

“Say It Fast, Fluent and Flawless”
Formulaicity in the Oral Language Production
of Young Foreign Language Learners

“Say It Fast, Fluent and Flawless”
Formulaicity in the Oral Language Production
of Young Foreign Language Learners

Parvin Gheitasi



Department of language studies
Umeå 2017

Department of Language Studies
Umeå University
SE-901 87 Umeå
www.sprak.umu.se

This work is protected by the Swedish Copyright Legislation (Act 1960:729)

Copyright © 2017 Parvin Gheitasi

ISBN: 978-91-7601-688-6

Front cover illustration: Parvin Gheitasi

Electronic version accessible via <http://umu.diva-portal.org/>

Umeå studies in Language and Literature 35

Series editors: Heidi Hansson, Per Ambrosiani

Printed by: UmU-tryckservice, Umeå University

Distributed by: eddy.se ab, Visby

Umeå, Sweden 2017

To all children who are deprived of basic education

&

برای پدرم و مادرم

Table of Contents

Abstract	I
Acknowledgements	III
1 Introduction	1
1.3 Structure of the thesis	4
2 Review of the literature	5
2.1 Overview	5
2.2 Key concepts	6
2.2.1 <i>Second language acquisition</i>	6
2.2.2 <i>Young second or foreign language learners</i>	8
2.2.3 <i>Vocabulary and lexis</i>	9
2.2.4 <i>Formulaic sequences (definition and identification)</i>	10
2.2.5 <i>Mental lexicon</i>	13
2.3 Theoretical background	15
2.3.1 <i>Theories of second language acquisition</i>	15
2.3.2 <i>Formulaic sequences and second language acquisition</i>	17
2.3.3 <i>Individual differences in language learning</i>	18
2.3.4 <i>Classroom instruction and second language acquisition</i>	19
2.3.5 <i>Input and output</i>	20
2.3.6 <i>Language processing</i>	22
2.3.7 <i>Developmental procedure of formulaic language</i>	24
2.3.8 <i>Functions of formulaic language</i>	26
2.4 Empirical studies on formulaicity in second language acquisition	29
2.5 Conclusion	34
2.6 <i>Research questions</i>	35
3 Methodology	37
3.1 Context of the study	37
3.1.1 <i>Country context</i>	37
3.1.1.1 <i>English at public Schools</i>	39
3.1.1.2 <i>English at private language institutes</i>	40
3.1.2 <i>Learning context</i>	40
3.2 Participants	41
3.2.1 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	42
3.3 Instruments	44
3.3.1 <i>Observations and recordings</i>	44
3.3.2 <i>Elicitation tasks</i>	45
3.3.3 <i>Parents' questionnaire</i>	45
3.3.4 <i>Transcription software</i>	46
3.4 Pilot study	46
3.5 Data collection and analysis	47

3.5.1 <i>Informed consent</i>	48
3.5.2 <i>Classroom observations</i>	49
3.5.3 <i>Parents' questionnaire</i>	50
3.5.4 <i>Elicitation tasks</i>	50
3.5.5 <i>Transcribing</i>	51
3.5.6 <i>Data Analysis</i>	52
3.6 <i>description of a session</i>	54
3.7 <i>Description of the individual learners</i>	56
4 Results	63
4.1 <i>Functions of formulaic sequences</i>	63
4.1.1 <i>Time buyers</i>	63
4.1.1.1 <i>Fillers</i>	64
4.1.1.2 <i>Repetition</i>	65
4.1.1.3 <i>Utterance Launchers</i>	70
4.1.1.4 <i>Non-fluent sequences</i>	72
4.1.2 <i>Lexical teddy bears</i>	76
4.1.2.1 <i>Safe islands</i>	76
4.1.2.2 <i>Springboard to communication in L2</i>	78
4.1.2.3 <i>Avoidance strategy</i>	80
4.1.3 <i>Language play</i>	84
4.1.3.1 <i>Play with formulaic sequences</i>	85
4.1.3.2 <i>Taking on the teacher's role</i>	89
4.1.3.3 <i>Sound like the role model</i>	91
4.1.4 <i>Quick-fire</i>	96
4.2 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences</i>	101
4.2.1 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences as time buyers</i>	104
4.2.2 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences as teddy bears</i>	107
4.2.3 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences in language play</i>	109
4.2.4 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences to sound like a role model</i>	111
4.2.5 <i>Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences for quick-fire</i>	113
4.3 <i>Concluding remarks</i>	113
5 Discussion	115
5.1 <i>Time buyers</i>	117
5.2 <i>Lexical teddy bears</i>	121
5.3 <i>Language play</i>	125
5.4 <i>Quick-fire</i>	129
5.5 <i>Inter-learner variation</i>	131
5.6 <i>Concluding remarks</i>	133
6 Conclusion	137
6.1 <i>Implications</i>	138
6.2 <i>Suggestions for further research</i>	140
6.3 <i>Limitations of this study</i>	141

6.4 Personal reflection	143
Summary in Swedish	145
Summary in Farsi	149
Bibliography	151
Appendices	161
Appendix A - Transcription codes	161
Appendix B- Criteria for the identification of formulaic sequences	162
Appendix C- Transcription of a session	163
Appendix D-Elicitation task	177
Appendix E- Elicitation task	178
Appendix F (a)- Parents' questionnaire	179
Appendix F (b)- Parents' questionnaire (English translation)	183
Appendix G (a)- Head of the institute's informed consent	191
Appendix G (b)- Head of the institute's informed consent (English translation)	192
Appendix H (a)- Parents' informed consent	193
Appendix H (b)- Parents' informed consent (English Translation)	194
Appendix I (a)- Children's informed assent	195
Appendix I (b)- Children's informed assent (English Translation)	196

List of tables

Table 1. Structure of chapter 2	5
Table 2. Functions of formulaic sequences (from Wray & Perkins, 2000, pp. 14–16)	27
Table 3. Relevant studies on formulaicity in SLA.....	30
Table 4. Frequent classroom commands	103
Table 5. Functions of formulaic sequences for the learners of this study	116

Abstract

This thesis reports on a study, which investigated the process of early foreign language learning in a classroom context and the functions of multi-word units of language known as formulaic sequences in the oral language production of young foreign language learners. A classroom with 11 students in the age range 9 to 11 years was observed and video recorded for 16 sessions (90 minutes per session). The observations were accompanied by two elicitation tasks. 10 sessions out of the 16 sessions of the collected speech samples were transcribed chronologically. In the next step, formulaic sequences were identified based on pre-established criteria, which were further developed during the analysis. The data was analyzed in order to identify the functions of formulaic sequences in learners' oral language production in addition to the inter-learner variations in the application of formulaic sequences for different functions.

The results revealed evidence of incidental learning of formulaic sequences from input; the language input provided instances for the learners to learn multi-word units. In addition, formulaic sequences played different roles in the language production of the learners. These sequences helped young language learners to overcome their lack of knowledge, to improve their fluency, and to enjoy some language play. Formulaic sequences were used as a strategy to economize effort on processing and also to buy time for processing. The findings of the study suggested that language users might introduce dis-fluency in the production of their sequences in order to buy time for further processing. Moreover, the data provided examples illustrating communicative functions of formulaic sequences where the use of formulaic sequences was affected by the relationship between the speaker and listener. The analysis revealed that although all the learners applied formulaic sequences in their language production, there was a great variation among individual learners in their intention and the extent of the application of formulaic sequences. Some learners used these sequences to be able to extend their utterances and produce more of the language, whereas other learners used them to avoid further language production. In sum, it seemed that individual learners' different personalities, needs or limitations served as explanation for the application of formulaic sequences in different contexts.

Acknowledgements

Among the very first books that I remember of my childhood, was a book about a little black fish, which decided to go beyond the river to explore the sea. Like that little fish, I also had venturesome dreams. In order to satisfy those dreams I moved to Sweden to pursue my PhD, where I ended up separated from my family and friends and found myself in a big sea with lots of ebb and flow. Both the PhD project and also the new life in front of me appeared challenging and scary in the beginning. However, soon I found myself surrounded with many who helped me to carry on. Wonderful people whom I got to know during this journey and made my journey enriched and enjoyable and also loved ones who supported me from a far geographical distance. Accomplishing this journey would have been far from imagination without the help and support that I received from so many.

I cannot thank enough my supervisor Janet Enever for her continuous support, encouragement and immense knowledge. Thank you Janet for being so generous with your time and knowledge; you taught me a great deal about research and life in general. I would also like to thank my other supervisors Christian Waldmann and Ingmarie Mellenius for their invaluable help and generous input during these years. Christian, I always appreciated and enjoyed our discussions on creative vs. prefabricated language as much as I enjoyed our fun time during Volleyball. Ingmarie, thank you for all your feedbacks and help.

I am very grateful to Alison Wray who provided me with valuable guidance during two significant stages of my research, thanks for all that you taught me about formulaic language; to Parvaneh Tavakoli who introduced the notion of lexical chunks to me during my master studies and encouraged me to carry on; to Eva Lindgren for being a very caring and supportive colleague; and to Jelena Mihaljevic Djigunovic for her inspiring feedbacks during my final review. A big thank you to all my colleagues in the Department of Language Studies at Umeå University who helped me through stimulating discussions during our seminars as well as by accepting and supporting me as part of their group.

This journey became even more enjoyable and feasible due to the presence of many lovely friends and colleagues with whom I grew academically and personally during these four years. Yvonne Knospe, one of the first friendly faces that I met when I arrived. During these years she was there for me not only to support me over my problems, but also happily by talking about things other than just our papers. My kind and caring friends

Per Boström and Emma Olsson, with whom I experienced remarkable moments of friendship and companionship. Susanne Haugen, Matilda Marshall, Hanna Outakoski, and Sergej Ivanov, thank you for being supportive, encouraging, and cheerful friends (Tack ska ni ha!). Thanks to the Fika group for our inspiring and joyful coffee breaks during which I learned lots of formulaic sequences in Swedish. You contributed to my survival by all that you taught me together with laughter and a warm drink.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family; my mom and my dad, Zahra and Youssef, without whom I would not have had the courage to embark on this journey in the first place. Thanks for always believing in me and encouraging me to follow my dreams. Thanks to my amazing siblings for all their love and inspiration. To Akram who always encouraged me to keep moving, thank you also for helping me with the translations; Ali, thanks particularly for your continuous support and sympathetic ear during these years; Amir, thank you for being so caring and kind. No matter where I am and how far away we are from each other, I know you (all) are there for me.

A very special thank you to the wonderful, lively, and inspiring learners who kindly accepted me and my camera in their class and taught me about language learning. Thanks to the teacher and the parents for their kind cooperation.

Thank you all! It is because of you that this journey became so special.

با سپاس فراوان.

Parvin Gheitasi

Umeå, 14 February 2017

Teacher: in the morning I was at home. I was. but now I am in the classroom. Now, **I am**. before, **I was**

Dornaz: Miss for example, my sister, I was, I was, I was stomachache, and now my sister is headache.

1 Introduction

During the 1950s and 1960s, Chomsky critiqued and rejected behaviourist accounts of language use. Henceforth, subsequent studies of (second) language acquisition concentrated on demonstrating language as highly systematic and rule governed. Consequently, a majority of linguists adopted the Chomskyan paradigm of language acquisition with an emphasis on the power of syntax to create novel utterances (Weinert, 1995). However, since the 1970s and especially the 1980s a number of linguists and language practitioners have worked on one or another aspect of multi-word units and argued against the generative grammar perspective (Pawley, 2007; Pawley, 2009; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wong Fillmore, 1976; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2002). Their findings demonstrated that certain sequences of words consistently appear together and are associated with specific meanings, attitudes or social functions (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). That is, words might be co-selected to be understood in a conventional manner (e.g., “how do you do”). This has led linguists to suggest that some of these sequences are prefabricated; they are stored as holistic units and are not spontaneously generated each time they are used (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002).

Mastering a second language can be a challenging task for learners of any age, but for foreign language learners it can be even more formidable. There might be aspects of the two languages such as phonological, morpho-syntactic, semantic structures and functions that differ to a greater or lesser extent between the first language and the foreign language. In addition, in my experience as a foreign language learner and teacher, I have found a common cause of concern to be the lack of ability to communicate effectively. Foreign language learners might have an insufficient understanding of the frequently used set-phrases to be able to produce fluent language.

In response to this gap in learner acquisition, over the last twenty years there have been language-teaching materials that focus on learning larger units than words. However, still many teachers and learners view the individual word as the core unit of language (Wray, 2014). Such a stance is particularly familiar for foreign language teachers and learners who have less contact with natural language use outside the classroom setting. According to Wray (2014) this could explain, at least to some extent, the difficulties that adults typically face in mastering a new language. Learners might have mastered an advanced knowledge of syntax and a vast amount of words as individual units but in order to combine them properly during their language production, they face difficulties (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002, 2014). This issue addresses the fact that vocabulary knowledge does not only involve knowing a word and its meaning, but it also entails the knowledge of the words that co-occur with it frequently, thus creating multi-word sequences.

These multi-word sequences have been referred to by many different terms (see chapter 2); there are over forty terms used in the literature (Wray, 2002). In this paper the term ‘formulaic sequence’ is used because the definition of formulaic sequence by Wray (2002), as is discussed in the next chapter, has a clear focus and also fits the study’s aim to investigate formulaicity with a learner internal approach. It must be underlined that the units are identified as a formulaic sequence based on a psycholinguistic approach. Formulaicity is defined and identified learner internally; that is, depending on whether an individual language user treats a sequence holistically.

A large and growing body of literature in diverse fields of language studies, psycholinguistics (e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Ellis, 2002), corpus linguistics (e.g., Erman & Warren, 2000; Sinclair, 2004), usage-based theories (e.g., Ellis, 2002, 2008), and first and second language acquisition research (e.g., Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998; Peters, 1983) has revealed that formulaic sequences are pervasive and essential in communication (Wray, 2002). Researchers argued that these sequences of language have a significant role in language acquisition and use (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006; Lewis, 1993; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2000). One of the areas that has been highly affected by these findings is the field of second language acquisition. Experts in the field of second language acquisition acknowledged that formulaic sequences play a vital role in second language learners’ language skills, such as speech fluency and pragmatic competence, among other aspects of proficiency (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wood, 2009; Wray, 2002; Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Therefore, such components of language proficiency have gained increasing interest recently. According to Wray (2002), researchers and teachers in this field are interested in the claim that formulaic language can facilitate idiomatic production and so identify the language user as an "insider" in a given discourse community (pp. 88–90).

The rationale for this study stems from the mounting evidence regarding the importance of formulaicity in language acquisition. According to the findings of previous research, formulaic sequences contribute to aspects of fluency, accuracy, creativity and cohesion (Lewis, 1997; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wood, 2010, Wray, 2002). On becoming familiar with the notion of formulaicity, I was interested in its pervasiveness in language and communication, its positive influence on fluent language production, and its potential to foster accuracy. This project relates to major issues in the field of early language learning, foreign language learning and formulaicity. Essentially, the principal question for this study is what it would take to improve the outcomes of children at the age 9–11 learning a foreign language in the classroom context. In summary, this study intends to probe into the production and usage of formulaic sequences by young language learners (9–11 years old) who learn English as a foreign language mainly in a classroom-based context. This question is addressed in the context of Farsi-speaking children learning English in Iran.

Although this study might seem to be a local research, I believe the findings may offer a global perspective in that they could provide new insights into the theory of formulaic sequences. In addition, this study deals with the language production of young children and it can reveal some common procedures that all children might experience in their second/foreign language acquisition process. In sum, the theoretical and educational implications of the findings of this study could contribute to future research and education policies. The results will shed further light on the process of early foreign language learning and also the role of formulaic sequences in learners' language production.

An extensive search of the literature, using the keywords formulaic sequences, foreign language learning and early language learning has produced seven studies, indicating that formulaicity in the language production of young foreign language learners has not been widely explored. As Wood (2015) mentioned, we are in the beginning of exploring formulaicity in spoken language. Henceforth, he calls for more research and richer data for a better understanding of the role of formulaic language in spoken communication. The present study may provide evidence on a somewhat less developed area in the process of early foreign language

learning in a classroom setting. Consequently, it might help teachers to uncover related issues in the foreign language setting, thus beginning the process of improving instruction. Knowledge on the role of formulaic sequences in second/foreign language acquisition can stimulate the development of beneficial strategies and to minimize the shortcomings. Furthermore, the results may help materials developers to supplement and enrich the required input and/or enhanced input for learners in a foreign language context thus compensating for the lack of contact with native speakers. Moreover, any research on formulaicity is significant since the existence of formulaic sequences challenges the conceptual structure view of language held by many linguists, which does not account for the formulaic nature of language (Wray, 2002).

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The present thesis comprises six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 covers a review of the literature in the field and the theoretical background. It reviews the current knowledge on the areas of early language learning, foreign language learning and formulaicity. Previous findings will be examined in order to get an insight of the process of early foreign language learning, the nature of formulaic language and its role in the language learning process. Chapter 3 includes a report of the study design and the research procedure for collecting and analysing the data. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. It is followed by a discussion of the main findings in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this study by providing a brief summary of the research and its contributions, implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2 Review of the literature

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the relevant literature in the field in order to first define the essential concepts and also to establish the theoretical stance of this study with the aid of the findings of previous studies. With this goal as a guide this chapter is divided into five main sections: definition of key concepts, theoretical background, empirical studies on formulaicity in second language acquisition (SLA), conclusion and research questions. Table 1 illustrates the structure of this chapter.

Table 1. Structure of chapter 2

Review of the literature		
2.2 Key concepts	2.3 Theoretical background	2.4 Empirical studies
Second language acquisition	Theories of second language acquisition	General review of the previous empirical studies on FS and SLA
Young language learners	Formulaic sequences and second language acquisition	Detailed review of three particular studies
Vocabulary and lexis	Individual differences in language learning	
Formulaic sequences	Classroom instruction and second language acquisition	
Mental lexicon	Input and output	
	Language processing	
	Developmental procedure of formulaic sequences	
	Functions of formulaic sequences	
2.5 Conclusion		
2.6 Research questions		

Section (2.2) will cover a description of the key concepts used in this study. It elaborates on the underpinnings of the concepts of 'second/foreign language acquisition' and 'formulaic sequences' by means of appropriate sources and references. The concept of 'young language learners' will be defined. The terms 'vocabulary' and 'lexis' are outlined together with a description of various approaches to the definition and identification of formulaic sequences. Finally a brief description of the mental lexicon will be presented.

In Section (2.3) theories of second/foreign language acquisition will be addressed accompanied by an exploration of different perspectives and approaches for studying second/foreign language acquisition with regard to formulaic sequences. Different assets of formulaic sequences will be discussed with a consideration of their significance and place in the process of language learning. Issues regarding individual differences in language learning, learning context, and language input and output will also be covered. Furthermore, ideas regarding the developmental procedure of formulaic sequences will be addressed parallel to the arguments regarding the functions of formulaic sequences in the process of language acquisition.

Section (2.4) surveys some of the previous empirical studies on issues regarding formulaicity and language acquisition. Three particular studies identified as being highly relevant to the aims of this study will be reviewed more closely in order to set the background for the present study.

The chapter will conclude with a summary of the key discussions, paving the way for the research gaps and questions to be addressed in this study.

2.2 Key concepts

2.2.1 Second language acquisition

Defining the terms ‘first’, ‘second’ and ‘foreign’ language is not an easy and straightforward task. It is frequently assumed that first language acquisition refers to the natural process in which children subconsciously develop linguistic knowledge of the environment they live in. In contrast, ‘second’ or ‘foreign’ language acquisition deals with the way individuals acquire another language in addition to their first language (L1). On the distinction between second and foreign language, Krashen (1982) proposed the acquisition–learning hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, second language acquisition (SLA) occurs unconsciously through implicit, informal or natural learning in a setting in which the language to be acquired is the language spoken in the local community. In sum, the non-instructed setting is a distinguishing characteristic of second language acquisition (De Bot et al., 2005). In contrast to second language acquisition, foreign language learning (FLL) occurs actively and consciously through explicit or formal instruction, resulting in explicit knowledge about the target language. The language to be learned is not the language spoken in the local community and in most cases it is learned in a setting with a formal language instruction (De Bot et al., 2005). According to this model, the present study will deal with foreign language learning. However, in the following review of the literature the term *second language acquisition* will be used to refer to both

second and foreign language acquisition since, sometimes there is lack of clear division in the literature on the distinction between these two. Yet, the distinction between a second and a foreign language will be made where necessary.

In studies of second language acquisition, it is essential to make a distinction between learning a second language (L2) and learning the first language, even for young children. In general, it can be argued that the main difference between first and second language acquisition is that a second language learner has already acquired a set of habits from his/her previous experience; that is, first language acquisition (VanPatten & Williams, 2007). Regarding the difference between first and second language acquisition, Ellis (2008) maintains that through their experience of first language acquisition, second language learners have learned to 'hear' certain things in the input and to disregard others. According to Wray (2002), the same mechanisms are employed in first and second language acquisition at different ages. However, a number of studies on the process of language acquisition have revealed that the transfer of processing routines from first language to second language varies between early language learners and late second language learners (e.g. Sabourin & Stowe, 2008; Weber-Fox & Neville, 1996). The findings of these studies suggest that neural mechanisms and structures employed for second language processing are largely the same as those that underlie first language processing; however, for late language learners second language processing is slower and is more affected by the proficiency level.

Wray (2002) attributes the differences between learners of different ages to the quality and quantity of the input, the extent to which patterns of the first language are developed, and the tendencies in general cognitive skills. Since these three phenomena change with age, language learners experience diverse language acquisition paths and outcomes at different ages. Ellis (2002) asserts that first language patterns result from naturalistic exposure to language, whereas in second or foreign language acquisition the classroom environment can distort the pattern of exposure, function and social interaction. It is different since the first language is already a substantial system that a child has in place; a child learning a foreign language will encounter such a small amount of foreign language compared to the amount of input s/he receives during first language acquisition; and because it is 'foreign', the language "belongs to people in a distant and strange culture" (Cameron, 2001, p. 241). However, we should bear in mind that there might be huge differences regarding the distance in culture and the amount of exposure to the language from one context to another. For instance, learning

English as a second language is a different experience for a language learner in Iran compared to one in Sweden. There are various factors leading to this difference, among which I can refer to linguistic affinities between Swedish and English. Both languages are of Germanic origin and therefore they share a number of linguistic features. For instance, both Swedish and English are Subject+Verb+Object languages and use Latin alphabets. On the other hand, Farsi, being an Iranian language, differs from English regarding the linguistic structure as well as the alphabet. Farsi is a Subject+Object+Verb language, which uses a modified version of Arabic alphabets. Furthermore, the amount of exposure to English varies a lot between these two contexts. According to Lindgren and Munoz (2013), a language learner in Sweden may be exposed to English on a daily basis (with an average of more than eight hours per week) through various sources apart from the language classroom (e.g. TV or contact with English speakers). However, an English language learner in Iran has very limited access to the target language outside the classroom (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004). Very few programs are broadcast on TV in English and almost all foreign movies are dubbed into Farsi. Therefore, English can be considered as a foreign language in Iran where the learners have access to the target language mainly in the formal context of a classroom.

Regarding the limitations of learning a second language where the input fails to become intake, Ellis (2006) refers to the role of first language. He claims that second language learners might not succeed in adopting and using some language forms in their second language processing due to transfer from their first language. These features, which are available owing to “frequency, recency or context”, might fail to become intake because of one of the “associative learning factors” or due to “associative attentional tuning”. Associative learning factors refer to “contingency, cue competition, or salience”, whereas associative attentional tuning involves “inference, overshadowing and blocking or perceptual leaning” which are all shaped by first language (ibid. pp. 164-5). In sum, it can be concluded that second language acquisition is “the study of how learners create a new language system with only limited exposure to that language. It is the study of what is learned of a second language and what is not learned” (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 1).

2.2.2 Young second or foreign language learners

The term *young language learners* can be used for those who learn a second or foreign language during the first six or seven years of formal schooling (McKay 2006). Starting age for primary schooling might vary from

one context to another. Some researchers such as Pinter (2006) apply the term to children from “five to fourteen years of age” (p. 1), whereas McKay (2006) considers the learners between the age of “approximately five and twelve” (p. 1). In the context of the present study, the term ‘young language learners’ refers to children aged 9-11.

Scott and Lisbeth (1992) have identified certain characteristics of children aged 8-10, which they propose, should be considered in teaching them English. They have argued that children in this age range are mature enough to have a particular point of view. They are curious, ask questions and can cooperate and learn from each other. They are competent users of their mother tongue and therefore they are aware of the basic linguistic rules of their mother tongue. They also believe that children aged 8-10 are able to interpret meaning without understanding words separately and are competent in using language creatively. Moon (2000) also stresses children’s limited world knowledge and experiences, and argues that young language learners do not have access to metalanguage, as do older learners; they are still at the earlier stage of their cognitive development. Furthermore, Hasselgreen (2000) points to young language learners’ limited attention span and also refers to their particular need for play and fun.

Due to the special characteristics of young learners, which are different from those of adult learners, teaching English to young learners brings a number of challenges (Cameron, 2001). Young language learners are inclined to use a language that is mainly focused on meaning. They attend to the whole message delivered rather than to specific aspects of the language since they are less skilled in analysing the language at this age (Pinter, 2006). Wray (2002) refers to the strong desire of children aged five to ten to be part of a group and argues that this characteristic might promote certain types of linguistic behaviour. For instance, they might use specific chunks of a language in order to construct identities as competent language users and create relations with others.

2.2.3 Vocabulary and lexis

Nation (2001) regards vocabulary as an essential component of competence in a foreign language, and also argues that knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with. Vocabulary development is about learning words and about learning more about those words; it also entails learning phrases or chunks in order to learn more about the words inside them (Cameron, 2001). However, there is a need for making a distinction between vocabulary and lexis. Lewis (1997) suggests that the term vocabulary is often used to refer to individual words of a

language, whereas lexis covers both single words and word combinations that we store in our mental lexicons ready for use. These word combinations, referred to as “formulaic sequences” (Wray, 2002, p. 9), have been distinguished from creative speech, which is the language that has been constructed by putting together individual lexical units with the aid of underlying abstract patterns or rules (Ellis, 2008).

2.2.4 Formulaic sequences (definition and identification)

Given that one of the issues that this study is interested in is formulaic language, it is essential to define the notion of formulaicity and indicate how formulaic sequences can be identified. A number of researchers have attempted to define formulaic sequences and also elaborate criteria to identify them. This section presents a review of the previous studies on the definition and identification of formulaic sequences. The goal of this review is to establish a definition and also a set of criteria for the identification of formulaic sequences to be applied for the purposes of this study.

Formulaic sequences have been the main concern of various researchers with different perspectives over the years. This has led to a number of interpretations on their exact nature, the approach used to identify them, as well as what to call them (Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Read & Nation, 2004; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2002, 2008). In the literature there are over 40 terms referring to formulaic sequences, including ‘chunks’, ‘collocations’, ‘prefabricated phrases’, ‘lexical phrases’, and ‘fixed expressions’. However, a review of the definitions provided by different scholars show a consensus among many researchers that formulaic sequences are chunks of language that are stored and retrieved as wholes rather than being generated or analysable by grammar (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2000, 2002, 2008).

For more than thirty years now, the existence of formulaic sequences has been recognized in the language; however, some researchers have tended to give them low prominence. Myles (2004) has related this to the difficulty in distinguishing formulaic sequences. She observes that it can be a challenging task to distinguish whether a sequence has been generated by the grammar or is an unanalysed whole. In other words, identifying formulaic sequences has been a major obstacle for many researchers in the field. Wray (2008) highlights this difficulty by likening the identification of formulaic sequences to “finding black cats in a dark room” (p. 101).

Durrant and Mathews-Aydinli (2011) have distinguished three main approaches to the definition and identification of formulaic sequences. These approaches will be briefly summarized below.

The first approach, which is called the “frequency-based approach”, defines formulaic sequences as “strings of linguistic items (including words, parts of speech, and semantic fields), which have a statistical tendency to co-occur in corpora” (p. 59). This approach is mainly adopted for studies in the field of corpus linguistics and focuses on the recurrent sequences of words in corpora. The second approach, called the “phraseological approach”, defines formulaicity in terms of “either the degree to which the meaning of a word combination is predictable from the meaning of its parts or the degree to which words with similar meaning can be substituted into the phrase” (p. 59). The third approach is called the “psychological approach”. This approach emphasizes the “efficient mental processing and storage of language, defining formulas as strings of linguistic items which speakers remember and process as wholes, rather than constructing them ‘online’ with each use” (p. 59).

All the three approaches mentioned above define formulaic sequences as a construct with certain characteristics and reject all sequences, which do not present these characteristics. For instance, for the frequency-based approach the main criterion for formulaicity is frequency of occurrence. That is, if a sequence occurs above a certain frequency threshold it is considered to be a formulaic sequence and those sequences that occur below the threshold are not formulaic. Within the phraseological approach, one could decide to study only the formulaic sequences that are semantically opaque and grammatically irregular and hence the sequences, which are regular and semantically transparent, will be rejected. These two approaches (frequency-based and phraseological) deal with the notion of formulaicity in terms of the external linguistic characteristics; that is, at a linguistic level only. However, the psychological approach puts formulaicity at the centre of language competence and studies the holistic treatment of a sequence by a particular language user.

Considering the psycholinguistic perspective, Wray (2008) encourages viewing formulaicity as the way a certain string is handled by a particular individual (speaker internal approach), and not attributing formulaicity to strings in the language (speaker external approach). The rationale for her argument is that a string, which might be formulaic for one person (for instance for the speaker) need not be formulaic for another (for instance for the listener). Another reasoning proposed by Ellis (2012) is that a speaker might make use of sequences that are ready-made but not necessarily native-like. For instance, foreign language learners, who learn language mainly in the classroom and have less contact with native speakers, might internalize sequences, which are not frequently used by other speakers of that language.

Emphasizing the distinction between the speaker internal and speaker external approaches to formulaicity should not be considered as denying the possible overlap between the two approaches. For instance, it is undeniable that sequences, which are used frequently in social routines, might be automatized by the language users of a given community. However, it is essential to consider that what is formulaic speaker externally is not necessarily so speaker internally and the overlap between them should not be assumed without empirical evidence.

In this study the focus is on formulaicity in the language production of foreign language learners who learn the target language in the classroom context. Therefore, a psycholinguistic approach is adopted to define formulaic sequences learner internally. Within the psycholinguistic approach, one of the most widely used definitions of formulaic sequences is presented by Wray (2002) who defines formulaic sequences 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 (Wray, 2002, p. 9).

The definition provided by Wray will be used for the purpose of this study. However, this definition cannot be directly operationalized in empirical studies; that is, it is not enough for the identification of formulaic sequences in a set of data. Due to the psycholinguistic approach of this study formulaicness depends on the speaker's use of an utterance rather than anything about the expression itself. As Wray (2004) claims it is difficult to identify formulaic sequences by simply looking at their form, meaning or usage. Therefore, in order to identify a word string as formulaic or non-formulaic, one needs contextual and pragmatic cues (Wray, 2002). Further, Wray admits that the definition needs to be established prior to the identification, for identifying a phenomenon relies on how it is defined. However, there is a circular relationship between definition and identification, and in the case of formulaic sequences "identification relies less on formal definitions than the definitions rely on identification" (ibid. p. 19).

One effective way to approach the identification of formulaic sequences is criteria checklists that combine characteristics typically associated with formulaic language. A number of researchers have developed such checklists to be used for the identification of formulaic sequences. These include: Myles (2004), Wood (2010), and Wray (2008). Based on the review of the criteria checklists introduced by these researchers, it can be concluded that

formulaic sequences are characterized by certain crucial features. The following list of features provides a synthesis of the checklists developed by the above researchers. This list will be used to recognize formulaic sequences in this study.

- Well-formedness of a sequence compared to a more creative language production (A sequence beyond the speaker's current knowledge of grammar)
- Odd syntactic or semantic function in the sentence
- Phonologically coherent utterance (fluently articulated, non-hesitant)
- A sequence used repeatedly in the same form
- A particular formulation, which is the one most commonly used by the individual speaker when conveying a specific idea.
- A sequence associated with a particular situation
- Community-wide in use (shared classroom knowledge)
- The repetition of the previous utterance
- Combined with other language units without applying necessary changes

It is expected that the list might be revised and developed during the study. Since as Read and Nation (2004) suggest, considering the variability of formulaic sequences and the way different researchers see the construct, it is important to modify the definition of formulaic sequences depending on the purpose of a study.

2.2.5 Mental lexicon

According to Elman (2004) knowledge of the word is usually thought to reside in the mental lexicon, a type of dictionary that contains information about a word's knowledge. Jarema and Libben (2007) define the mental lexicon as "the cognitive system that constitutes the capacity for conscious and unconscious lexical activity" (p. 2). Regarding the structure of the mental lexicon, scholars such as Aitchison (1987) and Sinclair (1991) assert

that the mental lexicon stores linguistic materials in different sizes. It contains both single word units and multi-word chunks. They contended that the mental lexicon is heteromorphic thus allowing chunked forms and analysed forms to co-exist. There is a growing body of research indicating mental representations of formulaic sequences as wholes. Peters (1983) refers to language speakers' errors in blending formulaic sequences as an indicator that some multi-word sequences are stored as units in the same way as individual lexical items. For instance, the utterance 'I think so it is good' can indicate that the learner has stored the sequence 'I think so' as a whole unit. Wood (2015) refers to the findings regarding the fast speed of retrieval of formulaic sequences as evidence that formulaic sequences are stored as single units in mind.

Crick (1979) and later Aitchison (1987) claim that the human brain has a limited ability to process but has vast capacity to store things; therefore, it tends more often to memorize rather than processing. Consequently, language users are inclined to use memory and ready-made routines; if this proves inadequate, they turn to discrete elements and combine them into larger structures. Sinclair (1991) believes that the tendency for ready-made routines can be a natural tendency for economy of efforts or it might be motivated by the discursial processing requirements.

Weinert (1995) argues that formulaic language can be organized in different ways, including linear or non-linear arrangements associated with a particular meaning, function or situation. Formulaic sequences are retrieved based on the linear surface order of their parts or by their phonological units. Further, Weinert (1995) explains that the first and the last words of a sequence might be most perceptible in memory and prompt the recall of the whole sequence. In line with this argument, Wood (2006) has found that the recall of a lexical unit at the beginning of a sequence might elicit more sequences beginning with the same lexical item. Wood (2010) relates this issue to the cohort model of lexical retrieval. According to this model, proposed by Marslen-Wilson and Tyler (1980), retrieval or exposure to the initial phoneme of a lexical item triggers the activation of a mental network of words, which is initiated by the phoneme. During this process, most frequent items are activated the most strongly. Likewise, Sajavaara (1987) observed that an individual lexical item or even a concept could trigger the release of other lexical items or phrases.

2.3 Theoretical background

2.3.1 Theories of second language acquisition

Among the current influential approaches to understanding language acquisition, there are the generative accounts emerging from Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar (Chomsky 1965) and the usage-based approach (Tomasello, 2000).

The generative theory of language acquisition claims that the linguistic competence of a language user can be described as a grammar, which is a highly abstract and unconscious system, that allows the speaker to produce and comprehend language (Slabakova, 2013). In the generative paradigm, the emphasis is mainly on the creative nature of language. According to this model, language is a set of syntactic rules and a set of lexical items and the syntactic rules provide and determine the slots that lexical items can fit. This feature enables language users to formulate novel sentences never heard before (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Sinclair, 1991). This theory proposes a processing system (Universal Grammar) inherent in the mind/brain, which bestows on people a great analytical capacity for the acquisition and generation of language (Chomsky, 1965). In sum, the generative approach is mainly concerned with how Universal Grammar facilitates and constrains the process of language acquisition.

On the other hand, usage-based theories of language acquisition claim that the creative linguistic competence of the speaker is shaped through language use and from "frequency biased abstraction of regularities" within the language (Ellis, 2006, p. 101; Myles et al., 1998, 1999; Slabakova, 2013). Scholars with a usage-based perspective share the assumption that "all linguistic knowledge derives in the first instance from the comprehension and production of specific utterances on specific occasions of use" (Tomasello, 2000, pp. 237–8). This approach puts emphasis on the role of input, since children build up linguistic structures from experience with language (Bybee, 2010; Lieven, Behrens, Speares, & Tomasello, 2003; Tomasello, 2000, 2003). Therefore, differences in quantity and quality of input are expected to result in different learning outcomes. Usage-based accounts of language acquisition focus on redundancy as the main characteristic of grammar, hence analyses the effect of repetition and frequency on the emergence of form in language and the way this knowledge affects comprehension and production (Ellis, 2008; Slabakova, 2013). This model of experience-based and redundant cognitive storage and access system for language, which contains words as well as phrases and sentences, leads to the conception that lexicon and grammar are highly intertwined.

That is, it suggests a continuum between lexis and grammar. Such a view of redundant linguistic representations is in contrast with the generativists' theory of an abstract grammatical system with a redundancy free lexicon (Bybee, 2010).

Supporting the idea that humans possess a valuable cognitive capacity for analytical language processing, some scholars assert that language users also manage to create and understand language using formulaic sequences that are retrieved from memory as a whole unit (Pawly & Syder, 1983; Schmitt, 2000; Wray, 2002; Wray & Perkins, 2000). Although there has been constant interest in the role of formulaic language in second language acquisition, there is a lack of a coherent overall theoretical framework (Wray, 2002; Yorio, 1989). However, Weinert (1995) proposes that a general and comprehensive perspective of the phenomenon of formulaic language may relate to "certain cognitive theories of language and second language acquisition where language knowledge and use are seen in close relation" (p. 181). Sinclair (1991) contends that formulaic sequences are counted under a model of language processing called the "idiom principle", which proposes, "a language user has available to him/her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices" (p. 110). That is, language users have access to multi-word sequences, which are processed holistically (the 'idiom principle' is elaborated in section 2.3.6).

In an attempt to find a theoretical position that places formulaic sequences at the centre of language description and also juxtaposes novelty and formulaicity as options for utterance construction, Wray (2002, pp. 100–101) proposes a model, which includes the various functions of formulaic sequences. According to this model, formulaic language may be a product of a bypassing strategy to reduce the processing effort, to manipulate the hearer or to mark discourse structure. Formulaic sequences might appear diverse in form and function at the linguistic level, but they are a linguistic solution to communication (processing and interaction). Further, she argues that formulaic sequences are a dynamic supply, which is constantly changing to meet the different needs of the language user. However, there are indeed many similarities between individuals in their selection criteria, "as they share, within a speech community, an inventory of idiomatic forms and certain interactional expectations" (ibid. p. 101). In sum, Wray (2002) believes in a compromise between a rule-based and a holistic system. She asserts the rule-based system is essential for language to avoid lack of novelty and imagination, while without the holistic system, language would sound "unidiomatic and pedestrian" (p. 183). The present study, which investigates formulaicity in the oral language production of young

foreign language learners, adopts Wray's theoretical position and the usage-based theories of language acquisition.

2.3.2 Formulaic sequences and second language acquisition

In the field of second language acquisition there is a consensus among scholars that the knowledge and use of formulaic sequences contribute to fluent, well-formed, and appropriate language use and understanding in addition to the processing advantage (Boers et al., 2006; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2008; Wray, 2002). Wray (2000) asserts that in both first and second language acquisition, children seem to be able to use sequences of language that they understand at a holistic level. These sequences can also be used as input for a process of segmentation and analysis (Wray 2000).

Schmitt (2010) criticizes that language instruction has tended to focus more on individual words rather than formulaic sequences while formulaic sequences can play a significant role in second language acquisition and use. He argues that language contains large percentages of formulaic sequences and that language users can commonly apply a large number of formulaic sequences for different purposes in a precise and understandable way. By drawing on the teaching styles in second language classrooms that encourage breaking down larger units of language, Wray (2002, 2008) argues that formulaic language is likely to be less existent in second language acquisition. However, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) claim that formulaic sequences can be the centre of second language acquisition, as all language learners seem to go through a stage where they make use of unanalysed chunks of language in certain predictable situations. In fact, the language classroom is a context of practice and repetition and therefore certain multi-word sequences are used frequently (e.g. *may I go out, open your books*), which lead to them being automatized as a single unit. Moreover, there might be phrases that were initially generated creatively but due to frequency of use they fused into a single processing unit. Based on the results of previous studies, Ellis (2008) argues that production of formulaic sequences is not restricted to learners in naturalistic settings, but can also be observed in the language produced by classroom learners even when the instruction is grammar-oriented. Likewise, Myles et al. (1999) maintain that classroom learners extract and internalize prefabricated sequences out of the grammar practice activities they engage in.

2.3.3 Individual differences in language learning

Ellis (2004) declares that in the process of first language acquisition, children do not follow the same path in language acquisition and they vary in their speed of acquisition. Nevertheless, all, except for special cases (such as individuals with language impairments), achieve full competence in their mother tongue. However, in the case of second language acquisition, learners vary not only in the rate of acquisition but also in their level of achievement. He identified key variables responsible for individual differences, which include intelligence, language aptitude, memory, learning styles, personality, anxiety, willingness to communication, motivation, learner beliefs and learning strategies (Ellis, 2004, p. 530).

In the field of second language acquisition, research on individual differences attempts to explain how and why language learners differ in the rate and level of achievement (Dörnyei, 2006; Skehan, 1991). Dörnyei (2006) argues that in instructed settings individual differences as persistent personal characteristics have been found to generate multiple correlations with language acquisition. Studies on individual differences have revealed a number of influential factors that can affect the language learning and teaching process. In the process of second language acquisition, Mihaljevic Djigunovic (2015) believes that studies on young language learners can provide valuable information about the role of individual learner differences on learners' second language development. Mihaljevic Djigunovic (2009) criticizes a general tendency among researchers, which assumes that there is not much need for research on individual differences among children learning a foreign language, since they are similar to one another. She states that research on individual differences is highly necessary for young foreign language learners as they do differ among themselves.

Individual differences can be highly influential in language learners' thinking and performance and hence have gained significant attention by researchers to help explain the impact of learner-related variables on language learning processes and outcomes (Dörnyei, 2006; Ellis, 2004). According to Mackey (2012) individual differences are posited to account for the degree to which a learner can attend to incoming input, process feedback, produce output, and benefit from all these factors in the process of second language acquisition.

Among the different aspects of language, the acquisition and use of formulaic sequences have also been found to vary between individual language learners (Dörnyei, Durow, & Zahran, 2004; Wong Fillmore, 1976; Wray, 2002). Wray (2002) believes that the use of formulaic sequences is associated with the "need and desire to interact" (p. 175). In this regard, the

relevant factors that play a role might be the interactional and other purposes of the second language use, the degree of internal or external pressure on the learner, and the learners' desire to interact with the native speakers of the target language (Wong Fillmore, 1976; Wray, 2002). Based on the results of their study Dörnyei et al. (2004) concluded that the acquisition of formulaic language could be highly affected by the three variables of language aptitude, motivation, and sociocultural adaptation. Even though individual differences have proved to play a crucial role in second language acquisition, few studies have addressed individual differences with regard to the acquisition and application of formulaic sequences.

Concerning the research methods adopted for studies on individual differences, both Skehan (1991) and Ellis (2004) have criticized the over-reliance on quantitative approaches particularly the use of questionnaires. Skehan (1991) suggests that in order to capture a fair view on individuality of the learners, a greater reliance on ethnographic approaches is required for research on individual differences. He states that naturalistic studies might reveal a deeper understanding of the individuality of learners and also the interaction between individual differences and learners' experiences. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, individual differences among the learners are investigated through a more naturalistic approach; that is, through observation and also information from the parents' questionnaire.

2.3.4 Classroom instruction and second language acquisition

In the field of second language acquisition, research results obtained from naturalistic language learning settings and the related conclusions have often been generalized to foreign language learning settings (Muñoz, 2010). However, in contrast to learners who learn their second language in a natural setting, children learning a language in a foreign language classroom context only have access to the target language inside the classroom and their exposure to the second language outside of the classroom ranges from minimal to no exposure at all. Muñoz (2010) described some of the characteristics of an instructed setting where the target language is a foreign language which differentiate it from a natural setting: (1) instruction is limited to 2–4 sessions of approximately 50 minutes per week; (2) exposure to the target language during those class periods may be limited both in source (mainly the teacher) and quantity; (3) the target language is not the language of communication between peers; (4) the teacher's oral fluency in the target language may be limited; and (5) the target language is not spoken outside the classroom. Therefore, considering the fact that both quantity and

quality of the input to which learners have access is of high significance, Muñoz (2010) believes that differences in the process and outcome of language learning in a natural setting and in a typical foreign language setting are too important to be disregarded.

Based on their findings Eyckmans, Boers, & Stengers (2007) argue that language learning in the classroom does not provide adequate occasions for the students to "build a phrasal repertoire" (ibid. p. 2) that could be close to that of native speakers. As Ellis (2002) states, the classroom environment can be a context, which might distort patterns of exposure, function, medium and social interaction. However, this environment can be advantageous for tracking the broad outlines of pedagogical input to learners while tracking their production (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002).

Some scholars such as Pawley & Syder (1983) and Wray (2008) argue that classroom settings often do not provide the type and amount of input required for the development of formulaicity. Since language teachers and learners have a tendency towards individual words instead of phrases (Wray, 2008). Therefore, it is common that classroom-taught learners produce grammatical but unidiomatic language (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Meanwhile, Cameron (2001) credits classroom routines for being a good source for the learners to develop knowledge of the language. Owing to context and familiarity of events, learners get the opportunity to predict the meaning of language. Also these routines offer a way to add variation and complexity to the language; growing complexity of language can be supported by routines and situations so that the child continues to understand. Classroom routines then can provide opportunities for meaningful language development especially with regard to prefabricated strings that are repeated in certain situations.

2.3.5 Input and output

Corder (1967) introduced the term 'input' as the data available to learners through listening or reading. Building on this foundation, Krashen (1981) presented the construct of comprehensible input. According to Krashen, learning will occur when the input learners receive is at or slightly higher than their language level.

Comprehensible input is considered as an indispensable component for second language learning; however, input alone has been shown insufficient. Learners need opportunities to produce and use language (to create output) in order to develop in their second language (Mackey, 2012). Initial arguments on the insufficiency of comprehensible input were advanced by Swain (1985) who noted that learners need to be able to process language for

both its meaning and its grammatical form. Hence, she proposed the *Output Hypothesis* claiming that production in the target language can promote language acquisition. She declares that output provides opportunities for learners to reflect upon language form; thus interlanguage change is more likely. In the process of second language acquisition, output has a number of functions, such as promoting automatization, helping the learners to notice the gaps in their language knowledge and receiving feedback. Recognition of a problem during production may prompt learners to receive the feedback attentively. Therefore, it has been concluded that opportunities to produce output can facilitate second language development (Swain, 1985, 2005). Likewise, Bakhtin (1986) views language learning as a combination of learner's experiences in interactions and his/her practice in the implementation of specific language skills. He emphasizes that by speaking to others, language learners begin to understand language and learn new utterances. In the formulation of new utterances, learners choose words and structures based on what they have heard from other speakers in similar situations. That is, they tend to accumulate vocabulary and grammatical forms that they hear or read from a textbook and repeat them in their utterances for creating new meaning (Bakhtin, 1986).

Interaction in second language acquisition triggers output and also provides opportunities for learners to modify output and to overcome comprehension difficulties through the process of negotiation for meaning (Long, 1989). Through these negotiations, utterances are checked, repeated, clarified or modified so that they provide comprehensible input for the listener. Meanwhile, when learners are asked to modify their initially incorrect output, they might draw on their emergent grammatical resources to process language syntactically (Long, 1989; Swain, 1985). Consequently, negotiation of meaning brings about conditions to promote second language acquisition through learners': comprehension of input, production of modified output and attention to second language form (Pica et al., 1996).

Ellis (2002) regards frequency of experience with language input as a vital element in the process of language acquisition. He further explains that structural regularities such as lexical choices (including formulaic sequences) and grammatical rules of language emerge from learners' analysis of distributional features of language input. However, different theories of second language acquisition assign different degrees of importance to the role of input. Advocates of the generative theory of language acquisition believe in an innate knowledge of the possible forms of language and argue that input works as a trigger that fosters internal language processing (Ellis, 2008). On the other hand, the usage-based

theory of second language acquisition assigns a significant role to the input. According to this theory, knowledge of a language derives from knowledge of the actual usage (Bybee, 2010; Tomasello, 2003). That is, acquisition is controlled by external factors. Tomasello (2003) underlines that frequency of use affects cognitive representations; patterns that are repeated in communication seem to become automated and conventionalized. The more often a linguistic form occurs in the input, the more likely it becomes that this will form the basis of the learner's language output.

2.3.6 Language processing

In the field of language acquisition and psycholinguistics, processing of language refers to “the cognitive activities that underlie different aspects of language learning and use” such as understanding and/or producing language (Gass & Mackey, 2012, p. 596).

In section 2.2.5, it was noted that human brain can store a vast amount of knowledge in long-term memory, but it is able to process only a limited amount of it in real time such as when one is speaking (Crick, 1979). Hence, it was suggested that humans tend to compensate the lack of processing capacity by storing a large number of frequently needed sequences, which can be easily retrieved as a whole (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Theoretical descriptions on the processing of formulaic sequences have made a significant contribution to the understanding of the processing efficiency of formulaic sequences in first and second language acquisition.

There are two theoretical explanations on the processing of formulaic sequences. These are the usage-based model (Ellis, 1996, 2002) and the dual systems model proposed by Wray (2002). The usage-based model holds that linguistic structures are built up from experience with language. This model emphasizes the characteristics of input as an influential factor on the way language is learnt, processed and used. Ellis (2002) suggests that the usage-based model can be applied to explain the processing of formulaic sequences. He argues that sequences that appear more frequently in input are processed faster than a less frequent formulaic sequence. In sum, this approach mainly concerns the frequency effects in the processing of formulaic sequences. It is proposed that frequent structures, words or sequences can be represented in the lexicon in the same way. However, as Ellis (2002) warns, frequency should not be viewed as the only explanation. There are other factors including semantic salience, communicative intent, etc. that can be influential.

The other theoretical description is the dual processing model, proposed by Wray (2002). In this model there are two mechanisms—holistic and

analytical—for language processing and production. The holistic procedural system corresponds to the formulaic system where a whole chunk of language (of various lengths) is processed as a single unit. On the other hand, the analytical system will be accessed for online generation of word-for-word utterances. According to this model, the holistic system will be accessed for processing and interactional needs of language users. This system minimizes the workload of the short-term memory, which can be overloaded when generating language from individual words and syntax (Ellis, 2002; Wray, 2002). The analytical system will be accessed when language users are not under pressure to perform rapidly online (Ellis, 2002; Wray, 2002). This system is responsible for creativity and flexibility in language.

Such a dual-nature view of the language system is similar to the two principles proposed by Sinclair (1991) who made a contrast between the two structuring principles employed in language use: an ‘open choice principle’ and an ‘idiom principle’. The former matches the generativist view or the analytic approach where phrases and sentences are made up of morphemes and words by the rules of grammar. In contrast, the idiom principle emphasizes, “a language user has available to him/her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 110). This principle deals with multi-word combinations or chunks, which are processed as whole units without an analysis of the component parts. (Sinclair 1991). That is, language users process these chunks as a single unit. According to this view a language user employs both principles when necessary.

Considering the above-mentioned language systems, Nikolov (2009) asserts that young language learners use memory-based processes, whereas adult language learners rely mainly on rule-based learning. In the process of language learning, it is claimed that adult second language learners have a stronger tendency to analyse input and to store smaller lexical units. As a result they are more likely to express messages in alternative ways, which are meaningful but not native-like (Wray, 2008). On the other hand, considering first language acquisition, Wray (2002) claims:

The process of analysis, which the native speaker child engages in, is not that of breaking down as much linguistic material as possible into its smallest components. Rather nothing is broken down unless there is a specific reason. (Wray, 2002, p. 130)

According to Ellis (2008) the whole issue of whether second language learners run a dual system, is still an open question. Based on the results of a

study by Foster (2001) who found clear differences between native speakers and non-native speakers with regard to the frequency of their use of formulaic sequences, Ellis (2008) argued that second language learners, particularly those who have had little exposure to the target language, may be over-reliant on their rule-based system. However, McLaughlin's information processing model of second language acquisition (1983), suggests that both the nature of the task and the language users' information processing capacity affect the amount of information that the language users are able to process. According to this model, learners are not capable of attending to all the information available in the input or their long-term memory; therefore, routinisation helps them to reduce the burden on their information processing capacity (Ellis, 2008).

Presenting an input processing theory, VanPatten (1996) refers to the limited capacity of working memory, and concludes that this makes it difficult for learners to attend simultaneously to different stimuli in the input. This theory is based on some principles explaining learners' priorities in attending to an input. For instance, he argues that input is processed for meaning prior to the process for form. Content words are processed before anything else. Learners prefer to process lexical items rather than grammatical items (for full account of the principles, see VanPatten, 1996). In an investigation of the error types in collocations, Nesselhauf (2003) observed that the advanced foreign language learners of her study used collocations containing errors. The analysis of the inaccurate sequences demonstrated that mistakes were mainly in non-lexical elements (including prepositions and determiners). The underlying reason proposed by Nesselhauf is that function words like prepositions and articles do not carry meaning and thus fail to attract learners' attention. Similarly, Wray and Fitzpatrick (2008) observed that in the process of producing a sequence, some morphological deviations might occur in function words, articles and inflections. Inflections and articles are the most likely to be changed and articles are the most plausible to be omitted.

2.3.7 Developmental procedure of formulaic language

Concerning the role of formulaic sequences in second language acquisition, Myles et al. (1999) point out the existing debate on whether language learners go through the process of unpacking the initially unanalysed utterances. That is, whether knowledge of formulaic sequences contributes to the development of grammatical competence or whether such rote-learned sequences would be dropped from learners' speech repertoire by the development of their creative rule-governed competence.

Some scholars believe in a clear distinction between formulaic language and the rule created language. Studying the prefabricated patterns in child second language acquisition, Wagner-Gough (1975) and Granger (1998) claim that there is no direct progress of prefabricated patterns into creative rule-governed language. Correspondingly, Krashen and Scarcella (1978) assert that “creative construction process is independent of routines and patterns” (p. 99). According to this perspective, the linguistic information contained in the formulaic sequences is not unpacked; rather learners internalize second language rules independently. On the contrary, other scholars argue for the significant role of formulaic sequences and believe that they contribute to the rest of the system in development; that memorized chunks of language serve as resources from which linguistic abstractions can be made (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002; Ellis, 2002; Myles, 2004; Myles et al., 1998; Nattinger & Decarrico, 1992; Peters, 1983; Tomasello, 2000; Wood, 2002, 2010; Wray, 2008). According to this view, language knowledge is a formulaic-creative continuum and this view stresses the double role of formulaic sequences. Formulaic sequences can be regarded as prefabricated chunks to be used in certain situations and also as resources to feed the analytical knowledge.

During language acquisition, learners acquire and retain a large number of unanalysed chunks of language linked to pragmatic competence in order to use them in certain predictable social contexts. As learners’ competence grows, these formulaic sequences are subject to segmentation and analysis where they are broken down into smaller patterns and individual words. Both the original formulas and the individual units and rules of syntax, which come from analysis, can be retained later (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002). Likewise, in the case of early language learning, McKay (2006) proposes that while exposed to the language in use, young language learners have a strong tendency to rely on a formulaic system. Through this, they achieve implicit knowledge of language rules; hence they become able to create their own structures and discourse. In first language acquisition, there is some evidence that sequences learnt formulaically are later segmented into individual words, which can be combined with other words in a novel utterance (Cameron, 2001; Peters, 1983). The two studies by Myles et al. (1998, 1999) provide positive evidence of a developmental process from formulaic-based language production to lexico-grammatical productivity in the foreign language context. The findings of their studies illustrated that over the course of a year, the participants of their research (eleven and twelve year old learners of French) not only acquired and used formulaic sequences as wholes, but also

progressed from holistically stored interrogative forms to more analytically stored forms and used components in different ways.

Regarding the segmentation of a whole unit, some scholars believe that humans generally adopt a conservative approach to processing. That is, they are unwilling to go beyond the things they have heard in the input or that they have often used themselves (Tomasello, 2003; Wray & Grace, 2007; Wray, 2002). In line with the conservative approach to language processing, Wray (2002) has proposed the “Needs Only Analysis hypothesis” (p. 130). According to this hypothesis, a language user engages in analysing a sequence only if communication circumstances require it. In both first and second language acquisition young language learners analyse formulaic sequences only when needed and more specifically to the extent that they are needed or when the possible changes have been indicated in the course of input (Wray, 2002, 2008). This processing principle explains why some formulas are processed and stored more analytically than others. The Needs Only Analysis strategy leads to the storage of unanalysed formulaic sequences parallel to the storage of analysed sequences and their constituents (Peters, 1983; Wray, 2002).

2.3.8 Functions of formulaic language

As previous sections indicate, a growing body of research has recognized formulaic sequences as significant elements of language. Hence, there has been a growing interest recently in the nature and role of formulaic sequences. Scholars have attempted to find functions of these ready-made lexical bundles for language users and particularly for second language learners. This section will cover a review of the literature to find out the different types of functions that scholars have claimed formulaic language is used for. The aim is to find out what these functions are for and more specifically which of those functions might be potentially relevant to the participants of this study.

Formulaic sequences have been described as a tool that can carry out a range of different functions for different language users (Wood, 2006; Wray, 1999; Wray & Perkins, 2000). Wray and Perkins (2000) regard formulaic sequences as more than a simple linguistic unit and argue that these sequences are tools that different types of speakers can put to different uses. The diversity of uses appears to depend upon several factors, including “maturational level, language knowledge, and personal interactional need” (Ibid. p. 9).

Analysing various functions of formulaic sequences in communication, Wray and Perkins (2000) offer a descriptive model including two main

categories: to reduce the processing load in order to compensate for the limitations of short term memory (e.g. as time buyers), and to function as a tool for social interaction (e.g. satisfying physical, emotional, and cognitive needs). Further, they hypothesize that while the compensatory function eases processing for the speaker, the socio-interactive role serves to ensure successful comprehension on the part of the hearer. Table 2 summarizes Wray and Perkin's (2000) model of functions of formulaic sequences.

Table 2. Functions of formulaic sequences (from Wray & Perkins, 2000, pp. 14–16)

	Function	Effects	Types
Devices of social interaction	Manipulation of others	Satisfying physical emotional and cognitive needs	Commands, requests, politeness markers, bargains
	Asserting separate identity	Being taken seriously Separating from the crowd	Story telling, turn claimers and holders
	Asserting group identity	Overall membership Place in hierarchy	Rituals, threats, group chants, forms of address
Compensatory devices for memory limitations	Processing shortcuts	Increased production speed and/or fluency	Standard phrases, standard ideational labels with agreed meanings
	Time-buyers	Vehicles for fluency, rhythm and emphasis Planning time without losing the turn	Standard phrases with simple meaning, fillers, turn holders, discourse shape markers, repetitions of preceding input
	Manipulation of information	Gaining and retaining access to information otherwise unlikely to be remembered	Mnemonics, lengthy texts one is required to learn, rehearsal

Formulaic sequences assist processing and fluency (Wray, 1999). Due to their prefabricated nature, formulaic sequences are processed more quickly than non-formulaic constructions (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008). They are efficient tools that ease processing for both speakers and listeners (Wray, 2000). Consequently, they are often used by speakers operating under time constraints and need to speak quickly and fluently (Schmitt and Carter 2004). In sum, a main reason for the prevalence of formulaic sequences is that they improve the efficiency in communication (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002).

According to the findings of his research, Wood (2006) suggested that adult second language learners might rely heavily on the use of a particular formulaic sequence to extend the run and avoid pausing, which might permit them to create an illusion of increased fluency. Wray (1999) carried out a broad survey of the literature on formulaic language in the output of adult native speakers, child and adult second language learners, and aphasics. According to her findings, the use of formulaic sequences to extend the run in conversation is more prevalent in normal adults (adults without language difficulties), native or non-native speakers, compared to the other groups (children and aphasics). In addition, Wray (1999) claims that second language learners are more likely to rely on immediate repetition as time buyers. The learner uses these “prefabricated time buying sequences” to promote fluency and protect the turn during planning (Wray, 1999; Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 17). This is a strategy to compensate the limitations of the short-term memory capacity (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Formulaic language is related to three central functions of social interaction. These functions relate to “speaker’s manipulation of others, asserting separate identity and asserting group identity” (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 14). Reviewing the findings of the study by Wong Fillmore (1976) (discussed in section 2.4), Wray (2008) concluded that children seem to adopt a strategy to memorize and use a sequence before they fully understand it, which helps them to “bootstrap themselves into a language” (p. 259). Furthermore, there are recurring speech acts in their social worlds that are often performed using certain conventionalised expressions (formulaic language). That is, a particular discourse function or a particular discourse context requires some established linguistic strings (Schmitt, 2005; Schmitt & Carter, 2004).

According to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), the term speech act refers to an utterance that performs a function in communication. The speech act theory accounts for prototypical discourse functions such as apologizing,

requesting, etc. Austin divides the speech act into three component acts: locutionary acts (utterance of certain words with a certain meaning), illocutionary acts (the function that the speaker intends to accomplish), and perlocutionary acts (the consequential effect or the change caused by the utterance). Among these, the illocutionary act is particularly relevant to formulaic language. To perform social and interactional actions, members of a speech community use specific expressions, which are “tried and true ways of doing things, standard recipes for achieving social purposes” (Pawley, 2007, p. 19). Mastery of these established sequences can enhance integration into communities of speakers, which in turn leads to greater amount of target language input (Schmitt, 2004; Wong Fillmore, 1976). Likewise, Myles et al. (1998) observed that formulaic sequences could help learners to engage in classroom communication. In addition, when they were analysed, formulaic sequences could contribute to learners’ grammatical competence.

2.4 Empirical studies on formulaicity in second language acquisition

There have been a number of research studies in the classroom context demonstrating that formulaic sequences are omnipresent in the language production of second language learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002; Boers et al., 2006; Girard & Sionis, 2003; Myles et al., 1998; Nation, 2001).

Parallel to the findings of Granger (1998) and Ellis (2002), findings of the two research studies by Myles et al. (1998, 1999) support the idea that the classroom context may provide input conditions that are conducive to formulaic intake, use and subsequent analysis. In a review of previous studies (such as Nelson, 1973 and Wong Fillmore, 1976), Li and Schmitt (2009) concluded that children clearly learn formulaic sequences from exposure. However, they argue that there is not enough research to know how incidental formulaic language acquisition occurs.

A study by Boers et al. (2006) reveals that the number of formulaic sequences produced by language learners during their task, correlated with their scores for oral language proficiency and particularly for fluency. Wood and Namba (2013) studied the impact of focused instruction on awareness and use of formulaic sequences by adult second language learners. Their results revealed that exposure to and practice with formulaic sequences could lead to enriched repertoire of formulaic sequences, which could enhance learners’ overall speech fluency and also proficiency.

Investigating the acquisition and use of formulaic sequences, some studies have uncovered problems that learners might experience with these formulas (De Cock, 2004; Liu, 2000; Nesselhauf, 2003, Wray & Fitzpatrick,

2008). The findings of these studies suggest that language learners do not always apply formulaic sequences appropriately and accurately. They might use inaccurate combinations such as ‘I think so we can do it’, or they might use a sequence inappropriately. In sum, these observations revealed that language learners tend to misuse, underuse or overuse formulaic sequences. Based on her observation of adult second language learners, Hasselgreen (1994) concluded that language learners tend to pick up certain high frequency words or sequences and stick to them rather than risking the time and cognitive energy to find alternative choices. Furthermore, Girard and Sionis (2003) studied young language learners’ production of formulaic sequences and concluded that since formulaic sequences seem to be stored in the lexicon as a single unit, at the semantic level this may result in formulaic expressions, which have lost the referential meaning of their constituents. Consequently, learners may misuse formulaic sequences since they do not fully grasp their meaning.

The following section reviews three influential studies on formulaicity in second language acquisition, which could be of particular importance for the present study. These studies are first summarized in table 3 and later they are discussed in more detail.

Table 3. Relevant studies on formulaicity in SLA

Reference	Focus of the study	Participants	Context of study
Wong Fillmore, 1976	Cognitive and social strategies in second language acquisition	5 Spanish speaking children (5–7 years old)	United States (second language context)
Myles, Hooper and Mitchel, 1998	Role of formulaic language in classroom foreign language learning	16 learners of French as a foreign language (11–13 years old)	Secondary School in England (classroom context)
Wood, 2006	Functions of formulaic sequences in second language speech	11 adult intermediate level, English as a second language (ESL) learners	Intensive course at a Canadian University (second language context)

One of the most complete and influential studies of formulaic sequences in child second language acquisition in an English-speaking environment is Wong Fillmore's (1976) study of five young non-English speaking children during the process of their integration into an English-medium school environment. The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies that the children would require to apply in order to handle the problem of making social contacts with those from whom they are to learn a new language. The study involved observation of the five children interacting and playing in pairs with their English-speaking friends over the course of one school year. She identified eight strategies that children used during their language acquisition; some of these strategies directly involved formulaic language. Her findings suggested that children memorized formulaic sequences to establish and sustain social relations and also to use them as basic materials to feed their developing linguistic system. The young language learners in Wong Fillmore's study used formulaic sequences to give the impression that they spoke the language. They used some prefabricated expressions in order to be understood and to initiate conversation. Formulaic sequences allowed the children to start speaking the language before they knew the underlying structures. They picked up certain sequences such as "wanna play?" and used them to interact with their English-speaking peers who could then provide further useful sequences in the context. The data indicated that later the learners analysed the sequences into their component parts. Based on these observations, Wong Fillmore claimed that the acquisition of formulaic sequences is central to learning of the language and that formulas provide the foundation for further analysis and grammatical development.

A significant aspect of the results of Wong Fillmore's study concerns the variation among the five children in her study. Based on her observations, Wong Fillmore concluded that the personal characteristics and preferences of the learners could have a serious effect on the way they handle a complex task like language learning. She related the variation among the learners to the nature of the task and the strategies that the children needed to apply in dealing with the tasks. Moreover, she believed that certain personal characteristics such as language habits, motivation, social needs and habitual approaches to problems affected the way the learners behaved. She observed that the learners differed greatly in the above-mentioned characteristics.

Albeit admitting the significance of formulaic sequences in Wong Fillmore's data, Krashen and Scarcella (1978) state that the participants of her study were required to produce a language far above their linguistic competence. In addition, the learners were mainly exposed to a strongly routinized and predictable language. They declare, "the sort of early output

demands Fillmore's subjects had imposed on them and the routinized predictable input are not present in most language acquisition situations" (p. 295). Correspondingly, Wray (2002) maintains that the selection of formulaic sequences depends on the specific needs in communication and processing. Different second language learners use different formulaic sequences depending on their priorities and also on the situation they find themselves in.

Myles, Hooper and Mitchell (1998) studied 16 foreign language learners of French at the age 11–12 years old, in a British school. They investigated the role of formulaic sequences in the development of the learners' emerging grammatical competence by tracing the development of certain formulaic sequences in the learners' language production. The results of the study suggested that the classroom context could provide input that was conducive to formulaic intake, use and subsequent analysis. Over the course of a year the learners progressed from holistically treated formulaic sequences to more analytical forms. In sum, this study provided positive evidence of a developmental link between formulaic language and grammatical productivity. Myles and her colleagues observed that there was a continuum in the learners of the study ranging from those who never managed to break down the sequences to those who succeeded in doing so. They argued that as the communicative needs of the learners grew beyond the well-practiced classroom routines, they started the breakdown process and used the component parts productively. Instead of dropping the sequences from their interlanguage, the learners actively 'worked on' them and fed them directly into the creative construction process. The learners' first step was to keep the sequence unbroken and add an additional element to it but gradually they started to break down the sequences and used parts of them to generate new utterances. The data of the study revealed that those learners who were more able to use formulaic sequences were also more creative in the later stages. Despite the significance of the study, the results should be considered with caution. It should be remembered that the participants of the study received explicit instructions on the forms. Therefore, as Wray (2002) claims, it is not possible to assert conclusively that the breaking of sequences was the result of segmentation process, due to the explicit instructions or both.

Wood (2006) conducted an exploratory study on the effect of a growing repertoire of formulaic sequences on learners' speech fluency development. The study involved analysing the language production of eleven international learners studying on an intensive ESL program at a Canadian University. The study involved viewing and retelling of three silent movies twice, with a three-month interval between the viewings. The results of the study

indicated that the speech fluency of most of the learners improved over the course of the six months. The quantitative analysis of the data revealed that the learners took different paths to improvement over the six samples. Moreover, through a qualitative analysis of the learners' speech samples, Wood identified a number of functions of formulaic sequences, which facilitated the development of speech fluency. He found that learners tended to use formulaic sequences to extend the run and avoid pausing. Formulas were employed by the learners as fillers in order to buy time to recall the events and to formulate the next stretch of speech. Learners used formulaic sequences to produce more appropriate expressions. In some instances the learners relied on one or several formulas to establish islands of reliability and to increase the illusion of fluency. Learners could repeat formulaic sequences or use multiple sequences in one utterance to lengthen their utterance. The learners could recall a sequence based on a single lexical item. Formulaic sequences could also be triggered by other sequences based on a common lexical element. In these cases the articulation was found to be coherent and rapid. The quantitative results of Wood's study revealed differences among learners in using formulaic sequences for their fluency advantage. However, the study lacked a qualitative investigation and explanation on the individual differences in the application of formulaic sequences for different purposes.

The above-mentioned studies are among the ground-breaking research in the field of formulaicity, in that they investigated some significant issues with regard to formulaic language in different contexts and with learners' from different age groups. Wong Fillmore (1976) carried out a longitudinal observation of learners in a setting where they were surrounded by other children who spoke the target language. The learners needed to acquire the language in order to integrate into the group. They were exposed to massive input both in their school context and probably outside their schools. Myles and her colleagues (1998) observed a classroom of older learners (age 11–13) who were studying French as a foreign language. The learners did not have much exposure to the language outside the classroom. Wood (2006) studied adult learners' performance on some elicitation tasks. The learners were enrolled in an intensive course in an English-speaking context.

The present study will sit between the aforementioned studies with regard to the age of the learners, context of study and also the research design and aim. The subjects of this study are children at the age 9–11 who study English as a foreign language in a classroom setting. The age range of these learners is different from the previous studies. The setting of the study is also different from most studies on formulaicity in second language

acquisition (including the two studies by Wong Fillmore and Wood) which have been carried out in naturalistic contexts. The present study aims at investigating formulaicity in a foreign language classroom context. Unlike the participants of the mentioned studies, the learners of the present study have limited input outside the classroom and their social integration is through their first language (Farsi), which they share with their peers. Considering the similarities and differences in the design of this study in comparison to the previous studies, it will be interesting to explore the possible similarities and differences in the results.

2.5 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has highlighted issues concerning formulaic sequences and second language acquisition. It has informed the present study by providing an account of the nature of formulaic sequences and their function in the process of language production. A review of different approaches to the definition and identification of formulaic sequences could help to set a definition and a criteria checklist as a baseline to be used for the purpose of the present study. It has also covered issues regarding early second or foreign language learning with special focus on the classroom setting parallel to a review of the perspectives on the nature and role of input and output in the process of language learning. The theories of generative grammar and usage-based language acquisition were presented. With reference to usage-based theory, it has been demonstrated that language users have a strong tendency to employ certain sequences in their language production more often. A review of some of the previous empirical studies on formulaicity in second language acquisition could help to locate the present study in the current body of works in the relevant field.

This review of the literature has established a basis for the significance and objectives of this study. It has revealed that despite the growing interest in different aspects of formulaicity, the limited research into the teaching and learning of formulaic language has left many questions unanswered. Many of the investigations concerning formulaicity to date have tended to focus on adult advanced learners, particularly those who were enrolled in an immersion program. Most studies into formulaic language in second language acquisition have focused strongly on naturalistic contexts, hence, very little is known about formulaic language in a classroom context (Wood, 2015). Considering the fact that input has a significant role in the process of language acquisition, the foreign language context (where learners are exposed to limited language input mainly in the classroom context) is a particularly interesting area for more research. Moreover, there are limited

accounts of formulaicity emerging at the early stages of learning, particularly regarding young language learners in a foreign language context, where learners are not exposed to real communication in their second language outside the classroom. All in all, as Wray (2002) emphasizes, we “miss some striking differences in the patterns of form and function between different types of learner” (p. 145). In general, therefore, it seems that there is very limited knowledge on the production and usage of formulaic sequences by young language learners who mainly receive their input within a classroom context. Noticing this gap in the literature and partly my experience of learning and teaching English as a foreign language has motivated this research. In sum, this study is distinctive in two respects: First, the learner characteristics, namely age (young language learners, 9–11 years old) and first language background (Farsi), and second, the learning context (foreign language context).

2.6 Research questions

An overarching aim of the present study is to bridge the gap in the literature and to investigate formulaicity in the oral language production of young foreign language learners. Overall, the purpose of this study is to explore the use of formulaic sequences by young foreign language learners in a classroom context. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the functions of formulaic sequences in young learners’ oral language production?

Analysis of the data revealed evidence of inter-learner variation in the use of formulaic sequences for different functions. Therefore, a second research question emerged from the data analysis. That is:

2. What are the differences among the individual learners in applying formulaic sequences for certain functions?

3 Methodology

The present chapter provides a description of the study design and the rationale for the methodological choices in the research. The context of the study will be introduced in section (3.1) followed by a general presentation of the participants and the ethical considerations regarding research with children in section (3.2). After a presentation of the data collection tools and the rationale for the choices in section (3.3), there will be a short report on a pilot study (section 3.4). Section (3.5) elaborates on the research procedure from data collection to data analysis. In order to provide a picture of the nature of data, a random session was described in section (3.6). The chapter ends with a description of the individual learners of this study in section (3.7).

3.1 Context of the study

One of the influential factors that play a role in the process of language learning is the context. Therefore, in this section I will present the context of this study with regard to the position of the English language in society.

This study addresses issues regarding children learning a foreign language in the classroom context in Iran. The aim is to gain an insight into the structure of language learning and the objectives of teaching and learning English in the Iranian context; the reason that these children are learning English and the goals that the teacher is trying to achieve. The setting for the data collection was a private language institute in Iran. Iran provides a good example of a foreign language context where learners are exposed to English mainly in the classroom and since there are very few studies investigating formulaicity in a foreign language context, this provides an added significance for the study. In addition, the researcher's knowledge of the context and easy contact with the language institute (convenience sampling) were other factors for selecting this context.

3.1.1 Country context

Despite the recent trend towards early English language learning in most countries around the world (Rixon, 2013), Iran has been more conservative in its English language policy. Khubchandani (2008) believes that this policy could be due to the politicization of language issues and the concern that English poses a threat to the Farsi (Persian) language and Islamic culture. In Iran the English language is associated with the United States and the United Kingdom. Due to the government's negative attitude towards western culture, politics and social foundations, the English language is faced with hostility from officials (Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015). Although the English

language is viewed as a tool to introduce imperialism and cultural invasion, the national policy documents reflect the fact that foreign language education is necessary for the economic and technological development of the country (Farhady et al., 2010).

An English as a foreign language (EFL) learner in Iran usually has very limited access to the target language outside the classroom. The classroom provides the main source of input for the learners (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004). Very few programs are broadcast in English on TV, and almost all foreign movies are dubbed into Farsi. Due to the developments in technology and the accessibility of Internet and satellite, there are growing opportunities for language learners. However, the exposure to English is still very limited compared to countries such as Sweden. According to Lindgren and Munoz (2013) a language learner in Sweden may be exposed to English on a daily basis (with an average of more than eight hours per week) through various sources apart from the language classroom (e.g. TV or contact with English speakers).

In addition to the difficulties at the pragmatic level (due to cultural differences), the contrastive rules of the two languages pose difficulties at the syntactic and semantic levels. The language structures of English and Farsi are different. Farsi is a Subject+Object+Verb language, while English is a Subject+Verb+Object language. Moreover, Farsi is a pro-drop language where verb inflection can indicate the person and number of the subject. There is no definite article in Farsi; therefore, it can be difficult for Farsi speaking EFL learners to use the definite article *the*. In Farsi there is no gender for nouns and pronouns and hence pronouns *he and she* in English can be confusing for a Farsi speaker.

It can be demanding to master the phonetic system of English, to know where to pause, stress, and to know how to deal with intonation. In Farsi, stress usually falls on the final syllable of a word, while in English the position of stress is not predictable in that way. Farsi does not have word-initial consonant cluster, therefore pronouncing English words with consonant cluster in the initial syllable can be challenging for Farsi speaking EFL learners. Furthermore, they need to change their reading and writing habits. Farsi writing is from right to left with a completely different alphabet (modified from the Arabic alphabet) and therefore it is not surprising that Farsi speakers are challenged when it comes to languages written with the Latin alphabet.

3.1.1.1 English at public Schools

Public education in Iran includes one year of pre-primary (age 5) and two cycles of primary (ages 6 to 12) and secondary (ages 12 to 18) education. Each of these two cycles lasts for six years. Although there are a number of languages and dialects spoken in different parts of Iran, Farsi (Persian) is the predominant and official language of the country. Also, Farsi is the official language of instruction in public schools throughout the country. English and Arabic are two foreign languages that are taught at schools beginning in grade seven when the learners are around 11–12 years old. That is, the formal instruction of the two foreign languages (at school) starts at the same time. Arabic is the language of religion and in the documents English is referred to by the phrase “foreign language” rather than English language (Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015, p. 16).

The central government in Iran decides (primarily) about all the educational policies. The ministry of education is responsible for the policies regarding the school system, textbook selection and the exams (Ghorbani, 2009). The teachers can only select the prescribed textbooks for use in school. Due to the politicization of language, English education at school segregates language from culture. The textbooks used in schools do not include anything regarding the culture of English speaking countries. Almost all the names and situations are Iranian and even in some situations, some Islamic values related to the appearance of the characters (in the illustrations) and their activities are implemented. This absence of English culture can be a major barrier for communicative language learning, because the native culture is completely different from that of English-speaking countries. In sum, the English subject taught in schools is mainly a representation of Farsi and Islamic ideology and has no reference to the culture of the English-speaking communities (Aliakbari, 2004).

The ministry of education does not demand a high level of proficiency from the applicants to be able to teach English. The entrance exam that the applicants at the teacher-training centre take has a cut score much lower than the university entrance exams. In addition, the ministry of education does not provide any specialized teacher-training courses for the English teachers to improve their English proficiency and teaching skills. Due to the teachers' low proficiency level, the English classes at schools are mostly held in L1 (Farsi). Consequently, after 6–7 years of English instruction, students have minimal communication skills in English.

3.1.1.2 English at private language institutes

Nowadays the Iranian society seems to pay more attention to English as a required tool for engaging in globalization, communication and science and technology (Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015). Accordingly, during recent years, parents have been keen on early language education for their children. Moreover, given the knowledge that the quality of English education in public schools is not satisfactory, many people send their children to private institutes to learn English as an extracurricular activity. Therefore, there is a high level of demand for private language institutes. Even adults who want to achieve a better proficiency in English have to take English courses at these language institutes. Aliakbari (2004) argues “English seems to have found its way right to the heart of Iranian society, proving itself to be a necessary, rather than a mere school subject” (p. 2).

Due to this ever-growing interest in acquiring English, the number of language institutes is also growing and hence the competition among them is becoming more intense. Therefore, notions like communicative language teaching and learning, and teaching materials selection have become fundamental matters in language education. Language institutes use a wide variety of pirated American or British materials, which might be adapted in some cases in line with the general guidelines provided to them by the state.

Compared to public schools, private language institutes generally have higher requirements regarding the language proficiency of their teachers. The applicants should pass a test similar to IELTS or TOEFL. Most of the language institutes also provide teacher-training courses for their teachers. The language classes at the private language institutes are mainly held in L2 (English).

3.1.2 Learning context

As mentioned earlier, the public educational system in Iran does not introduce English language to the students before the age of 11; consequently, parents who wish their children to learn English before the age 11 need to send their children to a private language institute as an extracurricular activity. This study was carried out in one of the language institutes in the capital, Tehran, where learners study English after their school hours. The learning context is an instructed foreign language learning setting, a formal language learning context where students are exposed to English predominantly in the structured environment of the language classroom. The instruction is mainly based on the course book. The learners attend their language classes two to three sessions (during the summer, three sessions) per week; each session is 90-minutes. The school year is

divided into periods known as semester, each semester lasts for approximately two and a half months. The total number of sessions for each semester is 18 sessions. One session in the middle of the semester and one session at the end of the semester are devoted to test and review. In total, there are four semesters per year and since the course is an extra curricular activity the learners can attend the course even during summer. The data for this study was collected during the summer of 2014.

The lessons were based around the course material “Family and Friends” (Oxford University Press) and the conversations originated from the course book themes. The activities ranged from reading a text to doing a role-play, and all of the activities were presented in or at least built on topics included in the course book. According to the institute’s policy, teacher and students are expected to communicate only in English during the whole session. However, there are instances when the children use their first language (Farsi), particularly when talking to their peers and when the teacher is not present. The resistance towards using first language was voiced by the frequently repeated sequence, “No Farsi”. One of the reasons for abandoning first language in the English classrooms is that the class is the only source of the target language input for the learners, and through using an English-only approach the learners are provided with maximum exposure to the language. As mentioned earlier, the state education system focuses mainly on the teaching of grammar and reading and speaking skills seem to be overlooked. In addition the language of instruction is Farsi. In contrast, the private language institutes try to emphasize on a communicative approach and developing the speaking skills of learners. In order to maximize learners’ communication in English, teachers and learners are required to abandon their L1 in the classroom.

3.2 Participants

In the classroom that I observed there were 12 language learners (9–11 years of age) who have been studying English for about three years, and their teacher. Each semester the learners might be grouped differently, therefore each semester when there is a new group some learners might know each other and some might be new to each other. The class where the data was collected was chosen by the head of the institute, a convenience sample (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In this group all of the learners knew each other from the previous semesters and the teacher was new to all the learners. Although there were 12 language learners in the classroom, not all the learners were active participants throughout the study. One of the learners was not willing to be part of the study. She consented to the

researcher's presence, on the condition that her image was not recorded in the video and her language output not analysed. Her wish was taken into consideration and the camera was positioned at an angle that avoided capturing her image: she was also cooperative in this procedure and selected a seat out of the view of the camera. Further attrition occurred when 3 students left the class following a 10-day holiday break during the research period (after eight sessions). Therefore, the rest of the observations included eight learners. Since the students were grouped based on their proficiency level and not on age, the age range of the learners was between nine and eleven years. Both the teacher and the learners were Farsi native speakers and English was their foreign language. At this age (9–11) the learners have not started English at their ordinary school and they have no other formal English instruction apart from their language class at the language institute. A more detailed description of each learner is presented in section 3.7.

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

For research that involves human beings as participants, the ethical issues are of high significance. The researcher should respect the rights, interests, sensitivities, and privacy of participants of the study. When working with human beings as participants of a study all aspects of identity including their culture, gender, and age should be respected and thoroughly considered (BAAL, 1994, 2006; The Swedish research council (VR), 2011).

This project involved observing and recording a language classroom using a video camera and audio recording devices. The participants were children aged between 9 and 11 years old, therefore the ethical aspects of classroom observations were considered in advance. This study was carried out in Iran where the local procedure of the context requires permission from the head of the institute or institute board. In order to do so, prior to the data collection, the researcher was asked to provide a written document (Appendix G) that contained an explanation of what she was going to do and how long the study would take. Additionally, an explanation was needed regarding any possible effects (benefits/harms) of the research on the students, institute, or the society. Furthermore, children's right to withdraw at any time during the study was confirmed. Based on the documents and a follow up interview, the institute's committee consented to this study. Next, the principal arranged a meeting with the teacher of the target classroom where the researcher could explain the research process and obtain the teacher's consent.

An important aspect of the researcher's responsibilities concerned the informants of the study. Regarding the willingness to participate and also the

confidentiality, particular care was applied to those people from whom information or data were going to be elicited or collected. As the participants of this study were young language learners, informed consent was obtained from their parents or guardians during a face-to-face meeting. In order to get the informed consent from the parents, an information sheet in Farsi was prepared (Appendix H) containing the information about the research as well as asking for their permission. Out of respect for children as developing individuals, informed assent was also obtained from children. For this purpose, I was required to make sure that the children understood what the project involved concerning the purpose, procedure and the outcomes. Therefore, a simple and short written informed consent (Appendix I) was prepared in Farsi using simple language comprehensible to children. After an oral explanation of the research process by the researcher, the children were asked to read the short informed consent and to circle a smiley face if they agreed or a sad face if they were not willing to participate. The drawback with using sad face and smiley face as the only alternatives might be that children could feel obliged to choose the happy face since a sad face might be considered negative. However, I tried to emphasize (both in oral and in written explanations) on their voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The overall goal of the informed consent was to make sure that enough information was provided for the participants to make informed voluntary decisions about participating. Based on the checklist recommended by Mackey and Gass (2005, pp. 29–30), the informed consent (prepared for the parents) included information about:

- Procedure and purpose of the research; attempts were made to provide sufficient information about all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to affect informants' willingness to participate.
- The potential risks and benefits; the information given at the outset of the project covered the objectives of the research and its possible consequences for the participants
- Whom to contact with questions regarding the study or their rights as participants; the researcher's phone number and email address were provided in the form as well as the name and address of the university.

- The steps that were and will be taken to ensure their confidentiality and anonymity (using pseudonyms, not revealing identifying information,...). The issues of privacy and confidentiality were of high importance for the researcher to be considered, hence using pseudonyms for both the learners and the teachers and not revealing any identifying information will be the first step to ensure the participants' anonymity. The video recordings will be viewed only by the researcher and her supervisors. All the recordings will be stored on a memory stick in a locked cabinet and will be used only for the purpose of the research and then after the completion of the project they will be destroyed.
- Also the informed consent included information that the participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

3.3 Instruments

In the following section, all the instruments that were used for the purpose of this study are presented. First, multiple data collection methods that were used in this study are presented and later the software that was used for transcription of the data is introduced. Data collection from a range of sources (learners, teacher, parents), contributed to triangulation as well as broadening the scope of the investigation and enhance the scholar's ability to draw conclusions about the problem under study (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.3.1 Observations and recordings

Mason (2002) defines observation as “methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing him/herself in a research setting so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (p. 84). Observation has long been considered as an important research tool to gain insight into the process of teaching and learning particularly in a classroom setting. It has also been used in this study as the main source of data collection since it was believed that it would allow the researcher to collect live data from naturally occurring situations (Cohen et al., 2007).

During the classroom observations I had a non-participant role sitting quietly in a corner in the classroom. One of the collection methods included observational field notes by the researcher during the sessions. The lessons were also recorded using a video camera, which was set in a fixed position in order to capture the whole classroom except the student who did not consent to participate in the study. It was believed that the video recording could capture the non-verbal behaviour that may be relevant for the analysis.

Moreover, as Mackey and Gass (2005) explain, repeated observation helps the researcher to gain a “deeper and more multi-layered understanding” of the participants and the context of the study (p. 176). During the revision of the video recordings more details were added to the field notes. Having access to the video and audio recordings in addition to the field notes provided during the observations could help to develop a better awareness of the events in the classroom. In this way the common risks of the observation method such as “selective attention” and “selective memory” was addressed (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 410). A pilot study (described in section 3.4) revealed the weaknesses of the instrument concerning the sound quality of the recordings; for instance, on occasions when more than one speaker was speaking. Therefore, in order to have a backup for those instances when the sound quality of the video recordings was not good enough, there were six audio recorders positioned in different places in the classroom. The field-notes from classroom observations were supplemented by additional notes from the post-lesson reviews with the teacher.

3.3.2 Elicitation tasks

In order to elicit oral production from each individual learner two picture-story elicitation tasks were administered in the beginning (Session 2) and at the end of the semester (Session 16). The first elicitation task was adopted from the ELLiE project (Enever, 2011). It was a picture of a classroom scene intended to elicit language concerning classroom activities (Appendix D). The second task was a picture of a classroom scene adopted from the picture book “First Thousand Words in English” (Amery, 2003) (Appendix E). Both the elicitation tasks illustrated classroom scenes with children engaged in different activities. Since these learners learn their language mainly in the classroom, it was believed that a task, which would elicit some classroom language, would be appropriate.

3.3.3 Parents’ questionnaire

In order to gain information about the children’s exposure to English outside the classroom, a questionnaire was administered to the parents. The questionnaire was adopted and adapted from the ELLiE project and was translated into Farsi (Appendix F). To make sure that the reliability of the translated text was acceptable, a Farsi-speaking English language teacher completed back translation, which could help to identify and eliminate the ambiguities in the language. The questionnaire mainly asked about learners’ exposure or interaction with English outside the classroom.

3.3.4 Transcription software

The recordings were transcribed using the transcription software F5. The software allows setting the playback speed so that the recordings play at half-speed. The recording restarts a few seconds behind where it stopped which helps to back up a few words when it starts anew. It also offers shortcuts, which helps with commonly used words or phrases. The additional advantage of using the program F5 was the time stamping feature, which refers to inserting the time in minutes and seconds into a transcript. It provides a marker of where in the audio or video the text is found. For the purpose of analysis sometimes it was essential to distinguish and compare the time of language production.

The above-mentioned instruments were tested and modified through a small-scale pilot study. The next section briefly presents the pilot study.

3.4 Pilot study

This section reports on a small-scale pilot study, which was intended to test logistics prior to conducting the main study. The principal aim of the pilot phase was to test the feasibility of the main study and refine the design quality and efficiency.

Local procedures in this context led me to negotiate with the institute principal who gave permission for me to observe and audio and video record one of the classrooms (eight learners and their teacher) for three consecutive sessions (3 x 90 minutes). For the next step, I obtained the teacher's and parents' permission. Learning context and age of the participants were the same in both pilot study and the main study. To provide sufficient data for the purposes of the pilot study, classroom observations were conducted over three sessions, followed by the administration of an elicitation task. The task was adopted from the ELLiE project (Appendix D). Following the data collection, the recordings were transcribed (Appendix A, codes used in transcription). In the next step, formulaic sequences were identified (Appendix B, list of criteria for identification). Afterwards, the data was analysed to identify the functions served by formulaic sequences in the oral language production of young foreign language learners. Analysis of the data revealed several functions of formulaic sequences in learners' language production such as language play and zone of safety (functions are more fully elaborated in chapter 4).

A significant result of this investigation concerns the categories for the functions of formulaic sequences. In the pilot study, an emergent-based approach was adopted, that is the categories emerged from the analysis of the data and there were no pre-established categories. However, the pilot

study revealed that this approach might miss some important aspects; for example, some of the categories previously identified by other researchers.

Regarding the methodological aspects, the study revealed some weaknesses in the choice of data collection tools. Since there were eight learners in the classroom with their teacher, there were instances when the voice quality of the video was not good enough for the transcription. There were several occasions when two, three, or more learners were talking at the same time. On the other hand, there were many instances when two or three students talked at the same time, which made transcription difficult or on some occasions even impossible. In general, the recordings illustrated a pattern that sometimes students keep silent, listening to the teacher, and when they start talking some of the students talk at the same time. To address the above-mentioned problems with sound quality of the recordings, for the main study, additional audio recording devices were placed strategically in the classroom; at least one recorder was located between each two or three learners.

Having explored and identified some of the features (and outcomes) of the research design and also the language output of the learners, the results of this pilot study offered several noteworthy contributions to different aspects of the main study. It provided the researcher with a useful opportunity to gain some insight into the teaching and learning processes in this context and also to test the instruments.

The results of the pilot study revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the emergent approach with categories of functions of formulaic sequences. Therefore, for the purpose of the main study, the baseline was pre-established categories, which emerged from review of the literature in the field and also the distinct categories identified in this pilot study could contribute to forming the baseline for the analysis of the main study. Moreover, additional categories of functions were expected to emerge with further investigation of the data. The analysis of learners' language could also contribute to the development of the criteria for identifying formulaic sequences. Since identification of formulaic sequences is context-based and learner internal, working with language samples from this context might reveal some patterns of frequent sequences which learners in this context share.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

The (main?) data collection lasted for two and a half months, between the middle of June 2014 until the end of August 2014. During this period the learners were followed in their language classroom for one whole semester,

that is 16 sessions of 90 minutes. During the summer, when the ordinary schools are closed, there are three sessions per week at this language institute while the rest of the year there are two sessions per week. All the 16 sessions were observed and video and audio recorded from the beginning to the end, which led to about 1,440 minutes of recordings and observation

3.5.1 Informed consent

After getting permission from the head of the institute to observe and audio and video record one of the classes, the teacher arranged a meeting with the parents where informed consent was obtained. The children were also informed (in their first language) about the research and classroom recordings and their permission was also obtained. In the meeting with the parents and also the one with the children, first, I introduced myself and explained the reason for inviting them to the meeting. I presented the general theme of the study and the procedure for data collection. Then, I described the issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I clarified that the participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time during the data collection. The parents seemed eager to cooperate with the researcher and they all agreed that they would complete the questionnaire. Also, they were curious about the topic of early language learning and had some questions about the project and mainly about how it can help their children in their progress in leaning English. In some instances, the parents asked for advice about how to help their children improve their English.

After obtaining parents' consent, I also asked the children for their permission for my presence as well as the presence of the camera to record the sessions. The children tried to reassure me that they agree with the presence of the camera saying "camera, no problem, no problem, camera". After my explanations, I opened the floor for the children to question me. The children were mainly curious about the country where I was studying (Sweden). I received questions such as: How is Sweden? Do children in Sweden speak English? In which language do I pursue my PhD in Sweden? In the beginning, all the 12 learners agreed to be part of the study. However, after the meeting, one of the learners asked to withdraw from the study and her main concern was that I do not study her language production. She consented that I could conduct my study but that I would not record her image in the video recordings. This request was considered during the whole data collection procedure.

3.5.2 Classroom observations

For each session, the instruments were installed in the classroom at least 5 minutes before the lesson began. The video camera was placed at the front of the classroom at a point from which the whole classroom was visible except for the student who withdrew. The audio recorders were set in different locations so that each recorder was near two or three learners. The audio recording files were used as a back up for those instances when the sound quality of the video was not comprehensible; in these cases the sound file of the recorder nearer to the target learner/s can be used for those particular instances. For this purpose, each recorder was specifically labelled for two or three learners and was positioned near them. The researcher sat on a student chair in the corner of the classroom near the video camera writing running logs about what was taking place in the classroom. The observation notes provided a common basis for becoming familiar with the data and the basic interpretations. Moreover, the researcher could engage with the teacher as a collaborator to interpret certain instances. After the session was finished, the researcher shared some of her observations with the teacher and the possible reason/s for certain behaviour and activities observed were discussed. The teacher was generous with her time, which made it possible to have an informal discussion after each class session.

This study disturbed the natural setting of the classroom with the presence of an observer as an outsider as well as some instruments, which were new elements in the classroom. These circumstances had the potential to change the behaviour of the participants. The effect of these changes was quite noticeable during the first session as the learners were all staring at the camera and scrutinizing the researcher. The first 10 minutes of the recording displays students' eyes looking at the camera and the researcher, which led to whispering with one another. However, as Bailey (2006) points out, "this problem can be overcome by familiarizing the participants with the recorders and by consistent use of recording over time" (p. 123). In order to address this issue and to mitigate the intrusion, I placed all the recording devices in the same stationary positions and even my chair as an observer was the same during each session. Also the instruments were installed before the lessons started so the instruments became more like a piece of furniture and I also became an accepted participant in the classroom. It was observed that the focus on the camera and the researcher lessened fairly quickly. Even during the first session, there was almost no visible staring at the camera after 20 minutes and it seemed as if the students and the teacher had forgotten about the researcher and the instruments.

The observations were conducted for the full length of each session, that is, 16x90 minute sessions. After the first eight sessions there was a 10-day holiday, which is called summer holidays. After summer holidays, three learners no longer attended these classes.

3.5.3 Parents' questionnaire

The parents were also asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the amount of exposure their children have with English outside the classroom. The parents were informed about the questionnaire during the first meeting, and the questionnaire was handed to them after session 3. All learners' parents completed the questionnaire. The results from the questionnaire provided some additional information on learners' attitude toward English language and also their practice outside the classroom.

3.5.4 Elicitation tasks

The data collection process was accompanied by two picture-story elicitation tasks, which were intended to generate some individual oral output from the learners. Since the first session was an introductory session for the teacher and the learners, the first elicitation task was administered before the second session was started. Thanks to parents' cooperation, each individual learner was assigned to come at a specified time before the (second) session was started. Thus, 11 learners completed the first elicitation task individually and then attended their class, which started at its usual time.

For the purpose of the elicitation tasks, the learners were asked to talk about a picture of a classroom scene of children engaged in different activities (Appendix D). The picture was presented to the children (individually) and they were asked to talk about the picture and say what they saw in the picture. Prior to testing, the researcher chatted informally with the learners (e.g. asked about their day, their pet, their siblings, etc.) in English to ensure that learners feel more comfortable with the setting and the researcher. The instructions for each testing session were provided in both Farsi and English. First a description in Farsi was given to each learner in order to make sure they fully understood the task. Next, the instructions were repeated in English, since it was believed that this would help learners to get some time to get into English mode. In general the children could engage well with the task. However, in some instances, the children were prompted with questions such as "What about this part? What is happening here?".

The second task was administered after the final session of the semester (Session 16) and the same procedure as the first task was adopted; however, there were only eight learners who performed the second elicitation task (Appendix E).

3.5.5 Transcribing

After the data was collected, the initial task was to transcribe the recordings of the classroom sessions and the elicitation tasks. Due to the substantial amount of data collected and the limited time available for this study not all 16 sessions were transcribed. First all the recordings were reviewed and then 10 sessions were selected for transcription. The initial plan was to transcribe every other session (8 sessions). However, there were two additional sessions, which were transcribed as well since they were found to contain significant information. In total, 10 sessions (i.e. sessions 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16) were fully transcribed (900 minutes). Moreover, the observational field notes, which were prepared during the data collection, were further elaborated while reviewing the video recordings. The data were transcribed using the software F5. Transcribing the spoken data proved a lengthy demanding task due to the number of learners and the nature of children's talk where some of the children might speak at the same time. For the purpose of this study, I mainly used conventional English orthography to transcribe the speech events; however, phonetic symbols were used where needed. In some instances the transcriptions are more affected by the phonological features of the language produced by the learners (e.g. excuse me for excuse me)

A number of codes have been employed to indicate certain features such as hesitation, pause and emphasis. The transcribing conventions that were used for this study were adopted and adapted from Jefferson (2004) and can be reviewed below.

- X: name of the speaker (anonymised)
- L1: indicates language production in first language (Farsi)
- [play]: brackets are used for speech in first language
- (0.2): pauses are shown in second in brackets, one second is shown by a point (.) and 2 seconds is shown by (0.2) and so on.
- Go::: one or more colons indicate extension of the preceding sound or syllable.

- no bu- : a hyphen indicates an abrupt cut off of the prior word or sound.
- (text): parentheses are used for transcriber's comments including description of non-verbal behaviour
- ↓↑ arrows indicate shifts in high or low pitch
- Text:** bold indicates marked stress
- TEXT:** capitals indicate increased loudness
- °thanks°: degree signs indicate decreased volume.
- ☺: smiley face indicates laughter
- text: the relevant stretches of transcript identified as formulaic are underlined

After transcribing the data with the F5 software, all the text was converted to a word file.

3.5.6 Data Analysis

The classroom observations and recordings provided a substantial amount of data, henceforth, due to the limited time I decided not to analyse the data from the elicitation tasks in the present study. It is planned that this will be followed up in a subsequent study. In this section the analysis of the data from classroom observations will be presented.

As an obvious requirement to answer the research questions of this study the transcribed data was reviewed to first identify formulaic sequences. However, similar to “finding black cats in a dark room” (Wray, 2008, p. 101), the identification of formulaic sequences is no simple task. In order to address the challenging task of identifying formulaic sequences, it is of paramount importance to have a definition (for a discussion of the different definitions of formulaic sequences, see chapter 2). In this study, a psycholinguistic approach has been adopted to define formulaic sequences. A formulaic sequence is defined learner internally; that is a sequence, which is treated as a whole unit by an individual language user. Based on a review of previous studies, which adopted a psycholinguistic approach to the definition and identification of formulaic sequences in second language acquisition, a list of criteria was prepared for the identification of formulaic sequences in this study (See Appendix B).

Despite this pre-established list of criteria, it was still sometimes problematic to distinguish what exactly could be defined as formulaic. However, several factors could help to address this challenging task. First,

the context of the study was a foreign language setting where the learners learned the language mainly in the classroom. Therefore, learners' language knowledge was limited and also it was possible to trace the input that they received. Furthermore, I believe that familiarity with the context, learners' first language and the usual classroom routines were helpful. An additional helpful source of information was the notes from the post-lesson reviews with the teacher. For instance, the teacher's comments were informative about the learners' learning experiences during the previous semesters. Probably, the most effective element, which made the task relatively feasible, was the numerous reviews of the data. The learner-internal approach to identification of formulaic sequences demands a thorough familiarity with the learners' language practice and knowledge. Since I observed the whole 16 sessions during the data collection, I could gain a fair knowledge of the whole events in the class and I became familiar with individual learners' language repertoire. In addition, I reviewed the recordings several times before and also during the transcription procedure. Revisiting the data for several times helped me to become more aware of the details about the classroom events and also the individual learners' knowledge, practices and approaches in their language learning. This intense familiarity with the data as a result of re-visiting the videos and transcripts several times facilitated the more detailed recognition of formulaic sequences.

The identified formulaic sequences were highlighted using colour-coded highlighting as different colours could illustrate the degree of certainty about the formulaic sequences. Green highlights were used for the sequences with highest certainty and pink highlight was used to show uncertainty about whether particular sequences could be categorized as formulaic. In some instances after several revisits of the data I could justify whether they were formulaic or not and in some instances I could find no clear answer, therefore I excluded them from the analysis.

For the next step, I listed the different functions of formulaic sequences, which had been developed based on the review of the literature and the results of the pilot study. The categories were listed with their subtypes such as: time buyers (fillers, turn holders...) or processing short cuts (standard phrases...). The identified formulaic sequences were examined to find which category they might belong to. Sometimes, the context in which each formulaic sequence was produced could illuminate the function. For instance, when the sequence was used during a game it could be classified as a processing short cut since the situation needed learners to be quick and fluent. Once again, for the task of categorization of the functions, the most helpful factor was familiarity and the knowledge of the learning context and

routines and also the knowledge about the individual learners. The context where a formulaic sequence was used plus the knowledge about the learners' approaches and language repertoire could help to identify the function of the identified formulaic sequences in learners' language production.

Triangulation was established through confirming both the intra-rater and inter-rater consistency. Through the repeated review of the data intra-rater reliability of the findings was secured. In addition, in order to assess the inter-rater reliability, an external expert reviewed a selection of the identified formulaic sequences and their recognized functions. The agreement between the raters could confirm the judgments.

A detailed analysis of the data with regard to each individual learner, revealed a significant variation among the learners in their application of formulaic sequences for different functions. That is, the functions were not used similarly by all the learners. It was found implausible to report the functions without also reporting the differences among the learners. From this observation, the second research question emerged, which addressed the inter-learner variation in the application of formulaic sequences for different functions.

3.6 description of a session

This section presents a description of one of the observed sessions in order to provide a picture of the learning context of this study. Both the context of the classroom and the language practice in this context are influential factors in understanding the results of this study. Hence, this section describes the learners' activities and experiences in this formal language-learning context during a 90-minute session to help a better understanding of the study and its results. (For a full transcription of the session see Appendix C).

Session 2: 28 June 2014

- The course starts at 16:00; however, most of the learners are present in the classroom at least 5 minutes before.
- The data collection instruments are installed and the children are talking to their peers in Farsi. Some of the children are trying to complete their homework with their friends' help. Some are curious about the researcher and the instruments, one of them asks a question to the researcher ("What is your name? I forgot your first name").
- The teacher enters the class saying "Hello everyone!"; henceforth, the language of the class turns to English. The teacher asks some general questions such as "How are you?" "Who is absent?" "Is it hot outside?"

- Register taken followed by a recap of last session's lesson. The exercises, which were assigned as the learners' homework, are checked by asking the students to read their answers one by one. Next, the teacher encourages choral singing of a song they have practiced during the last session; a majority of the students have memorised the song.
- As a warm up for the new lesson, the teacher asks some questions related to the topic, which is about "wedding party". In the beginning, the teacher talks more and the learners' contributions are quite short. But, when the topic moves on to the learners' experiences of wedding or birthday parties, the learners engage well with the conversation and are keen to answer and also listen to other students' stories (conversations are mainly in English but there are instances of using Farsi as well). Learners' contributions vary from a one-word response to longer stretches of language (some sentences).
- The teacher creates contexts to introduce some new words, which are related to the theme of "wedding party". All multi-words are broken down into individual units. For instance "wedding party" is introduced by clarifying the meaning of party as an individual word and wedding as another word. The same strategy is adopted for other sequences such as "invitation + card" and "wedding + cake".
- In the next step some picture cards are used to encourage students to talk more about the concepts and use the new words in a sentence (context).
- The teacher shows the card and writes the words on the board. The teacher asks for choral repetition of the words after she says them. Next, a CD is played and learners look at their books and listen to the CD. Afterwards, students are asked to read the list from the book.
- The teacher points to some pictures in the book and asks some questions such as: "What are they doing?", "Who are they?". In some instances, the questions elicit some choral responses from the learners and in other instances one or two learners make some individual statements related to the content.
- The students look at the text in their books and listen to the CD. The teacher goes through the text and provides some clarifications regarding some words or events and asks some comprehension questions. In the next step, students are each asked to read some part of the text.
- The teacher reviews present progressive tense using some sentences and questions related to the classroom context (contextualise the sentences) and encourages learners to answer or make their own sentences in present progressive tense. In the following step, the teacher writes some sentences on the board using different colours (black and red) to highlight the grammatical points. "He **is driving** a car now." The 'verb tobe' and the 'ing' were written in red while the

rest of the sentence was in black. Some sentences trigger the learners to free associations; they say something related to the content.

- The students are organised for pair work and are asked to look at the pictures in the book and ask each other some questions in present progressive tense. The teacher walks around and monitors their pair work.
- Homework is assigned and the session is finished. Some students come to the teacher for some informal talk, where they use both English and Farsi but all of them say *goodbye see you later* in English.

3.7 Description of the individual learners

In this section, the eleven learners of the study are described based on the researcher's observations. The purpose of this description is to provide a brief picture of each of the children in order to put into perspective later discussion of the learning approaches and individual differences. It should be remembered that for the purpose of confidentiality pseudonyms were used. Some of the data is based on the information gathered from parents through a questionnaire (see Appendix C); however, the main source of data was based on observations. Therefore the descriptions are essentially subjective. The children are described as the researcher perceived them during the two months period of data collection (16X90 minutes sessions) as well as on the subsequent analysis of the video recordings.

Anita

At the age of 9 Anita seemed very confident, friendly and verbally expressive in the classroom. She paid close attention to the teacher and to what other children said and did. She was generally a cooperative and enthusiastic participant in classroom activities. She was very careful to avoid Farsi both in her talking and also in reminding the others about it as well. She was remarkably patient and helpful to other learners; she could easily assign herself the role of an English teacher for the friend who was sitting beside her. Sometimes she would whisper the answers to her friends' ear trying to be helpful. She could use gestures or explanations to make things clear for her classmates. She tried to prompt her friends helping them to make a good impression in the class. It might be the generous and helpful personality of Anita that had attracted Darya to her; Darya often insisted on sitting beside Anita. It seemed Darya had chosen Anita as her interpreter or even her role model. Apart from Darya, Asal was also very keen on being around Anita and benefit from her generous help.

According to her parents' report in the questionnaire, Anita was very enthusiastic about her English lessons. Her main language practice at home could be watching a cartoon in English maybe for an hour per week. She had very limited opportunities of speaking English outside the classroom apart from one or two journeys abroad. According to her parents, during their holidays abroad, Anita was very keen on taking the chance to speak English.

Asal

Asal was a 10-year-old girl who did not seem very enthusiastic and engaged in classroom activities. She did not show much interest in interacting with her friends during the class, when they were supposed to speak in English, whereas she had conversations with her friends before the class when the language was Farsi. By the time the class started, the language was supposed to shift from Farsi to English. Since Asal did not communicate in English she was mostly silent and hence she lost her connection with her friends during the whole 90 minutes. She seemed quite lonely and often bored during the lessons. On instances when the teacher directly asked her a question, she tended to have a short response. She also seemed to appreciate it when her peers interrupted her and took the turn to respond instead of her. On such occasions she breathed a sigh of relief. According to her parents, Asal was not interested in English and taking an English course has been mainly her parents' decision. She was not willing to practice any English outside the class and this meant that her sole source of English was what she got in the class. She was even unwilling to open her mouth in English when the family travelled abroad.

Behnaz

Behnaz was 11 years old at the time of the study. She was not expressive, and was usually silent during the sessions. When the teacher tried to get her to talk, she seemed embarrassed and would refuse to say anything. However, on the infrequent occasions when she could say something in English she seemed very excited and pleased. In general, she could not easily communicate meaning since her language proficiency seemed to be lower than most of her classmates. According to her parents, she did not have any practice in English outside the classroom (she could have nearly 0 hours of listening to anything in English or speaking in English per week). However, she was very keen on taking the course. She did not like to miss the class even for one session.

Dornaz

Dornaz was a 9-year-old cooperative and friendly girl. She was well organized, tidy and very timid and well mannered. She was hardworking but she was not a child who tried new things quickly, usually she waited for the other friends to initiate. She seemed to observe others before she would venture to try herself. She could watch and listen without making any comments until she felt sure about what she wanted to say. When she had figured out what to say and how to say it then she would tentatively participate in the conversation. It usually took some time in the beginning of the class to break down her reservedness. At home she was the younger of the two children but according to her parents she behaved more mature and responsible in general. Unlike her older sister, she had been very keen on her English course and was very careful to do all her assignments at home. She has always been willing to practice English at home but she did not have much opportunity to communicate with anyone at home. Her main practice in English was limited to the classroom environment.

Darya

Darya was 9 years old and was not particularly expressive in the beginning of the semester. However, gradually she became more enthusiastic in taking part in classroom activities. The rate of her language production had an increasing pattern from the beginning to the end of the semester. Her relationship with Anita had a significant impact on Darya's language practice. She was always willing to sit next to Anita and when she could not, she was still constantly attentive to what Anita was doing or saying. Although it could take some time for her to feel ready to express herself in English, in general she seemed willing to participate in classroom activities and conversations. She usually waited for some examples or models from her peers to follow their pattern. She was noticeably attentive to Anita's language and there were a number of instances when Darya copied Anita's language. According to her parents she had very little exposure to English outside the classroom, she was willing to watch a cartoon in English or listen to music online (maximum 1–2 hours per week). She was very keen on elaborating her lessons at home for her mother. She tried to use some phrases that she had learned in the class at home with her parents. According to her mother, Darya used sequences such as “May I drink water” at home.

Farimah

Farimah was a 9 year old friendly but reserved girl. She was an organized and committed student in the class. She seemed attentive to the teacher and always followed the teacher's instructions. Usually she did not take many chances to speak, but she seemed very observant and keen as if she was learning silently. In general, she was fairly silent and did not speak often. Even during the time before the class started, when her peers were engaged in a conversation in Farsi, Farimah would be quite reserved. She would giggle at her friends' jokes but very timidly and politely. She was also well mannered and cooperative. With prompting and encouragement she would say what was asked but usually not more. Whenever the teacher asked the learners to say something in English or to make examples, Farimah was very likely to cooperate with the teacher and carefully chose her examples to present to the teacher. According to her parents, Farimah was interested in watching cartoons in English and listening to English songs but she did not show much interest in speaking English at home. She would talk about her class but very briefly. However, according to her parents she had enjoyed speaking English during their short travel abroad. She had shown great interest in playing the role of interpreter for her parents.

Fatemeh

At the age of 11 Fatemeh behaved in quite a grown up way, she was alert in the classroom and highly concerned about politeness. In general she was a mature, serious, respectful and very polite girl. She worked hard and did her assignments carefully and correctly. She did what she was asked for promptly and accurately. She would carefully choose what she wanted to say and she did not talk just for the sake of saying something. She was particularly observant of the things that went on or were said in the class. She was attentive to her teacher and also to her friends and their statements. She could notice her friends' mistakes and would correct them with respect and politeness so that it seemed no one was offended. She seemed keen on having conversations in English and she would always keep to the topic, relevant and concise. According to her parents, Fatemeh worked very autonomously on her English at home. She would read her book, listen to her CD, and do her homework at home very responsibly. In addition, she was eager to teach English to her two younger siblings. She had limited exposure to English outside the classroom. She might watch a cartoon or movie in English, listen to English songs, or read a storybook (altogether maybe 2–3 hours per week).

Hiva

At the age of 11, Hiva was the most expressive learner in the class. She had so much to say about everything that the teacher had to stop her at some points. In addition, she seemed very attentive to the teacher's every movement, she paid attention to what the teacher said or even what the other children were doing and saying. Her close inspection of the details became evident in her comments on things such as teacher's clothes, friends' hairstyle, etc. Due to her vigilance and expressive characteristics she had learned a great deal of English language, for example she knew different accessories since she wanted to comment on the teacher's accessories. In general, she had a greater repertoire of expressions than her friends. Apart from her clear and assertive voice, she could use a lot of attention calling expressions to be able to take the turn to talk. Hiva's extreme wish to be a communicator often resulted in her saying things, using whatever she knew (in English) which she felt was close in meaning. In summary, she used whatever she had at hand. Although this might sometimes lead to failure in linguistic accuracy, she could usually succeed in communicating meaning. She was very attentive of the things going on around her and she was quick to pick up phrases and when she picked up a phrase she would put that into use soon. She could recall and imitate phrases that she had heard even only once from her teacher. She enjoyed singing and often she could recite little phrases from the songs they had heard in the class. If she did not understand something she was very likely to ask, therefore she frequently produced the sequence "what's the meaning of (X)". According to her parents, Hiva, like the other students in this study, had very limited exposure to English outside the classroom, but she had shown great interest in speaking English outside the classroom. She could easily approach her fathers' colleagues who knew English and spoke with them in English.

Mobina

Mobina was a 10-year-old girl who was cooperative, well organized and enthusiastic. She had a good sense of humour and enjoyed playing with language but at the same time she showed her respect for the classroom norms and the teacher's expectations. She was expressive and could make comments on different things. However, she could easily get stuck on things she knew how to say well and repeated certain patterns in her language. She seemed very keen to play at being the teacher; therefore, she would imitate teacher's expressions. Although she sat beside Selina and interacted and laughed with her, she seemed attentive and cooperative with the teacher. She was an active participant in classroom activities. Mobina's sense of humour

and at the same time enthusiasm for English could revive the classroom atmosphere. Although Selina was more inclined to switch to Farsi, Mobina usually tended to refuse the language shift probably due to her respect for the teacher and the classroom rules. Mobina's parents described her as a 'passionate' language learner and that she was very enthusiastic about her English course. Her parents said that she was careful to do her homework well and to please her teacher. According to her parents, Mobina has always liked both her class and her English teachers. She also enjoyed mimicking her English teacher at home.

Selina

Selina was a 10-year-old girl who could spend a lot of time chatting and giggling with friends. She joked a lot. She was constantly watching what others were doing and hence was easily distracted. During conversations she could make unrelated remarks, for the sake of saying something, or calling for attention. Sometimes she could become competitive in seeking the teacher's attention, and hence she would make a statement totally unrelated to the topic of the conversation. In the classroom Selina sat beside Mobina, her favourite best friend. Selina and Mobina seemed interested in entertaining each other and getting the other to laugh. For this purpose, they could initiate a lot of language play. Since Mobina was concerned with her behaviour in the classroom she could control and guide Selina. When Mobina was engaged in a conversation or any other classroom activities it was more probable that Selina also followed her. In general it seemed as if Selina had chosen Mobina as her role model. She often picked up Mobina's language pattern and followed her behaviour in the class. According to her parents Selina had very little exposure to English outside the classroom. Generally she did not show any interest in practicing English at home or speaking English with anyone, but she was very enthusiastic about her English course and often talked about the fun parts of her English course at home. She would refer to certain instances when they had fun playing with words and she could use the 'funny' expressions at home. Her parents referred to an expression "*goodbye badbye*", invented during a session, that she constantly used at home.

Tina

At the age of 9, Tina was a confident girl with an entertaining sense of humour. She joked a lot and enjoyed entertaining the class. She seemed concerned with her relationship with her friends. She seemed bright but her language learning suffered from her lack of attentiveness in the classroom. Tina's enthusiasm for being involved with other people made her an active participant in classroom conversations. She appeared confident when she was speaking, and her linguistic mistakes did not inhibit her from taking part in conversations. Her parents mentioned Tina's high confidence and eagerness in using English during holidays abroad. They believed that Tina enjoyed talking in English with non-Farsi speakers; however, they said that she was not keen on practicing English at home. According to her parents, she was mainly interested in speaking English in a natural context rather than, for instance, doing exercises at home. Nonetheless, she has always liked to attend her English class.

4 Results

The aim of this chapter is to present and describe the results of the data analysis to address the research questions raised in this study:

- What are the functions of formulaic sequences in young learners' oral language production?
- What are the differences among the individual learners in applying formulaic sequences for certain functions?

The findings are reported in two parts; each part addresses one of the research questions. Section 4.1 presents an analysis of the functions of formulaic language, as evidenced by learners' language production. Next, section 4.2 examines the individual learners' approaches in the application of formulaic sequences for different functions (with reference to descriptions of the learners in section 3.7). The next chapter (chapter 5) provides a detailed discussion of the findings.

For the purposes of the analysis, a qualitative approach was undertaken with the objective of determining the functions of formulaic sequences in learners' language production and also examining the inter-learner variations in using formulaic sequences.

4.1 Functions of formulaic sequences

In order to learn more about the functions of formulaic sequences in learners' language production, the identified sequences were examined with reference to the context in which they were used. The data was explored drawing on pre-established categories. The categories were established based on a review of the literature (for a detailed description see section 2.3.8) together with evidence from the findings of the pilot study. Below, the major categories of functions that emerged from the analysis of the data are presented, with elaborations of illustrative examples for each category.

4.1.1 *Time buyers*

The data of this study revealed learners' tendency to apply formulaic sequences as time buyers in their oral language productions. Learners applied different types of time buyers such as fillers and utterance launchers in their utterances. Presented below are some examples of these types of use of formulas.

4.1.1.1 Fillers

A typical feature of many of the longer utterances produced by young language learners in this study was the re-use of one simple formula throughout a statement. The learners adopted this approach by heavily relying on some of their sequences. The function or meaning of these adopted sequences could vary substantially. Sometimes these sequences carry meaning and sometimes they appear not to convey a propositional meaning. In some instances the learners appended these sequences to their utterances as fillers, which helped them to maintain the fluency of their speech. Wray and Perkins (2000) refer to fillers as one of the subtypes of time buying formulas, which provides “planning time without losing turn” (p. 16).

Some of the frequent fillers used by the learners of this study include, *like this, I think, and then* and *I don't know but*. The following five examples illustrate some of the many occasions on which this feature was used. For clarity of illustration, the relevant sequences in the examples are underlined.

(1)

Anita: I go to the ice cream shop (.) and (.) my friend have a one bowl (.) like this (.) have a ice cream (.) and have smarties, like this (.) was very good

(2)

Mobina: miss, I think Amie and Leo (.) I think because their father (0.2) I think (.) their dad (.) hair is yellow because that is hair yellow

(3)

Hiva: miss, miss, I was a one idea

Teacher: what's your idea?

Hiva: write in the notebook (.) I think (.) I think about Mobina (.) and (.) all the students in this class (.) I think about Anita (.) Anita is from USA (.) I think (.) and write this one and in the class read

(4)

Hiva: I think they go to the picnic (.) and then (.)
 ta- to have some- to fishing (.) and then go
 home and (.) and give the fish to the mom and
 (.) have a lunch (.)

(5)

Anita: next week I want to (.) go (.) turkey (.) and
 (.) I don't know but (.) I can't come

The examples above illustrate learners' reliance on formulas such as *I think* and *like this*, which are sometimes combined with short pauses. It seemed that this strategy has helped the learners to gain time to compose the next part of their statement. The learners were using these sequences to augment their fluency, extending the run without long pauses, seemingly with minimal effort.

Example (5) is particularly noteworthy as a formulaic sequence, since the meaning of the sequence *I don't know but* is not clear. This sequence has occurred in other similar situations (in total three times in the whole data and only produced by Anita and Hiva). It seems likely that the learners have acquired this four/five-word sequence as a whole without having a clear or correct knowledge of its meaning and/or function.

The application of fillers was only found in the language production of four learners. Anita, Hiva and Mobina were the three learners who applied this strategy very often and Darya started to adopt this strategy near the end of the semester. The first instance of Darya using fillers was during session 13. In total during the three last sessions (sessions 13–16) she used fillers in five instances. This issue will be further elaborated in a discussion of the individual variation in section 4.2.1.

Some of the other learners who did not use fillers as time buyers in their speech were found to apply other strategies such as repetition of a sequence to buy time.

4.1.1.2 Repetition

Analysis of the data revealed that one of the most common strategies that the learners used to fill pauses in their speech was simply repeating a sequence consecutively within a run. This observation was in line with Wray's (1999) claim that the second language learners are more likely to rely on immediate repetition as time buyers in comparison to native speakers.

Some of the instances of using repetition as time buyers by the learners of this study are presented below.

(6)

Teacher: ...what can you see in the picture?

Selina: we have a (.) we have a (.) in wedding party
wedding cake (.) umm: and (0.2) they are (.)
they are (.) they are happy

(7)

Dornaz: Miss, one day (.) I go to the (.) wedding
party (.) a::nd I go to the wedding party and
(.) what i::s (0.2) [L1; camera]

(8)

Teacher: do you like ice cream?

Anita: Miss, for example (.) one day (.) I go to the
one (.) go to the one (0.2) what is [L1; ice
cream shop]

Teacher: ice cream shop?

(9)

Hiva: Miss, in old (.) in old Tehran (.) in old
Tehran (.) and one (.) one (.) what the
meaning of [L1; research]?

Example (6) indicates an instance when the teacher asked for a description of a picture. Selina who seemed excited to respond immediately took the turn to speak, without having much time for planning her utterance. She used the strategy of repeating sequences several times to be able to plan her utterance and produce it. Selina and Tina frequently applied this strategy probably due to their tendency for spontaneous statements. These two learners tended to be impulsive and could deliver unplanned responses to the events around them.

Examples (7–9) illustrate cases where repetition of a sequence was followed by a question. It implies that the learners were using this approach to buy time for their processing. These learners (Dornaz, Anita and Hiva) were looking for a word to complete their statement. While they were busy processing their statement, they repeated a sequence in order to buy time and in the meantime to avoid a long pause and consequently to avoid losing

their turn. Since the learners in this class are supposed not to use Farsi, they hesitate to use the Farsi word. They are trying to buy time to find the word in English, and when they cannot find it, they finally ask the teacher in Farsi.

The data provided some samples revealing the possible advantages of this strategy. The following examples show instances when the learners who were repeating a sequence to buy time for their further processing were successful in finding the element that they were looking for. They could produce their utterance without a break or long pause.

(10)

Darya: miss, I like every dog (.) like every dog
 (0.2) *what's meaning of* (0.2) em:: (.) ANGRY
 (.) angry (.) just angry dog (.) every dog

(11)

(the teacher is speaking, Tina is playing with a friend's pencil case)
 Teacher: Tina, look at the picture, and ask Hiva a wh question
 Tina: Umm::
 Anita: °What's she doing?°
 Tina: wha::t's she doing? (looking at the pictures to choose one)
 Hiva: she doing (0.2) she doing (0.2) she is reading (.) a invitation card

In examples (10) and (11), both Darya and Hiva repeat a sequence, buying time to recall the next word or phrase. This helped them to extend the run to recall the elements that they were looking for without a long silent pause in their utterance. Meanwhile they could avoid using Farsi or losing their turn. The non-fluent production of the two sequences *what's meaning of* and *what's she doing* do not follow the pattern typical of other formulaic sequences yet the two examples appear to operate as formulaic sequences. For instance, in example (11) Tina is using the device of repetition to buy time and hold onto her turn. This is further discussed in section (4.1.1.4)

There were also a number of examples illustrating learners' tendency to repeat a part of the previous statement. That is, in order to start a sentence, for instance an answer to a question, learners tended to use part of the previous utterance as their starting point. For instance, as shown in example (11), Tina repeated the question provided by her friend Anita, before she had

chosen the picture. Hiva who seemed not to be ready for a prompt reply employed a sequence from the previous utterance (*she doing*) and also repeated the sequence. Here, the learner is using this strategy to decrease the burden of language production by starting with what has already been provided. The other possible function of this strategy (repeating a sequence) for the learners of this study might be to keep the turn when they needed extra time for linguistic processing and planning the imminent utterances. For instance, in example (11) Hiva could avoid a long pause and could keep her turn safe while formulating her response, by repeating a ready-made formula.

A further example illustrating the strategy of repeating part of the previous utterance is presented below in example (12). This case demonstrates learners' reliance on part of the previous utterance for their language production. Learners use the previous sequence as their starting point in order to be able to respond to the teacher's question and to avoid silence or a long pause and also to have more time to plan their statement.

(12)

Teacher: do you know wet? when do we get wet?
 Selina: when the rain is coming
 Farimah: when we wash the face
 Tina: wash (.) wash the car
 Darva: wash the (.) wash the (.) wash the cat
 Mobina: wash the dog
 Dornaz: miss, wash the dishes

Example (12) illustrates the production or activation of a formulaic sequence by another word or formulaic sequence. As shown in the example, learners seemed to be prompted by the previous utterances that they heard. Tina produced the sequence *wash the car* immediately after she heard Farimah's sequence *wash the face*. In other words, the sequence *wash the face* prompted the recall of another sequence *wash the car*, which contained the same initial words (i.e. *wash the*). Here, the utterance *wash the face* may or may not be perceived as a formulaic sequence by the other learners (Tina), but it activates the production of the similar sequence *wash the car* by her. Likewise, Darya, Mobina and Dornaz adopted the same structure *wash the + noun* and refilled the final slot with other words (*cat, dog, dishes*). Darya's utterance particularly reveals her reliance on the previous structure as she repeated the sequence *wash the* followed by a pause *wash the (.) wash the (.)* before she could find the right word to add.

Despite the frequent application of time buyers in the language production of the majority of the learners, there were three learners who did not employ this strategy at all. In the whole data set there were no instances where Farimah, Asal or Behnaz used this strategy. On some occasions when the learners did not use time buyers the utterances could contain long pauses. In the competitive atmosphere of the classroom a long pause could lead to the loss of turn. The following data provides a clear example of a competitive situation where a learner (Behnaz) lost her turn as a result of pausing in mid-sentence.

(13)

Teacher: Behnaz, what is she doing?
 Behnaz: she doing (0.3)
 Darya: cooking (.) she cooking
 Hiva: cooking pizza
 Mobina: I love pizza
 Anita: miss, I like pizza but (.) I don't like
 (pointing to a picture of mushroom in her
 book)

This sample can be compared to the example (11) presented earlier. In both cases, the learners (Hiva and Behnaz) were asked a question for which they could not provide an immediate response. Both the learners started their statements with a sequence borrowed from the previous utterance (*she doing*). In example (11) Hiva used the strategy of repeating the sequence while she was processing the rest of the utterance and eventually she could answer the question. However, in example (13) Behnaz, who also started with repeating part of the previous utterance (*she doing*), paused after the sequence. This pause gave her peers the opportunity to intervene and soon she lost the turn without being able to answer the teacher's question. Further evidence that could confirm this was observable in the video recording where Behnaz's facial expression and voice quality added to the perception of her inability to complete the utterance. It is also possible that her status in the class may be an additional factor operating in favour of Hiva who is perceived as a more competent learner while Behnaz is perceived as a less competent learner. A more detailed description of the individual differences is provided in section (4.2.1)

4.1.1.3 Utterance Launchers

The learners of this study showed a tendency to use certain formulas to start their statements. Sometimes these sequences carried meaning and sometimes they appeared not to convey a propositional meaning but were used to seek attention or as a technique for taking over the turn and launching their statement. Some of the most frequent sequences found in the data from the ten sessions, are presented below:

- *For example* (13 times)
- *Miss, I think* (8 times)
- *Excuse me miss* (6 times)
- *Miss, I have a question* (4 times)

The following examples illustrate cases where both Tina and Hiva used the sequences in the correct context.

(14)

Tina: miss, I have a question (.) pen pal is like
pen friend?

(15)

Hiva: escuse me, Miss, em: (.) you (.) you say and
this sheep is smaller than the (.) you (.)
you say the (.) my dialogue.

Examples (14) and (15) present two instances where both the meaning and function of the sequences are suitable for the context in which they were used. However, there were some other cases when the meaning of the sequences did not agree with the context in which they were used.

(16)

(Teacher is pointing to a picture of a
wedding party in the course book)
Teacher: picture three (.) what is he doing?
Selina: he (.) he is (.) he is eating the cake
Anita: miss, I have a question
Teacher: what's your question?
Anita: it's a wedding party (.) and (0.2) they have
a (0.2) baby ☺
Teacher: honey, he's their cousin

(17)

Teacher: do you like ice cream?

Anita: miss, for example (.) one day (.) I go to
the one (.) go to the one (0.2) what is [L1,
ice cream shop?]

Teacher: ice cream shop?

Anita: I go to the ice cream shop (.) and (.) my
friend have a one bowl (.) like this (.)
have a ice cream (.) and have smarties, like
this (.) very good

(18)

Mobina: teacher (.) I think (.) here is (.) pink (.)
I don't like it

In all the above-mentioned examples (16–18), the sequences used at the beginning of the utterances do not carry their regular propositional meaning. Learners seem to be using these sequences as fillers or for turn taking only. For instance, in examples (16), Anita is using the formulaic sequence *miss, I have a question* to seek the teacher's attention in order to be able to indicate her surprise (In Iran it is not common for couples to have a child before they are married). Again in example (17), Anita is not presenting an example for something. It seems when the teacher asked about ice cream, Anita remembered her experience at an ice cream shop and is willing to share her story with the rest of the class. In order to seek the teacher's attention and to take the turn, she used the sequence *for example* to be able to tell her story. Likewise, in example (18) Mobina is looking at a picture of a dress in her book and uses the sequence *I think* to begin her statement that she does not like the dress since it is pink.

The examples presented above demonstrate that the children were applying these sequences in the beginning of their statements to take the turn and to seek the teachers' attention in order to be able to make a statement. However, this strategy might also be a way of getting permission to say something. In all instances where the learners were using utterance launchers they were calling the teacher's attention or taking the turn from the teacher. It might be that this strategy could help them to mitigate their act of interrupting the teacher. On the other hand, these utterance launchers could provide the children with some planning time during which they could prepare for the rest of their utterance. As the examples show, these children

are prompted by what they heard or saw (at that specific moment) and their utterances seemed to be a somehow spontaneous reaction. Thus, they might be using the sequence as a mechanism to provide them with time to prepare what they wanted to say.

4.1.1.4 Non-fluent sequences

In this section I look at some aspects of the data, which may be problematic for the research field. The data of the present study revealed some examples, which raised fundamental issues with the existing definitions of formulaic language. It is included in this section because it was found that they could be regarded as one of the subcategories of time buyers.

In the data there were some instances when learners paused in the middle of their sequences, or they lengthened a syllable in the sequences. The dis-fluency in the middle of the sequence introduced a challenge to the aforementioned arguments in the literature that formulaic sequences are produced fluently and smoothly (e.g. Wood 2006). This characteristic was initially set as criteria to distinguish formulaic sequences for the purposes of this study. This rather unexpected observation raises the question: Can we say that the learners were composing these utterances from parts of phrases and that they should not be defined as formulaic? According to the definitions of formulaic sequences, these utterances, which are not fluent, would not count as formulaic. Nevertheless, they could be identified as formulaic sequences according to some other criteria that were used in this study; for instance, the sequences were frequently used classroom commands. These sequences were mostly produced fluently as indicated by absence of any pauses or hesitations. However, there were several instances when learners paused in the middle or lengthened a syllable within these sequences while working on the planning of the subsequent part of the utterance. It was surprising that a sequence, which was previously produced fluently, in certain instances, contained a pause or a lengthened syllable. Considering the high frequency of occurrence, there was a possibility that these sequences were formulaic for these speakers. These sequences could have been produced fluently on some occasions but on these occasions they were not.

A simple example of this case can be identified in the example (11) mentioned previously, repeated in (19) for clarity.

(19)

(the teacher is speaking, Tina is playing with a friend's pencilcase)

Teacher: Tina, look at the picture, and ask Hiva a wh question

Tina: Umm::

Anita: °What's she doing?°

Tina: wha:::t's she doing? (looking at the pictures to choose one)

Hiva: she doing (0.2) she doing (0.2) she is reading (.) a invitation card

In this instance, the teacher asked Tina to make a wh question (a question commencing with a question word such as 'why, what, etc.) about the pictures provided in the book to ask her friend Hiva. Tina, who was distracted with her friend's pencil case, seemed confused and could not produce a quick response to the teacher's request. Anita wanted to help Tina and provided her with a sample wh question (*what is she doing?*), which was a frequently used wh question during the previous and the present session. Tina started to produce the question, although she had not chosen a picture yet. Therefore she lengthened the word *wha:::t's* while she was looking at the pictures and deciding which picture she was going to refer to. By the time she found the picture the intonation contour had become fluent and fast.

The other example of a case when a non-fluent formula was produced refers to the sequence *what's the meaning of*. This sequence was found as a high-frequency sequence in the data set. On occasion, it might appear several times in each session (34 times in the whole data set). Learners have learned this sequence only in the oral form. According to the teacher, there has never been any explicit instruction on the structure of this sequence and learners have not been exposed to the written form. The data shows that the majority of the learners (9 out of 11) have not learned the sequence fully and they have dropped either the article *the*, or the verb *is*. Therefore, there have been three versions of the sequence produced by the learners. Some of the learners had fossilized the sequence *what the meaning of* and some produced *what's meaning of* and only two learners produced the sequence in its correct form *what's the meaning of*. This sequence was mainly used to ask for a translation of an element from Farsi to English. That is, with this question learners are asking, for the English equivalent of a Farsi word. It should be noted that according to the rules of the class, the learners are supposed not to use much Farsi in their language production. When they

needed to use a word that they did not yet know in English, they asked the teacher for help. In order to minimize the use of Farsi they used this sequence followed by the word in Farsi (*what's the meaning of +L1*). In some cases learners have used it to ask for the meaning of an English word or phrase that they did not understand. On each occasion when learners asked for clarification of an English word or phrase, the question *what's the meaning of* was produced very fluently without any pauses or hesitations during the production of the sequence. Whereas, in some cases when the learners needed to use a Farsi word, the question was asked with some hesitations, pauses or lengthened syllables. The data revealed some instances where learners who were striving not to use Farsi tried to buy time to possibly retrieve the word or phrase. It may be that since they are familiar with the sequence and can retrieve it more or less effortlessly, they try to lengthen it to get enough time for processing and/or possibly avoiding the use of Farsi. Below is one of several examples of how learners paused or lengthened a syllable within the sequence *what's the meaning of*. It should be noted that throughout the data collection process Darya produced this sequence as *what is meaning of*; that is, she had dropped the article 'the'.

(20)

Darya: miss, what is (.) meani:ng o::f [°L1;
 fight°]?

In example (20), Darya seems to be reluctant to use the word in Farsi. She tries to buy time through a short pause and lengthening the production of the sequence in order to be able to recall the word *fight*, which they had previously learned. When she cannot remember the word, she seems shy and produces the Farsi word in a low voice.

Another case illustrating dis-fluency within a sequence was related to the other very frequent classroom commands *May I drink water* and *May I go out*. These sequences were introduced to the learners in the very early stages of their language education. Hence, they were found as frequent and fluently produced sequences in the classroom. The learners used these sequences to ask for permission to go out of the class, probably to drink water. During the second session, the teacher stated that learners could bring a bottle of water to the class and drink water in the class so that they do not need to go out. This request from the teacher resulted in modification of the sequence *may I drink water* by the learners. The learners realized that they needed to reformulate their formulaic sequence used for this request. They started to produce sequences such as *may I drink water in (the) class*, or *may I drink*

water downstairs, etc. Still the sequence *may I drink water* was used as the initial part of the statement followed by the addition of a new element. In some cases it appeared that adding a new element to the sequence was challenging for the learners, hence more processing was required. The examples below illustrate such cases.

(21)

session 1

Hiva: miss, may I drink water?

Session 2

Hiva: miss, may I:: (.) drink water (.) out of a class

(22)

Dornaz: miss, what is- what is [L1;out]

Teacher: what is?!

Dornaz: [L1; out] means

Hiva: out-outside

Dornaz: miss, may I: drink wate::r (.) downstair(s)

Hiva produced the sequence *may I drink water* twice in the first session and once at the beginning of the second session (i.e. three times during two sessions). On all three occasions she articulated the sequence very fluently with no hesitation. During the second session and after the teacher's request for drinking water in the class, Hiva started to produce the sequence *may I drink water* with an additional element appended to it (*out of a class*). The new utterance, which entailed a sequence and a new element (*may I drink water + out of a class*), was articulated differently. This time Hiva lengthened the word *I* followed by a short pause. It may be that she was buying time for processing the additional element of *out of a class*. Since this was the first time she had added this phrase to her sequence, she might have needed some time to process it.

In the second sample (example 22) Dornaz wanted to ask for permission to drink water out of the class (the water dispenser is located downstairs). She was preparing her utterance before producing it to the teacher. Dornaz who previously had used the sequence *may I go out* could not find the word *out* as an individual word. When she heard the word *out*, *outside*, she paused for a minute. It might be that since the teacher asked them to drink the water in the class she wanted to imply that she does not have a bottle and needs water from the water cooler downstairs. She produced the utterance *may I*

drink water + downstairs. In this instance the sequence *may I drink water* was not produced fluently as it had been previously; instead, Dornaz lengthened the word *I* and also the word *water* followed by a short pause before she produced the word *downstairs*.

Lengthening a syllable or pausing in the middle of a sequence could be a learner strategy to allow the speaker to gain some time to think about the following element to be produced without losing their turn.

4.1.2 Lexical teddy bears

In this section, the data will be analysed to scrutinize the young foreign language learners' tendency to (over)use certain formulaic sequences as their 'zones of safety'.

4.1.2.1 Safe islands

The data of this study revealed a number of examples demonstrating young language learners' preference for using certain sequences repeatedly rather than experimenting with novel constructions. On these occasions, the learners who were constructing a creative utterance shifted to a formulaic sequence. That is, the learners started by producing a sentence from scratch but at some point during this process it was evident that they recalled their frequently used sequences and hence they switched to those sequences. In some instances the sequence was not grammatically correct according to the rest of the utterance. However, it seemed that the learners felt more confident to use these sequences rather than creating a novel construction.

(23)

- Teacher: can your dog go to the garden?
 Anita: when the garden (.) like (.) the door (.) is
 (0.2) not open (.) it's clo-close the door
 (.) that (.) when close the door (.) can go
 to the garden
 Fatemeh: teacher I think (.) when (0.2) open the door
 (.) her dog (.) is (.) run away
 ...
 Hiva: miss, *for example* (.) I'm open the door and
 my dog (.) is going to the outside (.) and I
 not w- don't worry (.) because (.) I know to
 the (.) my dog is at the building not outside
 or garden (.) and back to me (.) back (.)
 back to home (.) and I (.) don't worry

In example (23), Anita was explaining to the teacher that when the door in the front garden of their house is closed, their dog could go into the garden. In order to explain this, she was producing an utterance (*it's clo-*), which could be a correct utterance. However, when she began to produce the word *close(d)*, she remembered their frequently used classroom instruction sequence (*close the door*) and abruptly stopped production of her intended sentence and used her formulaic sequence instead. Although this sequence is not grammatically correct in this context, it seems that Anita feels more confident using it. On the other hand, her friend (Fateme) who wanted to help Anita clarify her meaning used the other similarly frequent classroom instruction sequence (*open the door*) to explain Anita's statement for the teacher. After some minutes, while the conversation was still about pets at home, Hiva made a statement, where she used the same strategy as Anita. In this statement, Hiva switched from creating an utterance (*I not worry*) to a formulaic sequence (*don't worry*), which she repeated at the end of her statement.

Below, some other similar examples are presented where learners replaced their creative language production with their formulaic sequences such as *open the door* and *no problem*.

(24)

Dornaz: the teacher point to the (0.2) point the
board (.) and (.) door is (0.2) door open-
(.) Open the door

(25)

Teacher: do you give your doll to another child or
a baby to play with it?
Anita: I give (.) because (.) everyday (.) I can
play with my doll (.) when like (.) she
(0.2) play (.) or kill my doll (.) I say
to the she or he (.) I say (.) please
don't kill my doll (.) but (.) because (.)
she is very younger than me (.) don't have
any doll (.) it's (.) kill (.) it's not p-
(0.2) no problem (.) no problem (.) it's a
baby and not be bad (.) and (.) and I say
to my mom if don't buy a new doll (.) O-
um (.) it's not bad- *it's OK*

(26)

Hiva: if (.) I'm going to the trip (0.3) not a
prob-no problem in three session?

Teacher: yes, you can be absent for three sessions

In Examples (25–26) Both Anita and Hiva start to create an utterance using the word *problem*. Both learners abruptly stopped their utterance during the production of the word *problem*. The sequence *no problem* was known as a frequent sequence used by the teacher. The teacher believed that these learners have picked up the sequence *no problem* from the teachers' talk and that it was not explicitly taught to them. It might be that the familiarity with this sequence was the reason that the learners preferred it to a creative structure such as 'it is not a problem'.

4.1.2.2 *Springboard to communication in L2*

Analysis of the data revealed the use of particular language patterns during the first 10-15 minutes of each session. During the first few minutes of some sessions learners often were not so quick to participate in conversations unless the teacher initiated them. In order to prepare the learners to speak in English and to lose their inhibitions, the teacher opened the class sessions with some warm-up conversations. According to the teacher this strategy was aimed to activate learners' pre-existing knowledge as well as to increase their confidence and help them get into the 'English mode'. The warm-up conversations were mainly around learners' personal lives and their activities. Learners' first utterances in each session were mainly repetition of some sequences. Learners who appeared not very confident or willing to speak in English at the start of the session tried to stick to specific sequences. The sequences that were used by the learners could vary from one session to another. For example, during a session one of the learners applied the sequence *very very nice* (which was found to be a frequent sequence in the data) and this sequence became a frequently used sequence for that session employed by most of the learners. As illustrated in the following example, this device enabled them to produce some long runs without much processing.

(27)

Teacher: Mobina received an invitation last week (.)
tell us about the party (.) how was it?
#00:04:03-3#

Mobina: it's very very nice (0.3) um: (0.2) she (.)
she (0.2) she's (0.2) bride is very very nice
(0.3) she is- ha (.) she has a (0.3) dark
blue eyes and very nice (.) very very nice
(.) and (0.2) wedding (.) wedding dress is
very very nice #00:04:28-1#

...

(Selina is talking -in Farsi- with Dornaz
about a park called Eram)

Teacher: Selina, forget about Eram, let's talk about
farm #00:07:22-3#

Selina: um::(0.2) fa::rm is very very nice.#00:08:12-
5#

...

(Later in the lesson)

Teacher: ok (.) did you do the exercise in your
workbook? #00:25:45-3#

Anita: yes miss, (.) it's very very easy #00:25:46-
5#

(Later stage in the lesson)

Teacher: Darya, are you sad?! #00:49:20-3#

Darya: so-so miss, I'm (0.2) very very tired
#00:49:31-7#

In sum, the first extracts in the example above illustrate learners' reliance on sequences that they have available at the time, as a kind of springboard to initiate their communication in the foreign language. Some of these sequences were used regularly as a stable part of learners' repertoire (e.g. *open the door*). And some sequences (e.g. *very very nice*) were used on certain occasions, probably because they were available at the moment of production. These sequences might be activated because another learner had used them previously.

Example (27) was a particularly interesting case illustrating learners' overuse of a sequence (*very very nice*) in the beginning of the session while later this sequence was partly analysed. This sequence was an interesting case in itself since the repetition of *very* can be a sign of learners' strategy to extend their utterance or in other words they use this repetition to create the illusion of producing a longer utterance. Earlier, the structure *very very + adjective* was only used as *very very nice*. This sequence was a frequent sequence used by learners. During session four, Mobina introduced the use of this sequence in the first five minutes of the session. It appears that she did not feel ready or comfortable to speak in English about the party. She used the sequence *very very nice* in order to reply to the teacher's question and to make some longer sentences. Later, Selina seized her friend's teddy bear formula *very very nice* and hence it seemed like the sequence was activated in learners' repertoires. In total, the learners used this sequence eight times during this session. Later, after about 25 minutes into the session, Anita recognized that there is a slot in the sequence that can be filled with different adjectives. She substituted the adjective *nice* with another suitable adjective *easy*. This initiation from Anita triggered other learners such as Darya to follow the path and refill the slot within the sequence with another element.

4.1.2.3 Avoidance strategy

The findings of the previous section revealed that on some occasions, learners are more anxious about speaking in English. It was observed that particularly during the first minutes of each session learners felt less confident in using English. Hence they tried to either avoid speaking or simply stuck to certain formulaic sequences.

In line with the previously mentioned function (i.e. springboard to communication in L2), the young language learners tended to apply some prefabricated sequences in an effort to feel safe by producing only a limited amount of the target language. They tended to avoid speaking in English and when the teacher directly asked them, they limited their reply to the use of a sequence whose accuracy they were confident of. For instance, the data revealed some instances illustrating learners' use of formulaic sequences in order to avoid a topic that they were not confident to speak about in English.

- (28)
- (Selina and Behnaz are talking about
Selina's trip to north of Iran-in Farsi)
- Teacher: what are you talking about?
- Selina: nothing
- Behnaz: what time is it?
- Teacher: what time is it?! the only question that
you have is what time is it
- Selina: miss, I can't speak English this

What time is it was a frequent sequence used by learners in the classroom. Apart from asking for the time, this sequence could carry a variety of functions such as making the teacher aware that they were approaching the end of the session, that it was the time to play, or they might use this sequence to escape a topic (e.g. to avoid any explanation about their private chat with a friend). In example (28), as Selina stated, it was difficult for the learners (Selina and Behnaz) to explain their topic of conversation in English. In these situations where the learners' linguistic knowledge did not help them to express themselves in English and they could not use their first language, they might have one of the following options. They could either keep silent and not say anything or try to make a statement in English, which could probably contain linguistic errors. Leaving the teacher's question without a reply can be as embarrassing for the learners as making an incorrect response. It might have felt better for them to produce a (linguistically correct) sequence (even unrelated to the topic at hand) rather than sitting silent or making a mistake. Therefore, Behnaz applied the sequence *what time is it* in order to avoid the challenge of explaining the topic in English and in the meantime producing a linguistically correct utterance in English. Such ready-made formulaic sequences could help learners to meet the classroom expectations (i.e. to speak in English) and also to compensate for their lack of linguistic knowledge. This approach could be beneficial for the learners as the application of formulaic sequences could help learners to keep face and boost their confidence. On the other hand, such instances could demonstrate the potential drawbacks of using formulaic sequences. Formulaic sequences might restrict learners' linguistic practice.

Although learners were mostly eager to talk, not all of them were equally active in the classroom communication. Especially during the first ten minutes in the beginning of each session most learners seemed more resistant or uncomfortable with talking in English. Therefore, they

attempted to keep silent as much as the teacher would allow them. For the instances where the teacher insisted on their participation, they adopted a strategy of using a correct sequence. To mitigate the dilemma of talking in a foreign language, these learners were inclined to simply state some ready-made formulas such as *I don't know* or *I had fun* in order to have a correct and short response.

(29)

Session 2

Teacher: Selina, How was your grandma's birthday party? #00:09:22-2#

Selina: I had fun. #00:09:23-4#

...

Teacher: who was in a party? (.) During the holidays who went to a party? #00:26:01-9#

Teacher: party for example (.) birthday party (.) you know birthday party? #00:26:05-0#

Hiva: Miss, I'm going to the (.) birthday my cousin #00:26:14-4#

Hiva: he name's is Mohamad (.) and (.) six #00:26:20-8#

Selina: miss, yesterday is my grandma's happy birthday#00:26:42-4#

Teacher: did you have a birthday party for her? #00:26:52-1#

Selina: yes#00:26:52-4#

Teacher: what did you do then? #00:26:53-6#

Selina: I (.) make a cake (.) with mom (0.2) I and mom (.) make a cake #00:26:59-3#
(Selina shows a photo on her phone to her teacher)

Teacher: wow (.) it's so awesome #00:28:02-9#

(30)

Session 7

Teacher: Tell us about your grandpa's farm (.) how was it? #00:08:51

Mobina: I had fun. #00:08:54-5#

Teacher: can you tell us what you did (.) what did you see in the farm?#00:09:20-3#

Mobina: umm: (0.3) yes (.) in the fram (.) now (.) I have a little (.) goat (.) an::d (0.3) she is very very nice #00:09:54-8#

Selina: in Taleghan (0.2) my grandpa (.) has a farm (.) and (0.3) in the farm we have (.) two horse #00:010:18-6#

Dornaz: miss, it's grandpa farm (.) in the grandpa farm (0.2) is cow and (.) horses in the farm grandpa #00:11:51-0#

(31)

Session 8

Teacher: OK (.) now Asal (.) tell me what you do before a party? #00:07:28-5#

Asal: I don't know #00:07:30-8#

Anita: we need to have a nice dress#00:07:36-3#

Darya: nice shoes#00:07:40-2#

Hiva: nice high heels ☺ #00:07:43-6#

(32)

Session 10

Teacher: Behnaz, what did you do during the weekend? #00:04:31-5#

Behnaz: I had fun #00:04:36-2#

Example (29) shows Selina's transformation from her avoidance strategy to volunteer participation. In the beginning of the session (at the 9th minute from the beginning of the class) she refused to talk about the details of the birthday party and in response to the teacher's question *How was your grandma's birthday party?* she stuck to her sequence *I had fun* and showed no interest in talking more about the party. This sequence helped her to provide a correct reply for the question. In fact, the sequence seems to help her maintain face in front of the teacher and other classmates at a time when she did not feel ready to talk in English. However, in the middle of the

session (26 minutes into the session) she appeared more confident and volunteered to talk about the party.

During session 7 (example 30), Mobina employed the same strategy as Selina. In response to the teacher's question, Mobina used the sequence *I had fun* probably to avoid more language production. The teacher who was familiar with this avoidance strategy tried to elicit more responses from Mobina by asking some further questions. With some hesitations and a long pause in the beginning, Mobina started to answer the question. This time, her response contained their frequent sequence *very very nice*. This sequence has often been used both as a filler and also to extend the run. Mobina's response triggered more statements from Dornaz and Selina and learners' participation in conversation increased. Examples (31-32) present other similar instances of avoidance strategy when learners (Asal and Behnaz) used the sequences *I don't know* and *I had fun* to give a short and correct response to the teacher's question. Using sequences such as *I don't know* could be a learner's strategy to minimize their language production. As we see in example (31) Asal's response *I don't know* convinced her peers to interfere and take the turn from her. At the moment that her friends took the turn from Asal, she gave a sigh of relief. It appeared that she was using this strategy with the knowledge of the consequences (her friends' interference). In general, this approach of using certain formulaic sequences as a warm-up or avoidance strategy was temporary. This attitude was mostly evident in the beginning of the sessions or with the topics that the learners did not feel comfortable to speak about in English. This strategy appeared very helpful for learners to boost their confidence by enabling them to say something at the time when they were not feeling ready to use much English. In this way formulaic sequences could work as saviours and help learners to feel content with being able to say something in front of their friends and the teacher. However, there were instances when learners overused this strategy and hence limited their language production.

4.1.3 Language play

The data of this study revealed learners' tendency to play and have fun during their English lessons. On many occasions they turned the lesson into an opportunity to play and one way to have fun in the classroom for these learners was to play with the language.

4.1.3.1 Play with formulaic sequences

The learners of this study seem to enjoy the potential for language play with formulaic sequences. They tried to use their formulaic sequences in a playful way (e.g. by overstressing the sound pattern) or in some instances they enjoyed refilling a slot in a sequence with some other words.

One of the simple but enjoyable games that learners used was to play with the sounds of English. Sometimes when the learners heard a sequence, they started to laugh, imitate and exaggerate the sounds and hence they repeated the sequence several times. The following examples are some of the instances when learners were engaged in this type of language play.

(33)

Teacher: Selina, rea::d plea::se!
 Mobina: Selina, rea:::d Plea:::se.
 Class: Selina, rea:::d Plea:::se ☺
 ...
 Anita: Miss, co::me plea::se ☺

(34)

Teacher: oh I love that
 Hiva: Oh I love th'at ☺
 (Tina, Selina, Mobina, Anita repeat the sequence and laugh; soon the whole class imitates and laughs)

These incidents which were very common during the sessions, appeared to engage all the learners; even the more reserved and silent learners also seemed to be engaged and had fun. Such instances could bring opportunities for all the learners to practice saying the sequences. As shown in examples (33) and (34) when learners initiated the play with the sequences they repeated the sequences. This could be a positive strategy for young learners to practice language by repeating it and also hearing it from their peers and in the mean time having fun.

In addition to playing with the sounds, learners enjoyed partly analysing the sequences. On these occasions they refilled an element in a sequence with another element. The following sample illustrates one of the occasions when the learners had fun playing with the sound and also analysing a sequence. In this example, the teacher asked the learners to read their answers to the questions in the workbook. It was Asal's turn to read her

answer; however, it seemed that she was distracted and did not notice that it was her turn.

(35)

(Learners are asked to read from their book one after another)

Teacher: Asal! It's ↑you:r turn

Mobina: It's ↑you::r turn ☺

Tina: It's ↑you::r turn ☺

Darya: It's ↑you::r turn ☺

Anita: It's ↑you::r turn ☺

Hiva: It's ↑my:: turn ☺

Anita: No. It's sh:-he::r turn ☺

In example (35) the teacher who realized that Asal was distracted, tried to call Asal's attention and remind her that it was her turn to read. The teacher's statement drew Mobina's attention and she tried to imitate the sequence and exaggerate the sounds. Other learners such as Tina, Darya, and Anita who found it funny, tried to follow Mobina and tried to play with the pronunciation of the word *your* within the sequence *its your turn*. Later, Hiva who identified a possible substitution slot within the sequence tried to refill the slot with another word. She substituted the pronoun *your* with *my* and produced the sequence *it's my turn*. Since it was Asal's turn and not Hiva's turn, Anita wanted to correct her friend and hence started to refill the slot with another element. During her production she started to produce the pronoun *she* but then she realized that it was not suitable and hence replaced it with a correct possessive pronoun *her* and produced the sequence *it's her turn*. This example illustrates the learner's practice with a sequence through repeating it several times. Playing with the sounds provided an opportunity for the learners to repeat (and also to hear) the sequence several times. Moreover, this example clearly illustrates learners' practice with language structure through refilling a slot within the sequence. It became an opportunity for the learners to practice the use of possessive pronouns with the sequence.

The following example presents another case where learners started to play with a sequence by refilling a slot within the sequence. On this occasion, the teacher asked a question about the weather outside, which was hot.

(36)

Teacher: what's the weather like?
 Class: it's sunny and hot (gestures showing hot)
 Hiva: no (.) it's sunny and cold ☺
 Anita: it's sunny and rainy ☺

As shown in example (36), in answer to the teacher's question, the learners produced the sequence *it's sunny and hot*. Since it was summer and the weather was hot this sequence was found frequently within the data. On this occasion, Hiva tried to analyse the sequence *it's sunny and hot* substituting the word *hot* with the opposite adjective *cold*. She used the word *cold* instead of *hot* in order to make a joke of the hot weather outside. Immediately, Anita maintained this approach by substituting the same slot with another word (*rainy*). There was laughter after the production of these sequences. This type of language play with sequences happened quite often; there was at least one instance during each session. The following case is another example of this type, where learners had fun modifying a part of the formulaic sequences introduced in the book, to joke with each other. The lesson was on negative imperatives and the teacher was reading some of the imperatives from the book.

(37)

Session 6

Teacher: ... for example, in our class (.) what's the rule? Can you say some of the rules in this class
 Darya: *don't speak* Farsi
 Tina: (to Hiva) don't speak ask the time ☺
 Teacher: here (.) here in the farm (.) these are the rules (.) *don't touch* the animals
 Mobina: don't touch the Selina ☺
 Teacher: *don't feed* the animals
 Selina: don't feed the *Mobina* ☺

Session 8

(Asal wants to touch Selina's hair and Selina does not let her)
 Anita: don't touch the Selina hair ☺

Example (37) reported above, indicates an instance when some of the learners tried to use a few sequences playfully. The learners seemed to enjoy refilling a slot (at the end of the sequence) with words that were more familiar and funny for them. They were able to analyse the sequence and joke with each other. Also, two sessions later, one of the learners (Anita) applied the sequence *don't touch the Selina* when playing with friends. Although Anita heard this sequence only once, she could remember it after three sessions and she applied it in the right context. This instance clearly demonstrates the potential facilitative influence of language play in learner's language learning.

Below is another example of learners' play with formulaic sequences, where learners played with two homophones (too / two).

(38)

Anita: I (.) love (.) I love (.) Miss, I love
 birthda- birthd- birthday party
 Teacher: I love too
 Dornaz: me too
 Darya: me too
 Darya: me three ☺
 Tina: me four ☺

The other frequent instances of language play were occasions that the learners were prompted by the previous words or sequences and hence produced a sequence containing the same word as the previous one. For instance, the following example shows one occasion when language operated to trigger the learners' production of sequences beginning with the word good. According to Ellis (2002) retrieval or exposure to the initial phoneme of a word might activate other words in the lexicon with the same initial phoneme. Likewise, Sajavaara (1987) observed that an individual lexical item or even a concept could trigger the release of other lexical items or phrases. Also Wood (2006) has found that the recall of one lexical item at the beginning of a sequence could trigger more sequences beginning with the same lexical item.

(39)

Teacher: OK (.) good, now (.) I'm searching for something with good, umm:

Tina: good (.) good Gi:rl (.) good Tea::cher ☺

Dornaz: good work

Anita: good weather

Mobina: good luck (.) good luck

Selina: goodbye

Tina: good girl (.) bad boy ☺

Selina: good friend (point to Mobina) (.) bad friend (point to Tina) ☺

Teacher: Selina!

Darya: good teacher (point to the teacher) (.) bad student (point to Selina) ☺

Mobina: good luck (.) bad luck ☺

Selina: goodbye (.) badbye ☺

Teacher: OK, OK (.) thank you very much, it's enough

In this example, in response to the teacher's request about using the word *good* in a phrase or sentence, Tina started with a sequence (*good girl*), which was previously used by the teacher (as a compliment to the students who were girls). Following Tina, Dornaz, Anita, Mobina and Selina all recalled some other sequences starting with the word *good* that had been previously used. As this flow continued, Tina initiated a play with the structure by bringing the sequence *good girl* together with another phrase containing the opposite adjective *bad*. Immediately Selina and other peers also took the pattern and played with good and bad. This play made a very happy and lively atmosphere where the learners tried to use whatever they had at hand to joke around. The influence of this happy strategy became more evident in responses from parents in the questionnaire. For example, Selina's parents referred to Selina's constant application of the playful sequences such as *goodbye badbye* at home.

4.1.3.2 Taking on the teacher's role

The participants of this study were 11 young lively children with great enthusiasm for play. They might have been motivated to learn English or not but they all seemed very fond of fun. They could easily turn any potential situation into a game. One of the most frequently occurring playful activities in classroom environments is children playing the role of the teacher. This

seemed to be favoured by these young children. In order to be the teacher, they needed to imitate a role model and in the classroom context the role model was their language teacher. Therefore, not surprisingly there were many occasions where learners applied formulaic sequences that were frequently used by the teacher to play the teacher's role. In general, the data indicated learners' tendency to acquire and produce sequences that the teacher used in the class. On these occasions the learners tried to produce the sequence with the same (or in some cases an exaggerated) intonation pattern mimicking the pattern used by the teacher. In the following example, the learners were listening to a list of words and were supposed to repeat after the CD recording. The main purpose of this activity was to practice pronunciation of the new words.

(40)

Session 10

CD neat (.) messy (.) floor (.)

Class: neat (.) floor/mess

Mobina: repeat after me ☺ neat (.) messy (.)

Session 11

(The class has not started yet. Some students are in the class. Mobina arrives)

Mobina: HELLO!

(Some say hi some are talking to other friends!)

Mobina: repeat after me (.) **HELLO** ☺Class: how are you? ☺Tina: Oh my God ☺

At one point during the activity, the choral repetition became chaotic as learners forgot the order of the words. Normally on these occasions the teacher would stop the CD and ask them to repeat the phrase/sentence after her to remind them of the task. This time when the teacher stopped the CD, Mobina used this opportunity to play the role of the teacher, repeating one of the teacher's often used formulaic sequences *repeat after me*. This led to laughter on the part of the teacher and the other learners. The following session, the learners were in the classroom before the class started and were talking to their peers in Farsi (the teacher had not arrived yet). Mobina entered the class saying *hello*. Since there were not many responses from her classmates, she stood in front of the class and asked for a choral repetition of

the word *hello*, using the sequence *repeat after me*. In her response some of her classmates used the sequence *how are you*, which is a joke with the greeting rituals that they have. Next, Tina used the teacher's other sequence *oh my god*. All of them were laughing and had fun with these formulaic sequences.

This enthusiasm for play led to the acquisition of many of the teacher's sequences. In an attempt to imitate the teacher, the young learners could practice the teacher's sequences and eventually add them to their linguistic inventory. Since this type of play focused on mimicking and playing with the sounds rather than the analysis of the sequences, it could attract all the learners regardless of their language proficiency and self-confidence. In the previous sections it was observed that some learners are less active than others. But in these situations of imitations, even the silent learners seemed motivated to repeat or imitate the sound pattern and it seemed all the learners were engaged and enjoyed the play. The positive effect of these situations was even more evident when considering some less active students such as Asal and Behnaz. These two learners tended to keep silent as much as possible. However, in those instances where the play with sounds was initiated they were also engaged and seemed to enjoy it. Moreover, there were instances when they used the playful formulas such as *oh my god* in their speech.

Further occasions when learners adopted and applied the teachers' sequences are presented and explained in the following section.

4.1.3.3 Sound like the role model

Analysis of the data revealed children's particular focus and attention to their teacher as their role model. Children's attitude towards the teacher was evident in their comments and attention to the teachers' appearance; when for example, they appreciated the teacher's jewellery or her clothes. The learners seemed eager to look or sound like their teacher. For instance, on one occasion Hiva commented on the teacher's shoes and immediately she compared it to her own shoes and referred to their same colour.

The young language learners of the study seemed focused on their teacher and showed the tendency to pick up her language since they idealized their teacher. Moreover, it is genuinely important to them to please the teacher and one way to please the teacher is to produce what she has taught them (linguistically correct), or even to sound like the teacher. The data provided examples demonstrating the learners' attention to the sequences in the input. There were many instances where learners used sequences that they heard in the classroom (mainly from their teacher). In

particular, they showed a tendency to attend to the sequences used by the teacher in her natural conversation; that is when she was mainly talking to them and not explicitly teaching. These sequences were remembered and used in similar contexts often with the same intonation previously used by the teacher.

By hearing the sequences in the natural conversation, the learners seemed to grasp the general function of the whole sequence and later in some similar contexts they put their sequences into use. Such instances also revealed incidental learning of formulaic sequences. In addition, there were occasions when the learners could only remember the prosodic pattern and some sounds of a sequence that they had heard before but they tried to use the sequence nonetheless. These sequences were remembered and used in the appropriate context but it seemed the learner could not distinguish the word boundaries within the sequence and hence remembered a prosodic pattern of the whole sequence, rather than the correct pronunciation of individual words.

Some of these incidentally learned sequences became set phrases associated with specific meanings, attitudes or social functions. For instance, learners who had heard the sequence *here you are* from their teacher, seemed to adopt this sequence from the teacher and produced the sequence by saying /hi:jua/. The learners seemed to recall the prosodic pattern of the sequence without distinguishing the individual words. However, they appeared to be aware of the function of this sequence, since they used it as a polite response for a request. In particular they seemed to enjoy using this phrase with their teacher, probably to show their language proficiency and/or politeness. Throughout the observed lessons it was evident that the young learners were in constant competition for the teacher's attention and also to be the teacher's favourite student. Consequently, on occasions when the teacher needed something such as a CD, learners were competing to offer help while using a nice 'conventional' sequence in English. Thus, the sequence *here you are* became a set phrase associated with offering something to the teacher. In the beginning, only Anita and Hiva used this sequence but later almost all learners were found to use this sequence with slight variations in the sounds.

One other formulaic sequence, which was adopted from the teacher's talk, was the sequence *oh my god*. Reviewing the data it was revealed that the learners did not use this sequence during the first two sessions. The teacher used this sequence for five times in total during the two first sessions (the frequency of this sequence in teacher's talk might be related to a phrase often used in Farsi). From the third session, this sequence emerged in the learners'

language and became a frequent sequence during the whole semester. It was also interesting that after some time there were instances when the learners used this sequence while they were talking in Farsi with their friends.

(41)

Session 1 (Selina can not stop laughing at a friend's mistake)

Teacher: oh my god (.) Selina plea::se!

...

Session 2 (Several students ask for permission to go out)

Teacher: Oh my God (.) everyone wants to go out.
Listen everybody (.) you can bring a bottle of water to the class and drink water in the class (.) so you do not need to go out

Session 3 ...

Class: miss, play a game

Teacher: let's read this text first (.) who wants to read (.) Mobina!

Tina: oh my god

Selina: oh my god

As the example demonstrates, the learners adopted the formulaic sequence *oh my god* from the teacher's talk and applied it in their conversation. Analysis of the teacher's language revealed that the frequent function of the formulaic sequence *oh my god* was an exclamation of frustration. This same pattern could be observed as the dominant pattern in learners' usage of the sequence *oh my god*. For instance, in the example (41), the learners wanted to play a game in the class. The teacher did not accept this request and instead asked one of the learners to read the text. At this time, Selina and Tina used the sequence *oh my god* to show their frustration or disappointment. The sequence was produced with the same intonation contour that the teacher had previously produced. It seemed that the sequence allowed the learners to express frustration or resistance, whilst at the same time mitigating this resistance in order to fit the classroom norms.

Another sequence that the learners adopted from the teacher's natural conversation was *bless you*. During session four the teacher used this sequence when one of the learners sneezed. The learners, who seemed to grasp the function of this sequence due to the context, tried to imitate it and produced utterances such as /sIju/ or /bIsIju/. It seemed that the learners

could not distinguish the word boundaries or possibly the phonological structure of the individual words and hence they could not imitate the correct pronunciation of the whole sequence. However, they could retrieve a prosodic pattern of the whole sequence and produced utterances with similar sounds.

(42)

Session 4 (Dornaz sneezed)

Teacher: bless you

Hiva: /sIju/ ☺

Mobina: /bIsIju/ ☺

Teacher: bless you (.) **bless** (.) **you**(.) when someone sneezes we say, bless you

Mobina: miss, in Farsi [L1, bless you]

... (Asal sneezed)

Mobina: miss, bless she ☺

Teacher: sorry what did you say?

Mobina: bless she (.) her (.) Asal

Teacher: *Bless you* (.) you can say Asal, bless you (.) we use (.) bless her or bless him (.) when (.) for example (.) someone dies we say bless him or bless her...

Session 7

Teacher: Behnaz, how is your mom?

Behnaz: sad miss, very sad

Fatemeh: why? Miss, why?

Teacher: her grandma passed away (gesture)

Fatemeh: teacher (.) one man kill she?

Teacher: no (.) she passed away-

Hiva: - what the meaning of pass (incomprehensible)?

Teacher: passed away means died (.) she died-

Tina: -dead (.) forever sleep (.) sleep forever

Tina: Behnaz, she dead?

Behnaz: yes

Tina: [L1; God bless her]

Hiva: miss, can I say bless you (.) can I say bless you

Teacher: bless her (.) God bless her, or (.) I'm sorry for your loss

Example (42) illustrates an instance where the learners experienced a situation (someone sneezed) and heard a sequence related to that (*bless you*). The sequence attracted the learners' attention and they started to play with the sounds. While Hiva and Mobina were trying to imitate the teacher's sequence, all the learners were laughing. Consequently they repeated the sequence several times (probably just to joke with it). Later, when a friend sneezed, Hiva, tried to put the sequence into immediate use. She partly analysed the sequence and produced *bless she* referring to Asal. This led the teacher to explain the different functions of the two sequences (*bless you* versus *bless her*). Interestingly after three sessions, when the topic of the conversation was about someone's death, Hiva could remember the sequence and also the complexity underpinning it. Thus she wanted to check whether it is correct to use the sequence in this context.

The examples presented in this section demonstrate that the children were sensitive to what the teacher said in her natural conversation. It might be that since the language was used in a real context, the children could relate to the meaning and function of it more easily and hence were more prone to absorb it.

The following examples present further examples of learners' uptake from teacher's input.

(43)

(Selina showing a photo of a cake to the teacher)

Selina: I (.) make a cake (.) with mom (0.2) I and mom (.) make a cake #00:26:59-3#

Teacher: wow (.) it's so awesome #00:28:02-9#

...

(pointing to the picture in the book)

Hiva: miss, milly (.) (it')s so aksm #00:40:54-1#

Teacher: milly is? #00:40:58-4#

Hiva: is so:: atsm (.)asom #00:41:01-9#

Teacher: awesome?

(44)

Darya: miss do you have a pet?
 Teacher: no, I don't have any pets #00:10:58-4#
 Anita: miss, before! #00:11:01-9#
 Teacher: no (.) never ever #00:11:02-5#

 (Talking about doing chores at home)
 Fatemeh: Hiva can you clean the window? #00:25:20-5#
 Hiva: no, I can't (.) never ever #00:25:36-8#
 Class: never ever ☺

In sum, this section revealed the children's attitude towards the teacher and her language. It appeared that the children idealized the teacher and they wanted to be like the teacher. Although the teacher appeared to be the main role model for almost all learners, there were some learners who had chosen additional role models as well. For instance, Darya and Selina were two learners who obviously had chosen their friends, Anita and Mobina respectively, as (additional) role models. This is a point that I will return to in section (4.2.4)

4.1.4 Quick-fire

The analysis of the data revealed numerous instances where learners used their sequences as a whole unit without applying the necessary changes. These sequences needed to be (partly) analysed and reformulated to fit the context in which they were used. That is, at least one of the elements in the sequence needed to be modified. However, there were numerous occasions where the learners who were engaged in the conversation failed to do so and produced their sequences without the necessary changes. In this section some of the illustrative examples are presented.

One of the examples of learners' quick-fire was the production of an unanalysed sequence *I love you*. This illustrates learners' failure in adapting a sequence to the content/context. Learners used this sequence to show their positive feelings towards someone or something. This was mainly used to express both *like* and *love*. Since children were eager to express their feelings towards things, they frequently used this sequence.

The following example illustrates an occasion where a learner who wanted to quickly engage with the topic, used a formulaic sequence as a whole without applying the necessary changes.

(45)

Teacher: look here (.) these are farm animals (.) we
 have them here (.) cow (.) goat (.) horse
 (.) donkey (.) and (.) goose -

Behnaz: -I love you horse

Teacher: you love horse

Class: I love you, horse ☺

Behnaz: °Yes°

(46)

Anita: miss, my aunt (.) she is (.) in the
 Australia (0.2) and now (.) she is come
 Tehran (.) is very very nice

Teacher: Asal, tell us about your aunt? do you like
 her? #00:14:40-5#

Asal: yes, I love you #00:14:43-2#

In example (45) Behnaz who was engaged in the topic, interrupted the teacher to express her spontaneous statement that she loves horses. She produced one of their frequently used sequences (*I love you*) without applying the required change, which was a substitution (*horse* instead of *you*). The teacher, who was concerned about accuracy, provided the correct linguistic form. This focus on language accuracy led to silence on the part of the learner.

The data provided several instances of the usage of the sequence *I love you* as an unbroken sequence, without applying the necessary changes. In total there were six instances where the learners produced the sequence *I love you* as an unanalysed sequence. Out of these six cases, there were two instances when the learners first produced the sequence unanalysed, but immediately corrected their sentences by substituting the required element. An example illustrating this is presented in sample (47). In this sample, the teacher is talking about days of the week and dates, comparing the Iranian calendar with the English calendar. This topic triggers different statements from some of the learners.

(47)

(Teacher is talking about days and dates)

Teacher: ...today is June the 30th, In Iran we say Tir the 9th.

Fatemeh: teacher my uncle's birthday

Fatemeh: my two uncle birthday is (0.2) two is (.) one day.

Tina: miss, (0.2) 23 (.) my cousin (.) and (.) my brother and (.) mom and dad (.) go to Sari-

Hiva: miss, *I love my cousins*

Selina: miss, this is my dog

Tina: and cousin (.) I love yo- I love cousin (.) but (0.2) very naughty (.) I love (.) but very naughty

What we can see in example (47) is an underlying competition between Fatemeh, Tina, Hiva and Selina for the attention of the teacher. Fatemeh first offers information about the coincidence of two uncles both having the same birthdate, which was the exact date that the teacher mentioned. Following Fatemeh, Tina started to talk about her journey with her family on the 23rd. The link there is very weak, it is not even about the 30th, it is about a different date and a different subject. Next, Hiva took on the word *cousin* and interrupted Tina to express her statement about her cousin. She produced the correct sequence *I love my cousins*. Following Hiva, Selina took the turn to talk about her pet, which did not have any link with the existing topic. It turned into a competitive situation when a number of learners all wanted to talk at the same time. That is, the learners had to compete to take or keep the turn. Thus, they had to make their statements without long pauses or hesitations in order not to lose their turn. After Selina, Tina took the turn back sounding excited and in a hurry to continue her story. She intended to state that she loves her cousin although he is naughty. First she produced the sequence *I love you*. However, before finishing the production of the word *you*, she changed the sequence to *I love cousin*. It might be that she was hasty and excited to express herself before someone else interrupted her, therefore, she produced the sequence unanalysed first but then was successful in revising her sequence. It should be noted that during the conversation, she had heard the analysed version of the sequence from Hiva and that might have been a trigger for her to remember the required analysis.

There were some other instances where the learners used the sequence *I love + noun* correctly by inserting a suitable element. These instances mainly occurred on occasions when learners had time for processing or during the more formal conversations between the teacher and the learners where the focus was more specifically on language. For example, on one occasion during the lesson, the teacher asked the learners to make some example sentences. The learners had some time to reflect and when they were ready, they could volunteer to say their sentences. Below is one of the examples by Darya.

(48)

Darya: my grandpa is taller than me (.) and (.) I
love my grandpa

As is illustrated in the example (48), Darya had time to process her utterance before she produced it for the teacher. Hence she analysed the sequence and substituted the correct element.

Another example of using an unanalysed sequence as a whole was an instance where a learner (Hiva) had memorized a song, which they had practiced the previous session. She seemed very keen on singing her song for the class, hence she asked the teacher to let her sing the song. The teacher asked her to wait, since they were talking about the previous weekend and the teacher was eliciting some responses from the class. After a short time, Hiva became impatient and wanted to ask the teacher to let her sing the song as soon as possible. Below is an example of this incident.

(49)

Hiva: excuse me Miss, (.) last session (.) I don't
sing a song

Teacher: Oh (.) you wanna sing a song? Ok (.) after
... your friends' speaking you can sing.

Hiva: miss, my sing a song is (0.3) fly

Here, Hiva wanted to express that she needs to sing as soon as possible otherwise she will forget the song. We know this because she uses a metaphor, which is commonly used in her first language; the song will *fly* means she will forget the song. Instead of using the individual word *song*, Hiva produced the whole sequence *sing a song*, which is a frequent sequence used in the class since this is one of their classroom activities.

A further example of the use of a sequence as a whole without the required analysis, referred to an occasion when learners were engaged in a game. In this case, near the end of the session the teacher introduced a game. One of the learners was supposed to perform an action (only gestures were allowed and not words). The rest of the class were supposed to guess what the action was. The person who had the correct guess would be the next performer.

(50)

(Behnaz is miming)

Teacher: what is she doing?

Hiva: wash the car

Mobina: make a cake

Farimah: read a book

Fatemeh: do your homework

During this game most of the learners' language production were formulaic sequences. Because of the competition to be the next performer learners tried to be quick with their guess. Producing formulaic sequences could help them to reduce the language processing while they could be confident of its accuracy and comprehensibility. Hiva, Mobina and Farimah produced three formulaic sequences and likewise, Fatemeh produced a sequence that they had used and heard frequently in the classroom. However, the sequence that Fatemeh produced needed to be reformulated to 'she is doing her homework' in order to be a correct response, but she failed to analyse and reformulate the sequence. She may have failed to analyse the sequence because she wanted to give a quick response.

The examples provided in this section, demonstrate learners' use of formulaic sequences as a quick-fire response to be able to achieve the required communicative results while they were under time constraints. During some classroom activities such as games, the learners were very keen on winning the game despite their linguistic or time constraints. It appeared that formulaic sequences could help learners to compensate for their linguistic and processing limitations. Once again these results suggest that the learners are predominantly interested in communicating their meaning and they could use any devices that might help them achieve this goal.

The data provided some other examples indicating learners' tendency for prioritizing the meaning over linguistic aspects or individual words. In these cases the learners usually used their sequences based on the meaning that needed to be transferred and sometimes they seemed to ignore the specific

language structure that they were asked to use. For instance, in the following case the teacher was going through the reading text, checking detailed comprehension and also focusing on new words and structures. It was a text about a school trip to a farm.

(51)

(Teacher is reading the text in the book)
 Teacher: don't touch the animals (.) here (.) here in
 the farm (.) this is a rule
 Teacher: rule number 2, (.) don't open the gates (.)
 you know gate?
 Selina: yes (.) if (0.2) we (.) open the door (.) the
 animals go

The teacher read the text and came across the sequence *open the gate* and asked whether the learners knew the meaning of the word *gate*. Selina disregarded the specific word that the teacher was asking about and made a statement based on the actual action and the result of the action. Hence, she produced their frequently used sequence (*open the door*) instead of the new sequence (*open the gate*) to express her statement, which was more related to the connotation and consequences of opening the gate.

4.2 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences

In this section the second research question is addressed.

- What are the differences among the individual learners in applying formulaic sequences for certain functions?

The analysis of the data in the first section of this chapter revealed a number of different functions of formulaic sequences for young language learners who study English as a foreign language in a classroom context. In this section, I examine individual variations in the application of the above-mentioned functions. Individual learners' approaches to formulaic sequences are investigated with regard to the functions that these formulaic sequences serve. The aim is to investigate whether all the learners use the same functions that were discussed earlier. In addition, if some learners do not use formulaic sequences for a certain function, what do they do instead. Individual approaches to different functions are elaborated based on data collected during classroom observations, with reference to individual learner

differences as described in chapter 3. In addition, consideration is given to the way the learners' different approaches present advantages or disadvantages in relation to acquiring the language and how formulaic language plays a role in that.

The rationale for formulating this research question relates to a statement by Wray (2002) who claims that the acquisition and use of formulaic sequences varies between individual language learners. She suggested that the use of formulaic sequences is associated with the "need and desire to interact" (p. 175). In this regard, the relevant factors that play a role might be the interactional and other purposes of the second language use, the degree of internal or external pressure on the learner, and the learners' desire to interact with the L2 native speakers (*ibid*). Individual differences as persistent personal characteristics are assumed to generate multiple correlations with language acquisition in instructed settings (Dörnyei, 2006). In second language studies, the most relevant domains of individual differences include personality, aptitude, maturation, learning style and learning strategies. In the present study the accounts mainly cover the observed idiosyncratic personalities and their possible relations with the learners' approaches to language learning and more specifically to formulaic sequences.

Reviewing the results of the previous section, there was observed a general similarity among all the 11 learners of this study in the acquisition and application of formulaic sequences. All the 11 learners shared a common repertoire of some formulaic sequences, which they knew how to use in certain situations. Since the classroom was an English-only environment and they were supposed to use only English, all the learners had acquired sufficient formulaic sequences to be able to pursue their basic needs in the classroom. They had some fixed sequences for particular situations that all the learners used. It seems possible that these sequences had fossilized for the learners. Table 4 provides some illustrative examples of these fixed common expressions.

Table 4. Frequent classroom commands

Purpose	Formulaic sequence
Greeting & farewell	hi, how are you?; I'm fine thank you good bye, see you later
Request for information	what is the meaning of (X)?
Asking for permission	may I go out?; may I drink water?; may I come in?
Classroom activities	sing a song; play a game; read a book ...
Drawing teacher's attention to time	what time is it?

All the 11 learners used these sequences very frequently and also fluently. These sequences appeared to be of vital important because they allowed all the learners to communicate their basic needs in the classroom regardless of their language proficiency.

Despite the similarities among the 11 learners in the acquisition and use of certain formulaic sequences, individual learners showed different approaches in their language use and also in the application of formulaic sequences for different purposes. As an introductory example, I can refer to the striking differences between Farimah and Selina. Farimah seemed to monitor her language more closely than Selina by thinking about her utterances before producing them. This prevented her from getting certain types of practice, since she did not speak without thinking. She seemed very observant and attentive in the classroom (section 3.7). Usually she did not speak until she was asked (e.g. by the teacher). She rarely had quick-fire responses. On those occasions when she spoke, she could make relevant and usually linguistically correct statements. This reflective yet attentive approach might be her way of learning. Farimah did not show very repetitive use of formulaic sequences. On the other hand, Selina could easily say things without much concern about the linguistic accuracy or even relevance (section 3.7). She seemed more reliant on repetition of certain sequences. For instance, she could easily take a sequence used by a friend and use it as her starting point to be able to say something. Probably, she could enhance

her learning from the experience and the feedback that she received. Such individual differences seem likely to influence how learners might use formulaic language.

4.2.1 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences as time buyers

According to the results of this study described in section 4.1.1 one of the functions of formulaic sequences for the learners was to buy time. That is, the learners used different types of formulaic language in order to buy time for the planning and preparation of their utterances. One way of achieving this purpose was to use fillers. Learners used certain formulas in their speech to avoid pausing when they needed to process the subsequent utterances. Interestingly the data revealed that the strategy of using fillers in oral language production was only particularly prominent among some of the learners. There were some learners who used this strategy very seldom or even not at all. There were mainly four learners (Hiva, Anita, Mobina and later during the semester Darya) whose language production contained fillers. For Anita Hiva and Mobina, this strategy might have originated from their expressive personalities as well as their good language proficiency. These three learners (as described in section 3.7) appeared very verbal, attentive and motivated learners. Darya was an interesting case whose production showed a transformation during the data collection. Darya did not use fillers during the first sessions. In fact, there were no fillers found in her language production until session 13. However, during the last three sessions she began to use fillers and this pattern seemed to be growing in her speech. The filler that she adopted was the sequence *I think*. The first instance where Darya applied the sequence *I think* as a filler was during session 13, when she was talking about a picture of a garden with some children playing in it.

(52)

Darya: this garden is beautiful (.) a:nd (.)2) I think
 (.) the children, comes and play (.) he's
 don't like

The explanation for the change in Darya's behaviour might be the relationship between Darya and Anita. Anita was one of the learners who frequently applied fillers such as *I think* and *like this*. As mentioned in section 3.7 Darya seemed to have chosen Anita as a role model. She was very keen on sitting next to Anita and seemed very attentive to Anita's language.

The data revealed many instances when she repeated Anita's utterances or at least followed Anita's pattern. It seemed as if she was aiming at sounding like Anita. Therefore, it might be that she had adopted this strategy of using fillers from Anita. The following example illustrates Darya's attitude towards Anita.

(53)

(The teacher asks learners to work in pairs for a question and answer activity. She assigns pairs)

Teacher: you two (.) you two (.) you two

Darya: miss, I want with Anita

Farimah: miss, from here, you, you, you

Anita: miss, you three, you three, you three

Anita was a successful and above all a helpful friend (as mentioned in section 3.7) and Darya who seemed motivated to learn the language and participate in classroom activities had adopted the strategy of following a role model in order to help herself.

The same four learners mentioned above (Anita, Hiva, Mobina, and Darya) used the strategy of repeating a sequence in their utterances in order to buy time or extend their statement. Moreover, Tina, Dornaz, Fatemeh, and Selina who did not use fillers in their language production also used the strategy of repeating sequences. Particularly Selina and Tina used this strategy frequently. For these two learners, the use of this strategy might be due to their tendency for spontaneous speech. They seemed very eager to say something in order to get the teacher's attention or have fun with friends. Due to the mismatch between their language proficiency and their need to talk, they might have adopted this strategy to compensate for their lack of planning time. The examples below illustrate instances when Selina and Tina made impulsive utterances. On both occasions they repeated a sequence within the utterance probably in order to buy time to plan the rest of their utterance.

(54)

Hiva: miss, what time is it?

Selina: miss, I want (.) I want (.) I want see watch
(pointing to teacher's watch)

(55)

Anita: miss, I'm had a parrot (.) I (.) em (.)
 because I have allergy (.) I (.) what is
 [L1]

Teacher: let it go

Tina: miss, today (.) I'm going to the dog's shop
 (0.2) and (.) I'm one (.) I'm one (.) and
I'm one (.) and (.) [L1; I forgot!]

In fact, the strategy of repeating a sequence several times during the language production was a very frequent approach used by most of the learners. However, there were some learners (Asal, Behnaz, and Farimah) who used time buyers very seldom during the whole data collection. It should be mentioned that these three learners were among the most reserved and silent learners.

Farimah did not use many time buyers during her speech, probably because (as mentioned earlier) she tended to think about her utterance before she started to say something. She did not have as many spontaneous quick statements as her other more talkative peers. Regarding Asal and Behnaz, it was observed that their language proficiency seemed to be lower than that of the rest of the learners. Therefore, they did not have many opportunities to practice their speech strategies. In addition, it might be that they were not very willing to extend their runs. For instance, one of the functions of time buyers was for the learner to hold onto the turn while preparing the utterance to be produced. It might be that Behnaz and Asal did not feel comfortable to take or keep the turn to speak.

Based on classroom observations and a discussion with the teacher, it appeared that Behnaz and Asal struggled more than others in producing utterances or doing their exercises. It might be that their lower language proficiency demanded more processing during their language production; therefore, they had frequent pauses in the beginning or middle of their utterances. Asal generally seemed less enthusiastic towards English and therefore she did not seem very keen on taking or keeping the turn. There were a number of instances when peers took away Asal's turn and she appeared to give a sigh of relief. It might be that she simply paused with the hope that her peers would intervene and save her from the dilemma of speaking in English. In that situation, she might have considered that she did not need time buyers. In the case of Behnaz the situation seemed to be different. There were some occasions when she lost the turn to her peers and her facial expression suggested that she was disappointed. It seemed she was

hoping to be able to complete her utterance herself if she had enough time for processing. On such occasions Behnaz appeared very disappointed. For instance, in example (56) mentioned previously in (13), when Behnaz paused in the middle of her utterance and Darya took the turn, Behnaz seemed disappointed.

(56)

Teacher: Behnaz, what is she doing?
 Behnaz: she doing (0.3)
 Darya: cooking (.) she cooking
 Hiva: cooking pizza
 Mobina: I love pizza
 Anita: miss, I like pizza but (.) I don't like
 (pointing to a picture of mushroom in her
 book)

Probably Behnaz could benefit from the strategy of repeating the previous sequence in order to buy time to process and in the meantime to keep her turn. She could use this strategy to get more opportunities to practice language but it seemed that she had not developed this strategy. This, on the other hand, seemed a very successful strategy for Selina. She was very keen on speaking, having fun and seeking the teacher's attention. However, her language proficiency was lower than her needs (especially for competing with her other more competent peers such as Anita and Hiva). Repeating formulaic sequences could help her to accomplish her goal.

4.2.2 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences as teddy bears

The data showed a general tendency for most of the young learners to engage in the classroom activities and especially to seek the teacher's attention. One way of attracting their teacher's attention was to speak in English. Although most of the learners seemed enthusiastic about the English course, not all of them were equally active in the classroom activities. In section 4.1.2.2, it was noted that sometimes, for instance at the beginning of each session, the learners were more hesitant to speak in English. The data analysis revealed a strategy adopted by the learners in such challenging situations. In general, it was found that almost all the learners tended to stick to certain formulaic sequences, probably to ease the processing load. However, there appeared to be a striking difference between learners' objectives. Some learners used formulaic sequences as their springboard to

further communication while other learners used it to bat away the task of speaking. For instance, example (57) mentioned previously in (27) demonstrated Mobina's and Selina's application of formulaic sequences in order to be able to say something in English while they seemed not quite ready to speak in English. Later in the lesson it was observed that they were able to speak more comfortably.

(57)

Teacher: Mobina received an invitation last week (.)
tell us about the party (.) how was it?

#00:04:03-3#

Mobina: it's very very nice (0.3) um:: (0.2) she (.)
she (0.2) she's (0.2) bride is very very nice
(0.3) she is- ha (.) she has a (0.3) dark
blue eyes and very nice (.) very very nice
(.) and (0.2) wedding (.) wedding dress is
very very nice #00:04:28-1#

...

(Selina is talking -in Farsi- with Dornaz
about a park called Eram)

Teacher: Selina, forget about Eram, let's talk about
farm #00:07:22-3#

Selina: um::(0.2) fa::rm is very very nice.#00:08:02-

This strategy could be a helpful strategy for the learners to be able to say something and therefore save face in front of the others and the teacher and to boost their self-confidence. Behnaz and Asal showed the same approach in their language production (e.g. examples 58-59, mentioned previously in 31-32).

(58)

Session 8

Teacher: OK (.) now Asal (.) tell me what you do
before a party? #00:07:28-5#

Asal: I don't know #00:07:30-8#

Anita: we need to have a nice dress#00:07:36-3#

Darya: nice shoes#00:07:40-2#

Hiva: nice high heels ☺ #00:07:43-6#

(59)

Session 10

Teacher: Behnaz, what did you do during the weekend?
#00:04:31-5#

Behnaz: I had fun #00:04:36-2#

The difference between example (57) and the samples presented above was that Behnaz and Asal stuck to these sequences in order not to say much and to avoid any further production. In this way, this strategy could be a disadvantage for their language learning as it might limit the amount of practice and thus slow down their progress as language learners.

4.2.3 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences in language play

Despite the differences in the learners' language proficiency and motivation or attitudes towards foreign language learning, all the children in this study seemed lively and enthusiastic to play. Analysis of the data (e.g. section 4.1.3) indicated the learners' talent in turning the classroom setting into an opportunity to have fun with peers. Formulaic language was found to be a good source of entertainment for the learners. They had fun mimicking the sequences or partly analysing a sequence by refilling an element with perhaps an even "funnier" element. The first type of play where the learners could play with the sounds seemed to engage everyone. Even the most silent learners such as Farimah, Asal and Behnaz were also engaged in this type of activity. Particularly for Asal and Behnaz (whose lower proficiency level limited their language production) this was an opportunity to practice and produce some sequences of language. In general, this activity seemed a good warm up for all the learners. The other source of language play was to substitute an element in a sequence. There were certain learners (Mobina, Anita, Hiva, and Tina) who most often initiated this type of play.

Among these learners, Tina was not particularly a proficient language learner; however, she appeared to be keen on playing and humour. She could use language as a tool to have fun and entertainment. Her fun approach to language was evident in the following example when she provided her friend with a suitable formula through singing a song that they had previously learned.

(60)

Asal: Miss (L1; what time is it?)
 Fatemeh: no farsi
 Tina: ↑Wa-Taim ↓I::s ↑It, Its 'θri:: ↑ 'ə'klak ☺
 Tina: miss, what time is it?

This example illustrates the different approaches and attitudes that individuals can have in the process of language learning. In this example in order to ask the time, Asal used Farsi, which is not allowed according to the classroom rules. Fatemeh, as a student committed to the rules of the classroom, reminded Asal that they are not supposed to talk in Farsi. In the meantime, Tina applied her entertaining approach and started to sing part of a song that they had previously learned which contained the question *what time is it?*

In general Tina seemed confident and spirited to try new things (see section 3.7). She seemed not to worry about making mistakes. She could easily turn her linguistic mistakes into an opportunity to entertain her peers. The following example illustrates this observation.

(61)

Teacher: whose wedding party (is it)?
 Hiva: Milly (incomprehensible)-
 Tina: -my uncle
 Teacher: my?!
 Tina: uncle,
 Anita: **You: r** uncle?
 Tina: Uncle Milly
 Tina: My uncle ☺ he (.) **'MY** uncle ☺

In this example, Tina who seemed to be excited to answer the teacher's question took the turn from Hiva. In a fast delivery of her utterance, she failed to adjust a sequence from the text (*my uncle* to 'her' uncle) and hence introduced a mistake. When she was reminded about her mistake, she simply started to make fun of the mistake and laugh at it.

Once the language play was initiated, it could simply spread among the other learners. Although this type of play could entertain everyone in the class, not all the learners were actively engaged in it. Following the four learners mentioned earlier, Darya, Selina, and Dornaz could join the language play when it was initiated. Although, Fatemeh and Farimah seemed enjoyed listening to their friends while they were playing with sequences,

they tended to wait sometime before joining in. They were never the initiators and moreover did not participate in language play if they felt it might be against the classroom ethics. As mentioned in section 3.7 both these learners seemed to be very aware of the norms of the classroom. For instance, on occasions such as example (38) where learners were using the adjective *bad* such as *bad friend* for their peers neither of these two learners participated. In general, these two learners were among the conservative learners who tended to monitor their language and also their behaviour probably due to their respect for the class and the teacher.

Asal and Behnaz seemed to enjoy watching their peers playing with the language. Although they both could laugh with their friends during the play, they did not use this opportunity to actively participate and generate any utterances themselves. However, there were instances when they repeated the *funny* utterances of their peers. In general, as mentioned earlier in section 4.1.3 language play seemed very efficient in stimulating and engaging all the learners although to different degrees.

4.2.4 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences to sound like a role model

One type of language play that the learners were engaged in was to sound like a role model. As demonstrated in section 4.1.3.1 sometimes the learners could pick up a teachers' sequence and tried to imitate or even exaggerate the sound patterns. In addition to the joy of playing the teacher, learners seemed keen on sounding like their role model (section 4.1.4). There were also some interesting examples of learners adopting other role models. The two striking examples were Darya and Selina. These two learners appeared to be enthusiastic learners who seemed to enjoy the company of their more proficient friends, Anita and Mobina (see section 3.7). The data presented a number of examples illustrating that Darya and Selina were attentive to Anita and Mobina respectively. This attitude was evident in the language pattern of Darya and Selina. The following examples are two extracts that illustrate Selina and Darya's attitude towards their friends.

(62)

(the lesson is on comparative adjectives and the teacher is presenting some examples based on some pictures in the book)

Teacher: ... the horse is bigger than the goat...

Hiva: miss, what the meaning of goat?

Mobina: miss, I think (.) is (0.2) can I say in
... Farsi?

Selina: miss, in (0.3) [L1, before]-can I say
Farsi?

Teacher: before?

Selina: before in from (.) I have a rabbit

(63)

(Previous session the learners read a story and in the present session the teacher asks them what the story was about, almost all the learners take a turn to tell the story)

Book: ...*the giant builds a wall around the garden...*

Anita: ...and then (.) giant (.) build a hole (0.2)
build around (.) *make a wall around of the garden*

Darya: ... selfish giant (.) make a wall around of
the garden

Farimah: and he (.) *build a wall around the garden...*

As mentioned previously (section 3.7) Mobina seemed mindful of the classroom rules; that for instance Farsi was not allowed. In example (62) when she could not find the words to be able to explain the meaning of *goat* she asks for the teacher's permission to speak in Farsi using the sequence *can I say in Farsi*. Later that session, while Selina was talking, she used a word in Farsi and it seemed that at the time when she produced the word in Farsi she remembered the rule and hence she wanted to follow Mobina's approach (asking for teacher's permission) by using the sequence that Mobina had used (with a deleted preposition). Also in example (63) Darya introduces an error within a formula *make a wall around (of) the garden*. This error was first presented by Anita. It seemed as if Anita had internalized the sequence from the book and later was producing it creatively. She had

broken the sequence *build a wall around the garden* and when reconstructing it she replaced *build* with *make* and also *the* was substituted by *his*, in addition she added an *of* in a place where it did not belong. This case was interesting because the sequence was presented correctly in a written format in the book, and the students and the teacher had repeated it several times. Then Anita introduced an error and Darya picked it up from her. Farimah who narrated the story immediately after Darya did not apply the same structure (as Anita and Darya) but instead used the book's structure.

4.2.5 Inter-learner variation in using formulaic sequences for quick-fire

One of the occasions when formulaic language appeared favourable and beneficial for learners was during the classroom language play when the atmosphere could become very competitive. During the games some learners were quick and successful in engaging with the task (e.g. Hiva, Anita, and Mobina) and some were most often silent watching the others (Behnaz, Asal, Farimah, and Dornaz). It seemed that among the 11 learners in the class not all of them had actually worked out how to manage the circumstances that required them to be quick. Some learners succeeded more in the play simply by using some frequent formulaic sequences. The use of formulaic sequences helped them to avoid much processing and therefore they could be quick in their language production. As demonstrated in section 4.1.4, sometimes learners ignored the required modification of the sequence and produced it as a whole without any changes. On the other hand, some other learners were not very successful in accomplishing the game. It seemed like these learners were sitting there thinking that they had to say something and they needed to plan it, by which time the moment had passed.

4.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the results of the study addressing the two research questions. The data was interrogated to identify the functions of formulaic language in learner's oral language production and the individual variations in using formulaic language. The results revealed application of formulaic sequences by young language learners for different functions. Four major categories of functions emerged from the analysis together with their subtypes. The data also presented some variations among the learners in the application of formulaic sequences. These findings will be synthesized in the following chapter (chapter 5) and discussed in the context of the literature review presented in chapter 2.

5 Discussion

This chapter sets out to interpret the main findings of the study reported in chapter 4, in the light of the stated aims. First, the aims and the design of the study are revisited. Next, the results are discussed with reference to the current knowledge of this field as presented in the review of the literature (chapter 2). All the four main functions that were identified in the results will be discussed in sections 5.1–5.4 followed by a discussion of the individual variations among the learners in section 5.5.

Previous research findings for formulaicity have drawn attention to the significant role of formulaic sequences in language teaching and learning (e.g. Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2008). Given the importance and pervasiveness of formulaic sequences, this study set out to investigate formulaicity in early foreign language learning. More specifically, the study sought to identify the role that formulaic sequences could play in learners' foreign language learning process.

Based on a review of the relevant literature in Chapter 2, formulaic sequences were defined as fixed or semi fixed multi-word sequences, which are stored and produced as whole units. As prefabricated sequences carrying specific functional meanings, formulaic sequences provide language users with processing benefits by reducing the online processing time. They allow for the production of expressions that learners are not yet capable of constructing with the aid of their linguistic systems. As a result, formulaic sequences assist learners in speaking fluently and accurately beyond their knowledge of grammar rules (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). All in all, formulaic sequences seem to play an important role in L2 learners' language learning.

The majority of previous studies on formulaicity have looked at their use by adult language learners. There have been few studies about formulaicity in young second language learners' language production and much less is known about formulaicity in early foreign language learning in a classroom context. Studies on young language learners can provide valuable information about the role of individual learner differences in second language acquisition (Mihajevic Djigunovic, 2015). Moreover, the context of language learning and the type and amount of input that the learners receive, play a crucial role in the process of language learning. In sum, the present study was inspired by a shortage of empirical research on formulaicity in the oral language production of young foreign language learners. There are two primary aims of this study:

- 1) To find empirical evidence of the functions of formulaic sequences in young foreign language learners' oral language production
- 2) To investigate the individual differences in using formulaic sequences for different purposes.

The data of this study has emerged from observation and video recordings of a full course lasting one semester, 16 sessions of 90 minutes, conducted in a private language institute in Iran for children aged 9-10 years. Analysis of the data revealed several functions that formulaic sequences served in young language learners' oral language production. Table 5 summarizes the functions of formulaic sequences for the young language learners of this study. The four boxes on the left contain the main categories of functions and the boxes on the right side of the table include the types of functions. These are further discussed below.

Table 5. Functions of formulaic sequences for the learners of this study

Functions of formulaic sequences	
Functions	Types
Time buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filler • Repetition • Utterance launcher • Non-fluent formula
Lexical teddy bear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe island • Springboard to communication • Bat away the topic
Play with a formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on the teacher's role • Sound like the role model
Quick-fire	

5.1 Time buyers

Wray (2002) introduces a valuable function of formulaic language in that it buys time for the speaker. She argues that the processing of language includes “the struggle to retain fluency, and the sustaining of output while planning what to say next” (p. 75). Hence, the use of formulaic language can be a helpful strategy to better manage the speech production, particularly when under communicative and/or cognitive pressure. Language users apply these prefabricated time buying sequences to promote fluency and protect the turn while thinking about what they wish to say (Skehan, 1996; Wray, 1999, 2002; Wray & Perkins, 2000).

The results of the present study provided a number of examples illustrating learners’ reliance on different types of prefabricated sequences as time buyers during their oral language production. The learners were found to use formulaic sequences in the form of fillers, repetition of a sequence or utterance launchers for different purposes. These sequences could help learners to create an illusion of fluency or language proficiency by avoiding long pauses and/or increasing the length of runs. In these instances, formulaic sequences were used as a strategy to economize effort on processing and also to buy time for preparing the rest of the utterance.

Connecting these findings with a study of adult language learners conducted by Wood (2006) it is interesting to note that the participants in his study also used formulaic sequences to enhance their speech fluency by relying on one sequence, repeating a sequence or using rhetorical structuring devices. The present study revealed similar findings with respect to the function of formulaic sequences as time buyers or fillers, which foster fluency.

The application of certain sequences as fillers (e.g. *I think*) was found only in the language of four learners. The majority of the learners of this study frequently used the repetition of a sequence as time buyer. This can be regarded as their strategy to decrease the burden of language processing by relying on what has already been provided or by repeating a sequence several times in order to buy time. It seemed by repeating a sequence several times learners could avoid pausing and at the same time they could find time to process the rest of their utterance.

In his study of the adult second language learners, Wood (2006) observed the same approach of repeating a sequence several times to extend the run or to buy time. Based on his observations, he concluded that it might be due to the “nature of formulaic language retrieval” that a formulaic sequence can be stated several times consecutively more or less effortlessly (p. 25). As a result, a long utterance can be formulated with minimal pressure on

production capacity (*ibid*). It was interesting that the young language learners of this study show the use of the same strategy that the adult language users seemed to adopt in Wood's (2006) study. These two studies were quite different with regard to the age of the participants, the context of language learning and also the amount and type of input that the learners received (for more details about Wood's study, see Chapter 2). Along with the similarities in the results of the two studies, there were also some differences between the results of these two studies.

In this study the young language learners applied formulaic sequences to buy time and avoid pauses not only to enhance their fluency but also to be safe in the competition between class members related to taking possession of a turn or holding onto a turn. Using time buyers could help these learners keep their turn and avoid interruption on occasions where they needed more time for their processing. For these learners, there appear to be two major reasons for losing their turn if they paused for a long time. The first possibility might be that the pause convinced the teacher to intervene and provide what she thought the learner was looking for. The second possibility might be that other learners would take the turn. Therefore, learners who wanted to be able to complete their utterances themselves and not lose the turn to the teacher or peers had to avoid long pauses. Hence, they used this strategy to buy time for their processing without any long pauses.

Wood's (2006) study focused on adult second language learners who performed an elicitation task individually and therefore probably they were not required to apply strategies to keep the turn. In the present study, however, the young language learners were in a classroom setting. These learners were at an age where they were keen to please the teacher while also wanting to compete with one another. By using formulaic sequences as fillers the learners could complete their utterances without losing their turn. Therefore, in the present study time buyers were not only used to enhance fluency but they might have also been used as a communication strategy to avoid interruption. As mentioned previously in chapter 3 for the initial purposes of this study there were some elicitation tasks collected from individual learners, which were not analysed in this study, however, a comparative analysis of the elicitation data from these two studies could be an interesting topic for further research.

In addition to the application of fillers and repetitive sequences, the young language learners of this study applied formulaic sequences as a conversational device in the beginning of their utterances to call attention or take the turn and at the same time to buy planning time. These sequences were used as an opening for an utterance. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad,

& Finegan (1999) describe these sequences as “utterance launchers” which “have a special function of beginning a turn or an utterance” (p. 1073). The functions of these expressions might be to move the conversation into a new direction or to “provide the speaker with a planning respite, during which the rest of the utterance can be prepared for execution” (ibid. p. 1073). Biber et al. (1999) argue that the beginning of the utterance is a major planning point and utterance launchers provide the speaker with some thinking time before they move on to the content of the utterance.

The findings of this study are in line with the observations of Wong Fillmore (1976). Nora and Ana, the two successful language learners in Wong Fillmore’s study, tended to memorize formulaic sequences and sometimes overuse them. Sometimes they were used semantically and syntactically correctly, and sometimes these sequences were used in “semantically empty ways” (p. 494). According to the findings of this study, although sometimes sequences were used in “semantically empty ways”, they were playing an important role in learners’ oral language production. These sequences helped to ease fluency while providing them with planning time. In this way formulaic sequences can be regarded as saviours, which learners could resort to in order to reduce processing effort. Applying these “semantically empty” formulas helped the learners to be able to take the turn, extend their utterances and finally complete their utterances, without losing the turn or revealing their hesitations. All these measures can help to boost learners’ self-confidence.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from the current study is the evidence that in contrast to previous findings, formulaic sequences are not always produced fluently. This finding presents a challenge to the previously established view on the nature of formulaicity. Currently, there is a general consensus among researchers in the field of formulaicity that one of the essential characteristics of formulaic sequences is that they are produced fluently and smoothly without hesitations and pauses (Bybee, 2002; Hickey, 1993; Myles et al., 1998; Pawley, 1986; Peters, 1983; Wood, 2006; Wray, 2002). In fact, Hickey (1993) has considered phonological coherence as one of the “necessary” conditions for identification of formulaic sequences (p. 32). Pawley (1986) argues that after a hesitation, the speaker is likely to restart from the beginning of the expression; therefore, pauses within formulaic sequences are less acceptable than pauses within free expressions. Wray (2004) confirms this statement, reasoning that if a formulaic sequence is treated as a whole unit it should be “relatively resistant to internal dis-fluency and inaccuracy” (p. 260). Indeed this criterion was applied for this study as well (criteria for the identification of formulaic

sequences, Appendix B); however, some interesting observations immediately emerged during the analysis of the data. Analysis of the data revealed a number of examples where a formulaic sequence was produced with internal dis-fluency. In these examples, the learners paused or lengthened a syllable within a sequence, which had previously been produced frequently and fluently. Although these utterances were not produced fluently they could be defined as formulaic sequences based on certain other characteristics such as high frequency. One example of this was the sequence *may I drink water*, which was produced with internal dis-fluency on certain occasions. The dis-fluency could be used as evidence that the utterance was not a formulaic sequence. However, this sequence could also be identified as a formulaic sequence based on some other criteria; such as:

- Used repeatedly in the same form when conveying this idea
- Community-wide in use (shared classroom knowledge)
- Associated with a specific situation/genre

Further analysis of the data suggested that dis-fluency within a sequence might be the learners' strategy to buy time for their processing. These sequences, which had also previously been frequently produced by the learners, could provide learners with additional processing time and at the same time could help them to keep hold of their turn. A possible explanation for this result might be the holistic and predictive nature of formulaic sequences. Since formulaic sequences are prefabricated, the language user can skip the processing of individual words and the structure of the sequence and hence can think of the completion of the utterance during this 'borrowed' processing time. This is an interesting technique for keeping the turn because when the utterance is a formula it gives the speaker an opportunity to signal to the listener not to interrupt. When the listener knows that what the speaker is saying is a formula and therefore has confidence that the speaker is going to complete it (since it has been used correctly before), the listener will wait for the utterance to be completed. Therefore, it might be in the speakers' interest to put the gap in the middle of the sequence, since no one will interrupt, and they can buy some time to do their processing.

5.2 Lexical teddy bears

The second category of functions identified in this study, called lexical teddy bears represents learners' reliance on and overuse of certain prefabricated sequences in their language production.

In the literature, formulaic sequences are regarded as the “zone of safety” or “islands of reliability” on which language learners tend to depend in their language production to avoid linguistic errors and to communicate their ideas successfully (Boers et al., 2006; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wood, 2009). Therefore, not surprisingly language learners might reuse or overuse some of the sequences they know. That is, learners might stick to certain expressions or sequences that are familiar and apply them most frequently. Hasselgreen (1994) refers to this phenomenon as the use of “lexical teddy bears” by language learners (p. 237). In using this term she refers to a much-loved children's toy signifying warmth and familiarity for children. Reviewing the two studies by Wong Fillmore (1976) and Myles et al. (1998, 1999), it was found that the young language learners of these two studies acquired sequences of language and put them to frequent use (for a detailed description of the two studies refer to Chapter 2). The previous studies, which investigated the phenomenon of overusing formulaic sequences, were conducted in different contexts and/or with learners of a different age range compared to the context and the age of learners of this study.

In general, the learners of the present study demonstrated a strong inclination to resort to some formulaic sequences as their ‘zones of safety’. This function was evident particularly on certain occasions when the learners were not ready or comfortable to communicate in English, for instance, at the beginning of sessions. On these occasions, the learners showed an increased tendency to employ ready-made sequences, which probably could be brought into use with less effort than constructing a new utterance. One of the common occasions that learners overused some of their formulaic sequences was during the first 15 minutes of each session. The learners of this study had been mainly exposed to Farsi out of the class and even before the class started. Therefore, they did not feel very confident to suddenly switch from Farsi to English. Before the beginning of each lesson, the students generally communicated using their first language (Farsi) and they might not have spoken English at all since the previous session. As mentioned earlier, according to the rules of the class when the teacher entered the classroom, the language switched from Farsi to English and everyone was expected to only speak in English. However, it takes some time for the learners to prepare for the intensive ninety minutes of an English-

only session. Hence, in the beginning of each session learners appeared to rely on some prefabricated sequences to build confidence in speaking in English. Formulaic sequences seemed to offer support to learners who felt shy or not ready to speak in a foreign language. They tended to practice those sequences, which they were confident of, and in a way these sequences helped them to produce some longer stretches of accurate language. In this way learners could meet the classroom expectations (i.e. to speak in English) and avoided silence or the use of Farsi (which was not allowed).

Wong Fillmore (1976) had observed a similar strategy used by some of her participants. She concluded that, those formulaic sequences were just nice phrases that the children added to their utterances, which “served no communicative function in addition to extending the length of their statements” (p. 445). However, in this study it appeared that these sequences served significant functions other than extending the length of the utterances. They were used to save face and as a springboard to communication when the learners were required to produce in the foreign language but they were not yet ready to say much. It seemed that these formulaic sequences provided the young language learners of this study with easily retrievable and relatively safe tools with which to overcome the challenge of speaking in a foreign language. Nesselhauf (2005) refers to these sequences as “ready to use lexical teddy bears” (p. 149). In line with the findings of Nesselhauf (2005) the strategy of using lexical teddy bears was employed with great variation from one learner to another. Some learners relied on this strategy excessively while others employed it less.

Wray (2002) refers to the positive role of formulaic sequences for language learners particularly in the early stages of classroom tuition. She claims that formulaic sequences may offer support and boost learners’ confidence. Likewise, a number of studies on second language acquisition have revealed that formulaic sequences help to improve learners’ confidence in language use (e.g. Granger, 1998; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002). The findings of this study also indicate that formulaic language can boost learners’ confidence.

In sum, formulaic language appeared to play a role as a warm-up activity, which helped learners to be actively engaged and consequently contributed to boosting learners’ confidence. As noted by Schmitt and Carter (2004), in the process of second language learning, formulaic sequences are used initially as a quick means of communication. Thus, the application of formulaic sequences could lead to speakers’ faster integration within a group. It appeared that formulaic sequences, as tried and true ways of communication, provided learners of the present study with quick and safe

means to be communicative in the foreign language. These sequences were helping learners to boost their fluency and also to build confidence when they were not ready to speak.

Despite the benefits of formulaic sequences in the process of language acquisition, the findings of the study uncovered a problematic aspect of using formulaic sequences. The problem seemed to arise when some learners began to rely on certain formulaic “teddy bears” resulting in a tendency to make use of a limited range of formulaic sequences at the expense of other formulas, words or structures. Learners’ tendency to stick to their conservative formulas could result in a lack of experimentation with the language. A number of studies in the field of second language acquisition have indicated that language learners (both adult and young learners) tend to overuse certain words or sequences and underuse other words or sequences (De Cock, 2004; Granger, 1998; Hasselgreen, 1994; Nesselhauf, 2005; Wong Fillmore, 1976). Similar to the findings of previous research the learners of this study seemed to adopt a tendency to stick with a limited number of familiar and safe sequences, which they felt more confident using. The data of the present study showed the overuse of some frequent formulas and the underuse of other words, structures or even sequences. For instance, on some occasions it was observed that the learners abruptly stopped in the middle of an utterance and resorted to a frequently used formulaic sequence.

Anita: when the garden (.) like (.) the door (.)
 is (0.2) not open (.) it’s clo-close the
 door (.) that (.) when close the door (.)
 can go to the garden

(Example 23, discussed in Section 4.1.2.1.)

The evidence suggests that the learners who found their idiosyncratic sequences as their safe islands and felt confident with them seemed to be more resistant to taking risks and exploring a variety of other aspects of the language. This approach seems to be a result of what Tomasello (2003) calls a conservative attitude to language use (elaborated in section 2.3.7). Learners have perceived these formulas as safe because they are grammatically correct. Therefore, they do tend to avoid any further explorations, which might cause errors. In two studies of adult second language learners Nesselhauf (2005) and De Cock (2004) found similar results in their essays where they overused some sequences and underused others. Similarly, Hasselgreen (1994) noted that the adult advanced second

language learners in her study tended to use high frequency words in order to avoid the time and cognitive demand for finding other alternatives. Likewise, Wong Fillmore (1976) found the same approach used by some of her young participants. She noticed that some children (more than others) tended to apply a more conservative approach to their language use. These learners (e.g. Jesus and Juan) chose to stick to their safe formulas or structures rather than introducing innovations in their language. Although the age and/or the context of the present study were not similar to any of the previous studies mentioned, the results are comparable.

One further feature of this pattern of formula overuse occurred when some learners occasionally used a fixed and correct sequence such as “*I don’t know*” as an avoidance strategy so they would not be required to engage in any additional language production. Tarone (1980) refers to the avoidance strategy as one of the communication strategies used by second language learners. According to her, second language users might adopt the avoidance strategy when they do not know how to express something in the second language. In such cases learners may remain silent and thus avoid the topic.

Formulaic sequences could provide learners with an instrument to bat away the challenge of producing much in their second language. Learners’ reliance on this strategy can cause problems in the process of language teaching and learning. For instance, the analysis of the data revealed that Asal and Behnaz stuck to this approach almost all the time. They tried to keep silent as much as possible and in cases when the teacher directly asked them, they stuck to certain formulas particularly the sequence *I don’t know*. In this way they could easily ‘bat away’ the teacher’s question and skip any further language production. In addition, it appeared that they had noticed that statements such as *I don’t know* would encourage other peers to intervene and take over their turn, so they would be safe. The teacher seemed aware of the learners’ avoidance strategy and hence she tried to insist on eliciting more language from these learners and at same time avoiding the others’ interference. Nonetheless, learners’ reliance on particular formulaic sequences such as *I don’t know* made the situation more complicated for the teacher. Wong Fillmore (1976) observed the same strategy among some of her participants. Based on her observations, she concluded that the function of some sequences such as “I dunno” was a “response limiter” (p.685). That is the learners applied these sequences to limit their obligation to respond further or to pass on the conversation to the other speaker.

This evidence of overuse exposed a more multifaceted picture displaying the complex nature of formulaicity and its impact on the process of language

teaching and learning. That is, despite the valuable benefits of using formulaic sequences, it can also be problematic in the case of overuse. This observation raises a significant question of relevance to language teaching and learning. That is, whether the knowledge of formulaic language is always beneficial for the learners or if it limits learners in their language experience. While it is beyond the scope of this study to respond to this question, it clearly needs to be addressed in further investigations.

5.3 Language play

The literature in the field of second and foreign language learning has distinguished a stage in the learning of formulaic sequences where language speakers are able to identify the individual element/s of a sequence and refill the slot with other suitable elements (Schmitt, 2004; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2008). In the process of first language acquisition, Tomasello (2003) claims that children as conservative learners are in general unwilling to go beyond things they have heard in the input or that they have often used themselves. Further, Wray and Grace (2007) state, “humans naturally maintain a conservative approach to processing that eschews unnecessary explicitness” (p. 553). That is language users avoid analysing the multi-word sequences into smaller units until there is a need for it. In line with the conservative approach to language learning, the ‘needs only analysis hypothesis’ (Wray, 2002, p. 130) claims that learners hear a sequence, remember it, use it without questioning the form unless and until there is the need or the possible changes have been indicated in the course of input (Wray, 2002, 2008).

Research in the field of applied linguistics has revealed various roles of language play in facilitating language learning (e.g. Bell, 2005, 2012; Cook, 2000; Davies, 2003; Tarone, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1976). In a review of the literature on the relationship between formulaic language and language play, Bell (2012) concluded that formulaic sequences are rich resources for language play, which offers “particularly young second language learners” an opportunity for both practice and analysis (p. 194). In addition, this can be a way for these learners to build up knowledge of formulaic sequences and/or language structure through experimentation.

The young language learners of the present study were found to be frequently engaged in different types of language play with formulaic sequences. Language play could vary from playing with the sounds through exaggeration to manipulating some units of formulaic sequences. The data provided a number of examples illustrating the significant role of language play with formulaic sequences in creating opportunities for language

learners to practice, repeat, explore and interact with the language and at the same time to have fun. The teacher played a facilitative role in this process. She could create a sufficiently relaxed classroom atmosphere to allow this kind of play to happen. She was highly skilled in knowing when to allow it to continue and when to move on to the next task. Interestingly, language play appeared to promote a good mood among the learners who might often laugh together as a result of having initiated such play. Research in the field of applied linguistics has revealed that language play enhances language acquisition by lowering the affective barriers (Cook, 2000; Tarone, 2000).

It seemed that through playing with formulaic sequences, the learners of this study could enjoy language practice in a more lively and low stress environment. This in turn appeared to lead to a facilitated acquisition of sequences as confirmed by the data evidence that sometimes learners used the sequences that they played with, later in their language production. In chapter 4 a number of examples were presented where learners acquired and applied sequences that they played with such as *oh my god* or *bless you*. These findings support the claims by other researchers who assert that language play promotes internalization and acquisition of language by opening doors for learners to practice and develop deeper awareness of language (Bell, 2005; Cook, 2000; Tarone, 2000). The findings of this study are consistent with Wong Fillmore's (1976) findings. According to her observations, Nora and Anna (two successful learners of the study) were particularly keen on language play. Both Nora and Anna were prone to being experimental and playful in their speaking. Wong Fillmore argues that these learners' language development was helped by their language play. They could gain better grammatical control and an enhanced fluency.

Language play could help learners to practice with the language, by both repeating a sequence and also by analysing the structure. The results of this study indicated the facilitative nature of language play on learners' knowledge about language structure. In order to refill a slot within a sequence, learners were required to recognize the type and function of the individual units and the structure of the sequence that they were playing with. For instance, in example (35) when learners were playing with the sequence *its your turn* they had to distinguish the nature of the unit which was a possessive pronoun and then they could practice by substituting the pronoun 'your' with some other pronouns such as 'my' and 'her'. In sum, it appeared that refilling the slots within a sequence could enhance learners' awareness of different aspects of language structure. The role of language play with formulaic sequences in relation to learners' acquisition of language structures could be an interesting topic to be investigated in future research.

Although not all the language learners were initiators in language play, it appeared that when the play started it could engage all the learners to a greater or lesser degree. This observation can be explained by Hasselgreen's (2000) description of young language learners' characteristics. She believes that young learners are open and enthusiastic to learning a new language, they have relatively short attention span and they have particular need and capacity for play and fun. While this claim cannot be assumed to apply to all classrooms, in those contexts where a highly skilled teacher is able to create a supportive atmosphere, opportunities for fun and play with language are more likely to be taken.

The learners of the current study were at an age where typically young people tend to establish strong social bonds with their teacher (see Nikolov, 1999). As an important adult, the teacher appeared to be viewed as a role model by the learners. Teachers are identified by young language learners as models and therefore play pivotal roles in children's learning process, learners' attitudes towards language learning as well as their self-concept (Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2015; Nikolov, 1999). Similarly Bandura (1986) claims that children have a tendency to follow the beliefs and behaviours of an adult perceived to be important. Linked to these points, Bakhtin (1986) has also noted that in developing an utterance, language users tend to choose words or sentences that they have heard from other speakers on similar occasions. Children are often focused on their teacher and are very likely to pick up her language since they idealize their teacher. Therefore, in a language classroom one can expect that children are likely to imitate the teacher and his/her language. Additionally, the concept of formulaicity focuses on the idea that language users pick up strings that they have heard before and reuse them. A language user might pick up formulaic language in order to use it later to achieve increased fluency and accuracy. Thus, it can be concluded that formulaic language tends to relate to picking up language from a role model, a trusted language user.

As observed in this study as well, the learners seemed very keen to sound like the teacher or to play at being the teacher. One of the noticeable patterns of this type of play in the classroom was to employ the teachers' language in order to sound like her. They picked up certain sequences from the teachers' language and tried to act out the role of the teacher in front of their peers. This role-playing resulted in incidental learning of a number of formulaic sequences. The use of certain formulaic sequences for taking on the role of the teacher was also observed by Wong Fillmore (1976). For instance, Nora used sequences such as "now look" or "if you want" which "marked a special speech style" when she was playing the role of a teacher (p. 505). An

interesting feature of this play in the present study was that learners mainly attended to sequences that the teacher applied in natural communications rather than sequences selected from the teaching materials.

The data provided a number of instances when the teacher said a word or a sequence once and the learners put them to immediate use. In some instances, the learners attempted to imitate sequences from the teacher's talk, even though they could not remember the correct pronunciation of the whole sequence (e.g. /bIsIju/ for *bless you*; example 42, section 4.1.3.3). It seemed as if when the learners were engaged in the communication, they could grasp the function of the sequence and became interested in that sequence. Hence, they tried to reproduce it although they could only remember the prosodic pattern of the whole sequence, without distinguishing the individual words. Regarding these incidences the teacher explained that sometimes they [the learners] are like sponges, they just absorb what she says, and sometimes she explains things several times but they do not get it. It seems that in this instance what the teacher was failing to realize was the difference between spontaneous talk and taught talk. If language is going to have any value to these children at all, it will be in the real world. These observations might suggest that the children attend to things that are tangible for them and they feel the need for.

The language practice of these learners can be explained by Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, which places the social context at the heart of the learning and communication process. Vygotsky suggested that learning can not be understood independently from the social and cultural forces that influence the individuals (Toohey, 2000). Hence, in order to interpret the findings of this study it is significant to consider the social context of the classroom, the setting of the classroom, the relations among the learners and to their teacher as well as the design and structure of the teaching and learning practice. In this context most of the learners have not chosen to learn English because they wanted to learn a new language. In the first place, this was an extra-curricular activity that their parents had chosen for them. In such a situation, the children need to learn and use the language to be able to fulfil certain functions. That is, to please the teacher, to have fun and to be able to assimilate in the group, following the rules of an English-only classroom. In sum, it can be concluded that among the most influential factors in the learners' language practice are the role of the teacher and the peers. Like Vygotsky, Bakhtin (1986) believes that any instance of language use draws on conventions that embody particular social and ideological practices. Bakhtin's (1986) view on the relation between the social context and the individual is evident in his concept of dialogism, which emphasizes

that language emerges from the individual's communication with others. Bakhtin proposes that language users try on other speakers' utterances and through the process of appropriation they reflect on those utterances and shape them to their own intentions (Toohey, 2000). The present study provided evidence that formulaic sequences go through a process of appropriation. The learners picked up sequences from others (either their teacher or their peers) and reused them to communicate their intentions. In order to maintain the crucial skill, of foreign language competence, these learners needed a role model to follow. In the classroom context and for young children the main role model is their teacher. Therefore, as observed in the examples in chapter 4, the learners were attentive to the teacher's language and the meaning and function of her language enabling them to meet their communication needs. This observation provides evidence for the importance of meaning for the young language learners confirming also the occurrence of incidental learning of formulaic sequences within a communicative context. As Bakhtin (1986) argues, once the language user appropriates an utterance, it becomes the individual's personal understanding and accommodates to their mental schemata.

Although all the learners seemed to have adopted their teacher as their role model, some of the learners seemed to have chosen their friends as their (additional) role models. For instance, it was observed in chapter 4 that Darya and Selina had chosen their friends (Anita and Mobina) as their role models and tried to imitate them. Although both Darya and Selina were helped by having their friends as role models since both Anita and Mobina were among the successful language learners, there were instances when the role models could introduce mistakes. These cases show the choice of a role model may not always support progress in language learning. If the role model has a better language proficiency and/or positive attitude towards language (like Mobina and Anita), it can be beneficial. The problem can arise when the role model is less proficient than the person who is following the role model. However, peer support can be helpful in terms of feeling positive about attending language classes at all.

5.4 Quick-fire

Analysis of the data demonstrated that in certain situations the learners tended to use more formulaic sequences than novel constructions. It was observed that the learners used more formulaic sequences when they did not have much planning time. On occasions when the learners were required to produce fast spontaneous utterances, they resorted to certain prefabricated sequences. For instance, one of the more evident contexts where formulaic

sequences were favoured and used frequently was during certain guessing games in the class. When playing the game, language learners could be in situations where they had to compete with their peers to provide a correct answer to win the game. During these games the learners were required to provide a quick-fire response and did not have much planning time to think about how to express themselves. They needed to make a quick guess and to express it before their friends had time to formulate an alternative response. On these occasions, when the competitive atmosphere increased, the learners tended to resort to prefabricated sequences probably in order to have a rapid and acceptable answer. This observation could be explained by the processing advantage of formulaic sequences. Due to their prefabricated nature, formulaic sequences are retrieved as a whole and hence are processed more rapidly than creative structures (Conklin and Schmitt, 2008; Pawley and Syder, 1983). Consequently, formulaic language is often favoured in the situations where the speaker is under time and attention constraints and therefore is required to speak quickly and fluently (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2010). Therefore, learners might have found these sequences to be an efficient tool to compensate for their lack of processing capacity when they were under time pressure.

The young language learners of this study were very keen on winning the games that they played in the class and also winning the teacher's attention by performing the task correctly. Therefore, on occasions such as playing 'Guess the mime' games, they could not allow long pauses and much processing time to be able to produce an utterance. The children were driven to be quick and also to make sure that their peers and the teacher would understand them. Under such circumstances formulaic sequences were a great help for them to achieve their goals. As Wray (2000) points out, formulaic sequences facilitate processing for both the speaker and listener.

One of the features of formulaic sequences, which were produced under such competitive conditions, was that these sequences were used without applying the necessary adjustments to fit the context. It seemed that the learners' main focus was on conveying the meaning and ensuring fast delivery of the utterance. This shift in focus diverted their attention away from the details of the formulaic sequences they were using. In such instances it appeared that they were more concerned with the general meaning of the sequence rather than with the individual words within a sequence. Once again these results suggest that the learners are predominantly interested in communicating their meaning despite their time and language constraints.

The results discussed here regarding quick-fire responses do not support the previous study by Foster (2001) who examined the effects of planning time on language production of adult native and non-native speakers doing classroom language tasks. In her study, Foster (2001) found that planning time did not affect the level of formulaicity in adult non-native speakers. In contrast, the native speaker participants in her study used more formulaic sequences when under time constraint conditions. The observed contrasting findings of these two studies might be a result of the age of the participants, their motivation and attitudes and also the tasks that they were engaged in. It could be that children and adults differ in their motivation and/or approach to the task of language acquisition. Another factor might be the differences in the nature of the tasks that they were engaged in. It might be that the performance in a competitive situation (for children in this study) demands a different approach to that required when performing an individual elicitation task (for adult learners in Foster's study).

5.5 Inter-learner variation

Another finding of this study concerns the degree of difference identified among the 11 learners in the application of formulaic sequences for different purposes. Indeed, although some formulaic sequences were found common to all learners, probably due to their similar language learning background, there were important inter-learner variations in the learners' repertoires and use of formulaic sequences. This observation was in line with the findings of Mihajevic Djigunovic (2015). In her study, she argued that in the process of early foreign language learning some aspects of the development can be pervasive and shared by all the learners while some other aspects can be idiosyncratic and particular to individual learners.

The differences among the learners of this study were clearly visible in the different strategies that they applied in their language learning process. These young language learners showed different approaches and purposes when applying formulaic sequences in their language production. These observations were in line with the quantitative results of Wood's (2006) study, which revealed inter-learner variations among adult second language learners in the application of formulaic sequences for the advantage of fluency. However, Wood did not provide any descriptions or explanations for these variations. In the present study, the results showed that not all the participants used formulaic sequences for the advantage of their fluency. For each of the categories there were some learners who used the strategy but there were also some learners who did not use any of these strategies during the data collection period. For instance, there were only four learners who

relied on particular formulaic sequences such as “*I think*” as fillers during their language production. The majority of the learners applied repetition of a sequence rather than formulaic fillers. The reason for this variation might be that using fillers require a higher level of automaticity. As for the participants of this study it was noted that the four learners who used fillers were generally more productive.

In general, the learners who applied formulaic sequences as time buyers appeared to be more talkative in the class. In other words, these learners created more opportunities to speak in English during lessons. It might be that since these learners were producing more spontaneous utterances, they had less planning time and hence tended to use more time buyers.

In many cases the learners had to compete with their peers in taking and holding their turns. The data provided many examples showing that sometimes when the learners paused in the middle of their utterances, their peers could interrupt them and therefore they could easily lose the turn without finishing their utterances. In such a competitive situation some learners (e.g. Hiva) who wanted to take or more importantly keep her turn, had devised the strategy of using formulaic sequences or repeating a sequence several times. The other learners (Behnaz and Asal) simply paused in the beginning or middle of their utterances (probably to plan their following utterances) and the pause could lead to the loss of their turn.

The more talkative and impulsive learners also seemed to have a quick-fire style of speech, with a tendency to speak first and think later. For instance, in a competitive situation in the classroom such as during games they would often produce more formulaic sequences in order to produce a correct utterance quickly. On the other hand, there were some learners who produced less spontaneous utterances and it seemed that they tended to think and process the utterance before producing it. On such competitive occasions those who won were the ones who spoke first and thought later. Wong Fillmore (1976) observed this phenomenon about her successful participants Nora and Ana who were more spontaneous and experimental in language production and talked first and analysed later. The two boys of her study (Juan and Jesus) were more conservative and less experimental and hence usually thought first and by the time they were finished thinking it was too late and they had lost the opportunity to speak.

In line with these observations, it was found that there were only certain learners (more experimental learners) who always initiated play with language and the more conservative learners might get actively engaged with the play after some time or not at all. These results were in line with Wong Fillmore’s (1976) observations that some learners were more experimental

than others. In the present study, some learners such as Hiva appeared more experimental and was likely to engage in language play while her other friends such as Dornaz seemed more conservative. Similarly, in Wong Fillmore's study Nora appeared experimental and was quick to figure out the slots in the sequence that could be substituted with other units. On the other hand Jesus appeared resistant to changing his fixed sequences. Wong Fillmore concluded that such a conservative approach was not a very profitable approach in language learning since inflexibility could limit the language experience.

An interesting finding of the study was the observed influence of personality traits in learners' engagements in language play. As Bakhtin (1986) states, the composition and style of speech can be highly affected by the speaker's attitude toward the others (listeners). Likewise, it was observed that learners such as Farimah and Fatemeh did not engage in some types of language play. These two learners seemed very observant of the words and the type of language that they were producing. It might be that Fatemeh and Farimah were concerned about politeness, and therefore could engage in language play only if it did not clash with their personal view of classroom ethics.

The other difference between the learners was in the application of formulaic sequences as 'lexical teddy bears'. Some learners (e.g. Mobina) applied formulaic sequences as their springboard to communication. Others (e.g. Asal) used formulaic sequences as an avoidance strategy in order to bat away the topic and avoid having to produce much language. Asal was one of the learners who did not appear willing or confident to use English. Her main approach seemed to be the avoidance strategy as she tried to keep silent as much as the teacher would allow her and on occasions when she was required to say something in English she frequently resorted to certain sequences such as *I don't know*.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided a discussion of the results of the study with the aim of answering the two research questions.

Analysis of the data confirmed that learners attend to the input provided in the classroom and internalize some chunks of language to further use in their language production and comprehension. The results have also provided evidence of incidental learning of formulaic sequences from input. Findings of the study clearly illustrate that formulaic sequences exist in the language classroom. Even though there might not be much explicit instruction at the sequence level, the language input provides instances for

the learners to learn a multi-word unit. Moreover, formulaic sequences played different roles in the language production of individual learners. These sequences provide young language learners with an instrument to overcome their lack of knowledge, to improve their fluency, and to enjoy some language play. The data also provided examples illustrating communicative functions of formulaic sequences where the use of formulaic sequences was affected by the learners' relationship with their peers and also the relationship between the learners and their teacher. The analysis revealed that although all the learners applied formulaic sequences in their language production, there was a great variation between (among) individual learners in their intention and the extent of the application of formulaic sequences. Some learners used formulaic sequences to be able to extend their run and produce more of the language, whereas other learners used formulaic sequences to avoid further language production. In sum, it seemed that individual learners' different personalities, needs or limitations serve as explanation for the application of formulaic sequences in different contexts.

In order to understand the range of the functions that learners used formulaic sequences for and the inter-learner variation among the learners, we should review two influential factors. It is significant to consider how motivation for this age group would be likely to influence the range of functions that they were trying to achieve in the classroom and how they responded using formulaic language. In considering this context we should be aware of what matters most to these learners. For instance, at times they might be interested in any or all of the following: learning English, sounding like their friends, sounding like the teacher, having a good time, engaging the attention of the teacher and gaining the teacher's respect. Classroom data confirmed that these young language learners frequently regarded this teacher as their role model.

The themes so far discussed can all be regarded as potential variables affecting the process of language acquisition. In different situations these different dynamics played a role in affecting their actions. The observations of this study regarding the language practice of these learners are indicative of the social situatedness of language learning. The application of certain formulaic sequences for different purposes are all loaded with traces of learners' perspectives and experiences within the group in this particular context. According to both Vygotsky and Bakhtin language is learned through contextualised social interaction and language use is dialogic; language is contextual and directed toward an audience (Wood 2010). Therefore the learners' use of formulaic sequences can be affected by their perception of the situation. For instance, they might choose sequences from

each other's language or from the teacher's language to indicate their relationships or to simply indicate that they belong to the community. At times these young language learners wanted to please the teacher, they wanted to avoid alienating their friends, and they wanted to gain the teacher's attention or to hold on to it. The learners in this study were at the age where they wanted to have the teacher's attention, since she was perceived as an important adult for them. With this aim in mind, one of the things that might help them achieve their goal of pleasing the teacher seemed to be formulaic language. For example, in a situation where they were not sure what to say but they wanted to speak, in order to gain the teacher's attention, they had to find something quick and ready to say so that they could finish their utterance before being interrupted. This happened particularly during games or in competitive situations. They used formulaic language to be able to say something quickly and also to hide the fact that they might not know enough. This evidence confirms the findings of Wong Fillmore (1976), which concluded that when children are motivated to be part of a group, they are likely to pick up and use formulaic language before they understand it. As Wray (2008) puts it, this can be a way for the young learners to "bootstrap themselves in the new language" (p. 259).

6 Conclusion

This concluding chapter briefly reviews the rationale for this study and the main findings. Some implications for both curriculum design and teaching methodology are discussed, followed by a discussion of possible directions for future research.

The main objective of this research was to learn about how young children deal with the challenges of learning a foreign language in a classroom and how teachers and material developers might help them in their language learning. In other words, this study was undertaken to provide new insights into the process of early foreign language learning and to shed light on the implications of selecting pedagogical strategies and materials. I believe that the topic of formulaic language is relevant to early language learning since the teachers of this age group tend to use a lot of formulaic sequences for early stage learners. Young children also operate in a world where they are exposed to lots of formulaic sequences in their first or second language (e.g. in songs, rhymes, stories), so this approach is generally considered to be pedagogically age appropriate and relevant. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate the functions of formulaic sequences in young learners' language production and also to find the variation between individual learners in the application of formulaic sequences for different functions.

In order to find answers to the research questions, one of the main tasks has been to select some examples and investigate the functions of formulaic sequences in this data for young language learners. The subjects of this study were 11 children in the age range of 9–11 years learning English in a language classroom in Tehran, Iran. The learners were followed in their classroom for a period of two months (16 x 90 minutes). The video recordings of ten sessions (900 minutes) were transcribed and analyzed.

The results of this study provided evidence for the existence of formulaic sequences in the language repertoire of the young language learners. Although there might not be much explicit instruction on formulaic sequences, the findings confirm that the learners acquired and used sequences for many different purposes. Learners used formulaic sequences as time buyers and also lexical teddy bears. In addition, formulaic sequences provided resources for the learners to play with language and also to be able to produce quick-fire utterances. In addition, the findings revealed that individual learners have different needs and approaches for applying formulaic sequences in their oral language production.

6.1 Implications

This study not only indicates the use of formulaic sequences by language learners for different purposes, but also offers important new information to raise some pedagogical insights for the consideration of language teachers and materials designers. Language teachers and the classroom materials they use serve to provide the main sources of information for foreign language learners. Thus they have the strongest contribution to make to the development of learners' language acquisition particularly in contexts where limited or no additional access to the foreign language exists beyond the classroom. This section synthesizes the pedagogical and the theoretical implications of the findings of the current study.

The emergence of the wide use of different functions of formulaic sequences in learners' language production suggests that formulaic language is an essential part of the language learning process. Therefore, it is crucial for language teachers to recognize the nature of formulaicity and the processes that underlie its usage. By uncovering some important features of formulaicity with regard to early foreign language learning, it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of an appropriate pedagogy for teaching a foreign language to young language learners.

The findings revealed a number of facilitative functions that formulaic language provided for young language learners. The language learners employed formulaic language to enhance their fluency, to enjoy the language learning process through play, and to boost their confidence. On the other hand, there were occasions when it was evident that formulaic sequences might actually limit language learning rather than just enhancing learning as a consequence of learners' overuse of certain sequences. For instance, the data illustrated that "I don't know" was a way of batting away and pushing the teacher away to avoid the expectation that they should engage in the conversation. Avoidance strategy might be a frequently used strategy in all classrooms. However, what makes it interesting here is that formulaic sequences are used for this strategy and that it is an overused strategy by some of the learners in this class due to anxiety, lack of motivation, or other reasons. Teachers should be aware of these functions and their potential effects in learners' language learning process. Raising teacher's awareness regarding these two aspects could valuably contribute to their effectiveness in implementing appropriate responses in the classroom situation. Equipped with this knowledge, teachers may be able to teach and encourage the facilitative functions such as language play with sequences and also implement some facilitative strategies to overcome the problematic aspects

such as the avoidance strategy. Given the dynamic nature of language learning for young learners, teachers might need to decide which type of formulaic sequences would be appropriate for the learners to help them in their development at any point in time. In addition, the teacher might consider how best to create contexts in which certain functions arise which could provide opportunities for learners to activate their knowledge of formulaic sequences.

One further pedagogical implication to consider with regard to the findings of this study is whether teachers can use the information about formulaic language to help their learners. For instance, the data showed that learners were using a lot of formulaic language right at the beginning of the class; in such situations if the teacher is aware of the situation and what is happening, he/she could encourage it and try to shape it. So if the teacher recognizes that the young language learners will operate much better in the second half of the class, if they have all had a chance to warm up using formulaic language in the first half, then the beneficial thing to do would be to introduce opportunities early in the class to use formulaic language. In doing so everybody gets to speak, everybody gets the feeling that they have said something that was relevant and therefore it could be expected that all of the learners may then be ready to learn something new. Otherwise, if the teachers are not aware of that situation and the functions of formulaic sequences they might simply ignore it or they might tend to discourage it because it might seem to be too repetitive and not very useful for the learners.

The data provided a number of examples illustrating the incidental learning of formulaic sequences. The learners seemed more motivated to pick up those sequences from input that were used in the social context. Thus the findings encourage us to consider the benefits of an increased focus on the teaching and learning of formulaic sequences embedded within the social context of the classroom learning environment. Both teachers and materials developers could consider presenting some contexts and merging useful formulaic sequences within the input addressed to the second language learners.

One further theme of pedagogical relevance was to note the prevalence and effectiveness of language play in the classroom. However, the data illustrated that although language play was a pervasive and possibly efficient strategy for learners to both practice English and to lower the affective barriers (Bell, 2012; Cook, 2000; Tarone, 2000), there was no evidence of teacher initiated language play. It might be that the teacher was not aware of the potential benefits of playing with formulaic sequences or that she simply

had not reflected on this aspect of her practice sufficiently. The findings of the study suggest that teachers should be informed and trained about the facilitative nature of language play in order to be able to apply language play in their instruction. They can then employ formulaic sequences as sources for language play in order to help learners in their language acquisition. It should be noted that this activity needs very careful planning in larger classes.

An important outcome of the present study is the evidence suggesting that in contrast to previous findings, formulaic sequences are not always produced fluently. This finding has important theoretical implication for the field of formulaicity. Scholars in the field of applied linguistics have repeatedly referred to phonological coherence of formulaic sequences as their crucial distinctive feature and concluded that formulaic sequences are produced fluently without hesitations or pauses (Bybee, 2002; Hickey, 1993; Myles et al., 1998; Pawley, 1986; Peters, 1983; Wood, 2006; Wray, 2002). However, the results of this study revealed a number of instances when certain non-fluently produced utterances could be categorized as formulaic sequences based on certain other criteria. These results have introduced a challenge to the existing definition and identification criteria that are widely cited and applied by many researchers in the field. It can be concluded that as previous researchers have argued, identifying formulaic sequences is not an easy and straightforward task. In order to distinguish formulaic sequences from a learner-internal perspective one needs to gain detailed knowledge about the language repertoire and practices of the individual learner. In addition, it is unacceptable for a researcher to rely on one criterion as a necessary feature to judge formulaicity.

6.2 Suggestions for further research

This study is novel in that it has explored formulaicity in the oral language production of young foreign language learners. By highlighting the different roles that formulaic sequences play in early foreign language learning and also individual differences in the application of formulaic sequences, this study has raised a number of issues that call for closer investigation. Some of the intriguing areas that require further attention are listed below.

Individual differences among language learners in the acquisition and application of formulaic sequences would be interesting to examine in more detail. Through combining methods such as observation, interview or journals in a longitudinal study the sources of individual variations in language acquisition can be detected. It could be helpful to study the changes

in the learners' personality traits and their relation to picking up and using formulaic sequences and hence language acquisition.

Another avenue would be to examine formulaicity in the language production of learners with other language backgrounds or in other contexts. It seems likely that the way the learners in this study proceeded in the task of language learning was affected to some extent by factors related to their culture and the context of learning.

Much more research is required to investigate why some sequences more than others attracted learners' attention and led to incidental learning. Is it the sequence itself that is important for the learners? Is it the task or the context? Or is it the function that the sequence might have for the learners that motivates the learners to acquire it? There are deeper layers to the functions of formulaic sequences that require more research. There may be other functions that formulaic language has for different language learners; the field needs more research to investigate that.

Since the data illustrated that language play is a pervasive and effective strategy for learners to practice English, future research could include an intervention study investigating ways of employing language play in language teaching.

In contrast to arguments presented in previous studies, the findings of this study showed that formulaic sequences could be produced non-fluently. However, more information on this would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy with regard to this finding. This is an important issue for research, since fluency of production has been widely used as an important or even necessary criterion for distinguishing formulaic sequences.

6.3 Limitations of this study

Some of the potential limitations of this study were discussed in the previous section together with the suggestions for the future research. This section elaborates on some other limitations of this qualitative study.

First, it would have been interesting to conduct a longitudinal study and follow the learners for a longer period of time in order to trace different functions of formulaic sequences and the development and changes in learners' needs and approaches. However, this was not possible due to time restrictions.

The second limitation relates to the sample size. A study that included 16 lesson observations of a classroom with 11 learners and their teacher is inevitably limited in scope. Hence, no claims are made about the generalizability of the findings to other populations of young language learners. However, it is believed that the findings of the current study add an

interesting and informative voice to the discussions about formulaicity in early foreign language learning.

Ideally I would have preferred to study both male and female learners in order to investigate the possible effect of gender on the results concerning the differences in the acquisition and application of formulaic sequences for different functions. This was not possible since in this context the classrooms are segregated by gender and collecting data from two different classes could result in data overload. This can be an interesting area to be investigated including both a study of all male classrooms and mixed gender classrooms.

Another limitation of the study is that the data was mainly analysed qualitatively. Quantitative analyses of the data could provide additional information on the frequency and the type and token of formulas with regard to the functions and more importantly the individual differences among the learners.

Finally, because of data overload, I was obliged to prioritize some parts of data over the rest. Hence, some interesting data about children's performance in the elicitation tasks are not included in this study, but will be published in the future.

6.4 Personal reflection

In order to pursue my PhD I moved to Sweden, which was a new context with a novel language for me. I had at least three tasks in front of me: completing a PhD project, integrating into a new society and probably learning (another) new language. At some points these tasks proved to be challenging; however, the participants of this study helped me with different aspects of my new career and life.

For this study a foreign language context was a significant element; therefore, I decided to collect the data in Iran where English can be considered a foreign language. Since I needed to video and audio record children learning English in a classroom, the data collection procedure turned out to be slightly complicated and time consuming. Several Language institutes turned down my application since they were concerned about the probable issues that could arise due to video recordings. Possibly they felt they could not trust a researcher who was conducting her study abroad. However, the data collection process was the easy part in comparison to the challenges raised when coding the data. Transcribing the recordings from a class with 11 children in the room turned into a daunting task since it was very common that at least two or three learners were talking at the same time. As the most challenging part of this study I can refer to the identification and categorization of formulaic sequences. I literally ‘memorized the data’ through several revisits of the recordings in order to get a detailed enough knowledge about the learners’ language learning experience and practice.

Despite all the challenges that I faced during this study, it had several significant implications for me. The learners of this study provided me with an enormous corpus for investigating formulaicity in the language production of young foreign language learners. In addition, they guided me through my other more personal tasks, which included integrating into a new social context and more importantly in learning a new language.

Parallel to my PhD project I started to learn a language (Swedish). Although there were differences with regard to age and the learning context, I shared some experiences with the learners of this study. Like these learners, once again I experienced that learning a language is a challenge in itself. It can be scary to open your mouth in a language that you might have very limited knowledge of. Nevertheless, in order to engage with and be part of the community (whether it is a classroom context or a social group) we needed to use the language of the group. Like some of these learners, I experienced how frustrating and sometimes demotivating it can be to be in an environment where one cannot communicate easily due to lack of words

and/or a low proficiency level in language structure. But still these young learners suggested that we could accept this challenge and try to enjoy both learning something new and becoming part of a community. They prompted me to be observant and attentive to the input from the more competent language users and pick up some formulas to be able to produce an utterance above my analytical knowledge, which could be fluent and accurate. They reminded me about the advantages of applying time buyers and fillers to sound fluent and to get time to process the rest of the utterance. They showed me how to use some prefabricated sequences as ‘lexical teddy bears’ to boost my confidence and to be able to engage in a conversation when I do not feel ready to construct an utterance. I learned that language is a fun game. I adopted the playing strategy from the learners of this study. Playing with sounds helped me to remember the sequences more easily. Moreover, they introduced a fun play with language, characterizing it as a game similar to Lego where one can pick a piece from a whole and replace it with other pieces with similar shape but probably different colours (more technically known as a substitution pattern). By deviating from the established constructs one can practice with language and at the same time enjoy the fun. All in all, these learners indicated that, language learning is not always ‘*sunny and hot*’ it can also be ‘*sunny and rainy*’!

Summary in Swedish

Bakgrund

Att lära sig ett andraspråk kan vara en utmanande uppgift för inlärare oavsett ålder, men för främmandespråksinlärare kan det vara ännu svårare. Det kan finnas aspekter hos de två språken, såsom fonologiska, morfosyntaktiska och semantiska strukturer och funktioner, som skiljer sig i en högre eller lägre grad mellan förstaspråket och det främmande språket. Vidare kan brist på kontakt med målspråket (i naturlig miljö) medföra att främmandespråksinlärare har en alltför otillräcklig förståelse av ofta använda ordsekvenser för att kunna prata språket med flyt och kommunicera effektivt.

Inlärare kan ha bemästrat en avancerad kunskap om syntax och en stor mängd ord som individuella enheter, men när de ska kombinera dem korrekt kan det uppstå svårigheter (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2014). Detta illustrerar att kunskap om ordförrådet inte endast innebär att kunna ett ord och dess betydelse, men också kunskap om vilka ord som ofta förekommer tillsammans i form av ordsekvenser som exempelvis *Ha en bra dag!*

Dessa ordsekvenser, här benämnda *formelaktiga ordsekvenser*, definieras som fasta eller halvfasta ordförbindelser som lagras och produceras som hela enheter snarare än att bildas med hjälp av en inlärares grammatiska förmåga (Wray 2002). Som färdiga ordsekvenser med specifika funktionella betydelser ger formelaktiga ordsekvenser språkbrukaren processuella fördelar genom att tiden för språkligt processande förkortas. Detta möjliggör produktion av språkliga strukturer som inläraren ännu inte är kapabel att konstruera med hjälp av sina grammatiska förmågor. Resultatet är att formelaktiga ordsekvenser hjälper inläraren att tala flytande och korrekt på en nivå över sin kunskap om grammatiska regler (Nattinger and DeCarrico 1992). Sammantaget tycks formelaktiga ordsekvenser spela en viktig roll i främmandespråksinlärarens språkliga tillägnande.

Majoriteten av tidigare studier av formelaktiga ordsekvenser har fokuserat på vuxna språkinlärare. Få studier har gjorts av formelaktigt språk i unga språkinlärares språkliga produktion, och mycket mindre är känt om formelaktiga ordsekvenser i tidig främmandespråksinlärning i klassrumskontexter. Tidigare forskning har bekräftat att unga språkinlärares sätt att närma sig ett andraspråk skiljer sig från hur vuxna gör (Nikolov 2009). Vidare spelar kontexten för språkinlärning samt typen och omfattningen av den input som inlärarna mottager en avgörande roll i språkinlärningsprocessen. Denna studie är alltså inspirerad av en brist på

empirisk forskning om formelaktiga ordsekvenser i muntlig språkproduktion hos unga främmandespråksinlärare. Eftersom formelaktiga ordsekvenser har visat sig betydelsefulla för inläringen av främmande språk genomfördes denna studie med syfte att ge nya insikter om hur unga barn handskas med utmaningen att lära ett främmande språk i en klassrumskontext och om den roll som formelaktiga ordsekvenser spelar i deras främmandespråksinläring. Sammanfattningsvis är denna studies två huvudsakliga mål att:

- 1) hitta empiriska belägg på formelaktiga ordsekvensers funktioner i främmandespråksinlärares muntliga språkproduktion
- 2) undersöka individuella variationer hos inlärare som använder formelaktiga ordsekvenser med olika funktioner

Metod

Datainsamlingen skedde på ett privat språkinstitut i Iran. Iran utgör ett bra exempel på en främmandespråkskontext där inlärare exponeras för engelska huvudsakligen i klassrummet. I studien deltog 11 barn i åldrarna 9–11 år som lärde sig engelska i Teheran, Iran. Datainsamlingen inkluderade observation och inspelning av video samt ljud i ett klassrum under två månader. Det insamlade materialet omfattar fältanteckningar och inspelningar av 16 lektioner á 90 minuter, dvs. totalt 1440 minuter. Inlärarnas föräldrar ombads också besvara en enkät om i vilken grad barnen exponerades för engelska utanför klassrummet.

Utöver fältanteckningarna så transkriberades inspelningarna av 10 lektioner (900 minuter) varpå formelaktiga ordsekvenser identifierades. För identifieringen användes en lista med kriterier som sammanställts utifrån en forskningsöversikt över tidigare studier med psykolingvistiska perspektiv på definitionen och identifieringen av formelaktiga ordsekvenser (se Bilaga B). Ett sådant inlärarinternt sätt att närma sig identifieringen av formelaktiga ordsekvenser kräver en grundlig förtrogenhet med inlärarnas språkliga praktik och kunskap, och i denna studie hjälptes forskaren av en bekantskap med kontexten, inlärarnas förstaspråk och vanliga klassrumsrutiner.

De formelaktiga ordsekvensernas funktioner identifierades och kategoriserades utifrån litteraturgenomgången och resultatet av en pilotstudie. De funktionella kategorierna listades med sina undertyper så som: tidsbesparare (utfyllare, turhållare). Ibland belystes funktionen av kontexten i vilken var och en av de formelaktiga ordsekvenserna producerades. Med hjälp av oberoende medbedömare bekräftades att såväl identifieringen av de formelaktiga sekvenserna som kategoriseringen av deras funktioner uppvisade en hög interbedömarreliabilitet.

Sammanfattning av de huvudsakliga resultaten

Resultaten av denna studie ger bevis för att formelaktiga ordsekvenser existerar i den språkliga repertoaren hos unga främmandespråksinlärare. Trots att det kanske inte finns många explicita instruktioner om formelaktiga ordsekvenser i undervisningen bekräftar resultaten att inlärarna lärde sig och använde sekvenser med många olika funktioner.

Analysen av materialet avslöjade att vissa av de unga inlärarna försökte använda vissa sekvenser vid varje möjligt tillfälle för att fylla kommunikativa glapp och undvika långa pauser. Språkinlärarna återanvände eller överanvände vissa sekvenser för att antingen vinna tid till språkligt processande eller för att helt enkelt förlänga sina yttranden. Formelaktiga ordsekvenser hjälpte inlärarna att producera långa yttranden med flyt och att behålla turen och undvika att bli avbrutna.

Vissa formelaktiga ordsekvenser verkade erbjuda "säkerhetszoner" för språkinlärarna. Dessa sekvenser hjälpte inlärarna att stärka sitt språkliga flyt och även att bygga upp självförtroende när de inte var redo att prata. Exempelvis observerades att inlärarna tenderade att använda mer formelaktigt språk i början av sina lektioner när de inte verkade redo att omedelbart byta från förstaspråket persiska till det främmande språket engelska. Det verkade som att kunskapen om formelaktiga ordsekvenser hjälpte inlärarna att producera vissa språkliga yttranden utan särskilt mycket processande.

Materialet visade på en hög grad av repetition av vissa sekvenser. Inlärarna verkade ofta föredra vissa formelaktiga ordsekvenser snarare än att experimentera med nya ord eller grammatiska strukturer. Denna observation aktualiserar den viktiga frågan om formelaktiga sekvensers betydelse för språkundervisning och språkinläring, d.v.s. huruvida kunskapen om formelaktigt språk alltid är positiv för inlärarna eller om den kan begränsa dem.

Ett viktigt resultat av denna studie är belägg för att formelaktiga ordsekvenser inte alltid produceras flytande, något som står i kontrast mot tidigare forskning. Resultaten av studien pekar mot att språkanvändare kan producera sekvenser utan flyt för att vinna tid till ytterligare språkligt processande. Formelaktiga ordsekvenser hjälper därmed talaren att signalera till mottagaren att yttrandet inte är klart ännu, och på så vis kan talaren vinna tid till att formulera resten av yttrandet utan att bli avbruten.

Formelaktiga ordsekvenser förefaller vara potentiella källor till språklek för de unga språkinlärarna i denna studie. Inlärarna sysselsatte sig med olika typer av lek med formelaktigt språk, exempelvis genom att överdriva ljuden i en sekvens eller ersätta en del av en sekvens. Språklekarna kunde utvecklas

till en möjlighet för inlärarna att praktisera, ha kul med och experimentera med språket. En aktivitet som inlärarna verkade uppskatta var att leka med lärarrollen genom att snappa upp sekvenser från lärarens språk. Dessa tillfällen utgjorde tydliga exempel på oavsiktligt/informellt inlärande av formelaktiga ordsekvenser.

Inlärare använde också formelaktiga ordsekvenser vid tillfällen då de inte hade mycket tid att planera. När tillfället krävde att de skulle producera snabba spontana yttranden, exempelvis när de deltog i en gissningslek, tillgrip de vissa formelaktiga sekvenser.

En detaljerad analys av materialet utifrån de individuella inlärarna visade en stor variation bland användandet av formelaktiga sekvenser med olika funktioner. Det vill säga, funktionerna användes inte på ett liknande sätt av alla inlärare. De mer pratsamma inlärarna använde mer formelaktiga sekvenser, antagligen för att kunna prata flytande och producera långa yttranden. Dessa inlärare använde formelaktiga sekvenser för att vinna tid och behålla samtalssturen under tiden som de processade resten av yttrandet. Vissa inlärare, som inte verkade särskilt trygga med att använda det främmande språket, kunde använda formelaktiga ordsekvenser för att ge en snabb och korrekt respons och under tiden undvika vidare språklig produktion. De mer experimentella inlärarna var angelägna om att initiera språklekar med formelaktigt språk. De mer konservativa inlärarna verkade tänka och processa språket innan de använde det.

Sammanfattningsvis tyder framväxten av de olika funktionerna av formelaktiga ordsekvenser i inlärares språkliga produktion på att formelaktigt språk är en essentiell del av språkinlärningsprocessen. Analysen visar att trots att alla inlärare använde formelaktiga ordsekvenser i språkproduktionen så var variationen stor mellan individuella inlärare vad gäller deras intention och i vilken utsträckning de använde sådana sekvenser. Det verkar som att de individuella inlärarnas attityder, behov eller begränsningar fungerar som förklaring till användandet av formelaktiga sekvenser i olika kontexter. Genom att visa på några betydelsefulla egenskaper av formelaktigt språk i relation till tidig främmandespråksinläring, hoppas denna studie bidra till utvecklingen av en lämplig pedagogik för att undervisa unga språkinlärare i främmandespråk.

Summary in Farsi

چکیده

پیش‌زمینه

مهارت یافتن در زبان دوم، می‌تواند برای زبان‌آموزان در هر سنی دشوار و چالش‌برانگیز باشد، اما برای فراگیران زبان خارجی دشوارتر است. ساختارها و کارکردهای آواشناختی، صرفی- نحوی و معناشناختی زبان مادری و زبان دوم با یکدیگر تفاوت دارند. علاوه بر این، به دلیل عدم تماس زبان‌آموزان با زبان مقصد (در بافت طبیعی آن)، ممکن است فراگیران زبان خارجی درک کاملی از عبارتهای ثابت که به طور مکرر مورد استفاده قرار می‌گیرند- برای برقراری ارتباطی مؤثر نداشته باشند.

این عبارتهای چند کلمه‌ای که به آنها «ترکیب‌های قالبی» گفته می‌شود، به صورت زنجیره‌های ثابت یا نیمه ثابتی از کلمات یا عناصری تعریف می‌شوند و به صورت واحدهایی کامل ذخیره و بازیابی می‌شوند و به جای اینکه از طریق دستور زبان پردازش شوند، به عنوان توالی‌های پیش‌ساخته‌ای که معانی کارکردی خاصی دارند، به منظور کاهش زمان پردازش، در پردازش ذهنی برای کاربران زبان مفیدند. ترکیب‌های قالبی به زبان‌آموزان کمک می‌کنند تا فراتر از دانش قواعد دستوری‌شان، سلیس و درست صحبت کنند؛ بنابراین، در مجموع ترکیب‌های قالبی برای زبان‌آموزان نقش مهمی در فراگیری زبان دوم دارند.

بیشتر پژوهش‌های قبلی در زمینه ترکیب‌های قالبی مربوط به زبان‌آموزان بزرگسال است. تحقیق چندانی در خصوص ترکیب‌های قالبی در تولید زبانی کودکان هنگام فراگیری زبان دوم صورت نگرفته است و اطلاعات بسیار کمی درباره کاربرد ساختارهای قالبی در آموزش زبان «خارجی» در بافت کلاس وجود دارد. با این وصف، یافته‌های پژوهش‌های پیشین حاکی از آن است که کودکان در مقایسه با بزرگسالان، رویکرد متفاوتی در یادگیری زبان دوم دارند.

با توجه به مهم و غالب بودن ترکیب‌های قالبی، این پژوهش سعی دارد بینشی جدید در خصوص اینکه کودکان چگونه با چالش‌های یادگیری زبان خارجی در کلاس کنار می‌آیند و اینکه ترکیب‌های قالبی چه نقشی در یادگیری زبان آنها دارد، به دست دهد.

در مجموع، دو هدف اصلی این پژوهش عبارتند از :

الف. یافتن شواهد تجربی از کارکردهای ترکیب‌های قالبی در تولید زبان گفتاری کودکان زبان‌آموز

ب بررسی تفاوت فردی در کاربرد ترکیب‌های قالبی در بین زبان‌آموزان برای اهداف مختلف.

روش تحقیق

داده‌های این پژوهش از 11 کودک بین 9 تا 11 سال در کلاس زبان انگلیسی یک موسسه خصوصی در ایران جمع‌آوری شده است. ایران نمونه خوبی از بافت زبان خارجی است؛ زیرا زبان‌آموزان به طور عمده در کلاس با زبان انگلیسی آشنا می‌شوند. برای انجام این پژوهش، علاوه بر مشاهدات پژوهشگر، صدابرداری و تصویربرداری از کلاس مورد نظر به مدت 2 ماه انجام شد. علاوه بر این، والدین این کودکان پرسش‌نامه‌ای را پر کردند تا مشخص شود زبان‌آموزان خارج از بافت کلاس تا چه میزان با زبان انگلیسی در ارتباطاند. در نهایت، داده‌های به‌دست‌آمده مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند.

نتایج تحقیق

نتایج این تحقیق، گواهی است بر وجود ترکیب‌های قالبی در ذخیره زبانی کودکانی که زبان خارجی فرامی‌گیرند؛ هرچند ممکن است آموزش مشخصی در زمینه ترکیب‌های قالبی وجود نداشته باشد، یافته‌ها تایید می‌کنند که زبان‌آموزان این زنجیره‌ها را برای اهداف مختلفی یاد می‌گیرند و به کار می‌برند.

تحلیل داده‌ها نشان داد که برخی از کودکان زبان‌آموز سعی می‌کردند در موقعیت‌های ویژه‌ای از زنجیره‌های خاصی استفاده کنند تا در ارتباطات جاهای خالی را پر کنند و از وقفه‌های طولانی بپرهیزند. زبان‌آموزان از برخی زنجیره‌ها بارها و بارها استفاده می‌کردند تا برای پردازش بیشتر وقت پیدا کنند یا آنکه فقط مطالبشان را طولانی‌تر کنند.

تحلیل دقیق داده‌ها بیانگر تنوع خاصی در به کارگیری ترکیب‌های قالبی در بین زبان‌آموزان برای کارکردهای مختلف بود؛ به این معنا که زبان‌آموزان این ترکیب‌ها را به شکلی یکسان به کار نمی‌بردند. زبان‌آموزان پرحرف‌تر بیشتر از ترکیب‌های قالبی استفاده می‌کردند که احتمالاً دلیل آن، امکان تولید پاره‌گفتارهای روان‌تر و طولانی‌تر بود.

نتایج تحقیق همچنین نشان داد که گرچه همه زبان‌آموزان از ترکیب‌های قالبی در تولید زبانی استفاده می‌کردند، اما این ترکیب‌ها را با اهدافی بسیار متفاوت و به میزان مختلفی به کار می‌بردند. به نظر می‌رسد نگرش زبان‌آموزان مختلف و نیز نیازها و محدودیت‌هایشان، کاربرد ترکیب‌های قالبی در بافت‌های مختلف را توجیه می‌کند. امید است که یافته‌های این پژوهش، با کشف برخی از ویژگی‌های مهم ترکیب‌های قالبی برای یادگیری زبان خارجی، در جهت ارتقای آموزش مناسب برای آموختن زبان خارجی به کودکان مفید باشد.

Bibliography

- Aitchison, J. (1987). *Words in the mind. An introduction to the mental lexicon*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Aliakbari, M. (2004). The place of culture in the Iranian ELT textbooks in high school level. Paper presented at 9th Pan-Pacific association of applied linguistics conference. August 2004, Namseoul University, Korea.
- Amery, H. (2003). *First thousand words in English*. Usborne.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- BAAL (2006). The British association of applied linguistics: *Recommendations on good practice in applied linguistics*. http://www.baal.org.uk/goodpractice_full_2016.pdf
- Bailey, K. M. (2006). *Language teacher supervision: A case-based approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1986). The problem of speech genres (V. McGee, Trans.). In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *Speech genres and other late Essays* (pp. 60-102). Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall, Inc.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2002). A new starting point? Investigating formulaic use and input in future expression. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 24(2), 189–198.
- Bell, N. (2005). Exploring L2 language play as an aid to SLL: A case study of humour in NS-NNS interaction. *Applied Linguistics*, 26(2), 192–218.
- Bell, N. (2012). Formulaic language, creativity, and language play in a second language. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 32, 189-205.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Cortes, V. (2004). If You Look At ...: Lexical bundles in university teaching and textbooks. *Applied Linguistics*, 25(3), 371–405.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., Kappel, J., Stengers, H. & Demecheleer, M. (2006). Formulaic sequences and perceived oral proficiency: putting a lexical approach to the test. *Language Teaching Research*, 10(3), 245–261.
- Boers, F., & Lindstromberg, S. (2009). *Optimizing a lexical approach to instructed second language acquisition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Bybee, J. (2002). Phonological evidence for exemplar storage of multiword sequences. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 215–21.
- Bybee, J. (2010). *Language, usage and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in Education* (6th ed). Oxon: Routledge.
- Conklin, K. & Schmitt, N. (2008). Formulaic sequences: Are they processed more quickly than nonformulaic language by native and nonnative speakers? *Applied Linguistics*, 29 (1), 72–89.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crick, F.H.C. (1979). Thinking about the brain. *Scientific American*, 241, 219-232; reprinted in *The Brain*, Scientific American special issue, 130-137.
- Davari, H. & F. Aghagolzadeh. (2015). 'To teach or not to teach? Still an open question for the Iranian education system' In C. Kennedy (ed.). *English language teaching in the Islamic Republic of Iran: innovations, trends and challenges*. London: British Council.
- Davies, C. (2003). 'How English-learners joke with native speakers: an interactional sociolinguistic perspective on humor as collaborative discourse across cultures,' *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 1361–85.
- De Bot, K., Lowie, W., & Verspoor, M. (2005). *Second language acquisition, an advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.
- De Cock, S. (2004). Preferred sequences of words in NS and NNS speech. *Belgian journal of English Language and Literature (BELL) New series*, 2, 225–246.
- Dechert, H.W. (1983). 'How a story is done in a second language' in *Strategies in interlanguage communication*, eds. C. Faerch and G. Kasper, Longman, London.
- Dörnyei, Z., Durró, V., & Zahran, K. (2004). Individual differences and their effect on formulaic sequence acquisition. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *Formulaic Sequences* (pp. 55-86). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2006). Individual differences in second language acquisition. *AILA Review*, 19, 42–68.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Durrant P, Schmitt N (2009). To what extent do native and non-native writers make use of collocations?. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 47(2), 157–177.
- Ellis, N.C. (2002). Frequency effects in language processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 143–188.
- Ellis, N. C. (2006). Selective attention and transfer phenomena in L2 acquisition: Contingency, cue competition, saliency, interference, overshadowing, blocking, and perceptual learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 27, 164 – 194.
- Ellis, N. C. (2008) Usage-based and Form-focused Language Acquisition: The Associative Learning of Constructions, Learned-attention, and the Limited L2 Endstate. Chapter 16 in P. Robinson and N. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of cognitive linguistics and second language acquisition*. London: Routledge.
- Ellis, N. C. (2012). Formulaic language and second language acquisition: Zipf and the phrasal teddy bear. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 32, 17–44.
- Ellis, R. (2004). Individual differences in second language learning. In A. Davies & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 525–551). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Elman J.L. (2004). An alternative view of the mental lexicon. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 8, 301–306.
- Enever, J. (2011). (ed) ELLiE. *Early Language Learning in Europe*. London, UK: British Council.
- Erman, B. & Warren, B. (2000). The idiom principle and the open choice principle. *Text*, 20, 29–62.
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. & Valizadeh, K. (2004). Classroom activities viewed from different perspectives: Learners' voice vs. teachers' voice. *TESL EJ*, 8(3), 1–13.
- Eykman, J., Boers, F., & Stengers, H. (2007). Identifying chunks: Who can see the wood for the trees? *Language Forum*. 33(2), 85–100.
- Farhady, H., Sajadi Hezaveh, F., & Hedayati, H. (2010). Reflections on foreign language education in Iran. *TESL-EJ* 13(4), 1–18.
- Foster, P. (2001) Rules and routines: A consideration of their role in the task-based language production of native and non-native speakers. In M.

- Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning. Teaching and Testing* (pp. 75–93). Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Gass, S. & Mackey, A. (Eds.) (2012) *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*. London: Routledge.
- Gass, S.M. & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition* (3rd ed). Oxon: Taylor & Francis, Routledge.
- Ghorbani, M. R. (2009). ELT in Iranian high schools in Iran, Malaysia and Japan: Reflections on how tests influence use of prescribed textbooks. *The Journal of Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 8, (2), 131–139.
- Girard, M. & Sionis, C. (2003). Formulaic speech in the L2 class: An attempt at identification and classification. *Pragmatics*, 13(2) 231–251.
- Granger, S. (1998). Prefabricated patterns in advanced EFL writing: collocations and formulae. In A. Cowie (ed.) *Phraseology: theory, analysis and applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 145–160.
- Hasselgreen, A. (1994). Lexical teddy bears and advanced learners: A study into the ways Norwegian students cope with English vocabulary. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 4(2) 237–258.
- Hasselgreen, A. (2000). The assessment of the English ability of young learners in Norwegian schools: an innovative approach. *Language testing*, 17(2) 261–277.
- Hickey, T. (1993). Identifying formulas in first language acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*. 20, 27–41.
- Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. H. Lerner (Ed). *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. (pp. 13–31). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jarema, G. & Libben, G. (Eds.) (2007). *The mental lexicon: core perspectives*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Kersten, S. (2010). The mental lexicon and vocabulary learning : Implications for the foreign language classroom . *Language in Performance (LiP)*, vol. 43, Narr , Tübingen.
- Khubchandani, L. (2008). Language policy and education in the Indian subcontinent. In *Encyclopedia of language and education, 2nd Edition*, (1, pp. 393–404). New York: Springer Science + Business Media LLC.
- Krashen, S. & Scarcella, R. (1978). On routines and patterns in second language acquisition and performance. *Language Learning*, 28, 283–300.

- Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the lexical approach: Putting theory into practice*. Hove, England: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lieven, E., Behrens, H., Speares, J. & Tomasello, M. (2003). Early syntactic creativity: a usage-based approach. *Child Lang.*, 30(2), 333–70.
- Li, J. & Schmitt, N. (2009). *The acquisition of lexical phrases in academic writing: A longitudinal case study*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18, 85–102.
- Lindgren, E. & Muñoz, C. (2013). The influence of exposure, parents, and linguistic distance on young European learners' foreign language comprehension. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 10, 105–129.
- Liu, C. P. (2000). An empirical study of collocation teaching. *The Proceedings of the 17th International Symposium on English Teaching*. 165–178.
- Long, M. (1989). Task, group, & task group interaction. *University of Hawaii working papers in English as a second language*, 8 (2), 1–26.
- Mackey, A. (2012). *Input, interaction and corrective feedback in L2 classrooms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research. Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Marslen-Wilson, W.D., & Tyler, L.K. (1980). the temporal structure of spoken language understanding. *Cognition*, 8, 1–71.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd edition). London: Sage.
- McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mihaljevic Djigunovic, J. (2009). Impact of learning conditions on young FL learners' motivation. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), *Early learning of modern foreign languages. Processes and outcomes* (pp. 75–89). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Mihaljevic Djigunovic, J. (2015). Individual differences among young EFL learners: age- or proficiency-related? A look from the affective learner factors perspective. In: Mihaljević Djigunović, J. Medved Krajnović, M.(Eds.). *Early learning and teaching of English: New dynamics of primary English*, (pp. 10-36). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Moon, J. (2000). *Children learning English*. Oxford: Macmillan education.
- Muñoz, C. (Ed.). (2006). Age and the rate of foreign language learning (19). *Multilingual Matters*.
- Muñoz, C. (2010). On how age affects foreign language learning. *Advances in Research on Language Acquisition and Teaching: Selected Papers*.

- Murphy, V. (2014). *Second language learning in the early school years: Trends and contexts: An overview of current themes and research on second language learning in the early school years*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Myles, F. (2004). From data to theory: The over-representation of linguistic knowledge in SLA. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 102, 139–168.
- Myles, F., Hooper, J., & Mitchell, R. (1998). Rote or rule? Exploring the role of formulaic language in classroom foreign language learning. *Language Learning*, 48(3), 323–363.
- Myles, F., Mitchell, R., & Hooper, J., (1999). Interrogative chunks in French L2: a basis for creative construction? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 21 (1), 49–80.
- Nattinger, J., & DeCarrico, J. (1992). *Lexical phrases and language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nesselhauf, N. (2003). The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching. *Applied Linguistics* 24(2), 223–242.
- Nesselhauf, N. (2005). *Collocations in a learner corpus*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Nikolov, M. (1999). ‘Why do you learn English?’ ‘Because the teacher is short.’ A study of Hungarian children’s foreign language learning motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 3(1), 33–56.
- Nikolov, M. (Ed.). (2009). *The age factor and early language learning*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Pawley, A (2007). Developments in the study of formulaic language since 1970: A personal view, in P. Skandera (ed.), *Phraseology and culture in English*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, Germany, 3–45.
- Pawley, A., & Syder, F. H. (1983). Two puzzles for linguistic theory native like selection and native-like fluency. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication*. London: Longman, 191–230.
- Peters, A. (1983). *The units of language acquisition*, Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Pica, T., Lincoln-Porter, F., Paninos, D., & Linnell, J. (1996). Language learners' interaction: How does it address input, output, and feedback needs of L2 learners? *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 59–84.

- Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching Young Language Learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Read, J., & Nation, I. S. P. (2004). Measurement of formulaic sequences. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *Formulaic sequences*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 23–35.
- Rixon, S. (2013). *British Council Survey of Policy and Practice in Primary English Language Teaching Worldwide*. London: The British Council.
- Sabourin, L. , & Stowe , L. A . (2008). Second language processing: When are first and second languages processed similarly? *Second Language Research*, 24, 397 –430 .
- Sajavaara, K. (1987). Second language speech production: Factors affecting fluency. In H. Dechert and M. Raupach (Eds.), *Psycholinguistic models of production* (pp. 45–65). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). Key concepts in ELT: Lexical chunks. *ELT Journal*, 54 (4), 400–401.
- Schmitt, N. (2005). Formulaic language: Fixed and varied. *ELIA: Estudios de Linguística Inglesa Aplicada*, 6, 13–39.
- Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schmitt, N. & Carter, R. (2004). Formulaic sequences in action: An introduction. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *Formulaic sequences: Acquisition, processing, and use* (pp. 1-22). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Scott, W. A. & Lisbeth H. Y. (1992). *Teaching English to children*. London: Longman.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts. An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation: Describing English language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skehan, P. (1991). Individual differences in second language learning. *Studies of Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 275–298.
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slabakova, R. (2013). Adult second language acquisition: a selective overview with a focus on the learner linguistic system. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, 3 (1), 48–72.
- Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: Theory and research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook on research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 471–483). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Taron, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk and repair in interlanguage. *Language learning*, 30, 417–413.
- Tarone, E. (2000). Getting serious about language play: Language play, interlanguage variation, and second language acquisition. In B. Swierzbins, F. Morris, M. E. Anderson, C. Klee, & E. Tarone (Eds.), *Social and cognitive factors in second language acquisition: Selected proceedings of the 1999 Second Language Research Forum* (pp. 31–54). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Tomasello, M. (2000). First steps toward a usage-based theory of language acquisition. *Cognitive Linguistics* 11(1/2) 61–82.
- Tomasello, M. (2003). *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: identity, social relations and classroom practice*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- VanPatten, B. (1996). *Input processing and grammar instruction: Theory and research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- VanPatten, B. & Williams, J. (2007). Early theories in second language acquisition. *Theories in second language acquisition*.
- Wagner-Gough, J. (1975). Comparative studies in second language learning. *CAL-ERIC/CLL Series on Languages and Linguistics*. 26.
- Webb, S., Newton, J. & Chang, A. (2013). Incidental learning of collocation. *Language Learning*, 63(1), 91–120.
- Weber-Fox, C.M. & Neville, H.J. (1996). Maturation constraints on functional specializations for language processing: ERP and behavioral evidence in bilingual speakers. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 8, 231–56.
- Weinert, R. (1995). The role of formulaic language in second language acquisition: A review. *Applied Linguistics*, 16(2), 180–205.
- Wible, D. (2008). Multiword expressions and the digital turn, F. Meunier & S. Granger (Eds.), *Phraseology in language learning and teaching*, (pp. 163–181), Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wong-Fillmore, L. (1976). The second time around: Cognitive and social strategies in second language acquisition. *PhD thesis, Stanford University*.
- Wood, D. (2002). Formulaic language in thought and word: Vygotskian perspectives. *Cahiers linguistiques d' Ottawa*, 30, 29–48.
- Wood, D. (2006). Uses and functions of formulaic sequences in second language speech: An exploration of the foundations of fluency. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63 (1), 13–33.

- Wood, D. (2010). *Formulaic language and second language speech fluency: Background, evidence, and classroom applications*. London: Continuum.
- Wood, D. (2015). *Fundamentals of formulaic language: An introduction*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.
- Wood, D., & Namba, K. (2013). Focused instruction of formulaic language: Use and awareness in a Japanese university class. *The Asian Conference on Language Learning Official Conference Proceedings*, 203–212.
- Wray, A. (1999). Formulaic language in learners and native speakers. *Language Teaching* 32 (4) 213–31.
- Wray, A. (2002). *Formulaic language and the lexicon*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wray, A. (2004). 'Here's one I prepared earlier': Formulaic language learning on television. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *Formulaic Sequences* (pp. 248–268). Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wray, A. (2008a). The puzzle of language learning: from child's play to 'linguaphobia'. *Language Teaching*, 41 (2), 255–273.
- Wray, A. (2008b). *Formulaic Language: Pushing the Boundaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wray, A. (2014). Why are we so sure we know what a word is? In Taylor, John (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Word*.
- Wray, A. & Fitzpatrick, T. (2008). Why can't you just leave it alone? Deviations from memorized language as a gauge of native-like competence. In Meunier, F., and Granger, S. (eds.) *Phraseology in language learning and teaching* (pp. 123–48). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wray, A., & Grace, G. W. (2007). The consequences of talking to strangers: Evolutionary corollaries of socio-cultural influences on linguistic form. *Lingua*, 117(3), 543–578.
- Wray, A., & Namba, K. (2003). Use of Formulaic Language by a Japanese-English Bilingual Child: A Practical Approach to Data Analysis. *Japan Journal of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*, 9(1), 24–51.
- Wray, A., & Perkins, R. M. (2000). The functions of formulaic language: An integrated model. *Language and communication*, 20, 1-28.
- Yorio, C.A. (1989). Idiomaticity as an indicator of second language proficiency. In Hylltenstam, K. & Obler, L.K. (eds), *Bilingualism across the lifespan: Aspects of acquisition, maturity and loss*, (pp. 55–72). Cambridge: CUP.

Appendices

Appendix A - Transcription codes

The following codes have been used in the transcriptions in this text:

X:	name of the speaker (anonymised)
L1:	indicates language production in first language (Farsi)
[play]:	brackets are used for speech in first language
(o. 2):	pauses are shown in second in brackets, one second is shown by a point (.) and 2 seconds is shown by (0.2) and so on.
Go:::	one or more colons indicate extension of the preceding sound or syllable.
no bu- :	a hyphen indicates an abrupt cut off of the prior word or sound.
(text):	parentheses are used for transcriber's comments including description of non-verbal behaviour
Text:	bold indicates marked stress
TEXT:	capitals indicate increased loudness
°thanks°:	degree signs indicate decreased volume.
↓↑	arrows indicate shifts in high or low pitch
☺:	smiley face indicates laughter
<u>text:</u>	the stretches of transcript identified as formulaic are <u>underlined</u>

In some instances the transcriptions are more affected by the phonological features of the language produced by the learners (e.g. excuse me for excuse me).

Appendix B- Criteria for the identification of formulaic sequences

Below is a list of criteria for the identification of the formulaic sequences are based closely on those commonly suggested in the literature. (e.g. Myles et al. 1998, Wray and Namba 2003, Myles 2004). (This list is a work in progress and will be developed based on the data itself and parallel to the analysis)

- A sequence beyond the learner's current knowledge of grammar: well-formedness of a sequence compared to a more creative language production
- A sequence with an odd syntactic or semantic function in the sentence
- Phonologically coherent utterance (fluently articulated, non-hesitant)
- A sequence used repeatedly in the same form
- A particular formulation, which is the one most commonly used by the individual speaker when conveying a specific idea.
- A sequence community wide in use (shared classroom knowledge)
- A sequence associated with a specific situation, register or genre
- A sequence, which is the repetition of the previous utterance
- A sequence, which is combined with other language units without applying necessary changes.

Appendix C- Transcription of a session

Session 2; 28 June 2014

15:00

Teacher: hello everyone
Class: hello
Teacher: how are you?
Class: I'm fine thank you, and you?
Teacher: I am fine
Teacher: It's quite hot outside (.) Isn't it?
Class: yes, miss very hot
Teacher: yeah:.(.)
Hiva: miss(.) beautiful shoes
Teacher: thank you
Teacher: ok good, um: lets see (.) who is absent today?
Teacher: great no one is absent today.
Teacher: what did you do during the weekend (.) did anyone do something special?
(no response from the learners)
Dornaz: miss, I cold
Teacher: is it cold there? do you want to change your seat?
Teacher: You can sit here.
Anita: miss, workbook?
Teacher: yes, I will check the workbooks
Teacher: but first tell me about your weekend.
Hiva, how was your weekend?
Hiva: so-so miss.
Teacher: what did you do?
Teacher: where were you? what happened? What did you do during the weekend?
Tina: nothing
Teacher: nothing? (.) were you at home?
Anita: watch TV
Mobina: yes, miss, watch TV
Teacher: Selina, how was your grandma's birthday party?
Selina: I had fun

(Some of the learners go the teacher one after each other to talk to her about different topics, they whisper to the teacher mostly in Farsi)

Teacher: last session we had a song (.) can you remember it?

Teacher: ok, now we are going to sing a song

Teacher: can you remember the song we had last session? (.) it was a very nice song

Teacher: wasn't it nice?

Class: yes:: very very nice

Tina: so-so miss (.) no Ver- Very nice, so-so
(Teacher plays the CD)

Teacher: ok, now listen (.) you can also look at your book and sing the song

CD: the wheels on the bus go round and..
(children are singing the song and also dancing with the song)

Teacher: now, while I am checking your work books (.) I want you to tell me what we learned last session (.) what did we speak about?

Hiva: I wearing a blue shirt (.) pink shirt (.) like this..

Teacher: yes. good, we talked about clothes

Teacher: Farimah, tell me(.) what are you wearing today?

Farimah: I'm wearing a white and pink shoes (.) black pants (.) I'm wearing a purple dress (.) and (incomprehensible)

Teacher: Tina, what is she wearing?

Tina: she wearing a (0.2) purple pants (0.2) a:nd brown shoes (.) a:nd (.) pink T-shirt

Teacher: Mobina please ask your friend

Mobina: what's she wearing?

Hiva: she wearing a (.) white and red shoes (0.2) and (.) black pants (.) and purple dress (.) and tomato red uniform

Hiva: miss, what time is it?

Teacher: who can say? Who can tell the time?

Mobina: miss, one minute

(Mobina is looking for her watch in her bag)

Mobina: miss, I have time (.) one minute

Mobina: aha: (.) it's (.) it's (.) it's three
twenty

Teacher: thank you
(Teacher is looking at her picture cards.
Learners are talking to each other in Farsi)

Teacher: Oh my God! are you talking in Farsi?

Anita: **no:** farsi!

Mobina: no::: Farsi::☺

Class: no:: Farsi:: ☺

Teacher: Ok (.) listen please

Teacher: last week we had three days holidays, what
did you do during the holidays?

Hiva: I'm going to (.) the (.) theatre (.)with
my friends (.) and go hip hop class

Teacher: during holidays?

Hiva: no, miss (.) Thursday

Selina: I'm going (.)with my grandma and grandpa
(.) to the park (0.2) to the park (.) and
(0.3) and my friend coming (.) and I (.)
play with my friend

Mobina: I'm go to the fram (.) and (.) is a very
very (L1; boring)

Teacher: who was in a party? (.) during the
holidays, who went to a party?
(no response)

Teacher: party for example (.) birthday party (.)
you know birthday party?

Class: aha::, miss:: (raised hands)

Hiva: Miss, I'm going to the(.) birthday my
cousin

Hiva: he name's is Mohamad (.) and (.) six

Teacher: his name

Selina: miss, yesterday is my grandma's happy
birthday

Teacher: did you have a birthday party for her?

Selina: yes

Teacher: what did you do then?

Selina: I (.) make a cake (.) with mom (0.2) I and mom (.) make a cake
(Selina shows a photo on her phone to her teacher)

Teacher: wow (.) it's so awesome

Hiva: miss, can I see?

Anita: Miss, I think (.) its (.) heart

Mobina: My friend (.) is (0.2) like this, too

Teacher: aha, your friend's birthday cake was also like this? nice!

Tina: miss, my (.) one friend (.) its (.) it's a (.) most most love cakes (.) but (.) no fat (.) no fat-

Anita: -miss, may I drink water?

Teacher: yes you can

Darya: may I drink water?

Tina: may I go out?

Teacher: Oh my God (.) everyone wants to go out. Listen everybody (.) you can bring a bottle of water to the class and drink water in the class (.) so you do not need to go out

Teacher: ok, we were talking about party (.) Um: who can dance?

Hiva: miss, I can dancing Arabic (.) African (.) dance an:d (.) hip-hop dancing

Hiva: I can three (incomprehensible)

Teacher: (incomprehensible) so its very good that they have dance

Teacher: what about you Fatemeh, do you dance?

Fatemeh: So-so

Teacher: sometimes

Hiva: miss, I have a idea (.)I have a idea

Teacher: what is your idea?

Hiva: miss, one day (.) not this (.) this (0.3)

Teacher: this session

Hiva: thistession (.) also (0.2) one (0.3) competition dance (.) in here

Hiva: dancing English music

(Teacher holds a picture of a wedding party)

Teacher: who is she?

Hiva: BRIDE, BRIDE

Teacher: thanks, yes, she is bride, you see (.) this is a wedding party, and she is bride.

Teacher: wedding party (.) we call it wedding party

Teacher: when there is a party and people go to the party (.) they are called guests (.)When I come to your birthday party I am your guest. Guest, did you get it?

Mobina: miss, for example (0.2) um:: (.) I-me and (.) Selina go to the (.) wedding party (0.2) tha-um:

Teacher: you are

Mobina: you are (.) no (.) um: (.) they are (.) a guest

Teacher: good (.) we are guests

Teacher: Mobina and Selina are invited to a party (.) wedding party (.) they are guests (.) yes

Teacher: in the party we also have music, we have music and we dance

Teacher: sometimes there is a band in the party, band, music band.

Teacher: singer and some musicians, they play music

Anita: miss, (.) don't work with (0.2) notebook?

Teacher: no, now just listen to me please

Teacher: so we said in a party for example wedding party we have some people who are guests, we have a band

Teacher: when we have a party and we want our friend to come to the party we invite them to the party. INVITE

Teacher: I say (.) for example, Dear Selina please come to my party on Saturday (.) I invite Selina to my party.

Teacher: I can also have some invitation cards. A card that I write for my friends to invite them to come to my party

Teacher: invitation (.) like the picture (.) look here (.) you write something for your friend or for your family member (.) anybody you like or you want and ask him or her to come to your party (.) for example, its your birthday party (0.2) and you have an invitation for somebody. did you get it (.) things that we write-for example lovely Sara ... next week is my birthday please come to my party (.) love you (0.2) yes? you invite her (.) to your party (.) you ask her to come to your party (.) did you get it? (0.2)
(Teacher writes some words on the board, first she reads and then asks the students to read them)

Class: wedding party (.) invitation(.) band (.) wedding cake (.) guest

Hiva: Escuse me miss, can you repeat this (incomprehensible)

Teacher: band, wedding cake, guest

Teacher: now please listen
(Teacher plays the CD)

CD: wedding, guests, bride, band, invitation, bride, wedding, invitation, guests, band

Teacher: did you get invitation, Hiva? when we ask somebody to come to a party, I don't know wedding.

Teacher: and you know the meaning of guests?

Teacher: people who

Selina: (L1; come to the party)

Teacher: O:h!

Class: No Farsi!

Hiva: my friends, (incomprehensible)

Selina: perpl coming to (.) coming to the wedding party

Anita: miss, for example (0.2) we can say (.) someone have a (incomprehensible)
(Teacher has a photo in her hand before she asks any questions Anita sees the

photo)

Anita: he is taking a photo

Teacher: what is he doing?

Class: he is taking photos

Teacher: what is he wearing?

Class: he is wearing a red T-shirt

Teacher: what are they doing?

Class: they are baking a cake

Anita: miss, what is (L1; decorate)

Teacher: they are decorating

Anita: they are decorating the cake

Teacher: who told me I can bake a cake

Selina: me (.) miss

Teacher: see here (.) he and mom are baking a cake

Anita: miss, I (.) I don't see (0.2) the boy
cooking a cake (.)like this (.) I see
cooking (.) but I don't see cooking-baking
a cake

Teacher: but I have students who bake a cake (.)
boys can bake a cake

Teacher: so what are they doing?

Class: they are baking a cake

Teacher: what is she doing?

Class: she is brushing her hair

Teacher: what are they doing?

Class: they are washing the car

Teacher: what is he doing?

Class: he is taking a photos
(Teacher refers to the photos in the book
and asks the learners about the pictures)

Teacher: what are they doing?

Anita: they see our wedding party

Teacher: they are watching wedding party's film

Teacher: whose wedding party?

Hiva: Milly (incomprehensible)

Tina: my uncle

Teacher: My?!

Tina: uncle (.) uncle

Anita: your uncle?!

Tina: my uncle 😊 he (.) MY uncle 😊

Teacher: Milly's uncle (.) it is his uncle's wedding party

Teacher: where are they?

Teacher: where are the (incomprehensible)?

Selina: they are in TVs

Teacher: in which room are they

Class: living room

Teacher: who is he? Behnaz (.) who is he?

Behnaz: Um: (0.2) I don't know

Mobina: Suzy (.) I think (.) cousins Suzy

Teacher: yes, Suzy's cousins (.) remember they went to train station

Teacher: who are they?

Class: grandma and grandpa

Teacher: what are they doing?

Farimah: they are talking

Teacher: thank you. they are talking

Teacher: picture three (.) what is he doing?

Selina: dad eat (.)

Teacher: he or she?

Selina: he (.) he is (.) he is eating the cake

Teacher: very good (.) he is eating the wedding cake

Anita: miss, I have a question-

Teacher: -what's your question?

Anita: it's a wedding party (.) and (0.2) they have a (0.2) baby ☺

Teacher: honey, he's their cousin

Hiva: may I:: (.) drink water (.) out of a class

Teacher: out of the class? you want to go out?

Hiva: Yes

Teacher: ok.

Teacher: look here (.) how many are they? how many people?

Selina: seven

Teacher: what are they doing

Selina: they are talk and laugh (0.3) laughing (.) laughing

Teacher: they are talking and laughing

Hiva: may I come in

Teacher: they are talking about the wedding party
(.)Picture one, mom said (.) I'm dancing
with dad. picture three-

Selina: he is eating the (.) wedding cake

Dornaz: miss, come in

Teacher: come here

Teacher: picture four, again

Class: grandma and grandpa are talk/talking

Teacher: picture five (.)

Class: Milly is sleeping

Teacher: what is she doing?

Class: she is sleeping

Hiva: miss, Milly (it')s so aksm

Teacher: Milly is?

Hiva: is so:: atsm (.) asom

Teacher: awesome?

Teacher: picture six

Teacher: everyone?

Selina: everyone is (.) singing and talking and
(0.2) Milly is sleeping

Fatemeh: (incomprehensible) teacher in class dance
speaking

Tina: (to hiva) go and dancing

Hiva: I doesn't

Teacher: I don't

Hiva: I don't have (.) music

Hiva: miss, at lastession (.) class I have music

Hiva: lastession I have a CD

Teacher: next session?

Hiva: Yes, music CD (.) and dance

Teacher: what is this?

Hiva: I think (.) this is a card (0.2) wedding
card

Teacher: wedding invitation?

Anita: invitation card

Hiva: Um::(.) birthday party
(Teacher plays the CD. Students are
listening to the CD and then each of them
read a part of the text.)

Teacher: Selina, please, jump (.)jump

Hiva: miss, can I jump? can I jump?
Teacher: Farimah what is Selina doing?
Class: she is jumping
Tina: miss, can I (.) can I running? can I running?
Hiva: miss, in my gymnastic class (.) two sister-one sister::s-two sisters is living (0.2) from-from (0.3) canada
Teacher: aha (.) two sisters are from canada
Hiva: they are (.) they are (0.3) can't speaking Farsi (.) and then (0.3) I and my friends gymnastic class (0.2) mu- must (.) English talking
Teacher: aha (.) you have to speak English (.) good
Mobina: can I come sing(ing)
Teacher: and sing? yeah of course (Mobina starts singing a song)
Teacher: what is she doing?
Class: she is singing a song
Teacher: she is?
Hiva: sing a song
Teacher: no (.) she is
Teacher: she is (0.2) singi:ng a song
Teacher: Farimah, what are you doing?
Farimah: um: (.) I: am-
Selina: -listen-
Farimah: -I am listening
Teacher: Anita, what are you doing?
Anita: I am laughing 😊
Fatemeh: teacher (.) don't read (.) our story book neksession?
Teacher: yeah (.) may be, I'm not sure
Darya: miss, what time is it?
Teacher: it's four fifteen (Teacher starts writing some sentences on the board)
Anita: mi:ss, write in notebook?
Teacher: no no (.) just listen (.) just look at the board and listen (Teacher is writing he is)

Tina: he is driving
Teacher writes "he is driving a car now"

Teacher: he is driving a car now

Mobina: No:w 😊

Tina: No::W 😊

Class: No::w 😊

Hiva: and boys like it

Tina: yes (.) and I'm like it

Teacher: you like it too? you like driving?

Tina: yes, I like too

Teacher: look here (.) when we talk about now (.)
we say like this

Teacher: I am writing now, I am talking now, she is
sitting now

Teacher: Mobina, what are you doing?

Mobina: um: (.) I am (0.2) I am (0.2) I am (.)
writing

Teacher: Asal, what am I doing?

Asal: you

Behnaz: you are

Dornaz: listen

Tina: listen

Hiva: listen

Teacher: listen?

Fatemeh: listening

Tina: listening to

Anita: listening to the teacher

Asal: listening to

Asal: you are (.) listening to

Teacher: I (.) I am listening

Teacher: music for example

Anita: you are listening to (.) your teacher

Hiva: miss, I listen the CD from music Russian
nights (.) Russian nights in: (.) Piano
(0.2) of Piano

Anita: miss, write?

Teacher: drive?

Anita: no, I say write these

Teacher: no, no you don't need to write (.) you
have them in the book

Fatemeh: I have example
Teacher: yeah tell us
Fatemeh: brushing and washing
Fatemeh: I am brushing my teeth
Teacher: what are you doing now?
Fatemeh: just I'm sitting
Anita: miss, why you write (.) why you have
(incomprehensible)
Teacher: we want to as-make question (.) she is
reading now (.) make a question
Teacher: how can we ask a question (.) change this
to a question
Farimah: what is she doing
Teacher: what is she doing (.) thank you Farimah
(.) what (.) remember what is she
wearing?
Teacher: could you please help me
Hiva: what is she wearing?
Anita: for example (.) We can say what is she
reading?
Teacher: what is she reading (.) very good
Anita: no (.) what- we say book (.) or magazine
Teacher: aha: yes (.) what is she reading? (.) she
is reading the (.) for example(.) story
book
Anita: no (.) I (.) I like (.) I like, what is
(L1 rooznameh)?
Teacher: newspaper
Anita: like newspaper, or book or what is (L1
maghaleh)?
Teacher: article
Teacher: yes we can ask this question
Teacher: they are dancing (.) question?
Class: what are they doing?
Teacher: and (.) I am speaking English (.) I am
speaking
Selina: what are you doing
Teacher: he is driving
Class: what are/is he/she doing
Dornaz: what is he doing

Teacher: now please open your books, page 34
Teacher: we want to listen
Teacher: listen to CD
CD: listen and say (.)
CD: what are you doing?
CD: I'm dancing with dad
Teacher: could you please repeat!
CD: what are you doing?
CD: we are watching our wedding
CD: what's he doing?
CD: he is eating the cake
CD: what are they doing?
CD: they are talking
Teacher: look at these four pictures
Teacher: picture number one,
Teacher: what's she doing?
Selina: she read a-
Teacher: she is (.) she is-
Hiva: -reading a invitation card
Teacher: ve:ry good (.) she is reading the
invitation
Fatemeh: invitation Card
Teacher: two
Anita: there is a band
Teacher: how many people are they?
Dornaz: five-six
Teacher: what are they doing?
Selina: they are (.) they are (.) play band-play
music
Teacher: they are?
Hiva: they are play instrument
Teacher: they are playing music
Teacher: number three (.) what's she doing?
Mobina: she is dancing
Teacher: who is she?
Dornaz: she is bride
Hiva: and so: beautiful
Anita: and they are-
Selina: guests
Teacher: aha: they are guests (.) thank you

Teacher: what are they doing?
Tina: they talking
Farimah: they are talking (.)
Teacher: thank you Farimah
Teacher: now you ask your friends (.) look at the pictures and ask your friends
Mobina: what's she doing
Anita: she doing (0.2) (incomprehensible)
Anita: what's he doing?
Darya: he's doing um::
Teacher: he is?
Mobina: he is playing (0.2) music
Darya: what's she doing?
FatemeH: she's (.) reading a book
Teacher: she is reading (.) she is reading the invitation card
Anita: miss, may I drink (.) my water(incomprehensible)
Hiva: miss, what time is it?
Selina: miss, I want (.) I want (.) I want see watch
Teacher: it is 4:30 (.) let me tell your home work
Teacher: pages 34 &35 (.) you have to listen to your CD and do the exercises, please don't forget to listen to your CD.
Tina: Ok miss, play a game?
Teacher: No, not today (.) its time to go home, please don't forget to do your homework...
Class: OK miss
Dornaz: Good bye miss (.) see you later
FatemeH: Good bye, see you later
Mobina: Good bye miss (.) see you later

Appendix D-Elicitation task



Copyright permission for the reproduction of Figure 77, ELLiE study – Oral task, (Enever, 2011: 137) is granted by the British Council and by Janet Enever (author), for academic purposes only.

Appendix E- Elicitation task



‘Reproduced from First Thousand Words in English by permission of Usborne Publishing, 83-85 Saffron Hill, London EC1N 8RT, UK. www.usborne.com. Copyright © 2013, 2009 Usborne Publishing Ltd.’

Appendix F (a)- Parents' questionnaire

پرسشنامه والدین

والدین گرامی

این پرسشنامه به منظور انجام یک پروژه دکترا در زمینه آموزش زبان به کودکان تدوین شده است. دیدگاههای شما درباره آموزش زبان انگلیسی در سنین کودکی و همچنین تجربه فرزند شما در رابطه با فراگیری و به کارگیری زبان خارجی برایمان بسیار قابل توجه است. دقت و صحت پاسخهای شما موجب امتنان ما می باشد. لطفا تا حد ممکن پاسخها را به طور کامل بنویسید.

قابل ذکر است که پاسخهای شما کاملا محرمانه خواهد ماند و هیچگونه تأثیر منفی بر روند آموزش فرزندتان نخواهد داشت و تمام تلاش ما در جهت بهبود روشهای آموزش زبان به فرزندان این سرزمین میباشد.

از همکاری و توجه شما کمال تشکر را داریم.

قسمت اول:

میزان تماس فرزند شما با زبان انگلیسی خارج از فضای کلاس

لطفا میزان وقتی را که فرزندتان در طی یک هفته صرف فعالیتهای زیر میکند علامت بزنید. (همچنین برای توضیحات احتمالی بیشتر بخشی در نظر گرفته شده.)

1. تماشای فیلم ، کارتون و سریال به زبان انگلیسی
1-0 ساعت 2-1 ساعت 3-2 ساعت 4-3 ساعت 5-4 ساعت
5 ساعت یا بیشتر توضیحات
2. انجام بازی های کامپیوتری یا ویدیویی به زبان انگلیسی
1-0 ساعت 2-1 ساعت 3-2 ساعت 4-3 ساعت 5-4 ساعت
5 ساعت یا بیشتر توضیحات
3. گوش دادن به موسیقی به زبان انگلیسی
1-0 ساعت 2-1 ساعت 3-2 ساعت 4-3 ساعت 5-4 ساعت
5 ساعت یا بیشتر توضیحات
4. خواندن کتاب ، مجله و... به زبان انگلیسی
1-0 ساعت 2-1 ساعت 3-2 ساعت 4-3 ساعت 5-4 ساعت
5 ساعت یا بیشتر توضیحات
5. صحبت کردن به زبان انگلیسی
1-0 ساعت 2-1 ساعت 3-2 ساعت 4-3 ساعت 5-4 ساعت
5 ساعت یا بیشتر توضیحات

فرزندتان از چه منابعی برای فعالیتهای فوق استفاده میکند؟ (مثلاً: اینترنت، سی دی، کتاب ...)

لطفاً منبع مورد استفاده در هر قسمت را تعیین کنید.

تماشای فیلم، کارتون یا سریال به زبان انگلیسی

- انجام بازی به زبان انگلیسی
- گوش دادن به موسیقی انگلیسی
- خواندن متون انگلیسی
- نوشتن به زبان انگلیسی

قسمت دوم

فرصتهایی که فرزندتان برای صحبت به زبان انگلیسی دارد
آیا فرزندتان با افرادی تماس دارد که زبان فارسی نمیدانند بلکه به زبان انگلیسی صحبت میکنند

بله / خیر
چنانچه پاسخ شما به سوال فوق مثبت میباشد، این تماسها در چه مواقع و موقعیتهای و به چه میزان رخ میدهند:

- طی مسافرت و تعطیلات خارج از کشور بله / خیر.....دفعه در سال
- در خانه بله /
- خیر.....دفعه در سال

طی دیدار دوستان و بستگان بله / خیر.....دفعه در سال

در موقعیتهای دیگر (مثلاً در تماس با جهانگردان در ایران) بله / خیر.....دفعه

آیا فرزندتان در موقعیتهای فوق از زبان انگلیسی استفاده میکند بله / خیر
آیا فکر میکنید فرزندتان در استفاده زبان انگلیسی در موقعیتهای فوق لذت میبرد بله / خیر

چنانچه پاسخ تان مثبت میباشد لطفاً مثالی بیاورید

چنانچه پاسخ تان منفی است در صورت امکان یک دلیل برای آن بنویسید

قسمت سوم

به نظر شما فرزندتان تا چه حد به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی علاقمند است؟

مشارکت فرزندتان در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی:

در خانه چنانچه هر یک از موارد زیر حداقل یک بار در هفته اتفاق می افتد، گزینه بله را انتخاب کنید و چنانچه کمتر از یک بار در هفته می باشد گزینه نه را انتخاب کنید:

- فرزندتان در مورد کلاس زبان انگلیسی با شما صحبت میکند بله / خیر
- فرزندتان در مورد درس زبان انگلیسی با شما صحبت میکند بله / خیر
- فرزندتان به شما نشان میدهد که در کلاس زبان انگلیسی چه چیزی یاد گرفته

- است بله / خیر
- فرزندتان زبان انگلیسی را در خانه تمرین میکند
- فرزندتان برای انجام تکالیف زبان انگلیسی اش از شما یا دیگر اعضای خانواده کمک میگیرد بله / خیر

- به نظر شما فرزندتان چه احساسی در مورد یادگیری زبان انگلیسی دارد؟ گزینه بله یا خیر را انتخاب کنید:
- فرزندتان مشتاق به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی است بله / خیر
- فرزندتان از یادگیری زبان انگلیسی احساس غرور میکند بله / خیر
- به نظر فرزندتان یادگیری زبان انگلیسی سخت است بله / خیر
- فرزندتان دوست دارد به زبان انگلیسی صحبت کند بله / خیر
- فرزندتان در مورد استفاده از زبان انگلیسی نگران و ناراحت است بله / خیر

- قسمت چهارم
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در دوره دبستان
- لطفا نظر خود را در مورد موارد زیر مشخص کنید:

- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین برای کودکان مفید است
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین برای کودکان جالب است
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین برای کودکان مشکل است
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین به فرزندتان کمک میکند در سالهای بعد مهارتهای بالاتری کسب کند
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین تاثیر منفی بر دیگر درسهای وی دارد
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین تاثیر مثبت بر دیدگاه آنها نسبت به فرهنگهای دیگر دارد
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- یادگیری زبان انگلیسی در سنین پایین هیچ تاثیری بر فرصتهای شغلی آنها ندارد
- کاملا موافق تا حدی موافق خنثی تا حدی مخالف کاملا مخالف
-
- هر چه آموزش زبان در سنین پایین تر شروع شود بهتر است

قسمت پنجم

لطفا کمی در مورد پیشینه خود بگویید (لطفا موارد مربوط به خانواده خود را انتخاب کنید)

بالاترین مدرک تحصیلی تان چیست؟

- مادر

دبستان دبیرستان تحصیلات عالی(دانشگاه) موارد دیگر(مشخص کنید)

- پدر

دبستان دبیرستان تحصیلات عالی(دانشگاه) موارد دیگر(مشخص کنید)

- سرپرستان دیگر

دبستان دبیرستان تحصیلات عالی(دانشگاه) موارد دیگر(مشخص کنید)

شغل شما چیست

مادر

پدر

دیگر سرپرستان

آیا برای شغل تان نیاز به صحبت به زبان انگلیسی دارید؟

مادر بله خیر

پدر بله خیر

سرپرستان دیگر بله خیر

آیا شما زبان انگلیسی میدانید؟ بله خیر

با سپاس فراوان برای همکاری شما.

Appendix F (b)- Parents' questionnaire (English translation)

Dear Parents and carers,

This questionnaire is provided for the purpose of a PhD project on early foreign language learning. Your responses on how your child experiences learning and using a foreign language (both in and out of school) can help this project significantly. It would be very helpful if you could answer the questions below as fully as possible. It should be reminded that all your responses will be kept confidential and they do not have any negative effect on children's language learning process.

Thank you for taking the time to help me.

Part 1

The amount of contact your child has with foreign languages (FL) outside the language class.

Please cross the amount of time your child spends weekly on the following activities (there is also a space if you had any further comments on this practice):

Watching films, cartoons and/or series on TV in English

- 0-59mins
- 1-1hr59min
- 2-2hr59min
- 3-3hr59min
- 4-4hr59min
- 5hrs or more

Further comments:

Playing video/computer games in English

- 0-59mins
- 1-1hr59min

- 2-2hr59min
- 3-3hr59min
- 4-4hr59min
- 5hrs or more

Further comments:

Listening to English music

- 0-59mins
- 1-1hr59min
- 2-2hr59min
- 3-3hr59min
- 4-4hr59min
- 5hrs or more

Further comments:

Reading English books, magazines, comics, etc.

- 0-59mins
- 1-1hr59min
- 2-2hr59min
- 3-3hr59min
- 4-4hr59min
- 5hrs or more

Further comments:

Speaking English with someone

- 0-59mins
- 1-1hr59min
- 2-2hr59min
- 3-3hr59min
- 4-4hr59min

5hrs or more

Further comments:

which sources does your child use for the activities listed above? (e.g. online, CDs, books,...)

could you please mention the sources next to the activities listed below?

Watching English films and/or series

Playing online games in English

Listening to English music

Reading English texts

Writing in English.....

Part 2

Chances to speak in English. Please circle the right answer.

Does your child ever have contact with people who do not speak Farsi, but do speak English? yes/no

If yes, when and how often does this happen?

During vacation/holidays abroad yes/no, _____ time(s) per year

At home yes/no, _____ time(s) per year

When visiting friends or family yes/no, _____ time(s) per year

In other situations (e.g. meeting tourists in Iran) yes/no, _____ time(s) per year

In these situations does your child use English? yes/no

Do you think your child enjoys using English in these situations? yes/no

If yes, please give an example:

If no, please give a possible reason why not:

Part 3

Tell us how you see your child’s interest in learning English.

At home, if any of the following happen regularly, say- at least once a week, circle ‘yes’, if they happen less than once a week, circle ‘no’.

Your child tells you about the English class day yes / no

Your child tells you about the English lesson yes / no

Your child shows what they learned in English lesson yes / no

Your child practices English at home yes / no

Your child asks you or another family member for help with English homework yes / no

Further comments:.....

How does your child feel about learning English, in your opinion? Please circle yes or no.

Your child is keen to learn English yes / no

Your child takes pride in learning English yes / no

Your child finds learning English hard yes / no

Your child likes to talk in English yes / no

Your child feels worried and insecure about using English yes / no

Further comments:.....

Part 4

Tell us what you think about foreign language (FL) learning in primary schools.

Please mark a cross against your views on the following statements.

Early FL learning is useful for children

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Early FL learning is fun for children

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Early FL learning is hard for children

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Early FL learning helps achieving a higher proficiency in later life

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Early FL learning has a bad influence on other subjects

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Early FL learning has a positive influence on attitude towards other cultures

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Learning a FL early has no influence on a person's opportunities in the job market

- totally agree
- agree a little
- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

The earlier education in an FL starts, the better.

- totally agree
- agree a little

- neutral
- disagree a little
- totally disagree

Part 5

Please tell us a little about your own background (please select the sections relevant to your household).

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Mother:

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Higher education (e.g. University)
- Other, please name _____

Father:

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Higher education (e.g. University)
- Other, please name _____

Other adult carer:

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Higher education (e.g. University)
- Other, please name _____

What is your occupation?

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Other adult carer: _____

Do you need to speak English for your occupation? yes/no

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Other adult carer: _____

Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix G (a)- Head of the institute's informed consent

فرم رضایت آگاهانه

مدیر محترم موسسه

اینجانب پروین قیطاسی دانشجوی دکتری رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی در دانشگاه اومیا در کشور سوئد هستم. استاد راهنمای من.....

به منظور انجام پایان نامه دکتری خود در نظر دارم در زمینه مهارت گفتاری زبان انگلیسی زبان آموزان 9_11- ساله ایرانی تحقیقی انجام دهم. این تحقیق در طول یک ترم آموزشی موسسه یعنی 16 جلسه 90 دقیقه ای در یک کلاس 10 الی 15 نفره با سطح زبان متوسط انجام خواهد گرفت.

برای انجام این تحقیق لازم است از کلاسی با زبان آموزان این رده سنی بازدید و فیلم تهیه شود. برای اینکار اینجانب در کلاس حضور پیدا کرده و صدا و فیلم ضبط خواهم کرد. همچنین پرسشنامه هایی تهیه شده تا والدین زبان آموزان به آنها پاسخ دهند و یک تکلیف فردی استنباطی به زبان آموزان ارائه خواهد شد. چنانچه با انجام این تحقیق در یکی از کلاسهای موسسه موافقت نمایند سپاسگزار خواهم بود. روش این تحقیق به صورت کیفی بوده و استفاده از کلمات و عبارات در تولید زبانی مورد بررسی قرار خواهد گرفت تا با توجه به روش یادگیری زبان آموزان سیستم آموزش زبان کودکان بهبود یابد.

قابل ذکر است که تمام فیلمها و اطلاعات به طور محرمانه استفاده خواهد شد و تنها اینجانب و حد اکثر اساتید راهنمای من به آنها دسترسی خواهیم داشت و هیچگونه استفاده ای غیر از هدف این تحقیق از اطلاعات فوق – چه در فضای حقیقی و چه فضای مجازی – صورت نخواهد گرفت و حتی اسامی زبان آموزان نیز محرمانه خواهد ماند. همچنین تمام فیلمها در کمپیوتر محرمانه نگهداری خواهد شد. علاوه بر آن دسترسی به فایلها به موبوطه در کامپیوتر اینجانب نیز برای دیگران امکانپذیر نخواهد بود زیرا ورود به این سیستم نیاز به رمز عبور شخصی دارد. علاوه بر آن در هر مقطعی از جریان انجام تحقیق می توانید بدون هیچگونه توضیحی اجازه داده شده را لغو کنید.

ارادتمند

پروین قیطاسی

تلفن تماس:

آدرس دانشگاه:

آدرس ایمیل استاد راهنما:

آدرس ایمیل:

-اینجانب با آگاهی کامل موافقت می نمایم که تحقیق فوق در یکی از کلاسهای این موسسه انجام گیرد.

امضاء مدیر موسسه

Appendix G (b)- Head of the institute's informed consent (English translation)

Dear head of language institute X,

I, Parvin Gheitasi, am a PhD student in the field of language teaching and learning in Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden. I am pursuing my PhD under the supervision of Professor Janet Enever. For my PhD project I would like to investigate the oral language production of young language learners aged 9–11. This study will be carried out in a classroom with 11–15 students during an entire semester, that is 16 sessions of 90 minutes.

This study is an exploratory study where I would like to investigate the acquisition and application of words and phrases in the oral language of young foreign language learners. For the purpose of this study I need to attend a classroom to observe and video and audio record one classroom with learners at the mentioned age range and intermediate level of language proficiency. I would also like to conduct two picture elicitation tasks at the beginning and the end of the semester, where learners will be asked to talk about a picture of a classroom individually. In addition the parents will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the children's exposure to English outside the classroom.

I would appreciate if you could kindly agree that I conduct this study in one of the classrooms in this institute.

It should be reminded that confidentiality of the collected data will be maintained at all times: all the names will be pseudonymized, all hard copies of the data will be kept in a safe cupboard, all digital data will be kept on a password protected computer. The data will only be used for the purpose of the study and they will not be used in any virtual spaces. You will be free to withdraw your permission at any time and without having to give a reason.

Should you have any questions about the research or procedures involved please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address, or phone number provided below or talk to me in person.

Kind regards

Parvin Gheitasi

Phone number:

Email address:

University address:

I agree that this study can be carried out in one of the classes in this language institute.

Signature Date

Appendix H (a)- Parents' informed consent

فرم رضایت آگاهانه

والدین گرامی

اینجانب پروین قیطاسی دانشجوی دکتری رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی در دانشگاه اومیا در کشور سوئد هستم. و استاد راهنمای من.....

به منظور انجام پایان نامه دکتری خود در نظر دارم در زمینه مهارت گفتاری زبان انگلیسی زبان آموزان 9-11 ساله ایرانی تحقیقی انجام دهم. این تحقیق در طول یک ترم آموزشی موسسه یعنی 16 جلسه 90 دقیقه‌ای در یک کلاس 10 الی 15 نفره با سطح زبان متوسط انجام خواهد گرفت.

برای انجام این تحقیق لازم است از کلاسی با زبان آموزان این رده سنی بازدید و فیلم تهیه شود. از آنجا که فرزند شما در این رده سنی قرار دارد از شما درخواست میکنم موافقت نمائید تا از کلاس فرزند شما فیلم ضبط گردد تا در تحقیق مذکور مورد استفاده قرار گیرد. توجه فرمایید که این فیلمها و نتایج آن هیچگونه تأثیری بر نمرات فرزندتان ندارد. برای اینکار اینجانب در کلاس حضور پیدا کرده و صدا و فیلم ضبط خواهم کرد. همچنین پرسشنامه‌هایی تهیه شده تا والدین زبان آموزان به آنها پاسخ دهند و یک تکلیف فردی استباطی به زبان آموزان ارائه خواهد شد. چنانچه با انجام این تحقیق در یکی از کلاسهای موسسه موافقت نمائید سپاسگزار خواهم بود. روش این تحقیق به صورت کیفی بوده و استفاده از کلمات و عبارات در تولید زبانی مورد بررسی قرار خواهد گرفت تا با توجه به روش یادگیری زبان آموزان سیستم آموزش زبان کودکان بهبود یابد.

قابل ذکر است که تمام فیلمها و اطلاعات به طور محرمانه استفاده خواهد شد و تنها اینجانب و حد اکثر اساتید راهنمای من به آنها دسترسی خواهیم داشت و هیچگونه استفاده‌ای غیر از هدف این تحقیق از اطلاعات فوق-چه در فضای حقیقی و چه فضای مجازی- صورت نخواهد گرفت و حتی اسامی زبان آموزان نیز محرمانه خواهد ماند. همچنین تمام فیلمها در کمپیوتر محرمانه نگهداری خواهد شد. علاوه بر آن دسترسی به فایل‌های مربوطه در کامپیوتر اینجانب نیز برای دیگران امکانپذیر نخواهد بود زیرا ورود به این سیستم نیاز به رمز عبور شخصی دارد. علاوه بر آن در هر مقطعی از جریان انجام تحقیق می‌توانید بدون هیچگونه توضیحی اجازه داده شده را لغو کنید.

ارادتمند

پروین قیطاسی

تلفن تماس:

آدرس دانشگاه:

آدرس ایمیل:

اینجانب با آگاهی کامل موافقت می‌نمایم که فرزندم در این تحقیق حضور داشته باشد.

نام زبان آموز

امضاء ولی زبان آموز

تاریخ

Appendix H (b)- Parents' informed consent (English Translation)

Dear Parents and carers,

I, Parvin Gheitasi, am a PhD student in the field of language teaching and learning in Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden. I am pursuing my PhD under the supervision of Professor Janet Enever. For my PhD project I would like to investigate the oral language production of young foreign language learners aged 9–11. This study will be carried out in a classroom with 11–15 students for an entire semester that is 16 sessions of 90 minutes.

As your child is in this age category, I would like to kindly ask your permission to include your child in the study. It should be underlined that this study will not have any effect on the grades of the children.

This study is an exploratory study where I would like to investigate the acquisition and application of words and phrases in the oral language of young foreign language learners. For the purpose of this study I need to attend a classroom to observe and video and audio record one classroom with learners at the mentioned age range and intermediate level of language proficiency. I would also like to conduct two picture elicitation tasks at the beginning and the end of the semester, where learners will be asked to talk about a picture of a classroom individually. In addition, I would like to ask you (parents) to complete a questionnaire about your children's exposure to English outside the classroom.

Confidentiality of the collected data will be maintained at all times: The names will be pseudonymized, all hard copies of the data will be kept in a safe cupboard, all digital data will be kept on a password protected computer. The data will only be used for the purpose of the study and they will not be used in any virtual spaces. You will be free to withdraw your permission at any time and without having to give a reason.

I would appreciate if you could kindly agree for your child to participate in this study. Should you have any questions about the research or procedures involved please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address provided below or talk to me in person.

Kind regards

Parvin Gheitasi

Email address:

University address:

I agree for my child to participate in this study.

Child's name Parent's signature Date

Appendix I (a)- Children's informed assent

زبان آموز عزیز

سلام. اسم من پروین است. من در کشور سوئد دانشجو هستم.

برای انجام یک تحقیق مایلم که در کلاس شما حضور پیدا کنم و از کلاس شما فیلم تهیه کنم. این فیلم را فقط من (و احتمالاً اساتید من) خواهم دید.

اگر راضی هستی که تو هم در این تحقیق شرکت کنی شکل خندان و چنانچه مایل نیستی شکل ناراحت را رنگ کن. شرکت در این تحقیق اجباری نیست و همچنین در هر زمان در طول تحقیق حق داری که تصمیم بگیری که دیگر در این تحقیق شرکت داده نشوی.



Appendix I (b)- Children's informed assent (English Translation)

Dear,

Hello. I am Parvin.

I am a university student in Sweden.

For my PhD project I need to attend and video and audio record your class. The recordings will only be watched by me (and probably my supervisors).

If you agree to participate in this study please colour the smile face and if you do not agree colour the sad face. Participation in this project is not mandatory and you will be free to withdraw your permission at any time.



Studier i språk och litteratur från Umeå universitet Umeå Studies in Language and Literature

Publicerade av Institutionen för språkstudier, Umeå universitet
Published by the Department of Language Studies, Umeå University

Redaktion/Editors: Heidi Hansson, Per Ambrosiani

Distribuerade av/Distributed by: eddy.se ab
P.O. Box 1310, SE-621 24 Visby, Sweden
E-mail: order@bokorder.se
Phone: +46 498 253900
Fax: +46 498 249789

1. Elena Lindholm Narváez, *'Ese terrible espejo'. Autorrepresentación en la narrativa sobre el exilio del Cono Sur en Suecia*. Diss. 2008.
2. Julian Vasquez (ed.), *Actas del Simposio Internacional "Suecia y León de Greiff (1895–1976)"*. 2008.
3. Dorothea Liebel, *Tageslichtfreude und Buchstabenangst. Zu Harry Martinsons dichterischen Wortbildungen als Übersetzungsproblematik*. Diss. 2009.
4. Dan Olsson, *„Davon sagen die Herren kein Wort“. Zum pädagogischen, grammatischen, und dialektologischen Schaffen Max Wilhelm Götzingers (1799–1856)*. Diss. 2009.
5. Ingela Valfridsson, *Nebensätze in Büchern und Köpfen. Zur Bedeutung der Begriffsvorstellungen beim Fremdsprachenerwerb*. Diss. 2009.
6. Per Ambrosiani (ed.), *Swedish Contributions to the Fourteenth International Congress of Slavists (Ohrid, 10–16 September 2008)*. 2009.
7. Therese Örnberg Berglund, *Making Sense Digitally: Conversational Coherence in Online and Mixed-Mode Contexts*. Diss. 2009.
8. Gregor von der Heiden, *Gespräche in einer Krise. Analyse von Telefonaten mit einem RAF-Mitglied während der Okkupation der westdeutschen Botschaft in Stockholm 1975*. Diss. 2009.
9. Maria Lindgren Leavenworth, *The Second Journey: Travelling in Literary Footsteps*. 2010.
10. Niklas Torstensson, *Judging the Immigrant: Accents and Attitudes*. Diss. 2010.
11. Van Leavenworth, *The Gothic in Contemporary Interactive Fictions*. Diss. 2010.
12. Heidi Hansson, Maria Lindgren Leavenworth & Lennart Pettersson (red.), *Regionernas bilder. Estetiska uttryck från och om periferin*.

- 2010.
13. Anette Svensson, *A Translation of Worlds: Aspects of Cultural Translation and Australian Migration Literature*. Diss. 2010.
 14. Mareike Jendis, Anita Malmqvist & Ingela Valfridsson (Hrsg.), *Text im Kontext 9. Beiträge zur 9. Arbeitstagung schwedischer Germanisten, 7.–8. Mai 2010, Umeå*. 2011.
 15. Nicklas Hällén, *Travelling Objects: Modernity and Materiality in British Colonial Travel Literature about Africa*. Diss. 2011.
 16. Stephanie Fayth Hendrick, *Beyond the Blog*. Diss. 2012.
 17. Misuzu Shimotori, *Conceptual Contrasts: A Comparative Semantic Study of Dimensional Adjectives in Japanese and Swedish*. Diss. 2013.
 18. Tove Solander, *“Creating the Senses”: Sensation in the Work of Shelley Jackson*. Diss. 2013.
 19. Helena Eckeskog, *Varför knackar han inte bara på? En studie om arbete med läsförståelse i åk 1–2*. Lic. 2013.
 20. Katarina Kärnebro, *Plugga stenhårt eller vara rolig? Normer om språk, kön och skolarbete i identitetsskapande språkpraktiker på fordonsprogrammet*. Diss. 2013.
 21. Ingalill Gustafsson, *www.lektion.se – din kollega på nätet. En studie av lärares lektionsförslag i skolämnet svenska (skrivande)*. Lic. 2013.
 22. Moa Matthis, *“Take a Taste”: Selling Isak Dinesen’s Seven Gothic Tales in 1934*. Diss. 2014.
 23. Anna Maria Hipkiss, *Klassrummets semiotiska resurser. En språkdidaktisk studie av skolämnena hem- och konsumentkunskap, kemi och biologi*. Diss. 2014.
 24. Maria Levlin, *Läsvårigheter, språklig förmåga och skolresultat i tidiga skolår – en undersökning av 44 elever i årskurs 2 till 3*. Diss. 2014.
 25. Janet Enever, Eva Lindgren & Sergej Ivanov (eds.), *Conference Proceedings from Early Language Learning: Theory and Practice*. 2014.
 26. Eva Lindgren & Janet Enever (eds.), *Språkdidaktik: Researching Language Teaching and Learning*. 2015.
 27. Hanna Outakoski, *Multilingual Literacy Among Young Learners of North Sámi: Contexts, Complexity and Writing in Sápmi*. Diss. 2015.
 28. James Barrett, *The Ergodic Revisited: Spatiality as a Governing Principle of Digital Literature*. Diss. 2015.
 29. Hilda Härgestam Strandberg, *Articulable Humanity: Narrative Ethics in Nuruddin Farah’s Trilogies*. Diss. 2016.
 30. Berit Aronsson, *Efectos pragmáticos de transferencias prosódicas del sueco al español L2: Implicaciones para la clase de español lengua extranjera*. Diss. 2015.
 31. Karyn Sandström, *Peer Review Practices of L2 Doctoral Students in the Natural Sciences*. Diss. 2016.
 32. Godelinde Perk, *Julian, God, and the Art of Storytelling: A Narrative*

- Analysis of the Works of Julian of Norwich*. Diss. 2016.
33. Sergej Ivanov, *A Transnational Study of Criticality in the History Learning Environment*. Diss. 2016.
 34. Mai Trang Vu, *Logics and Politics of Professionalism: The Case of University English Language Teachers in Vietnam*. Diss. 2017.
 35. Parvin Gheitasi, *Say It Fast, Fluent and Flawless: Formulaicity in the Oral Language Production of Young Foreign Language Learners*. Diss. 2017.

Skrifter från moderna språk (2001–2006)

Publicerade av Institutionen för moderna språk, Umeå universitet

Published by the Department of Modern Languages, Umeå University

1. Mareike Jendis, *Mumins wundersame Deutschlandabenteuer. Zur Rezeption von Tove Janssons Muminbüchern*. Diss. 2001.
2. Lena Karlsson, *Multiple Affiliations: Autobiographical Narratives of Displacement by US Women*. Diss. 2001.
3. Anders Steinvall, *English Colour Terms in Context*. Diss. 2002.
4. Raoul J. Granqvist (ed.), *Sensuality and Power in Visual Culture*. 2002. NY UPPLAGA 2006.
5. Berit Åström, *The Politics of Tradition: Examining the History of the Old English Poems The Wife's Lament and Wulf and Eadwacer*. Diss. 2002.
6. José J. Gamboa, *La lengua después del exilio. Influencias suecas en retornados chilenos*. Diss. 2003.
7. Katarina Gregersdotter, *Watching Women, Falling Women: Power and Dialogue in Three Novels by Margaret Atwood*. Diss. 2003.
8. Thomas Peter, *Hans Falladas Romane in den USA*. Diss. 2003.
9. Elias Schwieler, *Mutual Implications: Otherness in Theory and John Berryman's Poetry of Loss*. Diss. 2003.
10. Mats Deutschmann, *Apologising in British English*. Diss. 2003.
11. Raija Kangassalo & Ingmarie Mellenius (red.), *Låt mig ha kvar mitt språk. Den tredje SUKKA-rapporten. / Antakaa minun pitää kieleni. Kolmas SUKKA-raportti*. 2003.
12. Mareike Jendis, Anita Malmqvist & Ingela Valfridsson (Hg.), *Norden und Süden. Festschrift für Kjell-Åke Forsgren zum 65. Geburtstag*. 2004.
13. Philip Grey, *Defining Moments: A Cultural Biography of Jane Eyre*. Diss. 2004.
14. Kirsten Krull, *Lieber Gott, mach mich fromm... Zum Wort und Konzept „fromm“ im Wandel der Zeit*. Diss. 2004.
15. Maria Helena Svensson, *Critères de figement. L'identification des expressions figées en français contemporain*. Diss. 2004.

16. Malin Isaksson, *Adolescentes abandonnées. Je narrateur adolescent dans le roman français contemporain*. Diss. 2004.
17. Carla Jonsson, *Code-Switching in Chicano Theater: Power, Identity and Style in Three Plays by Cherríe Moraga*. Diss. 2005.
18. Eva Lindgren, *Writing and Revising: Didactic and Methodological Implications of Keystroke Logging*. Diss. 2005.
19. Monika Stridfeldt, *La perception du français oral par des apprenants suédois*. Diss. 2005.
20. María Denis Esquivel Sánchez, "Yo puedo bien español". *Influencia sueca y variedades hispanas en la actitud lingüística e identificación de los hispanoamericanos en Suecia*. Diss. 2005.
21. Raoul J. Granqvist (ed.), *Michael's Eyes: The War against the Ugandan Child*. 2005.
22. Martin Shaw, *Narrating Gypsies, Telling Travellers: A Study of the Relational Self in Four Life Stories*. Diss. 2006.

Umeå Studies in Linguistics (2001–2006)

Publicerade av Institutionen för filosofi och lingvistik, Umeå universitet
 Published by the Department of Philosophy and Linguistics, Umeå University

1. Leila Kalliokoski, *Understanding Sentence Structure: Experimental Studies on Processing of Syntactic Elements in Sentences*. Diss. 2001.
2. Anna-Lena Wiklund, *The Syntax of Tenselessness: On Copying Constructions in Swedish*. Diss. 2005.
3. Fredrik Karlsson, *The Acquisition of Contrast: A Longitudinal Investigation of Initial s+Plosive Cluster Development in Swedish Children*. Diss. 2006.

PHONUM (1990–2005)

Publicerade av Institutionen för lingvistik, Umeå universitet (1990–1998)
 och av Institutionen för filosofi och lingvistik, Umeå universitet (1999–2005)
 Published by the Department of Linguistics, Umeå University (1990–1998)
 and by the Department of Philosophy and Linguistics, Umeå University (1999–2005)

1. Eva Strangert & Peter Czigler (eds.), *Papers from Fonetik –90 / The Fourth Swedish Phonetics Conference, Held in Umeå/Lövånger, May 30–31 and June 1, 1990*. 1990.
2. Eva Strangert, Mattias Heldner & Peter Czigler (eds.), *Studies Presented to Claes-Christian Elert on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*. 1993.

3. Robert Bannert & Kirk Sullivan (eds.), *PHONUM* 3. 1995.
4. Robert Bannert, Mattias Heldner, Kirk Sullivan & Pär Wretling (eds.), *Proceedings from Fonetik 1997: Umeå 28–30 May 1997*. 1997.
5. Peter E. Czigler, *Timing in Swedish VC(C) Sequences*. Diss. 1998.
6. Kirk Sullivan, Fredrik Karlsson & Robert Bannert (eds.), *PHONUM* 6. 1998.
7. Robert Bannert & Peter E. Czigler (eds.), *Variations within Consonant Clusters in Standard Swedish*. 1999.
8. Mattias Heldner, *Focal Accent – f_0 Movements and Beyond*. Diss. 2001.
9. Mattias Heldner (ed.), *Proceedings from Fonetik 2003: Lövvånger 2–4 June 2003*. 2003.
10. Felix Schaeffler, *Phonological Quantity in Swedish Dialects: Typological Aspects, Phonetic Variation and Diachronic Change*. Diss. 2005.

Umeå Studies in the Educational Sciences

The Post-Graduate School for the Educational Sciences,

Umeå School of Education, Umeå University

1. Pérez-Karlsson, Åsa (2014). *Meeting the Other and Oneself: Experience and Learning in International, Upper Secondary Sojourns*. ISBN 978-91-7601-102-7.
2. Hipkiss, Anna Maria (2014). *Klassrummets semiotiska resurser: En språkdidaktisk studie av skolämnena hem- och konsumentkunskap, kemi och biologi*. ISBN 978-91-7601-100-3.
3. Sigurdson, Erik (2014). *Det sitter i väggarna: En studie av trä- och metallslöjdsalens materialitet, maskulinitet och förkroppsliganden*. ISBN 978-91-7601-124-9.
4. Hansson, Kristina (2014). *Skola och medier: Aktiviteter och styrning i en kommuns utvecklingssträvanden*. ISBN 978-91-7601-143-0.
5. Manni, Annika (2015). *Känsla, förståelse och värdering: Elevers meningsskapande i skolaktiviteter om miljö- och hållbarhetsfrågor*. ISBN 978-91-7601-238-3.
6. Olovsson, Tord Göran (2015). *Det kontrollera(n)de klassrummet: Bedömningsprocessen i svensk grundskolepraktik i relation till införandet av nationella skolreformer*. ISBN 978-91-7601-265-9.
7. Bagger, Anette (2015). *Prövningen av en skola för alla: Nationella provet i matematik i det tredje skolåret*. ISBN 978-91-7601-314-4.
8. Isaksson, Cristine (2016). *Den kritiska gästen: En professionsstudie om skolkuratorer*. ISBN 978-91-7601-341-0.
9. Lindblad, Michael (2016). *"De förstod aldrig min historia": Unga vuxna med migrationsbakgrund om skolmisslyckande och övergångar mellan skola och arbete*. ISBN 978-91-7601-485-1.
10. Lindblom, Cecilia (2016). *Skolämnet Hem- och konsumentkunskap på 200-talet: Förutsättningar för elevers möjlighet till måluppfyllelse*. ISBN 978-91-7601-498-1.
11. Norqvist, Mathias (2016). *On mathematical reasoning: Being told or finding out*. ISBN 978-91-7601-525-4.
12. Bergman, Bengt (2016). *Poliser som utbildar poliser: Reflexivitet, meningsskapande och professionell utveckling*. ISBN 978-91-7601-527-8.
13. Rantala, Anna (2016). *-Snälla du! Kan du sätta dig? Om vägledning i förskolan*. ISBN 978-91-7601-511-7.
14. Andersson Hult, Lars (2016). *Historia i bagaget: En historiedidaktisk studie om varför historiemedvetande uttrycks i olika former*. ISBN 978-91-7601-582-7.

15. Arnesson, Daniel (2016). *PISA i skolan: Hur lärare, rektorer och skolchefer förhåller sig till internationella kunskapsmätningar*. ISBN 978-91-7601-581-0.
16. Lindster Norberg, Eva-Lena (2016). *Hur ska du bli när du blir stor? En studie i svensk gymnasieskola när entreprenörskap i skolan är i fokus*. ISBN978-91-7601-577-3.
17. Norberg, Anders (2017). *From blended learning to learning onlife - ICTs, time and access in higher education*. ISBN: 978-91-7601-622-0.
18. Vu, Mai Trang (2017). *Logics and Politics of Professionalism: The case of University English Language Teachers in Vietnam*. ISBN: 978-91-7601-631-2.
19. Gheitasi, Parvin (2017). *"Say It Fast, Fluent and Flawless": Formulaicity in the Oral Language Production of Young Foreign Language Learners*. ISBN: 978-91-7601-688-6.