



DOI: 10.16986/HUJE.2016017558  
Makalenin Geliş Tarihi: 09.08.2015  
Makalenin Kabul Tarihi: 15.04.2016  
Online Yayın Tarihi: 25.04.2016

## EFL Learners' Use of Formulaic Language in Oral Assessments: A Study on Fluency and Proficiency\*

### İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Konuşma Sınavlarında Kalıp İfade Kullanımı: Akıcılık ve Dil becerisi Çalışması

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**ABSTRACT:** Despite the recent, increasing interest in the research of formulaic language which constitutes a significant part of languages, there is little research on formulaic language use in registers such as classroom teaching and textbooks. Therefore, this article aims to investigate a) formulaic language use of EFL learners in multi-task oral proficiency exams consisting of an individual and a paired task, b) the task type in which these learners use more formulaic language, and c) whether the use of formulaic expressions is related to their fluency and overall proficiency scores. The data were gathered from the content analyses of video recordings of oral proficiency exam belonging to 190 EFL learners with different proficiency levels according to the description of CEFR and the course book used at School of Foreign Languages at a state university in Turkey. The findings indicate that EFL learners used formulaic language which they were exposed to through their course books in oral proficiency exams with different tasks; they used more formulaic language in the paired tasks in which they interact with another exam taker and their use was significantly related to their scores of fluency and language proficiency.

**Keywords:** Formulaic language, oral proficiency exams, textbook, fluency, overall proficiency.

**ÖZ:** Dil kullanımında sağladığı kolaylıklardan ötürü kalıp ifadelerin kullanımına yönelik son yıllarda yapılan çalışmaların sayısındaki artışa rağmen, bu ifadelerin dil öğretiminde ya da ders kitaplarında nasıl kullanıldığına dair yapılan çalışmaların sayısının yeterli olmadığı görülmüştür. Bu eksiklik göz önünde bulundurularak yürütülen bu çalışmanın amacı a) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin ders kitaplarında yer alan kalıp ifadeleri tekli ve ikili görevlerden oluşan konuşma becerisini ölçme sınavlarında nasıl kullandıklarını b) bu öğrencilerin ne tür görevlerde (tekli ya da ikili) daha çok kalıp ifade kullandıklarını, c) kalıp ifade kullanmalarının konuşma sınavından aldıkları akıcılık puanları ya da genel dil başarılarıyla ilgili olup olmadığını araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın verileri, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda dil eğitimi alan Avrupa Ortak Ölçüt Çerçevesi tanımlamasına göre (CEFR) farklı seviyede dil kullanma becerisine sahip 190 öğrencinin konuşma sınavlarına ait kayıtların ve okulda kullanılan ders kitabının kalıp ifadeler kullanımına yönelik içerik analizleri karşılaştırılarak toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin çoklu görevlerden oluşan konuşma sınavlarında ders kitaplarında gördükleri kalıp ifadeleri kullandıklarını; dahası bunları ikili görevlerde daha çok kullandıklarını ve bu ifadeleri kullanmalarının söz konusu sınavdaki akıcılık puanları ve genel dil başarılarıyla doğrudan ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Kalıp ifadeler, konuşma sınavları, ders kitabı, akıcılık, dil başarısı.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Formulaic language which consists of multi-word expressions stored and retrieved as a single unit in the mind (Wray, 2002) has been a prominent subject in recent years because of the

\*The article is based on Master's Thesis "The Use of Formulaic Language by EFL Learners in Oral Proficiency Exams" (Üstünbaş, 2014).

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many benefits it provides for language users and learners. Besides being effective in reducing cognitive processing load (e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Jiang & Nekrasova, 2007; Underwood, Schmitt, & Galpin, 2004) and facilitating social interaction (e.g., Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wray & Perkins, 2000; Wray, 2000; Stengers, Boers, Housen & Eyckmans, 2011), the use of formulaic expressions also enhances the fluency of language learners (e.g., Weinert, 1995; Wray, 2000; Wood, 2002; 2006; 2009).

Regarding the role of formulaic language in second language (L2) development and its relation to fluency, previous research suggested that exposure to these fixed expressions enables language learners to obtain native-like fluency (e.g., Ortaçtepe, 2012; Yorio, 1980; Stengers et al., 2011). On the other hand, it is suggested in the literature that the level of proficiency (e.g., Howarth, 1998; Ohlrogge, 2009; Yorio, 1989) and task type (e.g., Ellis, 2000; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wood, 2002; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) are also effective on formulaic language use. Thus, this study investigates the extent to which English as a foreign language (EFL) learners use formulaic language in multi-task oral proficiency exams consisting of an individual and a paired task and whether their use of formulaic language is related to their scores of fluency in these exams and their overall proficiency. Therefore, the following questions will be addressed in this study:

- 1) In what ways do EFL learners use the formulaic language they are exposed to in their curriculum when taking oral proficiency exams?
- 2) In what type of tasks (individual or paired) do EFL learners use more formulaic language?
- 3) Is there a relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their test scores of fluency and overall proficiency?

### 1.1. Formulaic language in language teaching

Formulaic language provides significant benefits for language users and learners since it basically has important functions to facilitate language use such as reducing processing load in mind (e.g., Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Ellis & Sinclair, 1996; Wray, 2002), maintaining social interaction (e.g., Ortaçtepe, 2012; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wray & Perkins, 2000) and enhancing fluency which may be defined as “a naturalness of flow of speech, or speed of oral performance” (Wood, 2010, p. 9). In this sense, it is also effective in second language acquisition (Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Ellis, 2012; Wood, 2002; Wray, 2000).

With the shift from traditional approaches to communicative language teaching that the field of L2 teaching has witnessed, a considerable amount of emphasis has been put on the importance of L2 learners' communication and how they use linguistic items in various communicative discourses (e.g., Foster, 2001; Howarth, 1998; Wray, 2002; Ellis 1996, 2002; Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; Oliver, Haig, & Rochecouste, 2005; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Weinert, 1995; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Due to its role in communication such as helping to maintain social interaction (e.g., Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992) and boosting fluency (e.g., Skehan, 1998; Kuiper, 1996), formulaic language is integrated into the curriculum of language programs based on the idea that exposure to authentic sources will enhance L2 learners' comfort with natural language use (Wood, 2002). Regarding the significance of formulaic language being a part of curriculum, Wood (2002) suggests that;

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

However, mere exposure to these expressions may not be enough, as they need to notice these expressions in order to use them appropriately (Ortaçtepe, 2012; Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006). In a study conducted by Boers et al. (2006), it was revealed that language learners exposed to a wide range of noticing activities that focus on formulaic language used more formulaic expressions in conversations and were considered as more proficient in oral skills such as fluency. Furthermore, Webb, Newton and Chang (2013) have proposed that collocations can be acquired after 15 times of encounters; therefore, much and repeated exposure is required. Considering the fact that one of the basic sources of input for EFL learners are their textbooks (Meunier, 2012), it can be assumed that learners not only need “repeated exposure” (Wood, 2002, p. 10) in order to be able to learn these expressions but also they need to notice them.

Even though language learners are exposed to the same source of input through noticing activities in their curriculum, there is still variation in their use of formulaic expressions mostly because of the differences in their proficiency levels (e.g., Howarth, 1998; Ohlrogge, 2009; Yorio, 1989). As suggested by Yorio (1989), “the higher the level of linguistic proficiency, the higher the level of idiomaticity” (p. 65). Yet, despite the possible relationship between proficiency and the use of formulaic language, there is no research on formulaic language use in the early stages of learning (Lenko-Szymanska, 2014). Thus, this study may contribute to the existing research by shedding light on how formulaic language is used by language learners in oral assessments.

## **1.2. Formulaic language use in oral assessment**

As teaching and testing are two inseparable parts of language programs, the above mentioned changes in teaching English have stimulated shifts in testing as well. With the shift, tests and exams have been renewed in accordance with what language knowledge or skill they aim to assess. In aspect of the assessment of speaking skill, oral proficiency exams have been redesigned to measure L2 learners’ communicative skills by using different types of tasks which are known to be affecting learners’ performances in terms of linguistic and pragmatic features to be used (e.g., Ellis, 2000; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wood, 2002; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). According to Okada and Greer (2013), these tasks include “interviewer-led question and answer tasks, news-telling tasks, and role-play task” (p. 288). Role-play tasks are particularly used in oral proficiency exams in order to promote interaction between exam takers since they require natural flow of conversation, which serves well for the pragmatic function of tasks (e.g., Kasper, 2013; Okada & Greer, 2013; Seedhouse, 2013). As far as formulaic language is concerned, the type of a task plays a paramount importance as specific contexts call for specific formulaic expressions as stated in the literature (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). According to Schmitt and Carter (2004), “formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use” (p. 9). In other words, since the use of formulas is bound to a particular social context, understanding the nature of those contexts enables access to the pragmatic/figurative meaning of formulas (Wood, 2002), which, as a result, helps individuals not only to cope with complex social situations but also engage in smooth communication (Wood, 2002).

While both Boers et al. (2006) and Stengers et al. (2011) have confirmed the relationship between formulaic language use and oral proficiency, there have been fewer attempts on how the use of formulaic expressions can facilitate fluency in oral communication within different discourses (Wood, 2009). Therefore, the present study examines the use of formulaic expressions in EFL learners’ oral proficiency exams consisting of individual and paired tasks so as to contribute to the literature suggesting the role of these expressions in language learners’ fluency and overall proficiency.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Participants and Setting

The current study was carried out with the participation of 190 EFL learners who studied at the School of Foreign Languages of Bülent Ecevit University in Turkey during the 2012-2013 academic year. In the university where the study was conducted, all undergraduate students are administered a proficiency test that evaluates their knowledge of English before they start their BA degree. The students who score below 60 out of 100 are placed in classes appropriate for their language level and required to study at the School of Foreign Languages for prep-class. As a result, three proficiency levels; B, C and D (from the highest to the lowest) are comprised. While the highest level (B) students have 26 hours of teaching, the other levels (C and D) have 30 hours of teaching per week throughout the year. Even though there are three proficiency levels at the beginning of the academic year, all students are supposed to be at least level A2 (elementary and pre-intermediate) at the end of the year regardless of their initial proficiency level, and they are regarded as basic users of English language according to the description of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

The School of Foreign Languages uses a corpus-based course book; *Touchstone* (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2009) by Cambridge University Press which provides different contexts for students to practice daily language use including formulaic expressions. The textbook series consist of a set of four books, the three of which are used at the university. B level students are exposed to two of them (2 and 3) whereas C and D level students are exposed to all of them. Students' language development is assessed through midterm and final exams which are held at regular intervals throughout the academic year. These exams measure students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge as well as their oral and written performances. However, the success of students is determined by the final proficiency exam which is similar to the one they have to take at the beginning of the academic year.

The final proficiency exam comprises of listening, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking sections. The points allocated to sections are as follows: 10 points for listening, 20 points for grammar, 20 points for vocabulary, 10 points for reading, 25 points for speaking and 15 points for writing. The sum of the grades students receive from these different sections including the oral proficiency exam constitute the overall proficiency grades used in the present study.

Speaking skill constitutes an important part of this proficiency exam. Since the exit proficiency level is supposed to be the same for all the students by the time they take the end-of-the year proficiency exam, students from initially different levels are mixed in this exam and each student takes the speaking exam with another test-taker either from the same level or a different one. The oral proficiency exam consists of two tasks requiring individual and pair work performances. The individual task is conducted by an interlocutor requiring a picture-description task, while the paired task is based on a role-play activity (See Appendix A). For both tasks, two trained raters assess students' performances following a rubric developed by the head of speaking skill development unit according to the A2 level description of CEFR (see Appendix A). The rubric includes five components, *Fluency and Pronunciation*, *Vocabulary*, *Grammatical Range and Accuracy*, *Task Completion* and *Comprehension*. The lowest score that can be assigned for each component is 1 point, while the highest score is 5 points. As a *Total Score*, the raters can assign up to 25 points and the average grades of the two raters for each student is assigned as the final grade.

In order to ensure inter-rater reliability, a norming session in which instructors evaluate various students' speaking performance and negotiate their evaluation to determine a final grade is held before each oral proficiency exam and the difference between the grades of the two raters may be up to 3 points. Under these circumstances, the mean of the two raters' scores is determined as a final grade. When the difference is more than 3 points, the assessors have to negotiate to determine the final grade. These exams are video recorded and saved in the archives of the School of Foreign Languages. Hence, the data for the present study come from 95 video recordings (each approximately 15 minutes) belonging to 190 learners as well as the archival data of the evaluation sheets which were used by the raters in order to assess students' oral performances during the oral exams.

## 2.2. Descriptive Study Design

Since the aim of the study is to examine the ways EFL learners use the formulaic language they are exposed to through their textbook, a content analysis of the textbook was conducted in order to determine the target formulaic expressions and their frequencies in the book. For this purpose, Kecskes' (2007) formulaic language continuum (see Table 1) was referred to in order to identify the formulaic expressions that are included in the textbook series. However, for the purposes of the study only speech formulas that can be used anywhere in speech as long as speakers find them appropriate for the use, and situation-bound utterances that are used based on the interaction of speakers in specific situations (Kecskes, 2007) were analyzed as they occur more frequently in oral communication (Ortaçtepe, 2012). The frequencies of each formulaic expression were determined by counting their occurrence in the book. The reliability of the textbook analysis was provided by consulting another researcher who has much content knowledge and many studies conducted on formulaic expressions.

**Table 1: Kecskes' formulaic continuum (Adopted from Kecskes, 2007, p. 193)**

Grammatical Units	Fixed Units	Sem. Units	Phrasal verbs	Speech formulas	Situation-bound utterances	idioms
<i>be going to</i>	<i>as a matter of fact</i>	<i>put up with</i>	<i>going shopping</i>	<i>Welcome aboard</i>	<i>kick the bucket</i>	
<i>have to</i>	<i>suffice it to say</i>	<i>get along</i>	<i>not bad</i>	<i>Help yourself</i>	<i>spill the beans</i>	

A second content analysis was conducted again by using Kecskes' (2007) framework and Ortaçtepe's (2012) study to identify the formulaic expressions used by the learners in the video recordings as well as to determine the task type in which they used more formulaic expressions. For this purpose, formulaic expressions used by each student were noted down with their frequencies on an evaluation sheet in light of the target vocabulary list. In order to ensure the reliability of the video analysis, another researcher who was trained for this type of analysis analyzed 10% of the 95 videos used in this study. The comparison of these analyses showed that two researchers agreed on the categorization of the formulaic language used by the EFL learners.

In order to relate formulaic language use to fluency and overall proficiency, the number of formulaic expressions the learners used accurately and their scores for the *Fluency* section of the rubric and total language proficiency scores belonging to final proficiency exam were analyzed. Correlation tests were conducted for both analyses by using version 20 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## 3. FINDINGS

In light of the aim and the research questions of the study, the data belonging to 190 EFL learners were analyzed to investigate the formulaic language use in individual and paired tasks in

oral proficiency exams and the probable relationship between formulaic language use and fluency and language proficiency by analyzing oral exam recordings. These analyses revealed that formulaic language use constituted a significant part of the oral proficiency exam and which is presented in details below:

### 3.1. The use of formulaic language in oral proficiency exams

The content analyses of the textbook and video recordings revealed that all 190 students used formulaic expressions in the exam in both individual (see Figure 1 for a sample excerpt) and paired tasks (see Figure 2 for a sample excerpt) while their frequency of use (See Table 2) and their accurate use showed differences. Overall, while the textbook contained 228 different formulaic expressions with the frequency of 2083, the students used 134 of them with the frequency of 1298. Specifically, 87 out of 112 speech formulas were used by the participants with the frequency of 1010 compared to 1745 in the book. Similarly, the students used 47 out of 116 situation-bound utterances with the frequency of 288 compared to 338 in the book. Considering the frequencies of use that students preferred to use more speech formulas may be explained by the fact that they were exposed to speech formulas more frequently as these expressions are not context-specific.

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#### *Individual task (picture description)*

*By looking at a picture of a bazaar (see Appendix A.1)*

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

Interlocutor: How do they feel?

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

Interlocutor: What are they going to do next?

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

Interlocutor: for the party?

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

Interlocutor: OK

S74: Yes, that's all

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**Figure 1. Examples of the use of *I think* and *Maybe***

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#### *Paired task*

*Role play activity about ending phone conversations (see Appendix A.2)*

*(on the phone)*

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

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

S 76: Which exam?

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

S76: When does the exam start?

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

S76: **OK**. I'll call you later...

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

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

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

S 76:.....

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**Figure 2. Examples of the accurately used formulaic language in the paired task**

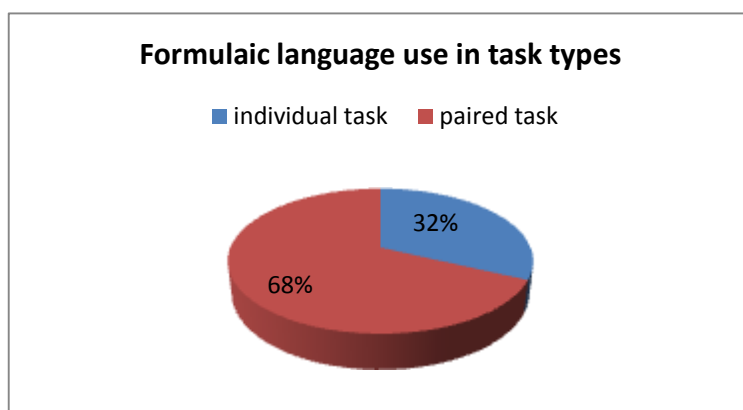
**Table 2. The comparison of the frequencies of the most commonly used formulaic expressions**

Formulaic expressions	The book	Students' use
OK	64	189
Maybe	18	150
I think	35	124
That's all	0	35
Well	107	11
See you	12	38
How are you?	18	22
Is this a good time to talk?	2	9
Call me later please	0	5

As can be seen in the table, the students used formulaic language in various extents. In terms of speech formulas, they used either the most commonly presented expressions or the expressions which did not involve in the course book. Similarly, the use of situation-bound utterances ranged from the most commonly exposed ones to the derived ones by the students. As a whole, it can be concluded all participants used different ranges of formulaic expressions that differ in type.

### 3.2. The type of task in which EFL learners use more formulaic language

The analyzed oral proficiency exam had two tasks in which the participants were assessed individually and in pairs with another test taker. While the individual task consisted of a picture description, the paired task required the students to interact with their pair to fulfill a communicative role-play. As a result of the analysis of the frequencies related to the task type, it was revealed that not only the participants used more formulaic language in the paired task (see Figure 4) but also variation in the used expressions was higher. More specifically, while the learners used 25 different formulaic expressions in the individual task, their use was 122 in the paired task.



*Figure 3. Formulaic language use in the individual and paired task*

As seen in Figure 3, 68% of overall use of formulaic language took place in the paired task while 32% of the overall use occurred in the individual task. Thus, the type of task emerges to be an important factor influencing the use of formulaic language.

### 3.3. The relationship between EFL learners' use of formulaic language and their test scores of fluency and overall proficiency

In order to reveal whether there is relationship between formulaic language use and fluency scores, as suggested in the literature, a correlation test was conducted subsequent to descriptive analysis of the variables (Formulaic language use: Minimum =1, Maximum= 23;  $M= 7.11$ ;  $SD= 4.05$ ; Fluency: Minimum =1, Maximum=5;  $M= 3.79$ ;  $SD= .92$ ). After conducting a normality test, a non-parametric Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted between formulaic language use and students' fluency scores in the test since these variables had non-normal distributions, (Formulaic language use: Skewness = 1.36, Kurtosis = 2.44) and (Fluency scores: Skewness = -0.63, Kurtosis = 0.55). The result of the correlation test revealed a significant relationship between students' formulaic language use and their fluency scores ( $r(188) = .406$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that the more formulaic language the learners used, the higher were their scores of fluency.

Similarly, a non-parametric Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between formulaic language use and their overall proficiency scores (Proficiency: Minimum =35; Maximum =92;  $M= 70.4$ ;  $SD= 10.5$ ) as their proficiency scores also showed a non-normal distribution as a result of the normality test (Skewness= -0.49, Kurtosis = 0.68). The results again showed a statistically significant relationship between students' formulaic language use and their proficiency scores ( $r(188) = .455$ ,  $p < .01$ ), implying that students who have a better mastery of formulaic expressions tend to be more proficient in English language.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. The use of formulaic language in oral proficiency exams

The textbook examined in this study included a great number of formulaic expressions and all participants used a wide variety of formulaic language to which they were exposed through their textbooks in the exam. Therefore, it may be concluded that textbooks are crucial sources of language input. According to Wood (2002), since formulaic language plays a significant role in pragmatic development and speech production, authentic sources of native-like input are crucial for the acquisition of these expressions. To this end, the corpus-based textbook used at the university where the study was conducted did include examples of real language use in different contexts, which enabled students' access to certain formulaic expressions.

The findings also indicate that the more exposed to formulaic expressions the students were through their textbook, the more frequently they used them in the oral proficiency exam, a finding in line with the literature (e.g., Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Tekmen & Daloglu, 2006; Webb, Newton & Chang, 2013). For instance, Ellis, Simpson-Vilach and Maynard (2008) state that learners are likely to know the words which they encounter more than the others. Thus, language selection of the students might be related to the frequency of exposure. In other words, it may be possible for EFL learners to learn formulaic language in the classroom environment through the use of text books, which provides them exposure to these expressions, and these expressions, in return, enable them to cope with various social situations and acquire native-like selection.

### 4.2. The type of task in which EFL learners use more formulaic language

Confirming what the literature suggests about the role of task type in the use of formulaic expressions (e.g., Ellis, 2000; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Wood, 2002; Yuan & Ellis, 2003), the findings reveal that the participants used more formulaic language in the paired task in which they were expected to communicate with another test-taker and conduct a dialog for the administered situation. In that sense, the features of a task influence learners' oral performances (Skehan &



Foster, 1999) by determining what linguistic and pragmatic features will be used (Ellis, 2000). Therefore, the findings of the study imply that language learners use certain formulaic expressions to serve the purpose and context of their speech. Since the use of formulas is bound to a particular social context, understanding the nature of those contexts not only enables language learners to gain access to the pragmatic/figurative meaning of formulas but also helps them cope with complex social situations to engage in meaningful communication (Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Wood, 2002).

The findings of the current study also confirm the results of Stengers et al.'s (2011) study which examined the use of formulaic language in a re-tell task and found that the number of formulaic expressions used by the learners in this task is highly associated with their oral proficiency. According to Stengers et al., (2011), "Future research will have to confirm whether the same trends are observed in other (real-time) speaking activities, such as conversation, where pragmatic formulae or interaction routines play a greater part" (p. 339). Therefore, the findings of this study related to task type may contribute to the existing research on formulaic language by providing insights into how language learners use these expressions in both individual and paired tasks in which they conducted monologic and dialogic conversations, respectively.

### **4.3. The relationship between EFL learners' formulaic language use and their test scores of fluency and overall proficiency**

The current study reveals a significant relationship between formulaic language use and fluency, confirming many studies in the literature about the role formulaic expressions play in enhancing language learners' fluency (e.g., Boers et al., 2006; Ellis, Simpson-Vlach & Maynard, 2008; Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Khodadady & Shamsaee, 2012; Kormos & Denes, 2004; McGuire, 2009; Ortaçtepe, 2013; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wood, 2002; 2006; 2010). In this respect, these studies and the finding of the current study suggest that the use of formulaic language helps language learners sound more native-like, making their speech more fluent and idiomatic.

There is also a significant relationship between formulaic language use and overall proficiency, yet another finding in accordance with the literature (e.g., Yorio, 1989; Lenko-Szymanska, 2014). In both Yorio's (1989) and Neary-Sundquist's (2013) studies, there was a notable difference in the use of formulaic language by learners with different proficiency levels. The findings of the present study might be useful since most formulaic language studies focused on either adult learners or young learners (e.g., Ohlrogge, 2009; Lenko-Szymanska, 2014) while ignoring the use of formulaic expressions in the early stages of learning (Lenko-Szymanska, 2014). Therefore, this study draws attention to the differences in the proficiency level of the students as a factor determining their formulaicity.

### **4.4. Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine how EFL learners use formulaic language in the curriculum through their textbook when taking oral proficiency exams and whether their use is related to their scores of fluency and overall language proficiency. The findings revealed that these learners did use the formulaic language in their course books and their formulaic language use was significantly related to task type as well as their fluency and overall language proficiency scores. Nevertheless, the study has some limitations as well as suggestions for further research. First, although the students were exposed to formulaic language in their course book, the extent to which the classroom teachers focused on these expressions is not known as there were no observations conducted. Further research can utilize classroom observations to analyze whether

formulaic language is taught by the classroom teachers considering the need for learners' exposure to formulaic language to enhance their speaking performance.

Second, it is unknown whether the learners had access to native-like input through other authentic sources such as videos. A questionnaire that asks about the nature of the teaching and the available sources would be helpful to determine the possible sources of exposure. Third, a treatment on formulaic language use for oral communication can be conducted in classroom teaching and the possible effects of the treatment can be determined by pre- and post-tests. This study also presents some important pedagogical implications. Since the findings suggest that formulaic language use provides benefits for language learners, it might be implied that formulaic language instruction should be a part of language programs. In that respect, curriculum developers can include formulaic language teaching in their curriculum or adapt the existing curriculum by integrating teaching materials and practices that focus on formulaic language teaching. For the purpose of increasing exposure, material developers can also design supplementary materials for EFL learners which include examples of how certain formulaic expressions are used in particular contexts. To conclude, it is to be hoped that findings of this study and the emerging pedagogical implications of the findings will contribute to the knowledge on the effectiveness of formulaic language teaching and its use in speaking and they will help learners overcome the difficulties they have in this language skill.

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## Uzun Özet

Literatürde çeşitli araştırmacılar (Granger, 1998; Schmitt ve Carter, 2004; Wood, 2002) tarafından farklı şekilde adlandırılan ve tanımlanan (Wray, 2002; Kecskes, 2007) kalıp ifadeler genel anlamda tek bir söz gibi beyinde depolanan ve konuşma esnasında kullanımının kullanıcıya farklı kolaylıklar sağladığı hazır söz dizimleridir (Wray, 2002). Dil kullanımında sağladığı beyindeki işlem yükünü azaltma (Conklin ve Schmitt, 2008; Ellis ve Sinclair, 1996; Wray, 2002), iletişimi kolaylaştırma, (Schmitt ve Carter, 2004; Wray, 2000) ve dil öğrenenlerin dil gelişimine katkıda bulunma (Ellis, Simpson-Vilach & Maynard, 2008; Weinert, 1995; Wray, 2000; Wood, 2002; 2006; 2009) gibi kolaylıklardan dolayı son yıllarda kalıp ifade kullanımının farklı yönlerini konu alan çalışmalar hız kazanmıştır (Khodadady ve Shamsaee, 2012; O'Donnell, Römer ve Ellis, 2013). Bu çalışmalardan bazıları kalıp ifade kullanımı ve konuşma esnasındaki akıcılığı incelemiş ve bu ifadeleri kullanmanın akıcılık üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Boers ve diğerleri, 2006; Hsu ve Chiu, 2008; Kormos ve Denes, 2004; McGuire, 2009; Pawley ve Syder; Stengers ve diğerleri, 2011; Wood, 2006; 2010).

Diğer taraftan, dil eğitiminde Türkiye'de ve dünyada geleneksel yöntemler yerine iletişimsel dil öğretim yöntemleri benimsenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, dil programlarında dil eğitimi alan öğrencilerin yabancı dilde iletişim kurma becerilerini geliştirme amacı önem kazanmış, programlar yeniden yapılandırılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, kalıp ifadelerin kullanımının dil gelişimine fayda sağladığı göz önünde bulundurulunca, öğrencilerin yabancı dilde iletişim becerilerini geliştirmeyi hedefleyen yeni sistemde bu ifadelerin yer alması beklenmektedir. Fakat Meunier'in (2012) de belirttiği gibi İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin kalıp ifadeleri öğrenmesi yalnızca ders kitapları ve öğretmenleri yoluyla sağlanabilmektedir. Bir diğer konu ise; bu öğrencilerin aynı ders kitabını kullanmalarına ve aynı dil programında bulunmalarına rağmen dil becerisi ya da kalıp ifadeler kullanımı bakımından aynı ölçüde başarılı olamamalarıdır. Bu ifadelerin kullanımındaki farklılıklara daha önceki çalışmalarda önerildiği gibi farklı dil seviyelerinin sebep olduğu savunulabilir (Howarth, 1998; Yorio, 1989).

Yenilenen dil programlarında değişikliklere bağlı olarak öğrencilerin dil becerisini ölçmeye yönelik sınavlar da yeniden düzenlenmiş ve konuşma sınavlarında öğrencilerin bireysel ve iletişimsel olarak konuşma becerisini ölçen çoklu görevler kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu farklı görevlerde öğrencilerin kalıp ifadeleri nasıl kullandıklarını araştıran çalışmalar daha farklı görevli konuşma sınavlarında kalıp ifade kullanımını araştırma gereğini ortaya koymuştur (Boers ve diğerleri, 2006; Stengers ve diğerleri, 2011). Öğrencilerin seviyelerinin kalıp ifade kullanımını etkileyen bir değişken olabileceği savından (Howarth, 1998; Ohlrogge, 2009; Yorio, 1989) da yola çıkarak bu çalışma; İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen farklı seviyede dil becerisine sahip bir öğrencinin tekli ve ikili görevlerden oluşan konuşma sınavlarında

kalıp ifadeleri nasıl kullandığını ve kullanımının akıcılığı ve dil becerisiyle ilgili olup olmadığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen ve Avrupa Ortak Ölçüt Çerçevesi tanımlamasına göre (CEFR) farklı seviyede dil kullanma becerisine sahip 190 öğrencinin farklı seviyedeki 190 öğrencinin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın veri toplama süreci; kalıp ifadeler kullanımını tespit etmek amacıyla bu dil programında kullanılan ders kitabının ve öğrencilerin konuşma sınav kayıtlarının içerik analizine dayanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, öncelikle öğrencilerin ders kitabı Kecskes (2007)'in kalıp ifadeler tablosu ışığında araştırmacılar tarafından incelenerek hedef ifadeler ve kullanım sıklığı listesi oluşturulmuş, bu liste tekli ve ikili görevli konuşma sınavlarına ait öğrenci kayıtları incelenerek öğrencilerin kullanımları ve kullanım sıklıklarıyla karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu analizlerin güvenilirliğini sağlamak amacıyla analizi yapılan kayıtların %10'u başka bir araştırmacı tarafından izlenmiş, iki araştırmacının sonuçları karşılaştırılmıştır. Kalıp ifade kullanımını akıcılıkla ve genel dil başarısıyla ilişkilendirmek için öğrencilerin konuşma sınavı ölçeğinde bulunan akıcılık bölümünden aldıkları notlar ve yılsonu başarı ortalamaları göz önünde bulundurulmuştur. İçerik analizlerinin sonucu öğrencilerin kitaplarında yer alan ifadeleri söz konusu sınavlarda genellikle doğru olarak kullandıklarını ve kullanım sıklıkları ve bu ifadelerin ders kitabında bulunma sıklığı arasında önemli bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur ( $r(132) = .467, p < .01$ ). Bu analizler sonucunda öğrencilerin kalıp ifadeleri daha çok ikili görevlerde kullandıkları da görülmüştür (Tekli görev= %32, ikili görev= %68). Diğer yandan, kalıp ifadeler kullanımı ve akıcılık, dil becerisi ilişkini ortaya koymayı amaçlayan korelasyon analizleri yoluyla kalıp ifade kullanımının akıcılık ( $r(188) = .406, p < .01$ ) ve dil beceri seviyesi ( $r(188) = .455, p < .01$ ) ile önemli ölçüde bağlantılı olduğu saptanmıştır.

Bu bulguların ortaya çıkması sadece konuşma sınav kayıtlarının incelenmesiyle sınırlı kalmıştır. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın bulgularının güvenilirliğini artırmak adına analize sınıf içi öğretimin de katılması mümkündür. Çalışmanın kapsamı içerisinde kalıp ifade kullanımı ders kitabında yer alan konuşma becerisine ait bölümlerdeki ifadelerle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Daha geniş kapsamlı verilere ulaşma adına, gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar ders kitaplarında diğer becerilere ait bölümlerin incelenmesine de odaklanabilir. Bu çalışmanın sınırlılığı, öğrencilerin kalıp ifade kullanımlarını akıcılık puanlarına ilişkilendirmek için bu sınavda notlandırıcıların verdiği puanların göz önünde bulundurulmasıdır. Bu anlamda, notların güvenilirliğini sağlamak için yapılan çalışmalara rağmen, yine de, verilen notlardaki öznellik etkeni çalışmanın temel sınırlılığını oluşturmaktadır.

Çalışmanın çeşitli bulguları doğrultusunda gelecek dil öğretim programlarının müfredatlarına kalıp ifadeler öğretiminin eklenmesi, bu ifadelerin doğru kullanımına yönelik materyal geliştirmesi ya da ders içi etkinliklerine yer verilmesi gibi önerilerde bulunmak mümkündür.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. 1: Individual task (picture description)



**Appendix A. 2: Paired task**

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

**Evaluation Sheet for the Assessor**

STUDENT'S NAME: .....

CLASS: ...../.....

DATE: ..... / 06 /2013

A1: Assessor 1

A2: Assessor 2

Grade	A1	A2	A1	A2	A1	A2	A1	A2	A1	A2	Total	A1	A2	Average
	<b>Fluency &amp; Pronunciation</b>		<b>Vocabulary Range</b>		<b>Grammatical Range &amp; Accuracy</b>		<b>Task Completion</b>		<b>Comprehension</b>					
<b>A2</b> <b>5</b>	<p><i>Adequate oral production</i> Cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction</p> <p>Uses a limited range of pronunciation features</p>		<p><i>Adequate range</i> Is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice</p> <p>Rarely attempts paraphrase</p>		<p><i>Adequate range</i> Produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare</p> <p>Errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstandings</p>		<p>Both tasks dealt with comprehensively &amp; relevantly with appropriate details</p>		<p>Student understands most everything said, yet repetition &amp; clarification necessary</p>					
<b>3</b>	<p><i>Limited oral production</i> Speaks with long pauses. Has limited ability to link simple sentences</p> <p>Mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener</p>		<p><i>Limited range</i> Uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information</p> <p>Has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics</p>		<p><i>Limited range</i> Attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorized utterances.</p> <p>Makes numerous errors except in memorized expressions.</p>		<p>Moderate success in at least one task &amp; limited success in the other task, some irrelevant data/ideas</p>		<p>Student has difficulty in understanding what is said &amp; requires frequent repetition</p>					
<b>1</b>	<p><i>Very limited oral production</i> Pauses lengthily before most words Little communication possible Mispronunciations are frequent</p>		<p><i>Little knowledge of English Vocabulary</i> Communication impaired from inadequate vocabulary</p>		<p><i>Little knowledge of sentence construction rules, does not communicate</i> Cannot produce basic sentence forms</p>		<p>Limited success in both tasks, very few details; no effort to complete both tasks. Both tasks include irrelevant data.</p>		<p>Student barely understands instructions and simple utterances</p>					

\*If the speaker makes no attempt to respond OR response is IRRELEVANT to the topic, the speaker will get 1.

**Kaynakça Bilgisi**

Üstünbaş, Ü., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2016). İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin konuşma sınavlarında kalıp ifade kullanımı: Akıcılık ve dil becerisi çalışması. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi [Hacettepe University Journal of Education]*, 31(3), 578-592.

**Citation Information**

Üstünbaş, Ü., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2016). EFL learners' use of formulaic language in oral assessments: A study on fluency and proficiency [in Turkish]. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education [Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi]*, 31(3), 578-592.