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Formulaic Sequences Used by Native English Speaking Teachers in a Thai Primary School

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Abstract

The use of formulaic sequences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons plays an integral role in language teaching and learning, but it seems still widely neglected in the Thai school context. To call attention to this issue, this study aims at identifying formulaic sequences used in a Thai primary school. The data were taken from three native English teachers in their young learners' EFL lessons, and were analysed with the use of corpus software to identify the formulaic sequences used according to their functions within the various situations in the lessons.The findings reveal that multiple formulaic sequences were used throughout the lessons for various reasons but always in a specific context during the course of the lessons. This study has created a potentially useful list of formulaic sequences, including their functions and situations they could be used in. We hope that this list could benefit non-native English EFL teachers who teach young learners in their own lessons.

Keywords: Thai EFL learners, formulaic sequences, formulaic language

Introduction

Despite teachers' dedication and effort, most Thai language learners have failed to master fluency, as Kirkpatrick (2012) reports that the "International institute of Management Development recently ranked Thai students 54th out of 56 for their English proficiency" (p. 27). One possible cause of this failure, he further explains, could be due to a 'grammar heavy' approach, with much focus on one-worded vocabulary. This focus of teaching grammar analysis and vocabulary sets could be a constraint in language learning and communication (Wray, 2000), as in English, several words tend to be strung together to form a meaningful unit called formulaic language (Biber, 2009).

Several researchers such as Alhassan and Wood (2015), Conklin and Schmitt (2008), Howarth (1998), Staples, Egbert, Biber and Mcclair (2013), Wood (2006), and Wray (1999; 2009) have attempted to point out the importance of formulaic sequences in language learning, as well as promoted the use of formulaic sequences in language classrooms. Nonetheless, insufficient attention to this could be for different reasons. For example, Schmitt and Alali (2012) have asserted that teachers often ignore the explicit teaching of formulaic sequences due to the lack of awareness regarding language teaching. Phongphio and Schmitt (2006) said that "Thai learners overestimate their knowledge of formulaic language" (p. 126), implying that Thai EFL learners were unaware of their lack of knowledge regarding formulaic sequences. This lack of awareness could be due to the limited exposure to formulaic sequences used in class as Howarth (1998) has observed that non-native English speakers use a limited range of formulaic sequences.

In Thailand, few researchers have conducted research into formulaic sequences. Of these few is Graham (2014) who identified the frequently used formulaic sequences used in English Engineering textbooks. Another is Amnuai (2012) who studied formulaic sequences in published Thai journals. These two studies focus on written language. Another is Leelasetakul (2014) who

investigated lexical bundles in Thai EFL learners' writings. To our knowledge, we have not seen any study that looks into the use of spoken formulaic sequences in classrooms, especially in the Thai context, although classroom teaching uses a "large number of formulaic sequences" (Neely & Cortes, 2009, p. 22). This paper then aims to shed light on this issue by identifying a list of formulaic sequences used in young learners' EFL lessons, and exploring their functions.

Literature Review

Defining formulaic sequences

Several terms are related to formulaic language, and these terms could be, as Cortes put it, "quite confusing" (2013, p. 2). Alali and Schmitt (2012), Wray (2000), and Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004) refer to formulaic language as formulaic sequences. Ellis (1996) defines formulaic sequences as chunks, and yet Cortes (2013) and Hyland (2008) refer to it as lexical bundles. Cortes (2013) has advised that "the variation in terminology could relate to the focus of the formulaic language's use, be it written or spoken, or for beginner or advanced language learners" (p. 2). To best suit this research, we use the term 'formulaic sequences', with the focus on spoken discourse with young beginner learners. This term has been widely adopted and used as an umbrella term with other similar research.

Based on our review of literature, there are three aspects of formulaic sequences. The first aspect is that formulaic sequences are multi-worded strings (Alali & Schmitt, 2012; Cortes, 2013; Hyland, 2008; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Wood, 2010). These multi-worded strings should be no shorter than two words and no longer than five words in sequence (Hyland, 2008). The second aspect is that formulaic sequences act as a single unit, absorbed and remembered as one whole unit (Wood, 2010; Wray, 2013). The third aspect is that formulaic sequences are ubiquitous (Alali & Schmitt, 2012). In other words, formulaic sequences can be found in many places in a text or discourse. Moreover, Alali and Schmitt (2012) and Cortes (2013) assert

that formulaic sequences can make up a large portion of a discourse. One point that needs to be kept in mind is that their meaning may be different in a different context. To further explain, for instance, we could find a formulaic sequence such as *'hands up'* in an EFL or Mathematics lesson, but it adopts a different meaning in a cowboy movie. For this reason, formulaic sequences are ubiquitous where they would be clear and understandable to the hearer (Cortes, 2013; Wood, 2010). Therefore, in this study, formulaic sequences are defined as frequently occurring, multi-worded, ubiquitous sequences that act as a single unit and retrieved as a whole in a specific context.

Functions of formulaic sequences

After examining the aspects of formulaic sequences, it is essential to understand functions of formulaic sequences. These functions are viewed differently by different researchers. Wray (2000) broadly describes the functions of formulaic sequences aptly as "a tool put to many uses" (p. 9), and further elaborates two main functions of formulaic sequences: to aid the speaker's production and to aid the hearer's comprehension. When considering the speaker's production, *"*speakers use formulaic sequences to manipulate information, buy time for processing, provide textual bulk, create a shorter processing route, as well as organise and signal the organization of discourse*"* (Wray, 2000, p. 478). Examples of formulaic sequences that aid the speaker's production are *'let's see'* to buy time, or *'ok, next one'* to indicate the speaker's organization of the discourse to show that something is to follow. When considered from the hearer's comprehension, formulaic sequences such as *'ok, next one'* can aid the hearer's comprehension in that it is an indication to the hearer of what comes after.

Viewed from a different perspective, formulaic sequences, according to Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), could be used as part of a social interaction, discourse devices, and/or part of a necessary topic. For example, 'well done' could be seen as a device for a social orientation, or 'ok, let's see' could serve a pedagogical purpose. More

specifically to the classroom are the functions proposed by Bahns, Burmeister, and Vogel (1986). The functions could be seen as*:*

1) Directives: classroom commands or show state of mind ('*help me*', '*sit down*')
2) Game: introduce a new activity or give instructions ('*need to*', '*the first*')
3) Phatic: part of the social interaction and general utterances ('*are you finished*', '*over here*')
4) Expressive: show the teachers' emotions or feedback ('*good job*', '*very good ok*')
5) Questioning: eliciting information ('*what is*', '*who can*', and '*what about*')
6) Polyfunctional: more than one semantic –pragmatic function ('*are you finished*', '*let's see*')

The views on formulaic sequences from Bahns, Burmeister, and Vogel (1986), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), and Wray (2000), although different, provide us with an integrated understanding of the functions of formulaic sequences from broad to specific levels. In short, these functions are described by Wray (2000) and Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) as supporting the hearer's comprehension or the speaker's production to have the formulaic sequences act as a discourse device, part of a necessary topic or as part of a social interaction. Not only would these formulaic sequences have specific functions, but they would also be used within certain situations such as a question, an expressive, a directive, part of a game, or as a phatic. This integrated conceptual understanding of formulaic sequences provides a basis for the analytical guide in this study.

Methodology

Data collection

The participants consisted of three native English speaking teachers, who had been teaching in a private Thai school in Bangkok, for at least one year and had a similar amount of experience teaching

in Thai primary schools. One main reason that we decided to choose the native English speaking teachers was that Thai teachers did not use English in their teaching, and thus it was not possible to identify what formulaic sequences were used in classrooms. To provide more background, the school followed the Thai curriculum with five lessons per week, four of which were conducted by native English speaking teachers, and the remaining one was taught by Thai-English teachers. These teachers adopted the school's expectations regarding teaching approaches and the teacher's role in the classroom. The three participants were all native English speakers from various English L1 backgrounds. It may be argued that their varied teaching styles and approaches could impact the data collected, including the frequency and the length of the formulaic sequences, as well as the presence of idiosyncratic speech, but this variety was not a major issue as we were not interested in comparing the data from different teachers. We were more interested in finding out what and how formulaic sequences were used in teaching and learning in young learners' classrooms.

Altogether, six lessons of fifty minutes each (a total of five hours) were recorded. Three classes of grade 2 students were taught by each teacher who taught one class twice. There were approximately forty students per class, with the learners of a similar age of about eight years old. Most of these learners had completed their first year at the same school, which allowed for a possible overlap of background knowledge, as well as experience with native English teachers. The classrooms were set up in rows and columns, as required by the school, but the native English teacher allowed the learners to walk around during communicative activities. The native English teachers taught their class four times per week, which created opportunities for the teachers to develop a rapport with the learners and set up routines and structures in their lessons. However, the learners had various levels of English proficiency, with different backgrounds in English learning.

The teachers' speech during six random lessons was recorded within a three-week period. The first researcher took notes during the

lessons, observed the formulaic sequences audible in each lesson, and also noted the time during the use of such sequences in the lesson, as well as what the teacher was doing at that time. Doing this allowed us to understand the situations where certain formulaic sequences could be used. The lessons consisted of various types of lessons, including a revision lesson, an introduction of a new chapter, a reading lesson, and practice lessons. Collecting the data from this variety of lessons made us understand what formulaic sequences were used, and if there was a specific sequence used in a certain lesson. The recording of the teachers' speech was typed out into text and then fed into a corpus software programme.

Data Analysis

There were two main steps in the analysis. The first was to identify a list of formulaic sequences, and the second was to identify their functions.

- **Identifying a list of formulaic sequences**

To generate an initial list, we used a software programme, AntConc. We also needed to consider the characteristics of formulaic sequences as earlier discussed, namely being mulit-worded, ubiquity, the probability of the words to be used in sequence to determine the unit as a whole, and the frequency of the use of formulaic sequences. To elaborate, firstly, the formulaic sequences had to be multi-worded expressions. We considered a minimal cluster of two and a maximum of four words within the programme, because according to Hyland (2008), the frequencies drop drastically as word sequences are stretched to five or more. Secondly, to ensure ubiquity, the clusters needed to appear in at least three lessons (that is, 50% of the six lessons), and used by at least two teachers. This decision was based partly on the warning from Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004) who mention that classroom teaching is "marked by speakers' personal concerns and interactions among participants" (p. 374). For instance, in the beginning of a lesson, Teacher A may focus on the routines and

group work in the class, whereas Teacher B may review a lesson and thus less language is used to introduce a new topic or target language. Therefore, idiosyncratic speech, such as 'OK, OK' and naming the teams 'the blue group' were then filtered as part of idiosyncratic speech because it only occurs in one or two lessons and would not necessarily be applicable to other teachers.

Another criterion was to determine the strength of formulaic sequences by considering how frequently the sequences were used with specific words such as 's see' and 'ok let' (see Table 1). These examples were not clear, and could be overlapped with other sequences. Therefore, some modification of the list was needed, and to do this, we followed Hsu (2014) who made, for pedagogical purposes, two modifications to his data, namely "modifying word sequences in different inflectional forms" to help simplify the language, and considering "partially overlapping word sequences", by creating one entry (pp. 151-152). For example, the opaque 's see' is an overlap of 'let's see' and would be classified as one entry under 'let's see'. We also used the feasibility of the meaning of the clusters (Hunston 2002). However, when it is "difficult to explain in terms of syntax or that it cannot be considered as a semantic unit" (Martinez, 2008, p. 763), a t-score which indicates the likelihood that two n-grams (that is, "a connecting sequence of n items from a given sequence of speech" (Hunston, 2002, p. 1)) could occur together could be used. The n-grams with the high t-scores, with a cut-off of the three most frequent collocations were then analysed.

Finally, the frequency of the formulaic sequences was brought into consideration. Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004) chose a cut-off point at 40 times in a million words (p. 21). Adopting their idea, with our sample corpus of 15,660 words, we used selected clusters that appear at least 10 times. As soon as clusters were identified less than 10 times in the corpus, they became more arbitrary with much repetition of the same words, possibly due to the teacher's repetitive speech and the level of the learners. For example, n-grams occurring

10 times in the discourse were 'now we' and 'we can', in comparison to the n-gram 'good job' (157 times) within the discourse.

- **Classifying formulaic sequences into their functions**

After the process of identifying the formulaic sequences, we classified the formulaic sequences into their functions by categorizing the function of each formulaic sequence and sorting them according to the context in the lesson. Wray (2013) notes that formulaic sequences have different functions and meanings in different contexts. For these formulaic sequences to be of any value to a non-native English teacher, it would be imperative to determine the function of the formulaic sequences. Therefore, we determined the functions of the formulaic sequences used within the lessons by applying the ideas from Bahns, Burmeister, and Vogel (1986), Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992), and Wray (2000). That is, we attempted to discern between the reasons why the teacher is using the formulaic sequences and focus on the linguistic functions as part of the pedagogical process. We tried to find out if the clusters had functions, and if so, what their functions were. To determine the functions of the formulaic sequences the identification process was divided into three parts, namely who is benefiting, how the formulaic sequence is being used and what it is being used for.

The first step to identifying the functions was to determine who benefited from the formulaic sequence used. Wray (2000) states that the use of the formulaic sequence aids the speaker's production or the hearer's comprehension. Formulaic sequences such as 'ah, ok then' to 'alright, class' could be used to buy time, and examples such as 'hands up' and 'yes or no' help save time and effort, to minimize repetition and explanation in the lesson. The speaker could manipulate the hearer with formulaic sequences as 'help me' and 'sit down'. Then, Nattinger & DeCarrico's (1992) description would be referred to. If a formulaic sequence is used to aid the hearer, then it would be used as part of a social interaction, as a discourse organiser or as part of a necessary topic. The function of the formulaic sequences as a social interaction would consist of a social-interactional function which usually consists of greeting ('good bye'), thanking ('thank you') and

apologising parts of everyday cross communication between teachers and students. However, not many of these were identified, due to the small sample of corpus used and the high cut off of at least 10 occurrences. The second function of formulaic sequences as discourse organisers would indicate the start, the end or the continuance of a turn in speech, such as 'let's see' and 'ok who can' that show the start of a turn. The third function is that formulaic sequences are used as part of a necessary topic, which could refer to formulaic sequences that would only be found in the specific lesson, including the target language being taught. For example 'going to' and 'can you' were the target language taught on two separate days.

The following step was classifying formulaic sequences into groups based on what contexts they were used in the lesson. Bahns, Burmeister, and Vogel (1986) divided the formulaic sequences up into six contexts. These six contexts are often part of a lesson, as the teacher uses these as part of a specific context. As has been noted, formulaic sequences could be used as a directive, part of a game, a phatic, an expressive, or a question. These contexts make up the most common uses of formulaic sequences by young learners, as part of their everyday communication, which would then determine the input of formulaic sequences, used in these contexts. Finally, the formulaic sequences were matched with various situations during the lesson. This matching could provide us with a more rounded understanding of how formulaic could be used in class.

Findings

Formulaic sequences in young learners' lessons

The corpus software identified 236 n-grams (Note that not all n-grams are formulaic sequences. For clarification, see the definitions of formulaic sequences and n-grams earlier discussed). However, as can be seen in Table 1, we listed only the top 30 most frequent n-grams identified in the context of the young learners' EFL lesson. For a complete list, see Appendix. Some may question why 30 was used as a cut-off point. From our review of previous studies, surprisingly, there

were no clear justifications as well. This methodological issue may need attention from future researchers.

As can be seen in Table 1, we were able to identify the formulaic sequences according to three filters, namely the frequency, range and probability. The AntConc software arranged the formulaic sequences in descending order of frequency, with the frequency stated to indicate the amount of times the n-gram was counted in the sample corpus. For example, the 25th most frequent n-gram found was 'hands up' with a frequency of 42 times in the 6 texts of 5403 n-gram tokens. This indicates a high frequency and, therefore, reveals a strong or common formulaic sequence. Another aspect to be considered in Table 1 would be the range the formulaic sequences, with the use of the predetermined minimum range of 3, indicating that at least two teachers had used the formulaic sequences in their speech making up of at least 50% of the sample text used.

Table 1: N-grams found in teacher talk in EFL lessons

Total of N-gram types :236		**Total of N-gram tokens :5403**	
Rank	**N-gram**	**Frequency**	**Range**
1	good job	157	6
2	is it	122	6
3	very good	113	5
4	what is	111	6
5	let s	108	6
6	it s	96	6
7	what s	96	5
8	are you	89	6
9	who can	89	5
10	can you	79	6
11	is this	75	6
12	do you	73	6
13	going to	66	6
14	thank you	63	6
15	ok so	62	5
16	ok ok	61	5
17	this one	60	6
18	well done	50	4
19	help me	48	5
20	let s see	44	5
21	s see	44	5
22	what is it	44	6
23	ok who	43	5
24	you have	43	6
25	hands up	42	4
26	ok now	40	6

27	you are	40	6
28	ok good	36	6
29	next one	35	6
30	what about	34	4

- **Dealing with opaque n-grams**

As can be observed in Table 1, most of the n-grams identified complied with the definition of being ubiquitous, two words or longer, prefabricated and have a meaning. However, it was difficult to establish the meaning of some n-grams in the context, such as 's see', 'he s', and 's a', which required further analysis. Using the AntConc program, we searched the possible collates of the n-grams that seemed irregular, as seen in Table 2. With each opaque n-gram, we used the t-score to refer to collocates, to determine the frequency of appearance of 3 words left and right of the n-gram. The higher the t-score of these collocates, the higher the probability that the cluster would appear together in the text. We then used the key words with the highest t-scores to determine a formulaic sequence. An example of this, as is illustrated in Table 2, is 's see', where the highest t-scores were 'see' on the right and 'let' on the left of the 's' to make 'let's see' as a formulaic sequence. The analysis of the n-grams, with the use of the t-score, created a more viable list of formulaic sequences for the teachers to use.

Table 2: Opaque n-grams with t-score statistics

N-gram	**Frequency**	**T-score**	**Collocate**	**Formulaic sequence**
let s	115	10.4	s	*Ok, let's*
	68	7.5	ok	
it s	140	11	s	*it's a*
	19	3	a	
s see	44	6.3	see	*let's see*
	45	6.2	let	
s a	21	2.9	a	*it's a*
	16	1.6	it	
he s	23	4.4	s	*he's going to*
	7	2.5	going	
	7	2.3	to	
who's	27	4.2	s	*ok, who's*
	21	2.5	ok	

Functions of formulaic sequences used in young learners' EFL lessons

After discovering the formulaic sequences, we grouped the identified formulaic sequences according to their functions. This allowed us to observe various formulaic sequences used in a specific or various functions. In other words, we were interested in finding out, from a pedagogical perspective, who the formulaic sequences were used for, how they were used, and then in which situation they were used. Firstly, we divided the formulaic sequences into two groups whether to aid the hearer's comprehension or aid the speaker's production, together with examples, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Categorization of formulaic sequences according to usefulness

Rank	**Formulaic Sequence**	**Hearer's Comprehension**	**Speaker's Production**	**Other Samples**
1	good job	x	x	very good; well done
2	is it	x		what is; what s; is this;
4	what is	x		are you; what is it
8	are you	x	x	do you; can you; you have
9	who can		x	do you; let's see; hands up
15	ok so		x	ok, ok; ok now; ok good
19	help me	x	x	can help; can help me
29	next one		x	what about; last one; one more
32	sit down	x		you spell; have you got

In Table 3, we noticed that the teachers used specific formulaic sequences to aid the learners' comprehension, keeping the formulaic sequences short and repeating them often. The formulaic sequences with the highest frequencies were used to aid the learners' comprehension with 'good job' at 157 times, 'very good' at 113 times, and 'well done' at 50 times in this small corpus. This indicates that

the teachers frequently gave the learners feedback to guide them during the lesson. Another clear pattern was noticed regarding the questions used to both aid the teachers' productions and to aid the learners' comprehension, such as, the teachers used questions with 'is it' (122 times), 'what is' (111 times), 'are you' (89 times), and 'who can' (89 times) to aid the learners by checking their understanding, as well as aiding the teacher in managing the classroom.

Table 4 indicates how the first 30 formulaic sequences have been grouped into their respective functions, focusing on why the formulaic sequences were used.

Table 4: Formulaic sequences and their functions

Formulaic sequence	**Save effort**	**Buy/ Save time**	**Manipulate Hearer**	**Discourse Device**	**Social Interaction**	**Part of Necessary Topic**	**Example in Text**
good job			x		x		Good job, Elsa.
is it			x	x	x	X	What is it?
very good			x		x		Yes, very good
what is			x		x	X	What is it?
ok, let's		x		x	x		Let's see
it's a	x					X	It's a boy
what's	x		x	x		X	What's next?
are you			x	x			Are you finished?
who can		x	x	x			Who can spell?
can you		x	x	x			Can you check?
is this			x	x		X	What is this one?
do you				x	x		What do you have?
going to	x					X	We are going to practice.
thank you	x			x	x		OK, thank you very much
ok so	x	x		x			OK, so, the first one
this one	x		x		x		What's this one?
well done			x		x		Ah, well done, Noah.
help me			x		x		Team A, help me count your marks
Let's see	x	x		x	x		Let's see, let's try again.
what is this			x	x	x	X	Hands up, what is it?
ok who		x	x	x			Ok, who can spell

							beans?
you have	x					X	Ok, you have two minutes.
Formulaic sequence	**Save effort**	**Buy/ Save time**	**Manipulate Hearer**	**Discourse Device**	**Social Interaction**	**Part of Necessary Topic**	**Example in Text**
hands up	x		x	x	x		Hands up for yes.
ok now	x	x		x	x		OK, now guys, let's see.
you are		x	x	x			If you are finished, close your book
ok good			x	x	x		OK, good, who else?
next one		x		x			OK next one, what is this?
what about		x	x		x		What about this one?

As seen in Table 4, most formulaic sequences used by the teacher have multiple functions in the context of the lesson. Actually, 19 of the 30 most frequently used formulaic sequences were used as discourse devices, whereas only 9 of the formulaic sequences were used as part of the target language learned or part of the necessary topic. On the other hand, 10 of the 30 most frequently used formulaic sequences were used by the teacher to buy time and 10 were used to save effort. This could reveal the teachers' experience and level of comfort in the lesson. In total, 18 formulaic sequences were used to manipulate the hearer or the learner, which could indicate the teachers' desire to get the learners more involved in the lessons.

Table 5 outlines the contexts as suggested by Bahns, Burmeister, and Vogel (1986) and situations noted during the lessons. These situations were based on the notes in the classroom observation, including 1. Feedback, 2. Eliciting, 3. Starting a new activity (transitions), 4. Target language input, 5. Ending an activity (transitions), 6. Continuing an activity (transitions), 7. Grasping learners' attention, 8. Giving instructions, 9. Organization, and 10. Concept checking. Note that these 10 situations were noticed throughout certain stages in the lessons, with specific formulaic sequences used within these

situations. Note that the small sample corpus of lessons recorded could influence which situations were identified, with a possibly limited amount of contexts covered, where more research, with a wider variety of types of English lessons, could identify more contexts to use formulaic sequences.

Table 5: Formulaic sequences in contexts and situations

Formulaic Sequences	Expressive	Directive	Game /play	Polyfunctional	Questions	Phatic	Situation
good job	x						Giving feedback
is it					x		Eliciting
very good	x						Giving feedback
what is					x		Eliciting
(let s) ok let's			x				Start new activity
it's a				x			Target language input
what s					x		Eliciting
are you		x					Ending an activity
who can						X	Grasping attention
can you		x					Instructions
is this					x		Eliciting
do you					x		Eliciting
going to				x			Target language input
thank you	x						Organization
ok so						X	Grasping attention
this one			x				Concept check
well done	x						Giving feedback
help me		x					Organization
let s see						X	Grasping attention
what is this					x		Eliciting
ok who		x					Instructions
you have				x			Target language input
hands up			x				Concept check
ok now						X	Grasping attention
you are (finished)		x					Instructions
ok good	x						Giving feedback

next one			x				Start or continue activity
what about					x		Eliciting

As can be seen in Table 5, formulaic sequences such as 'good job' and 'very good' represent an expressive function, used as feedback in the lessons, and formulaic sequences such as 'is it', and 'what is' were used in questions to elicit the target language. On the other hand, examples such as 'let's see' or 'are you finished' could be classified respectively as phatic and question formula, but are used in the lesson to start an activity (game) or to end an activity. Another example of this is 'who can' that could be part of a question, but acts as a phatic device, and within the context, it is used to grasp attention.

Discussion and Conclusion

In spite of a limited set of data, we learned that firstly, native English speakers used many formulaic sequences in an EFL young learners' class, and secondly, the formulaic sequences have specific functions within specific contexts in the lessons. Furthermore, the teachers used the formulaic sequences to aid themselves and their learners throughout the lessons. Many of the formulaic sequences identified had more than one function. For instance, 'hands up' was used as a directive, acting as a command or an instruction as part of a game *(*Bahns, Burmeister, & Vogel, *1986)* with the functions of discourse device and social interaction (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). As Wray and Perkins (2000) wrote, the formulaic sequences had functions that acted as tools to make the formulaic sequences 'work' for the speaker. These tools, identified as functions, were used throughout various stages of the lessons to help the teacher 'buy time', 'save effort', 'use as a discourse device' or even 'manipulate the hearer' (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Non-native English speaking teachers could benefit from learning a list of formulaic sequences to perform certain functions within their lessons. However, Granger and Meunier (2008) state that the 'availability of phraseological information' is a challenge that should be tackled, stating that teachers should be conveniently capable

of finding formulaic sequences needed (p. 248). To respond to Granger and Meunier (2008), hence, we propose an initial list of formulaic sequences and their variations, with descriptions of their functions and context could benefit the non-native (especially Thai) English speaker. This list is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Formulaic sequences functions in the classroom

Situation	**How is it used?**	**Why is it used?**	**Who benefits?**	**Formulaic Sequences**
Feedback	Expressive	Manipulate hearer Social interaction	Speaker Hearer	*good job* *very good* *well done* *ok, good* *ok, very good*
Eliciting	Questions	Discourse device Part of topic Save effort Save/ buy time Social interaction	Hearer Speaker	*is it* *what is* *what's next* *what is this* *is this* *do you* *what about*
Start, Continue, or End Activity	Game / Play Directive	Save effort Buy/ save time Discourse device Social interaction	Hearer Speaker	*let's (ok, let's)* *write the* *let's see* *let's go* *are you* *finished* *ok, next* *next one* *ok, who's* *(who is)*
Target Language Input	Polyfunctional	Save effort Part of topic	Speaker	*it's a* *going to* *you have* *I have* *have you got*
Grasp attention	Phatic	Buy/ save time Manipulate hearer Discourse device Save effort	Hearer Speaker	*who can* *ok, so* *let's see* *ok, now*

Give instructions	Directive	Buy/ save time Manipulate hearer Discourse device	Speaker Hearer	*can you* *ok, who* *if you are finished* *you are*

Situation	**How is it used?**	**Why is it used?**	**Who benefits?**	**Formulaic Sequences**
Organization	Expressive	Social interaction Save effort	Speaker	*thank you*
	Directive	Social interaction Save effort Manipulate hearer	Hearer	*help me*
Concept check	Game / play	Save effort Manipulate hearer Social interaction	Hearer Speaker	*this one* *hands up*

Knowing the formulaic sequences presented in Table 6 and understanding how to use the formulaic sequences in a young learners' lesson could have specific pedagogical implications. That is, these functions could help clarify the reasons for the use of the formulaic sequences. For example a teacher could use one of the sequences if the teacher wanted to know what formulaic sequences to use to grasp the learners' attention. To teachers who teach in universities, this list may not be useful. However, for teachers who teach young learners and do not possess a good command of spoken English, this list may be beneficial to them as they can use some of the formulaic sequences in their teaching, thus having the young learners exposed to learning English as a string of words that carry a meaning. Our proposed idea is in accordance with Neely and Cortes (2009) who assert that it is "obviously beneficial to teach formulaic sequences" (p. 29).

To sum up, this research has shown the possibility to identify formulaic sequences used by native English speaking teachers in young learners' EFL lessons. We attempted to reveal the situations the

formulaic sequences were used in, as well as what the functions of these formulaic sequences were by referring to Wray (2000), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), as well as Bahns, Burmeister & Vogel (1986). The findings of this study suggest that native English teachers use formulaic sequences throughout their lessons as support in various situations. These formulaic sequences show consistent adherence to specific functions in ubiquitous contexts, therefore facilitating a list of formulaic sequences and functions for non-native English teachers to use. However, given these findings are based on a small sample set of data, future researchers may apply the analytical framework and steps with a larger set of data for a more expanded list of useful formulaic sequences that could be used in English classrooms.

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Appendix 1

#Total No. of N-Gram Types: 236
#Total No. of N-Gram Tokens: 5403

Rank	Freq	Range	Prob	N-gram
1	157	6	0.122	good job
2	122	6	0.059	is it
3	113	5	0.224	very good
4	111	6	0.064	what is
5	108	6	0.221	let s
6	96	6	0.071	it s
7	96	5	0.055	what s
8	89	6	0.097	are you
9	89	5	0.128	who can
10	79	6	0.076	can you
11	75	6	0.036	is this
12	73	6	0.123	do you
13	66	6	0.239	going to
14	63	6	0.251	thank you
15	62	5	0.018	ok so
16	61	5	0.018	ok ok
17	60	6	0.063	this one
18	50	4	0.202	well done
19	48	5	0.203	help me
20	44	5	0.090	let s see
21	44	5	0.024	s see
22	44	6	0.025	what is it
23	43	5	0.013	ok who
24	43	6	0.017	you have
25	42	4	0.159	hands up
26	40	6	0.012	ok now
27	40	6	0.016	you are
28	36	6	0.011	ok good
29	35	6	0.099	next one
30	34	4	0.020	what about
31	33	4	0.010	ok let
32	33	6	0.206	sit down
33	32	3	0.013	you spell
34	31	6	0.009	ok what
35	30	4	0.077	how do
36	30	6	0.167	if you
37	30	4	0.009	ok let s
38	30	3	0.009	ok very
39	30	3	0.009	ok very good
40	29	5	0.036	i m
41	28	4	0.022	good ok
42	28	5	0.146	need to
43	28	4	0.015	s this
44	27	4	0.070	how do you
45	27	6	0.013	is the
46	27	6	0.008	ok good job
47	27	4	0.054	very good ok
48	27	5	0.016	what do

49	26	6	0.241	don t
50	26	3	0.015	what s this
51	26	5	0.010	you can
52	25	3	0.024	can help
53	25	6	0.189	last one
54	25	4	0.007	ok who can
55	24	5	0.007	ok next
56	24	3	0.034	team a
57	24	5	0.034	who s
58	23	3	0.022	can help me
59	23	4	0.029	i have
60	23	4	0.021	one what
61	23	3	0.013	s this one
62	22	4	0.035	have you
63	22	6	0.020	one more
64	22	6	0.212	over here
65	22	5	0.024	to write
66	22	6	0.041	we have
67	22	5	0.013	what is this
68	22	5	0.009	you go
69	21	3	0.035	do you spell
70	21	3	0.054	how do you spell
71	21	3	0.010	is he
72	21	6	0.008	you ok
73	20	3	0.032	have you got
74	20	3	0.070	he s
75	20	6	0.081	in the
76	20	3	0.015	it is
77	20	4	0.015	it what
78	20	6	0.006	ok and
79	20	6	0.018	one ok
80	20	3	0.008	you got
81	19	4	0.021	are going
82	19	4	0.021	are going to
83	19	6	0.031	have to
84	19	3	0.024	i need
85	19	6	0.030	job ok
86	19	6	0.067	on the
87	19	4	0.067	on your
88	19	5	0.011	s a
89	19	3	0.027	who can help
90	18	4	0.079	done ok
91	18	3	0.063	for you
92	18	6	0.014	good job ok
93	18	3	0.039	me what
94	18	5	0.005	ok i
95	18	3	0.129	want to
96	18	4	0.073	well done ok
97	18	3	0.063	write the
98	17	4	0.097	at the
99	17	4	0.016	can do
100	17	4	0.044	how many
101	17	4	0.005	ok yes

102	17	4	0.052	there you
103	17	4	0.052	there you go
104	17	3	0.053	two one
105	17	5	0.032	we are
106	17	4	0.010	what does
107	17	3	0.024	who can help me
108	17	6	0.029	yes ok
109	17	4	0.007	you finished
110	17	5	0.007	you guys
111	16	5	0.026	have a
112	16	4	0.033	let s go
113	16	4	0.033	no no
114	16	3	0.005	ok let s see
115	16	4	0.071	or no
116	16	4	0.009	s go
117	16	3	0.211	show me
118	16	5	0.009	what is the
119	16	3	0.023	who else
120	16	4	0.027	yes or
121	16	4	0.027	yes or no
122	16	5	0.006	you know
123	16	5	0.006	you need
124	15	4	0.007	is it what
125	15	5	0.004	ok next one
126	15	4	0.004	ok thank
127	15	4	0.004	ok thank you
128	15	5	0.004	ok you
129	15	6	0.016	this what
130	15	5	0.006	you a
131	15	5	0.006	you see
132	15	3	0.006	you want
133	14	3	0.015	are you finished
134	14	5	0.013	can i
135	14	4	0.011	good good
136	14	5	0.056	in your
137	14	4	0.010	it it
138	14	5	0.029	let me
139	14	5	0.152	look at
140	14	5	0.004	ok number
141	14	5	0.013	one is
142	14	3	0.008	s up
143	14	3	0.206	tell me
144	14	4	0.044	up hands
145	14	4	0.044	up hands up
146	14	3	0.070	yeah ok
147	14	3	0.005	you want to
148	13	3	0.022	do we
149	13	4	0.049	hands up hands
150	13	4	0.049	hands up hands up
151	13	4	0.016	i m going
152	13	4	0.016	i m going to
153	13	4	0.006	is it it
154	13	6	0.010	it a

155	13	3	0.010	it s a
156	13	4	0.088	m going
157	13	4	0.088	m going to
158	13	5	0.081	of the
159	13	4	0.030	oh no
160	13	4	0.004	ok team
161	13	4	0.007	s your
162	13	3	0.024	so what
163	13	3	0.043	spell it
164	13	4	0.019	your name
165	12	4	0.013	are you sure
166	12	3	0.011	can you see
167	12	4	0.020	do you have
168	12	3	0.052	down ok
169	12	4	0.009	good job good
170	12	4	0.009	good job good job
171	12	4	0.015	i want
172	12	5	0.009	it ok
173	12	4	0.019	job good
174	12	4	0.019	job good job
175	12	4	0.052	please ok
176	12	3	0.007	s ok
177	12	3	0.039	t have
178	12	5	0.048	thank you ok
179	12	5	0.010	the first
180	12	3	0.010	the next
181	12	3	0.013	this one what
182	12	3	0.013	to ask
183	12	3	0.023	we are going
184	12	3	0.023	we are going to
185	12	3	0.007	what colour
186	12	4	0.007	what is it what
187	12	4	0.021	yes i
188	12	3	0.005	you like
189	12	4	0.005	you sure
190	11	4	0.065	about this
191	11	6	0.016	and what
192	11	3	0.106	couch ok
193	11	4	0.250	haven t
194	11	3	0.022	no i
195	11	4	0.022	no it
196	11	6	0.022	no ok
197	11	3	0.024	number one
198	11	4	0.003	ok can
199	11	3	0.172	sitting down
200	11	4	0.021	so let
201	11	5	0.009	the board
202	11	3	0.009	the end
203	11	4	0.006	what about this
204	11	5	0.006	what do you
205	11	4	0.131	when you
206	11	3	0.019	yes good
207	11	4	0.004	you write

208	10	3	0.010	can you spell
209	10	3	0.035	for me
210	10	3	0.035	for the
211	10	3	0.038	hands on
212	10	3	0.038	hands on your
213	10	5	0.013	i don
214	10	5	0.013	i don t
215	10	3	0.005	is it it s
216	10	3	0.005	is it what is
217	10	5	0.005	is that
218	10	3	0.007	it it s
219	10	3	0.007	it what is
220	10	5	0.033	now i
221	10	4	0.033	now we
222	10	6	0.003	ok are
223	10	5	0.003	ok one
224	10	4	0.009	one what is
225	10	4	0.019	so let s
226	10	3	0.019	so now
227	10	3	0.147	tell me what
228	10	4	0.027	that s
229	10	5	0.009	the last
230	10	4	0.019	we can
231	10	4	0.019	we need
232	10	3	0.006	what is it what is
233	10	4	0.014	who is
234	10	4	0.004	you don
235	10	4	0.004	you don t
236	10	3	0.004	you need to