, it's not a habit yet." (ST 22)*

*"I may need some extra work to turn it into a habit." (ST 17)*

When students' opinions are examined, one can clearly see the self-motivated student actions toward learning novel lexical chunks. A student mentions that searching new formulaic expressions has become a habit towards the end of the task.

### **6. Students' opinions about the impact of using formulaic sequences on their speaking and writing performances.**

The table below displays students' opinions about the impact of using formulaic sequences on their productive skills performances.

**Table 6**

*Students' opinions about the impact of using lexical chunks on speaking and writing skills*

Themes	(n)
enhances the quality of speech and writing	16
sound more sophisticated and smarter	6
sound like a native speaker	2

All of the students agreed that using lexical chunks in their speech and written work had a good impact on their performance. Most of them stated that the use of formulaic sequences enhanced the quality of speaking and writing. Some of them mentioned that they sounded more sophisticated and smarter if they used formulaic language in the classroom. Few of the students enjoyed sounding like a native speaker.

The third research question asked whether students could use the knowledge they had acquired in other courses apart from 'Oral Communication Skills'. Table 7 displays the themes and frequencies regarding this research question.

**Table 7**

*Other courses at the 1<sup>st</sup> grade where students could transfer their knowledge of formulaic sequences*

Themes	(n)
Advance Reading and Writing	15
Lexical Competence	13

As seen in Table 7, lexical competence and advanced reading and writing were the courses in which students thought they could use the acquired knowledge of formulaic language.

Example quotations about the issue from students' reports are given below:

*"Yeop! While writing an essay for reading and writing course, take a look at to those idioms and I try to use them to richen my essay." (ST18)*

*" I use the lexical chunks I learnt in this study in my lexical competence course" (ST 23)*

*"I can guess the meaning of a lexis from the context better now in my lexical competence course." (ST2)*

The students' quotations show that students review their vocabulary list and use the appropriate ones in their essays.

## Conclusion

Vocabulary studies have been conducted in the area of language teaching and the use of formulaic language has gained significance in second language acquisition (SLA) research recently; however, little research has been done on the implementation of lexical studies in language courses.

The study attempted to present the integration of the task "word hunting" into the Oral Communication Course", which provided an effective context for vocabulary expansion. The students were required to complete a task which was called "word hunting" for which students collected formulaic sequences from authentic materials during a term in an academic year. These materials were mainly Tv series, movies, novels, and magazines. Before students started word hunting experience, they were informed about formulaic language and the advantages of learning and using formulaic language in their speech and written work. During the process, students collected lexical phrases and prepared informative tables about each novel formulaic language on clip cards. Students were expected to write the formulaic expression, meaning, context, source, and example sentence and if possible the etymology of the phrases. After task completion, students' opinions were gathered through written reflection reports (Appendix A). Results were analyzed through qualitative analysis program NVivo 10.0, and themes were discussed.

The study pointed out that learners benefited from the experience in terms of raising awareness for formulaic language, forming habits of expanding their vocabulary with novel formulaic expressions, getting inspired for searching new formulaic sequences. In particular, participants in the study agreed that 'word hunt' studies contributed to their lexical competence and their speaking skills, so they gave importance to this issue. Most of the participant students emphasized that they had been keeping vocabulary notebooks since the beginning of the study. Furthermore, they stated that they were planning to add more lexical chunks, idiomatic expressions, formulaic expressions into their vocabulary lists or notebooks.

The themes that the students emphasized in the reflection reports were the variety of expressions they learned, their gaining awareness, self-development, use of daily language, comprehension of the authentic materials better, the contributions of the study to the other courses. Considering that students already had tendencies to receive comprehensible input through authentic resources outside the class, the study which led them to explore new expressions through extensive studies could be concluded as an effective tool to acquire new lexicons.

Michael Lewis (2002) suggested awareness for L2 lexical chunks should be raised. In this respect, integrating tasks such as word hunting" in language courses might be useful to guide prospective teachers to raise learners' awareness for the use of formulaic expressions.

To sum up, this study might shed light onto further vocabulary studies encouraging students' enthusiasm to do their best with the available resources. Therefore, language teachers should find such ways to raise the awareness of the language learners on a specific issue, foster learner autonomy through self-study activities and encourage them to use what they have gathered in language courses. Besides, integrating studies of formulaic sequences in teacher education programs might be useful to guide teacher trainers to decide on the materials which will be useful for student teachers. Similar studies on formulaic language can be included in other courses such as lexicology, reading and writing skills and listening and phonetics.

This study is limited only to student teachers' findings and reflection reports based on 'word hunting' experience. Another limitation of the study is the use of extensive studies

students carried on within a specific course. Learners can be exposed to some pre-designed materials presented by the teachers, teacher trainers or researchers.

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## **Appendix A**

### **REFLECTION REPORT QUESTIONS**

**Dear Students,**

**The questions below have been prepared to reveal your opinions regarding your weekly assignments (Word Hunting for ‘Lexical Chunks’) in Oral Communication Skills Course.**

**Please write your ideas clearly, try to give details and provide examples when necessary.**

- 1. Do you think studies on ‘lexical chunks’ have been beneficial for developing your speaking and other language skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening)?**
- 2. What were your basic resources to find lexical chunks?**
- 3. Do you think this study has expanded the depth of your vocabulary knowledge?**
- 4. Have you found any opportunities to use your lexical chunks in any other courses?**
- 5. Do you think you comprehend authentic materials written in English more easily?**
- 6. Have you formed a habit of searching for lexical chunks since your weekly assignment in the 1<sup>st</sup> term?**
- 7. Are you planning to record more lexical chunks in your vocabulary list?**
- 8. In your opinion what impression does the use of lexical chunks in your speech make on the listener?**