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A Theoretical Framework for Explicit Instruction of Idiomatic and Formulaic Language in EFL Academic Contexts

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Abstract
Idiomatic and formulaic expressions constitute essential ingredients in academic communication in English for Foreign Language (EFL) settings, the teaching of which is often deficient. This paper proposes a theoretical framework for the explicit teaching of such language, giving preference to usage-based approaches, sociocultural scaffolding, and cognitive learning theories. Increasing input, raising consciousness, scaffolding practice, and feedback are key operational features guiding teachers in preparing materials and syllabus design. While this framework is aimed at increasing fluency and rhetorical power, the drawbacks are that it is conceptual in nature and requires contextualization. Future suggested avenues for empirical research would definitely go a long way in validating and refining this framework towards academic success for EFL learners.

Keywords
Idiomatic language, formulaic sequences, explicit instruction, EFL academic contexts, theoretical framework

Introduction

It is commonly known that mastering idiomatic and formulaic language is essential to communicating effectively and fluently in academic settings. As demonstrated by fifty years of language acquisition and recent neurological research, fixed, familiar language, which includes formulaic expressions (such as idioms and proverbs), lexical bundles, and collocations, is holistically stored in the language user's mind and is essential for verbal communication. As such, a model of language competence that integrates it with grammatical and newly created expressions is necessary (Sidtis, 2023). A widespread conspiracy at the institutional level affects English Language Learners' (ELLs') academic success and access to resources in EFL contexts, especially academic ones. This conspiracy includes well-intentioned but misguided teacher attitudes, expectations that prioritize effort and affective support over cognitive mastery

and academic challenge, and the common practice of placing ELLs in lower track classes with limited, low-cognition interaction patterns. All of these factors work together to impede the development of ELLs' academic content knowledge and English language proficiency (Sharkey & Layzer, 2000). Nevertheless, idiomatic and formulaic sequences are frequently underrepresented or not given enough attention in EFL curricula, despite their significance. In addition to learning subject matter, this discrepancy makes it challenging for students to engage in academic discourse that primarily employs formulaic patterns. Despite being a promising solution to this problem, explicit instruction, particularly through the Sociocultural Theory-based Concept-based Language Instruction model, has not yet been widely used in academic EFL contexts. Explicit instruction is an effective pedagogical approach for late language learners that promotes L2 development by systematically providing both explicit conceptual knowledge of complex language features and extensive, intensive communicative practice to facilitate the transition from external cultural mediation to internalized mental functions (Lantolf, 2024).

The issue driving this research is the ongoing challenges EFL students encounter in achieving fluency and appropriateness in academic communication. Although implicit learning, which is defined as the automatic and unselective capture of environmental regularities like statistical co-occurrence, is a potent mechanism that aids language acquisition in domains such as lexical segmentation and phrase structure, its importance is limited by the fact that it can only be applied to adjacent or near-adjacent elements over time and that it is challenging to learn more complex, arbitrary grammatical regularities like abstract word classes or long-distance dependencies (Ellis, 2005). Idiomaticity refers to essential language units that are difficult to teach and learn in a second language curriculum because they are not single-word vocabulary units. This calls for renewed research attention and pedagogical ingenuity for effective language comprehension and production. Idiomaticity includes a wide and confusing array of terms like chunks, collocations, and idioms (Liontas, 2019). Although more work is required to fully integrate this concept into all teaching materials, particularly general language textbooks, and to establish the most effective pedagogical practices, the increasing understanding of the formulaic nature of language has had a significant impact on the teaching of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), increasing the availability of teaching materials and digital tools that make formulaicity accessible to both teachers and learners (Meunier, 2012). Additionally, idiomatic and formulaic language are often treated superficially, if at all, in current instructional materials, creating a gap between classroom input and the communicative requirements of academic discourse. Thus, the factors that prevented non-English major students from participating in English-speaking classes showed that although both students and lecturers agreed that the biggest linguistic barrier was a lack of vocabulary, and the biggest cognitive barrier was a lack of topic knowledge, they had significantly different opinions on a number of other important issues. For example, students considered the uncertainty of tense use and concern about the opinions of their peers to be significant obstacles, while lecturers were more concerned with large class sizes, inadequate class time, and students' lack of independence (Le et al., 2024). The need for a specific theoretical framework that can direct teachers in methodically incorporating explicit instruction of idiomatic and formulaic language into EFL academic contexts is highlighted by these difficulties.

This article attempts to develop this theoretical framework by presenting it from a completely objective standpoint. Through a synthesis of various perspectives-notice and memory modifications evidencing psycholinguistic theories, scaffolding or mediation theories from the sociocultural field-based approach to frequency and entrenchment, and cognitive theories relating to processing load, a framework is formed, intending to present a principled design

basis for instruction. This is to cognitively distinguish idiomatic or formulaic language that is feasible for teaching in an instructional medium, grounded theoretically, and tailored to the very needs of language trainees of EFL in academics.

Under this purpose, the article addresses two central aims: *(1) to explore how a theoretical framework could assist teachers in adopting explicit instruction of idiomatic and formulaic language in academic EFL classrooms*; and *(2) to identify and articulate the premises of theory from which such a framework should arise*. Hence, instead of proposing an empirically validated model for immediate use, this study basically proposes a conceptual framework on which pedagogical practice and further empirical investigation may be built. The contribution of this framework lies in addressing a critical gap in applied linguistics; much of the research has focused on the significance of formulaic language for fluency and an adequate level of communicative effectiveness; however, the problem of systematic and explicit teaching of formulaic language in academic EFL settings has largely been neglected. Through the presentation of a coherent and integrative framework, this article intends to bridge theory and pedagogical applications, thus providing a guide that would assist instructors in improving learners' academic communication and toward future empirical validation.

Literature Review

Idiomatic and formulaic language

Idiomatic and formulaic language encompasses a wide range of prefabricated expressions that occur frequently in natural discourse and are processed by speakers as single units rather than through word-by-word composition. Scholars in SLA and applied linguistics generally define formulaic language as multiword units that are stored and retrieved holistically from memory (Wray, 2002). Unlike freely generated utterances, these sequences are entrenched through repeated exposure and usage, thereby enabling more efficient communication.

The literature has provided strong evidence for a number of formulaic language subtypes. Idioms are fixed expressions (e.g., spill the beans, a blessing in disguise) whose meaning cannot be inferred directly from a literal interpretation of the meaning of the individual words. In essence, collocations are predictable high-frequency word co-occurrences that frequently reflect conventionalized usage patterns (e.g., conduct research, strong evidence). Lexical bundles are groups of three or more words that recur statistically regularly in specific registers, mainly academic speech and writing (e.g., on the other hand, it should be noted that; Biber et al., 2004). Because discourse markers serve pragmatic or organizational purposes, such as regulating the flow of interactions and marking transitions, they would classify communication (e.g., well, however, you know). All of these together make up the foundation of fluent discourse and are therefore essential to both academic communication and everyday conversation.

The role of formulaic sequences in fluency and academic discourse

In SLA research, the significance of formulaic sequences for developing communicative competence has been emphasized. According to the studies, a significant amount of both written and spoken language is composed of formulaic sequences and ranges between one-third and one-half (Erman & Warren, 2000; Pawley & Syder, 1983). Speakers have less work to do and more time to generate language more quickly and fluently because these sequences are stored in the mind as pre-made language chunks, which facilitates working memory processing (Wood, 2010). Therefore, these are considered fluency devices allowing learners to focus on some aspects of communication that require more attention, such as planning discourse and negotiating meaning.

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Formulaic expressions have a heavy weight in academic contexts. In fact, studies have noted that academic discourse is loaded with lexical bundles, collocations, and discourse markers that are reflections of disciplinary conventions (Biber et al., 2004). Cortes (2004) also notes that the proficient use of lexical bundles is what distinguishes expert academic writing from learner writing and confers acceptance to the language within the discipline. Similarly, idiomatic and formulaic expressions in academic speech are necessary in giving oral presentations, participating in classroom discussions, or seminar discussions since they help in achieving clarity, cohesiveness, and rhetorical appeal (Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010).

From a pedagogical standpoint, formulaic language is considered a really difficult subject for EFL learners, who sometimes have very limited access to authentic input. Unlike that of grammatical rules, formulaic expressions are not always transparent or, in fact, predictable, and so incidental acquisition through exposure remains dubious. In addition, given that academic registers use formulaic sequences much less than general communication, learners may seldom encounter these structures to the extent that they would internalize them either morphologically or functionally without specific instruction. This, therefore, provides additional support in favor of the explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language resources, especially in academic EFL settings where such languages are an indispensable part for fluency, accuracy, and academic communication.

Explicit vs. implicit instruction

One of the central issues in applied linguistics is the relative effectiveness of explicit and implicit methods of language teaching. Through the implicit way of teaching, language features are acquired incidentally, through exposure and communicative practice, without being explicitly explained from a metalinguistic point of view. Psycholinguistically speaking, it is thought to resemble the first language acquisition process, wherein learners unconsciously internalize structures as a result of frequent input (Krashen, 1982). Proponents of implicit instruction argue that implicit teaching facilitates naturalistic acquisition, leads to less overreliance on analytic skills, and supports automatization through repeated exposure. Implicit methods, according to second language research, though, often fail to supply sufficient input to the learners, especially for the less salient ones such as idiomatic and formulaic expressions (Ellis, 2008).

Explicit form-focused instruction directs learners to the conscious attention of language forms and their functions, usually through explanation, awareness-raising activities, and guided practice. Psycholinguistic theories, such as Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, suggest that conscious attention to linguistic forms is a prerequisite to acquisition, especially in foreign language settings with scarce input. Other research in the target language classroom has demonstrated that explicit instruction for collocations, idioms, and lexical bundles helps to speed up their acquisition by enhancing salience and retention (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009). To illustrate, the researches show that when learners are explicitly taught to identify collocations and practice them in context, they are more likely to remember and use the collocations correctly in both spoken and written language (Peters, 2016). Conversely, explicit feedback and metapragmatic explanations enhance learner comprehension of the idiomatic meanings and usages (Boers et al., 2006).

Current challenges in the EFL academic context

Writing, teaching, and structuring explicit instruction for an EFL classroom is a challenge due to many difficulties. The most persistent one is the lack of authentic input. Whereas learners in ESL contexts come into contact with idiomatic and formulaic usage patterns in daily life, EFL

students are largely confined to instruction through textbooks and classroom discourse, both underrepresenting the intensity and variety of formulaic sequences that characterize typical academic communication (Wei & Lin, 2019). It falls upon learners to hear and internalize these formulaic patterns in order to gain fluency in academic registers.

The second challenge lies in the cognitive load that comes with mastering formulaic sequences. Academic idioms, collocations, and lexical bundles may have abstract or disciplinary vocabulary that demands an extra brain load. For many learners, trying to notice, store, and retrieve such expressions while concurrently meeting the demands of academic tasks (e.g., giving presentations or writing essays) is a serious cognitive load. According to the findings of cognitive psychology, a high processing load may work against automatization of a formulaic sequence to the detriment of learners deploying them fluently during actual real-time communication (Skehan, 2009).

The third issue is one of cultural appropriateness. Many idiomatic and formulaic expressions are built upon cultural knowledge, pragmatic norms, and disciplinary conventions that are not always obvious to the learner. For example, idiomatic expressions may be based on culturally specific metaphors (break the ice, the ball is in your court), whereas academic lexical bundles vary across disciplines because of differing rhetorical traditions (Hyland, 2008). Without explicit instruction, students either misuse or steer clear of these expressions; occasionally, their communication is incredibly basic or just plain weird. The necessity of explicit instruction that incorporates the learning of forms with relevance to both pragmatic and cultural aspects is once again highlighted by this lacuna.

Existing frameworks or approaches

The learner's acquisition of idiomatic and formulaic language is partially explained by a number of hypothesized second language acquisition models; however, none of them adequately take into consideration the complexity of academic EFL contexts. Reviewing these frameworks clarifies their contributions but also brings forth the need for an exhaustive framework that centres on explicit instruction.

Probably the most influential view among these is that of Input Processing, initially formulated by VanPatten (1996), which essentially stated that learners focus on meaning rather than form in input processing and, in so doing, often ignore less salient structures such as collocations and idioms. The learning difficulty with formulaic language shown by input processing is in itself a reason why pedagogical interventions that increase the salience of such structures and draw learners' attention to multiword units during comprehension activities should be considered. But input processing theory itself does not chart out classroom intervention practices oriented towards formulaic sequences, especially in academic registers.

A second framework, the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), postulates that conscious awareness of linguistic forms is a necessary condition for their acquisition. Boers and Lindstromberg (2009) and others gave proof that drawing the learner's attention toward idiomatic or formulaic expressions by textual enhancement, explicit explanation, or by means of task-based implicit awareness-raising instruction makes for better uptake and retention by the learner. The case for explicit instruction is strongly supported by this research trend. However, because it is a cognitive model, the Noticing Hypothesis does not fully account for how students move from initial awareness to a fluent, contextually appropriate use of formulaic sequences in academic discourse.

The third perspective belongs to usage-based models (Bybee, 2010; Ellis, 2012), highlighting the need for frequency, exemplar learning, and entrenchment of behavior in acquiring language. In this paradigm, idiomatic and formulaic expressions become internalized in learners through gradual exposure to patterns recurring in genuine discourse. Corpus-based studies of academic writing and speech (Biber et al., 2004; Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010) corroborate the account that lexical bundles and collocations form the core of disciplinary communication. Although these models emphasize the significance of input frequency and distribution in learning situations, they make the assumption that learners are constantly exposed to meaningful academic texts, a scenario that is rarely the case in EFL contexts, where there is little chance that such meaningful repetitions will occur frequently.

When taken as a whole, these paradigms provide insight into the variety of factors that make up formulaic language acquisition, including the impact of frequency and usage patterns as well as cognitive limitations on input processing, attention, and awareness. They cannot, however, be said to form a unified theoretical and pedagogical framework that could provide direction for the unique issues that arise in academic EFL contexts. The Noticing Hypothesis argues for explicit treatment, while input processing theories explain why idioms and collocations are typically overlooked. Usage-based models, on the other hand, explain why entrenchment occurs over time, but under circumstances that might not apply in situations involving foreign languages. Therefore, what is lacking is an integrative framework that combines these approaches to explicit pedagogical principles and supports explicit instruction that scaffolds learners' awareness-building, reduces cognitive load, contextualizes cultural appropriateness, and provides opportunities for repeated meaningful practice.

The current study, which aims to provide a theoretical framework for the explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language in EFL academic settings, is based on this gap. By utilizing the insights offered by these current approaches, the framework aims to alleviate their inherent limitations and provide a more thorough and context-sensitive foundation for research and pedagogy.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Established SLA and learning theories must serve as the foundation for developing a framework for the explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language in EFL academic contexts. There is no one single theoretical stance that is able to grasp the many facets that go into noticing, processing, internalizing, and producing formulaic sequences. Hence, the most comprehensive framework must integrate cognitive theories, sociocultural views, and usage-based perspectives, which emphasize different but complementary sides of learning.

In SLA, cognitive theories emphasize the linkage of attention, memory, and processing toward learning something new. Paramount to this is Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, stating that learners have to consciously attend to linguistic forms if they do want acquisition of that linguistic form as an outcome. Idiomatic expressions or formulaic sequences that are, for the most part, semantically opaque or structurally irregular will not normally be acquired unless the learner really notices them. Instruction reinforcing these sequences and thus making learners notice their form-meaning mappings creates a gap between exposure and acquisition. To relate, the chunking theory (Miller, 1956; Ellis, 1996) sheds light on the fact that learners process formulaic sequences as single units, thereby lessening the cognitive burden in their production and comprehension. When learners internalize chunks, they may then focus attentional resources on communicative goals of a higher order, such as discourse organization or content engagement. The memory-based theory further assumes that repeated retrieval of

formulaic sequences will strengthen retention over the long term (Baddeley, 2003). Hence, in cognitive terms, explicit instruction is needed to enhance salience to support chunking and to provide support in strengthening the memory traces of idiomatic and formulaic language.

Contrasting individual cognitive processes, sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978) has given primacy to the social-interactive nature of learning. Thus, language learning occurs through mediation and scaffolding in the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD). Formulaic and idiomatic expressions often carry pragmatic and cultural meanings that are not fully grasped through mere decontextualized study. Classroom interaction brings about opportunities where expression use can be modelled by teachers and appropriated by learners, with the gradual withdrawal of supports as learners become competent in their own right. For example, discourse markers like on the contrary or having said that perform linguistic functions, as well as mark the rhetorical stance in academic argumentation. Learners come to know the form of these sequences, but also their pragmatic force, through explicit instruction linked into collaborative interaction within a classroom context. Accordingly, sociocultural theory emphasizes that overt instruction must take place within an interactional context through which learners can negotiate meaning, experiment with usage, and be scaffolded when needed.

In the usage-based theories of SLA (Bybee, 2010; Ellis, 2012), frequency, distribution, and exemplar learning are considered determining factors in the acquisition of language. Formulaic sequences become entrenched in memory as a function of multiple encounters occurring in meaningful contexts. Highly frequent expressions tend to be more accessible and automatic in use. Corpus studies proved that recurrent lexical bundles and collocations permeate academic discourse (Biber et al., 2004; Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010), but they are not widely found in EFL contexts for learners to have a natural entrenchment. Explicit instruction may strategically compensate for limited exposure by drawing the learner's attention to high-value formulaic sequences, selecting exemplars from authentic academic text, and providing opportunities for repetition of these through various tasks. The use of carefully designed input and practice would allow learners to experience frequency effects in the classroom that parallel the entrenchment processes in the world described by usage-based models.

Generally, via explicit instruction, the instructor can strategically limit exposure by drawing the student's attention to salient formulaic sequences, choosing from authentic academic text instances, and providing repetition through some tasks. Well-controlled input and practice would replicate for learners frequency effects akin to world entrenchment as described by the usage-based models. Thus, an integrated approach is paramount. The combination of a theoretical perspective embracing cognitive, sociocultural, and usage-based insights has been argued to support explicit instruction with considerations on learning, both inside and outside the mind. Whereas cognitive theory provides task designs to nurture noticing and chunking, sociocultural theory grounds the instruction in meaningful interaction within a scaffolded context. Concurrently, usage-based models serve as guidelines for selecting highly frequent and contextually plausible sequences for intensive practice. All three perspectives, therefore, serve to create a holistic basis for explicit instruction of idiomatic- and formulaic-language learns so that learners will be able to notice and remember the expressions and also notice their pragmatic functions and execute them fluently in academic discourse.

The Proposed Theoretical Framework

Building on the previously discussed cognitive, sociocultural, and usage-based foundations, this study offers a framework for explicit instruction of idiomatic and formulaic language in an

EFL academic context. It intends to provide a guideline for teachers to work systematically in presenting, practicing, and consolidating formulaic sequences while placing these sequences in genuine academic discourse tasks. It consists of five interconnected components, each consistent with both principles of effective SLA and pedagogical feasibility.

Components of the framework

Developing students' awareness of idiomatic and formulaic expressions in academic texts and speech is the main goal of the first phase. These activities include visual enhancement, teacher modelling in spoken discourse, and textual enhancement (e.g., boxing, bolding, or underlining lexical bundles in the readings). According to Schmidt (1990)'s Noticing Hypothesis, learners are better able to observe the expressions when their attention is focused on them. Formulaic sequences should receive extra attention when it comes to input enhancement because their fixed or opaque nature may otherwise cause them to go overlooked.

After being brought to light, students engage in activities that deepen their understanding of the relationships between form, meaning, and use. These could include matching exercises where students connect idioms to their meanings, metalinguistic explanations of idioms, or consciousness-raising exercises where students locate collocations in academic text samples. By connecting learning in its cognitive and sociocultural dimensions, these activities aim to promote noticing and, moreover, develop metacognitive awareness of how formulaic language functions in academic registers.

The design progresses from guided practice (sentence completion, paraphrasing, or brief dialogues) to controlled practice (fill-in-the-blank, substitution drill, or matching), and then to communicative use (debates, presentations, or academic writing tasks). According to skill-acquisition theory, learners should move from declarative knowledge to automated, proceduralized use. More precisely, students are improving their accuracy and fluency as they work with formulaic sequences at different practice levels.

Given the potential for language misuse or underuse, explicit corrective feedback is crucial. Teachers may provide recasts and metalinguistic feedback during oral interaction, explaining why the phrase "*do research*" is incorrect and should be changed to "*conduct research*." Receiving this kind of feedback encourages students to improve their pharmaceutical expression and keeps mistakes from becoming entrenched. Socioculturally speaking, related corrective instruction could be viewed as scaffolding, in which students receive support that is subsequently removed once they are capable of internalizing the proper form on their own.

The learners are asked to use idiomatic expressions in presentations to shed light on...), lexical bundles in seminar discussions (It is important to note that...), or collocations in academic writing with strong evidence and significant implications. In conclusion, a lot of formulaic sequences must be incorporated into real academic tasks to ensure their transferability. Learning the language both linguistically and rhetorically is made possible by integrating FL into context-specific performance, which allows classroom instruction to be connected with authentic academic discourse practices. Figure 1 shows the framework as a cyclical process because each component builds on what it needs to feed into future learning. This cyclical model emphasizes the idea that instruction is not linear-any formulaic sequence can be consistently introduced, noticed, practiced, refined, and incorporated into discourse.

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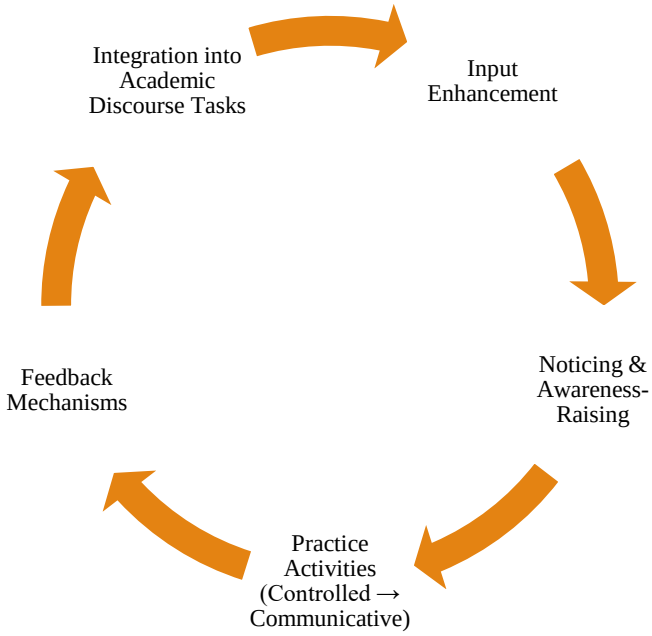
Figure 1
Conceptual Model



Principles of application

For teachers to effectively instantiate the framework, there are some guiding principles that should be foregrounded. To begin with, salience and transparency should be made paramount, just as incidental exposure is hardly effective in EFL contexts, formulaic sequences need to be deliberately foregrounded in instructional materials. Second, the instructional flow needs to go from awareness to use so that learners will be scaffolded, transitioning from merely noticing and controlled practice to independently and fluidly using formulaic language in genuine communication situations. Third, integration rather than isolation is needed because these sequences are not vocabulary units but discourse resources institutionalized in a particular academic genre, e.g., presentations, essays, and seminars.

Equally important is that feedback acts as scaffolding, meaning that teachers provide explicit guidance in constructive criticism that encourages the correct and contextually appropriate use without offending the learner's willingness to experiment. Practising and recycling in all modes of input and output reinforce the keeping of formulaic sequences in memory, contributing to automaticity. Keeping it contextual and culturally relevant, the lessons, and which emphasis should be laid must consider linguistic forms and aim at pragmatic and cultural factors affecting decision making in deliberative processes within academic discourse communities. Together, these constructs transfer the theoretical basis of the framework into teachable techniques, providing instructors with a proper roadmap for assisting their EFL learners toward fluency, accuracy, and rhetorical idiom at an academic level.

Implications

There are important pedagogical and research ramifications to the suggested framework for the explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language in EFL academic contexts.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the framework offers a moral basis for curriculum development, classroom exercises, and instructional material production. Instead of being viewed as supplemental material, idiomatic and formulaic sequences ought to be methodically

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incorporated into the syllabus design as central learning objectives. Students must find sequences as essential discourse resources for mapping them onto academic genres such as research reports, oral presentations, seminar discussions, or argumentative essays. Accordingly, teachers can create staged practice in their lesson planning that progresses from noticing and improving input, such as highlighting lexical bundles in real journal articles, to structured practice, including gap-fill or reformulation exercises, and onto communicative use, such as group debates, poster sessions, or academic writing workshops. Textbooks and any digital resources in materials development should highlight formulaic sequences with emphasis on explicit explanation regarding their pragmatic functions, frequency patterns, and cultural appropriateness. A perspective is given where measures might be taken to assist their students with the framework for the development of their rhetorical abilities, fluency, and confidence to carry on in academics.

From the research perspective, the framework creates options for testing empirically and refining. Design-based research may apply the framework in real classrooms so that it may be developed in an iterative manner, modifying instructional interventions according to student outcomes and teacher feedback. The relative efficacy of explicit versus implicit instruction of idiomatic and formulaic language in achieving fluency, accuracy, or pragmatic competence is one of the many topics that experimental studies may address. Researchers can track the evolving patterns of usage over time by creating tasks based on corpus evidence that examine how EFL learners employ particular formulaic sequences in their academic writing and speech. The degree to which formulaic language is ingrained in learners' repertoires could be further explored through longitudinal research, specifically through mechanisms of feedback, recycling, and repeated exposure that could promote long-term fluency improvements. Hence, the framework informs pedagogy, and reciprocally, it operates as a testable theoretical model that can help further applied linguistics endeavors across an intersection of psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and usage-based lines of thought.

Limitations

In EFL contexts, idiomatic and formulaic expressions are crucial components of academic communication, yet their instruction is frequently lacking. With a preference for usage-based methods, sociocultural scaffolding, and cognitive learning theories, this paper offers a theoretical framework for the explicit teaching of such language. The main operational elements that direct teachers in creating materials and designing curricula are increasing input, increasing consciousness, scaffolding practice, and providing feedback. The conceptual nature of this framework and the need for contextualization are its disadvantages, despite the fact that its goal is to improve fluency and rhetorical power. Future empirical research directions that have been suggested would undoubtedly be very helpful in confirming and improving this framework for EFL learners' academic success.

Additionally, it's possible that the framework will not work in every EFL situation. The proficiency levels of students, institutional expectations, and cultural orientations toward idiomatic and formulaic usage vary greatly among academic settings. While university students at the tertiary level may benefit from more complex and discipline-specific formulaic sequences integrated into the academic genres, secondary school-going students might want basic exposure and simpler assignments. Factors such as curriculum constraints, teacher training, and resources would only pay due consideration to the feasibility of using the framework as it has been designed for. These limitations must be recognized to maintain transparency and highlight where further attention is needed. To cater adequately to the varying

demands of EFL learners, adaptations, tests, and calibrations of the framework must thus be realized through empirical research conducted continuously in diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

A long-standing gap in second language acquisition research and classroom pedagogy has been filled by this paper's theoretical framework for the explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language in EFL academic contexts. Most EFL curricula tend to avoid or largely neglect idioms and formulaics, considered the sine qua non of pragmatic competence, discourse coherence, and fluency. The present framework seeks to fill this gap by offering a model that integrates cognitive, sociocultural, and usage-based perspectives and converts the theoretical conclusions into input enhancement, noticing, scaffolded practice, feedback, and integration into authentic language-based academic tasks.

There is a theoretical framework, introduced in this paper, for explicit teaching of idiomatic and formulaic language in EFL academic contexts, thereby filling a long-standing research gap in second language acquisition and classroom pedagogy. Most EFL curricula either avoid or neglect idioms and formulaics that are taken to be of utmost importance for pragmatic competence, discourse coherence, and fluency. To fill the gap present in L2 idiomatic instruction, the present framework proposes a model merging cognitive, sociocultural, and usage-based views and implements the theoretical conclusions in the form of input enhancement, noticing, scaffolded practice, feedback, and integration of authentic language-based academic tasks.

Meanwhile, however, the framework presented here should be considered as a first step and, in essence, cannot be viewed as a full-blown solution right away. Its efficacy needs to be examined in a more systematic manner through empirical research. Future research will have to examine the implementation of the framework in different contexts (secondary versus tertiary EFL classrooms) and learners' responses to explicit instruction of formulaic sequences in terms of fluency, accuracy, and pragmatic competence. Design-based research, controlled experiments, and corpus-informed analyses will be required in the attempts of testing, refining, and extending the framework.

The suggested framework highlights idiomatic and formulaic language as something that can and should be taught as an essential component of academic communication, thereby describing a significant need in applied linguistics. It offers the pedagogy and theoretical support that researchers and practitioners need to advance these concepts through debate and experimentation, giving EFL students the idiomatic proficiency, grammatical proficiency, and discourse flexibility necessary for academic success.

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