



Faculty of Arts
Postgraduate Studies and Training Centre
Department of English

**An Investigation into the Use of Formulaic Expressions in Enhancing the
EFL Students' Fluency in Spoken Language at University of Zawia**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics**

Submitted by
Sarah Khalifa Alzawi

Supervised by
Prof. Sadiq Mohammed Albosifi

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the use of formulaic expressions in enhancing the EFL students' fluency of spoken language at the University of Zawia. The study utilized a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected randomly through a closed-ended questionnaire. Forty MA students participated in the study from the Department of English at the University of Zawia. The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted purposively with ten MA students from the same department. The results of this study showed that most participants had positive perspectives towards the use of formulaic expressions. However, there are some challenges that the EFL students encounter when they are using formulaic expressions such as memorization, understanding the meaning, and using them in the right context. In spite of these challenges, most students demonstrated their beneficial role in enhancing language fluency, and improving their confidence. These findings underscored the value of using formulaic expressions to enhance the EFL students' fluency, and recommended that the formulaic expressions should be integrated effectively into language curriculum.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation entitled "An Investigation into the Use of Formulaic Expressions in Enhancing the EFL Students' Fluency in Spoken Language at University of Zawia" is the result of my own original work and has not been submitted before in whole or in part, for the award of any degree at the University of Zawia. All sources of information that are used in this dissertation have been properly cited and referenced.

Date:

Signature:

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved family.

Table of Contents

Title.....	Page. No
Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	iv
List of Tables	x
List of Abbreviations	x
CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 General Background.....	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	2
1.3 Aims of the Study	2
1.4 Research Questions.....	3
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	3
1.6 Methodology.....	3
1.7 The Structures of the Dissertation	4
CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.0 Introduction	5
2.1 Definitions of Formulaic Expressions	6
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	6

2.2.1 Lexical Approach	6
2.2.2 Formulaic Language Theory	7
2.2.3 Fluency Development Theory	7
2.3 Types of Formulaic Expressions	7
2.4 Characteristics of Formulaic Expressions	10
2.5 Benefits of Using Formulaic Expressions	11
2.6 Students' Challenges in Formulaic Expressions Use	13
2.7 Role of Formulaic Expressions in Language Learning	15
2.8 Role of Formulaic Expressions in Language Proficiency	16
2.9 Fluency	18
2.9.1 Types of Fluency	19
2.9.1.1 Reading Fluency	19
2.9.1.2 Listening Fluency.....	19
2.9.1.3 Oral Fluency.....	19
2.9.1.4 Written Fluency	20
2.10 Relationship between Formulaic Expressions and Fluency	20
2.11 Previous Studies	21
2.12 Summary of the Chapter.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 Introduction	25
3.1 Research Design	25
3.2 The Context of the Study.....	25

3.3 Sampling Techniques	26
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	27
3.4.1 Structured Questionnaire.....	27
3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview	28
3.5 Pilot Study	28
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	29
3.6.1 Administration of Students’ Questionnaire.....	29
3.6.2 Administration of Students’ Interview.....	30
3.7 Analysis of Data	30
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	30
3.9 Summary of the Chapter.....	31
CHAPTER FOUR : DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	32
4.0 Introduction	32
4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Questionnaire	32
4.2 Students' Interview Analysis	41
4.3 Main Findings.....	51
4.4 Summary of the Chapter.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	53
5.0 Discussion.....	53
5.1 Common Types of Formulaic Expressions Used by EFL Students	53
5.2 Students’ Perspectives towards Using Formulaic Expressions to Enhance Fluency ..	54

5.3 Perceived Benefits of using Formulaic Expressions	55
5.4 Challenges encountered by Students When Using Formulaic Expressions	57
5.5 Conclusion of the Whole Study.....	58
5.6 Implication of Teaching.....	58
5.7 Recommendations	59
5.8 Limitations of the Study	59
5.9 Suggestions for Further Research.....	60
References	61
Appendices.....	
Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire.....	
Appendix 2: Students' Semi-Structured Interview Questions.....	
Appendix 3: Samples of Interview Transcript.....	
Appendix 4: An invitation to Participate in an Interview.....	

List of Tables

Table 4.1 : Mean Intervals for a Five-Point Scale.....	43
Table 4. 2: Reliability Table with Cronbach's Alpha.....	44
Table 4. 3 : Questionnaire Items Related to the Role of Formulaic Expressions in Enhancing Fluency.....	46
Table 4. 4 : Students' Perspectives on the Role of Formulaic Language in Developing Fluency.....	48
Table 4. 5: Challenges Students Face in Understanding and Using Formulaic Language.....	49

List of Abbreviations

EFL	English as Foreign Language
FDT	Fluency Development Theory
FL	Formulaic Language Theory
FE	Formulaic Expressions
L2	Second Language
MA	Master Degree
S	Student
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPPS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences System

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the general background, statement of problem, aims of the study, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, and the structures of the dissertation.

Fluency is a key component for mastering any foreign language, and mastering it is necessary for EFL students to communicate proficiently and effectively. In recent decades, many scholars have paid attention to the competency in communication. They suggest that various strategies can develop the learners' fluency, one of which is using formulaic expressions. Accordingly, formulaic sequences were treated as an effective teaching strategy that may enhance the oral fluency and facilitate interaction between speakers.

In this study, the researcher investigates the use of formulaic expressions to enhance EFL students' fluency, with focus on the most common types of formulaic expressions, the students' perspectives towards using these expressions at the University of Zawia, and the challenges that EFL students may encounter when they are using these expressions. The study suggests that the formulaic expressions can develop the students' fluency. It deals with the essential role of formulaic expressions and how they are very important for EFL students to sound natural and fluent in their spoken language.

1.1 General Background

The interest in the development of fluency in a second language (L2) has been recognized as an essential goal in language learning. Fluency in a language involves the ability to speak smoothly like native speakers. Language instructions have highly focused on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. However, recently scholars have paid attention to the importance of formulaic expressions in facilitating language fluency to ensure that integrating these expressions assists in developing the language fluency. Various researchers such as McGuire (2009), Schmitt and Carter (2004), Wray and Perkins (2000), and Wray (2002) claimed that incorporating formulas in learners' discourse has an essential role in

developing their fluency. Biber et al., (1999) highlighted the importance of formulaic sequences in facilitating the language production, and reducing the cognitive load.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In teaching English language as a foreign language, the EFL teachers focus on developing accuracy rather than fluency. Brumfit (1984, p.56) argues that "there has been a tendency in language teaching to concentrate on accuracy in the belief that fluency will take care of itself". He discusses how language teaching often over-emphasizes accuracy and correctness of forms at the expense of students' ability to communicate fluently. Many techniques are implemented in classes and treated fluency as an important element, but those techniques are not enough, there is a little interest in the implementation of formulaic expressions in oral teaching, which can facilitate the production of the language. Many techniques in language classrooms emphasize fluency development, but they often neglect the systematic implementation of formulaic expressions in oral instruction, even though these can greatly facilitate language production (Orang et al.,2023). Similarly, classroom interaction studies reveal that while teachers use formulaic expressions more frequently, students' use remains limited, suggesting that instruction does not fully integrate formulaic language to support fluency (Indriyani et al., 2022). Within this context, this study aims to investigate EFL students' perspectives towards the importance of using the formulaic expressions to enhance oral fluency and the challenges that students encounter as they use formulaic expressions in their spoken language.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. Investigate the most common types of formulaic expressions that are used by EFL students in their spoken language at the University of Zawia.
2. Explore EFL students' perspectives towards using formulaic expressions in their spoken language at the University of Zawia.
3. Identify the challenges that students may encounter as they are using formulaic expressions in their spoken language.

1.4 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most common types of formulaic expressions that are used by EFL students in their spoken language?
2. What are the perspectives of EFL students towards using formulaic expressions in their spoken language?
3. What are the challenges that EFL students may encounter as they are using formulaic expressions in their spoken language?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the valuable insights to the use of formulaic expressions as an effective strategy to enhance the EFL students' fluency. The study investigates the most common types, the students' perspectives towards using these expressions and the challenges that EFL students may encounter as they are using these expressions. The study provides a deep comprehensive understanding of this effective strategy that can enhance the learner fluency and facilitate the production of language. It aims to investigate the effectiveness of merging formulaic expressions in English language as a foreign language to enhance the students' language fluency at the University of Zawia. It seeks to explore the benefits of using formulaic expressions and the challenges that the EFL students may encounter in using them. Moreover, the study gives some recommendation of how to use and merge these expressions in language teaching curriculum.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology refers to all procedures that are used to collect, organize and analyze data obtained from research. According to Polit and Hungler (2004, p.233) methodology refers to "ways of obtaining, organizing and analyzing data. It refers to the logical sequence of how the research is conducted so the findings are as valid as possible".

The researcher adopted a mixed method approach by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gain a deep comprehensive understanding, add valuable insights, and guarantee in-depth interpretation as well as ensuring the reliability and the validity of the gathered data. Quantitative research is a research approach that focuses on

collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns in order to explain phenomena (Burns & Grove, 2011). On the other hand, Merriam (2009) defined the qualitative approach as a research methodology that emphasizes the study of people in their natural settings.

To guarantee the validity and the reliability of this study, the researcher employs the descriptive method to investigate the use of formulaic expressions to enhance EFL students' fluency. A students' questionnaire was used to investigate the participants' perspectives. On this basis, the study adopted a descriptive design. A closed ended questionnaire was distributed to 40 students to collect quantitative data that can be measured through statistical analysis. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students to gather qualitative data. The interviews were analyzed thematically, they were transcribed and coded to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. Both instruments underwent piloting to test their validity and reliability. Based on their expertise, three professors were selected to review the questionnaire and the interview. Also, a pilot study was conducted with five students to ensure clarity. Accordingly, the questionnaire and the interview were refined to improve accuracy and effectiveness. The questionnaire was uploaded to google forms, an online survey platform. Also, the interview was distributed online via Facebook and WhatsApp to facilitate access for participants.

1.7 The Structures of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter is an introductory chapter which presents an overview of problem and its statement. Then, it presents the aims of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the research methodology, and finally, the structures of the dissertation. The second chapter discusses the literature review. It introduces the theoretical framework, and presents some previous studies about formulaic expressions and their role in developing the EFL students' language fluency. The third chapter presents the methodology and the instruments that are used to collect and analyze the data. The fourth chapter includes the findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the findings and draws the conclusion of the study in addition to giving recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides definitions of formulaic expressions, an overview of the relevant literature and presents the theoretical framework of this study, types of formulaic expressions, characteristics of formulaic expressions, benefits of formulaic expressions, students' challenges in formulaic expressions use, role of formulaic expressions in language learning, role of formulaic expressions in language proficiency, the definitions of fluency, the types of fluency, relationship between formulaic language and fluency, and previous studies.

2.1 Definitions of Formulaic Expressions

Previous studies have highlighted formulaic expressions as an important aspect of language use, along with the importance of integrating them in language teaching. In the literature, pre-constructed, frequently fixed or semi-fixed word sequences that are stored and retrieved as a whole, are referred to as formulaic expressions. Researchers frequently employ phrases like formulaic language, formulaic sequences, or simply formulaic chunks (Wray, 2002; Nation, 2013), to highlight the stored and ready-made nature of these expressions. Additionally, the related terms that emphasize various elements like frequency, function, or flexibility are speech formulas, lexical bundles, prefabricated patterns, and multiword expressions (Biber et al., 1999, Coulmas, 1981). Despite differences in terminology, these terms all relate to the same basic phenomenon.

Every language has characteristic formulas, and these formulas are described as whole sentences, or groups of words that are represented as units, which cannot be analyzed in a similar way of free combinations. They may be regular or irregular. His analysis of formulaic language provided various examples to illustrate the argument that part of formulaic expression definition is that it cannot be changed. For example, the phrase like *How do you do?* is completely different from the phrase like *I gave a boy a piece of cake*. In the former, everything is fixed, not even the stress nor the pauses between the words can be changed.

The formulaic expressions are fixed units, multi-word sequences, or phrases that are repeated in specific circumstances and play an essential role in everyday language use. These expressions include idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, and greetings such as "Hello", "What's up?" and "How are you?". Also, expressions of gratitude such as "Thank you" and "Thanks a lot", and parting words such as "Goodbye," "See you later," and "take care." are examples of common expressions that are used in everyday language. According to Wray (2002), formulaic expressions are continuous or discontinuous of other words which are prefabricated and retrieved as whole units from memory. According to Becker (1979), formulaic expressions comprise a large body of language in a sense that individuals benefit from readymade sequences in different contexts to generate sentences from scratch every time they want to express their ideas. The formulaic language existed in various forms; however, developing an exhaustive definition remains as one of the primary problems in the related literature. Schmitt and Carter (2004) provided multiple definitions for formulaic language and expressed that they refer to fixed strings, or chunks of words that cognitively stored, and retrieved by speakers, as if they were single words, and have a range of functions, and uses in speech. As stated by Pawley and Syder (1983, p.191), "Formulaic sequences are multi-word units of language that are stored and retrieved from memory as holistic chunks.". They also add that "An important part of the language knowledge of adult native speakers consists of a large inventory of memorized sequences".

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the foundation on which the present study is built. It outlines the major theories that explain how contributes in developing fluency.

2.2.1 Lexical Approach

The Lexical Approach theory was introduced by Lewis (1993), this theory emphasizes the importance of lexical chunks, vocabulary and word combination. It focuses on learning language from grammar to vocabulary and lexical chunks. Formulaic expressions are also known as lexical chunks. Native speakers frequently use multi-word units and store them as a single unit in their mental lexicon. These chunks are not constructed word by word but are retrieved as whole units to reduce the cognitive load and enable more fluent communication. Additionally, Lewis (1997) added a practical follow up to his book which emphasized the

importance of implementing lexical chunks (multi-word units) in language teaching over the traditional grammar.

2.2.2 Formulaic Language Theory

The Formulaic Language Theory (FL) was proposed by Wray (2002), who suggests that formulaic expressions play an essential role in language production. The language is not generated through the application of grammar but also through the use of formulaic sequences. According to FL theory, formulaic expressions are viewed as complete language units that are stored and recalled as entire chunks from memory.

2.2.3 Fluency Development Theory

The Fluency Development Theory (FDT) is a theory that was proposed by Nation (2007), and later discussed by others. It aimed to explain how language learners develop fluency in their second language (L2), or foreign language. FDT argues that fluency improves through repeated, and extensive practice with the language that is already and mostly known to the learner, so that the learner can produce the language more quickly. Additionally, Ellis (2012) puts some principles in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and one of which is his recognition of the role of formulaic expressions in language learning. According to Ellis, the formulaic expressions are fixed and semi-fixed and serve as a foundation for creative language use. The learners can modify and combine complex ideas if they have mastered a set of formulaic sequences.

2.3 Types of Formulaic Expressions

Formulaic expressions differ from other types of language in that they are fixed and often occur as a unit, without significant variation in form or meaning. These expressions are also typically learned and used as a single unit, without explicit knowledge of their individual components or grammar rules. They are particularly beneficial when a speaker wants to express a specific topic quickly, and effectively. For example, in a job interview, the candidate may use formulaic expressions such as "I'm a team player," "I'm a quick learner," and "I'm passionate about this field," to express their qualifications for the position.

There are various types of formulaic expressions that are commonly used in language. These types are discussed below:

1.Collocations

Collocations are combinations of words that are frequently occurring together, and forming a natural pair or sequence to sound more fluent and native-like, for example, "take a break," "heavy rain," and "fast food." They are semi-fixed and form a core part of native-like fluency (Laufer & Waldman, 2011).

2 Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs consist of verbs that are combined with prepositions or adverbs to create a new specific meaning, for example, "give up," means to quit "look after," to take care of. A combination of a main verb and one or more prepositions or adverbs, often with non-compositional meanings (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016).

3.Idioms

Idioms are fixed phrases or expressions with meanings that cannot be easily deduced from the literal meanings of their individual words to add cultural nuance to language. For example, "kick the bucket" means to die, and "barking up the wrong tree" means to pursue the wrong course of action. Idioms have figurative meaning that cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of their individual words. For example: hit the sack, which means go to bed (Liu, 2008).

4.Proverbs

Proverbs are traditional sayings of wisdom advice that convey a moral lesson, or express a common belief in a concise and memorable manner such as "A stitch in time saves nine", "Better late than never", and " Don't put all your eggs in one basket" (Mieder, 2004) .

5.Clichés

Clichés are overused expressions or phrases that have lost their originality and impact due to their frequent use, but are widely understood such as "all that glitters is not gold", "as old as

the hills" and "Think outside of the box". Many While many clichés originate as creative metaphors or idioms, their frequent use renders them predictable and often stylistically discouraged in formal writing (Cook, 2010; Mieder, 2004).

6. Lexical Bundles

Lexical bundles are frequent multi-word sequences that serve a functional purpose in discourse, often with no idiomatic meaning, and they are commonly used in academic writing and formal texts, for example, *the results of the study*, *at the same time*, in the case of, and it is important to (Biber et al., 1999).

7. Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are phrases that structure conversations, or writing, and manage discourse flow, such as *on the other hand*, *as I was saying*, and *you know*. They are often functionally formulaic, they may not carry lexical meaning but serve pragmatic and cohesive roles (Fraser, 1999).

8. Slang Expressions

Slang expressions are informal expressions that are used to describe a specific culture or context such as *all nighter* which means to stay awake all the night. . Slang is typically avoided in formal registers but plays a key role in spoken fluency and sociolinguistic competence (Adams, 2009).

9. Fixed Expressions

Fixed expressions are phrases or sentences that have a set structure and are used in specific contexts, or situations, and they are rarely changed. Examples include greetings like "How do you do?", "Nice to meet you" and "farewell expressions like "All the best."

Formulaic greetings and responses , these are common expressions used to greet others or respond to greetings, such as "Hello," "Good morning," "How are you?", "Fine, thank you," etc.

Formulaic expressions for politeness, these expressions are used to convey politeness and respect in social interactions, such as "Please," "Thank you," "You're welcome," and "Excuse me".

These types of formulaic expressions serve various communicative functions, and are essential components of everyday language use. They contribute to the fluency, efficiency, and effectiveness of communication by providing ready-made chunks of language.

2.4 Characteristics of Formulaic Expressions

Formulaic expressions have several characteristics that differentiate them from the other types of language:

1. Fixedness: formulaic expressions have a fixed form, they are typically used in the same way and with the same wording each time they are used.
2. Multi-word sequences: these expressions are not being in individual components; they often consist of multiple words that are used together as a unit.
3. Frequency: formulaic expressions are commonly used and encountered in everyday language, with some expressions appearing frequently in spoken language.
4. Idiomaticity: many formulaic expressions have an idiomatic quality, meaning that their meaning cannot be deduced by analyzing the meanings of their individual words in isolation. They often have a specific meaning that is not transparent from the literal interpretation of their parts. As stated that “Idioms are characterized by conventionalized meanings which cannot be fully deduced from the meanings of their constituent parts” (Fernando, 1996, p. 30).
5. Fluency enhancement: formulaic expressions contribute to fluency in language use by allowing speakers to express themselves more efficiently and effectively in various communicative contexts. (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 191) stated that “native speakers appear to achieve fluent and idiomatic control of their language largely by drawing on a repertoire of thousands of memorized sentences and phrases”.
6. Social and cultural norm: formulaic expressions play an essential role in establishing social rapport, conveying politeness, and adhering to cultural norms in language use. They reflect

conventionalized ways of speaking within specific cultural and social contexts (Coulmas, 1981).

7. Psychological reality: formulaic expressions are processed and stored as holistic units in the mental lexicon, providing quick access to ready-made chunks of language during communication. The formulaic language is processed without recourse to the full generative grammar (Wray, 2002).

8. Contextual sensitivity: formulaic expressions are sensitive to the context in which they are used, with variations and modifications based on factors such as register, social setting, and communicative goals. As stated that “Formulaic sequences are often pragmatically specialized, occurring in particular discourse contexts to serve conventional functions” (Schmitt & Carter, 2004, p.1).

These characteristics highlight the distinct nature of formulaic expressions and their important role in language production, comprehension, and social interaction.

2.5 Benefits of Using Formulaic Expressions

The use of formulaic expressions offers numerous benefits that are particularly significant for both native speakers and language learners. Here are the key advantages:

1. Enhance Fluency and Efficiency

Reduced Cognitive Load: formulaic expressions are stored and retrieved as whole units, which reduces the cognitive effort that is required to construct sentences word-by-word (Wray, 2002). This allows speakers to communicate more quickly and efficiently. It improved speaking fluency; in spoken language, these expressions help maintain a natural flow of speech. They assist speakers to avoid hesitation and fillers (e.g., "um," "ah"), leading to more fluent and confident communication.

2. Facilitate Communication

Formulaic expressions, like idioms or common phrases, are a simple way to share complex ideas clearly. They often carry deeper meanings better than single words. Many of these expressions are tied to culture, so using them correctly helps people fit in and communicate better within a specific language group. According to Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p. 36)

“Formulaic expressions facilitate communication by providing speakers with patterned ways of expressing common communicative functions”.

3.Support the Language

For non-native speakers, formulaic expressions offer pre-made language tools that make it easier to express complex ideas even with limited vocabulary and grammar skills. This helps build their confidence and lowers stress. Additionally, these expressions serve as key building blocks in language learning, allowing learners to pick up common patterns and structures more quickly, which speeds up their understanding of both vocabulary and grammar (Pawley & Syder, 1983).

4.Increase Pragmatic and Social Functions

Formulaic expressions play a key role in managing speech acts, such as giving compliments, making requests, or apologizing. They enable speakers to handle social interactions smoothly, and prevent misunderstandings. Additionally, common conversational phrases, like greetings or small talk, help build rapport and strengthen relationships (Boers et al., 2006). These expressions create a sense of familiarity and friendliness, promoting positive and meaningful social connections.

5.Improve Cognitive and Memory Benefits

Formulaic expressions are frequently stored in memory as complete units, or "chunks," making them simpler to remember and use. This chunking method improves memory efficiency and supports smoother language processing. Additionally, being exposed to these expressions helps learners identify common language patterns, which they can then apply to different situations, aiding overall language development (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992).

6.Simplify Language Learning.

Learning formulaic expressions makes language learning easier by offering pre-built units of meaning, reducing the need to memorize single words or grammar rules. These expressions are often learned in real-life contexts, making them simpler to remember and use correctly. According to Wood (2009, p. 39) “Formulaic sequences are a valuable pedagogical resource

because they allow learners to produce appropriate language without having to construct it from scratch”.

In general, formulaic expressions offer many benefits, including improving fluency, communication, language learning, and social interactions. They are vital tools for both native speakers and learners, serving as a foundation for effective and efficient language use.

2.6 Students’ Challenges in Formulaic Expressions Use

Formulaic expressions, such as idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs, are essential for achieving fluency in language learning. However, students often encounter many challenges when they are learning and using these expressions. One major challenge is the lack of awareness of their formulaic nature. Many students treat each expression individually rather than recognizing it as a fixed or semi-fixed unit. This can lead to confusion, especially when they attempt to translate expressions literally into their native language. For example, phrases like "kick the bucket" or "spill the beans" may lose their meaning if they are translated word by word. Another challenge is the difference between literal and figurative meanings. Many formulaic expressions carry meanings that go beyond the definitions of their individual words. Students who depend on direct translations may struggle to grasp the true intent behind such phrases. For example, "break the ice" does not involve actual ice but refers to being flexible and easy going in social interaction. Similarly, an expression like "a piece of cake" require learners to move beyond surface-level comprehension.

Overuse or misuse of formulaic expressions is another common challenge. Students may attempt to incorporate these phrases into their speech without fully understanding their appropriate meaning in contexts. This can result in incorrect usage, such as saying "long time no see" in formal settings or repeatedly using the same idiom regardless of the situation. Additionally, cultural differences pose a significant hurdle. Many formulaic expressions are deeply rooted in the culture of the target language, and their meanings or connotations may not resonate with learners from different cultural backgrounds. For instance, idioms like "spill the beans" or "hit the nail on the head" may feel unfamiliar or irrelevant to students whose cultures do not share similar concepts.

Memory and retention also present challenges. Formulaic expressions often require learners to memorize the entire chunks or units of language, which can be overwhelming, especially for those already grappling with vocabulary acquisition. Phrasal verbs, in particular, can be confusing due to their multiple forms and meanings. For example, distinguishing between "look up," "look down on," and "look forward to" requires significant effort and practice. Furthermore, the rigid grammatical structures of some expressions add another layer of complexity. Students may mistakenly alter these structures based on general grammar rules, leading to errors. For instance, changing "all of a sudden" to "suddenly all of" disrupts its correctness.

Pronunciation and stress patterns pose additional difficulties. Many formulaic expressions have unique intonation or rhythm that differs from standard sentences patterns. Mispronouncing these elements can hinder comprehension or make the speaker sound unnatural or incomprehensible. For example, incorrectly stressing "I **could** care less" instead of "I couldn't care **less**" changes the meaning entirely. Limited exposure to formulaic expressions in classroom settings further compounds these challenges. If students primarily encounter isolated vocabulary in textbooks, they may miss out on learning common collocations or idiomatic phrases that are frequently used in real-world communication.

Producing formulaic expressions accurately during speaking can also be difficult. Even if students understand and use these expressions confidently and correctly in their own communication, they require practice and familiarity. Overlapping these expressions with similar meanings or forms can create additional confusion. For example, distinguishing between "at the end" and "in the end" or "by heart" and "by mind" can be tricky, leading to errors in usage. Finally, the fear of making mistakes often discourages students from attempting to use formulaic expressions altogether. Concerns about mispronunciation, incorrect usage, or sounding unnatural and incomprehensible can prevent learners from incorporating these phrases into their speech. In summary, students face numerous challenges when they are using formulaic expressions, including difficulties with their formulaic nature, figurative meanings, overuse or misuse, cultural relevance, memory retention, grammar constraints, pronunciation, limited exposure, production, overlapping forms, and fear of

errors. These obstacles highlight the complexity of mastering formulaic language and underscore the importance of addressing these issues in language learning.

2.7 Role of Formulaic Expressions in Language Learning

Mastering the foreign language could be achieved through accuracy and fluency, both of which can facilitate the production of language. The formulaic expressions have a significant role in enhancing fluency. Wood (2006) argued that using formulaic expressions enhances the learners' fluency and when the learner sees the formulaic expressions as a single unit, he or she would not find any difficulties in processing the utterances. Boers (2006) also supports using formulaic expression in oral speech. According to previous studies, formulaic expressions are important and play a crucial role in both first and second language. Young children, for example, sometimes learn language by memorizing whole phrases and applying them in their conversations before they understand the individual words that are included within those phrases. Also, adults learning a new language frequently depend on formulaic expressions to communicate effectively, even before completely mastering the language's grammar and syntax.

Furthermore, studies show that language learners who can recognize and employ formulaic expressions have a significant advantage over those who cannot recognize these expressions. Formulaic expressions can facilitate students' fluency, accuracy, and language comprehension. They make the language natural and native like. Formulaic expressions become an interesting topic in language learning. They are expected to be taught at universities to help the students improve their language skills. The role of formulaic language is highly considered in relation to second language teaching and learning. Ellis (2005) discusses how already existing formulaic expressions interact with other contexts and how they can be used in language learning. Ellis suggests that teachers should not focus on teaching grammar rules and individual words only, but also, they should focus on teaching and practicing formulaic expressions by exposing learners to a variety of these expressions to encourage them to use these expressions in their communication which can improve their fluency.

Formulaic expressions are an essential part of language learning, especially for individuals looking for proficiency in a foreign language. They can range from basic phrases and idioms

to more complicated ones that are necessary for communicating. Ellis (2012), for example, investigates the usage of formulaic expressions in the Chinese language, finding that they are widely employed and serve an important role in communication and development of language. Another study was conducted by Zhang (2016), who explored the use of formulaic expressions in Chinese news headlines, finding that these expressions assist in conveying a message quickly and effectively. Meanwhile, An (2020) investigated the use of formulaic expressions in Korean. The study found out that formulaic expressions are commonly used in Korean and that they are basically used for effective communication in the language.

Formulaic statements may have greater significance in spoken language rather than in written language. However, they can be useful in written language, particularly in academic writing where exact terms and patterns are expected. Overuse of formulaic expressions can result in a lack of creativity and adaptability in language use, even though they might be helpful for language learners. Students could find it difficult to adapt to new circumstances and might not have the skills necessary to express themselves in unique ways. Wray and Perkins (2000) looked into how formulaic expressions are used in English. They learn that these expressions are more common in spoken English rather than in written English and that they are a crucial component of both. They proposed strategies for teaching and learning formulaic expressions. One strategy is contextualization, it exposes learners to authentic language use through listening and reading activities, to facilitate absorbing common expressions and structures in context. Another strategy is explicit teaching, it provides learners with explicit instruction and practice, which can help them comprehend these expressions and use them in new contexts. Finally, repetition and practice, teachers can encourage learners to repeat and practice these expressions to create their own, which creates creativity and flexibility in language use. Investigating the nature and scope of formulaic expressions in language use is critical to understand. According to Wray (2002), formulaic expressions account for a major amount of our daily language use, and knowing these expressions are essential for second language learners to reach proficiency in that language.

2.8 Role of Formulaic Expressions in Language Proficiency

Formulaic expressions are important in language. They facilitate communication, convey meaning efficiently, and enhance fluency. Formulaic expressions can also build relationships

in social interactions, such as when greeting someone or expressing gratitude. Formulaic expressions are a basic part of language proficiency. However, their integration into language teaching curricula and classroom practice still neglected. Formulaic expressions are an essential component of language proficiency because they are stored, and retrieved as whole units, facilitating fluent and native-like communication. However, their systematic integration into language teaching is often overlooked (Wray,2002; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012).

Teachers should consider whether these expressions are given enough emphasis, how they can be effectively taught and understood, how to help learners to use the appropriate contexts, and how to incorporate them into language assessments. Teachers may need to evaluate their curriculum to ensure that these phrases are included effectively. They can use a range of approaches, for instance, repetition and context-based practice, to help students recall and use them correctly. Moreover, formulaic expressions are not important for spoken language only but also written language. They may be more critical for spoken language as they allow for more natural and fluent conversations. In spoken language, they can facilitate communication by helping speakers produce language more rapidly and efficiently. In contrast, written language may need more time to think and plan the message, making formulaic expressions less necessary (Sert 2013). However, depending too heavily on formulaic expressions can obstacle learners' creativity and ability to communicate efficiently in unexpected situations. To deal with this obstacle, language teachers can integrate using formulaic expressions in authentic contexts, encouraging learners to adapt these expressions to fit different situations and to expose them to a variety of expressions through reading and listening.

Ultimately, mastering formulaic expressions is essential for developing proficiency and fluency in a new language. Moreover, these phrases are seen as important for language learners because they can help learners communicate more confidently and smoothly. Research has indicated that pre-established phrases make up a significant portion of everyday language, with some studies proposing that half to 70% of spoken communication is comprised of these formulaic sequences (Schmitt,2010; Wray,2002). Hence, acquiring pre-

set phrases is crucial for language learners to comprehend and engage in real-life language usage.

Formulaic phrases aid in the development of language skills by giving learners ready-to-use chunks of language, which help them sound more natural and fluent in different situations. Acquiring these phrases can help learners expand their vocabulary, enhance their grammar and pronunciation abilities, and establish a base for using more advanced language. Furthermore, they can assist in understanding, as students can identify and comprehend familiar phrases without needing to analyze each word or grammar pattern (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Nevertheless, they could be crucial in spoken communication, being commonly utilized in conversations to help learners remember and repeat commonly used language phrases in daily interactions. Hence, students can interact with more ease and authenticity. Formulaic expressions play a crucial role in language learning and speaking ability. Using formulaic expressions helps learners communicate more effectively and confidently, resulting in improved fluency (Wray & Perkins, 2000).

Despite this, they are also utilized in written language, such as in academic writing or business correspondence. Relying too much on formulaic expressions can hinder learners' creativity and diminish their motivation to learn. They might depend too much on them and not improve their language skills completely, hindering original language production and diminishing their desire to learn. Moreover, learners might misuse formulaic expressions, resulting in communication breakdowns or misunderstandings (An , 2020). If students only depend on memorization and formulaic phrases, they might find it challenging to generate original language or utilize phrases in unfamiliar situations. Moreover, if learners feel like they are not advancing in their language learning, they might become uninterested or disheartened. Hence, learners need to mix formulaic statements with other language learning methods like learning grammar and vocabulary.

2.9 Fluency

Fluency is a term that is commonly used in foreign language teaching and contrasted with accuracy especially in teaching communicative language. This term is used as a synonym of oral proficiency. On the other hand, in the assessment of foreign language proficiency, it is one of several descriptors of oral performance. In spite of having a common definition as

language teachers and researchers, there are no widely agreed-upon definitions of language fluency. According to Lennon (2000, p.26), “fluency may be broadly defined as the rapid, smooth, accurate, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing”. Similarly, Chambers (1997, p.535) describes fluency as “the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including the speed of delivery and the absence of excessive pauses or hesitations”.

2.9.1 Types of Fluency

Fluency is not only about oral production but can also be categorized across language skills such as: reading fluency, oral fluency, oral fluency, and written fluency. These types are interrelated with each other.

2.9.1.1 Reading Fluency

Reading fluency refers to the connection between the recognition of words while reading and reading comprehension which balance the speed and understanding the text itself. To achieve reading fluency, readers must have enough knowledge of the content of the language and vocabulary. It was defined as “The ability to read text not only accurately but also quickly and with proper expression” (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003, p. 3).

2.9.1.2 Listening Fluency

It refers to the ability to understand spoken language in real time without facing difficulties or interruption. It involves the capacity to follow conversations or any other forms of spoken communication and extract meaning efficiently. According to (Grabe, 2010) fluency is the speed, and accuracy which a listener can process spoken language for meaning, it reflects how the student can understand the utterances in real time without breakdowns.

2.9.1.3 Oral Fluency

It is the measurement of both the production and the reception of speech, the fluent speaker must have the ability to understand and respond to others in spoken language, which typically has non-fluent qualities such as fragments, pauses, repetition and hesitation. It was

defined as “The ability to produce spoken language in real time without pausing, hesitation, or reformulation” (Lennon, 2000, p. 26).

2.9.1.4 Written Fluency

It refers to the ability to write a language proficiently and smoothly with coherent and well-organized text. It involves the ability to express ideas clearly and effectively, without struggling to find the appropriate words. Written fluency was defined as “The ability to produce written language smoothly and rapidly, with minimal hesitation and appropriate organization of ideas” (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen, 2001, p. 220).

2.10 Relationship between Formulaic Expressions and Fluency

Formulaic expressions refer to fixed and memorized chunks of language that are used commonly in everyday communication. These expressions include idioms, phrases, collocations, and set phrases. Fluency, on the other hand, refers to the ability to communicate smoothly and effortlessly in a language.

The study of the nature of formulaic language and oral proficiency shows that the mastering of formulaic sequences is a key determiner of oral fluency. The present study investigates the use of fixed expressions by EFL learners of English which can assist their fluency in that language. Various researchers (e.g., Wray & Perkins, 2002; Schmitt, 2004; Wray, 2002; McGuire, 2009) claimed that the incorporating formulas in the learner discourse has an essential role in developing their fluency level. Moreover, other researchers such as Wood (2006), Pawley and Synder (1983) and Boers et al., (2006) claimed that using formulaic sequences appropriately may help EFL learners achieve a high level of speaking proficiency.

There is a strong relationship between formulaic expressions and fluency. Using formulaic expressions can greatly enhance fluency in a language. When language learners use these fixed expressions, it helps them to develop their speech production. They do not need to think about each word or phrase individually, but can draw on these ready-made chunks of language to express their ideas and communicate effectively.

By incorporating formulaic expressions into their language production, EFL learners will have the ability to fill their knowledge’s gaps and facilitate communication. These fixed

expressions become building blocks that learners can use to construct coherent and meaningful sentences more easily. They can also help learners sound more natural and native-like, as formulaic expressions are often idiomatic and reflect the cultural context of the language. Moreover, these expressions can improve listening comprehension. When EFL learners are familiar with common expressions, they can recognize them more easily when listening to native speakers. This improves their ability to understand and produce spoken language more quickly and effectively; they will not face obstacles to produce the language.

2.11 Previous Studies

The formulaic expressions have recently gained a noticeable attention in second language acquisition research due to its positive and valuable role in language use generally, and in language fluency particularly. In general, the formulaic expressions refer to fixed strings or chunks of words that are cognitively stored and retrieved by speakers as if they were single words, and have a range of functions, and uses in speech (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). These expressions play an essential role in facilitating communication, improving pragmatic competence, reduce hesitation, reduce the cognitive load, and develop fluency.

Previous studies have highlighted the enhancement and the significant contribution of formulaic expressions on fluency. For instance, Wray (2002) emphasized the positive influence of formulaic expressions, arguing that these expressions reduce the cognitive load by retrieving the chunks from the memory with a little pause, which was supported by Wood (2006), who conducted an empirical investigation into the speech of ESL learners and found that there was a positive relation between the formulaic expressions and fluency.

Also, according to the ethnographic study conducted in Philippine senior high schools, the enough exposure to formulaic sequences significantly improved the oral fluency among non-native English speakers, in spite of occasional irregularities in phrasing and pauses. The researchers observed about forty students during two months by using triangulated methods including classroom observation, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. They found that formulaic sequences facilitated smoother transitions between thoughts and reduced pauses. These findings align with Wood's (2006) assertion that formulaic language aids in producing fluent speech by allowing speakers to pause at clause junctures rather than within clauses, thus improving overall communicative efficiency. Additionally, Boers and

Lindstromberg (2012) emphasized that formulaic expressions are crucial for fluency and naturalness in speech. Also, Wood (2009) in his book *Formulaic Language* supported the cognitive efficiency hypothesis which argued that formulaic expressions reduce processing load during speaking and listening, and enable faster and smoother production. Furthermore, numerous studies had shown that collocations, discourse markers, and sentence frames are the most commonly used types of formulaic expressions. For example, a study was conducted by Conklin and Schmitt (2008) argue that collocation offer both lexical and grammatical support, which make them easier to understand and use. The discourse markers were also found common to maintain coherence such as "you know," "I mean," and "actually". Schmitt and Carter (2004) also highlighted the importance of collocations, noting that students who mastered these combinations were more likely to sound native-like rather than those students who did not. Moreover, Nation (2013) asserted that the acquisition of core chunks such as greeting expressions, transactional phrases, and conversational management markers should be prioritized in early instruction to enhance basic communicative competence.

In terms of student's perspectives towards using formulaic expressions, research has explored how students perceive the usefulness and practicality of formulaic expressions. Alhassan and Wood (2015) examined students' attitudes towards using formulaic expressions in speaking tasks by doing an experiment on a group of students who had received explicit instructions in formulaic expressions, and found that these expressions helped the experimental group feel more confident and prepared when speaking in real-time, especially in exam or interview settings. However, they also noted difficulties in remembering longer or less transparent expressions, especially idiomatic phrases. Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) noted that learners may memorize chunks without fully understanding their pragmatics or appropriate usage contexts, resulting in inappropriate communication.

Ellis (2013) suggested that formulaic language should not be ignored in language teaching, because the traditional instructions often focus on grammar and vocabulary and neglected fluency. Also, Hymes (1972) in his work emphasized that language is a social practice not just rules. He asserted that accuracy and fluency are two important components of the

communicative competence to use ready-made phrases in real interactions, rather than generating every sentence from grammatical rules.

In a mixed-method study by Nguyen and Boers (2019), students reported that explicit instruction on formulaic sequences helped them use these phrases more effectively and with greater understanding. Learners especially appreciated context-based teaching and opportunities to hear these expressions in natural dialogues, suggesting that input-rich environments enhance both comprehension and output.

Several studies have highlighted the common difficulties and the challenges that students may encounter when they are using formulaic expressions. Among the common difficulties are the idiomatic meaning of idioms, cultural unfamiliarity, and limited exposure in traditional classroom settings. For instance, Kecskes (2007) emphasized the sociocultural and contextual barriers that learners must overcome in order to understand and use them appropriately, because they cannot be translated into their first language. Similarly, studies like those of Martinez and Schmitt (2012) suggested that learners tend to over-rely on more frequent and transparent chunks, while avoiding less common but equally valuable expressions. Additionally, another challenge that students encounter is retention. Boers et al. (2006) found that without repetition and contextual recycling, learners quickly forget formulaic expressions, especially those that are idiomatic or structurally complex. The solution, they argue, is task-based instruction that requires repeated, meaningful use of these expressions in varied contexts.

The previous studies strongly support the essential role of formulaic expressions in enhancing the EFL students' fluency. Research has identified types that are commonly used and has highlighted their role in improving speech, coherence, and listener comprehension. Studies have also demonstrated that learners appreciate the benefits of formulaic language, although they encounter challenges and difficulties in understanding, retaining, and appropriately using them. However, a lot of the existing research has been conducted in ESL contexts (English as a second language) often with students who are taught in English speaking environments. This research has focused on native speakers and less attention has been paid to EFL students in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language, often with limited exposure. Additionally, few studies have triangulated students' perceptions,

actual usage, and challenges in a single investigation using a mixed methods approach. From this perspective the current research study aims to address these gaps by investigating not only the most common types of formulaic expressions that are used by EFL students, but also examining students' perspectives toward these expressions, and identifying the challenges that students may encounter when they are using them. The findings are expected to contribute to pedagogical improvements in teaching formulaic language for fluency development.

2.12 Summary of the Chapter

Recently, the formulaic language has received a significant amount of attention in second language learning. Researchers use various terms to describe these expressions. Different classifications were proposed to categorize formulaic language. However, they all agreed that formulaic expressions are multiword strings or chunks of a language that are acquired, learned, memorized, and retrieved from memory as if they were single words. Many studies showed their significant role and how fixed expressions can enhance the speaker language production, giving various evidences of the critical relationship between formulaic expressions and fluency enhancement. Thus, there was a variety of efforts and recommendations such as developing methods, techniques, and materials to facilitate the implementation of this knowledge in language teaching methodology.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of this research study. It provides the research design, the area of the study, the sampling, the instruments that are used to collect data, the pilot study, the ethical considerations, the data collection analysis, and finally a conclusion to sum up all the parts of this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is an entire plan for how a research study is to be conducted, a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher in order to answer questions for deeper understanding. According to Gupta and Hitsh (2019), research design provides a flow of activities from problem formulation to hypothesis development, to data collection, to data analysis, to final results, and finally, to implications. According to Kumar (1999), research design provides a flow of activities from problem formulation to hypothesis development to data collection to data analysis to final result. The researcher adopted mixed methods approach by merging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to gain more comprehensive understanding for the use of formulaic expressions to enhance the EFL students' fluency. Quantitative research involves numerical data, whereas qualitative research involves exploring, and understanding phenomena in depth.

3.2 The Context of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Zawia which is one of the prominent higher education institutions in northwestern Libya. The Department of English Language offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including a Master's degree in English language teaching, and applied linguistics. The study was carried out during the academic year 2025 at the same university with MA students of four semesters, which facilitated the procedures, and the contact process with participants. Instructors have informally observed challenges in oral fluency among postgraduate students. Many students exhibit hesitation, limited use of formulaic language, and overreliance on literal translation from Arabic, which impedes the

natural flow of speech. These difficulties are further compounded by limited exposure to authentic spoken English outside the classroom.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

According to Ary et al, (2010), sampling refers to the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected. They emphasize the importance of ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the population, enabling researchers to make valid generalizations about the larger group based on the findings from the sample.

The target population for this research study consists of MA students in the Department of English at the University of Zawia. The participants were chosen randomly to avoid bias and because of their relevance to the research objectives. Every student from the population has the chance to volunteer to be a part of this study which consequently led to reliability and the possibility of making generalizations of the findings. For the purpose of data collection, two distinct samples were drawn. First, a total of 40 students from the all semesters (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th semester) were randomly selected to participate in the questionnaire survey, ensuring a sufficient sample size to capture diverse perspectives while maintaining feasibility within the scope of the study. Second, a subset of 10 students was chosen through a purposive sampling from the same group to participate in semi-structured interviews; the purposive sample is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers intentionally select participants based on predefined criteria relevant to the study. According to Etikan et al. (2016), this method involves depending on the researcher's judgment to identify individuals who are most suitable for providing rich and relevant data. Similarly, Patton (2002) describes purposive sampling as the process of selecting "information-rich cases" that align with the research objectives, ensuring that the selected participants can offer valuable insights into the phenomenon being studied. This combination of quantitative and qualitative sampling approaches ensures a deeper understanding of the research problem while maintaining reliability in the data collection process.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are the backbone of any research project, which help researchers to gather the data they need in order to answer their questions or test their ideas. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods provides deep comprehensive insights towards using the formulaic expressions in order to enhance the EFL students' fluency. The selected instruments are questionnaire and interview. The closed-ended questionnaire and the semi structured interview were chosen because they are suitable instruments to achieve the study objectives. Both instruments have their place in research. Questionnaire is perfect to gather numerical data and interview to explore complex phenomena in details. Choosing the right instrument is based on the purpose of the study to ensure that the findings are accurate, meaningful and relevant to the questions.

3.4.1 Structured Questionnaire

Questionnaires are structured instruments consisting of a series of written questions designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from respondents (Fowler, 2013). They are efficient for reaching a large sample size, ensuring anonymity, and standardizing responses for easier analysis (Dillman et al., 2014). In this study, the questionnaire was divided into sections, starting from the role of formulaic expressions and the students' perceptions, and ending with the challenges that the students encounter when they are using these expressions. The questionnaire was adopted from a study that was conducted by Amiri and Mekdimiki (2020), which was designed purposefully to investigate the use of formulaic language to enhance English language learners' fluency in oral proficiency. However, it was modified according to professors' and students' feedback. The questionnaire was reviewed by three expert professors to confirm validity, and their feedback was incorporated to refine clarity, and relevance. Also, the questionnaire was piloted with five students and they reported that the questionnaire was clear, well-structured and easy to follow. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items that consisted of 18 clear and easy statements. It indicated the students' opinions based on their perceived experiences towards using the formulaic expressions. The eighteen questions were designed by using a five-point rating Likert scale of the following range: agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire was distributed online to forty students via platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The

completed copies were received and analyzed through Google Forms to enhance accessibility and response rates . Before full deployment, a pilot study was conducted to assess clarity and reliability, ensuring the validity of the instrument (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview

Interviews provide in-depth qualitative insights by allowing direct interaction between the researcher and participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This study employed a semi-structured interview, which combine predefined questions with flexibility for follow-up discussions (Bryman, 2016). Participants were selected through a purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant expertise or experience related to the research topic. Each interview lasted approximately from 25 to 30 minutes and was conducted via platforms such as WhatsApp, and Facebook. Also, the questions of the interview underwent the same procedures that the questionnaire went through. Ten questions were designed to achieve the research objectives, which were divided into four sections: the types of formulaic expressions, the students' perspectives, the students' challenges, and the recommended suggestions. The ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly followed (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, participation was optional, privacy was protected and participants had the right to withdraw any time.

3.5 Pilot Study

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments that were used in this research, a pilot study was conducted before collecting the real data. A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary investigation used to test and refine research tools, identify potential issues, and improve the clarity and feasibility of the study design (Van Teijlingen & Hundley,2001). In this case, the pilot study involved distributing the questionnaire to five EFL students to evaluate whether the statements were understandable, well structured, and clear. In addition to student feedback, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide were reviewed by three expert professors to confirm validity, and their feedback was incorporated to refine clarity, and relevance. Their insights contributed to the refinement of both instruments, ensuring that each item aligned with the study aims and was suitable for all participants.

To assess reliability, which refers to the consistency and stability of an instrument across time and different contexts (Creswell, 2012), Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the questionnaire items. Cronbach's Alpha is a statistical measure used to evaluate internal consistency, with values above 0.7 generally considered acceptable for social science research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The results from the pilot study demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability, indicating that the instrument is likely to produce consistent results. Validity, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which an instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). By involving actual participants and knowledgeable peers in the evaluation process, this study enhanced both case validity and content validity. Case validity refers to "the extent to which the conclusions of a study accurately represent the phenomena studied, particularly in relation to the specific case examined" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 283), whereas content validity refers to "the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures all aspects of a construct" (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p. 66). As a result of this rigorous pilot testing, it can be concluded that the research instruments that are used in this study are both valid and reliable.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures refer to all the systematic procedures that are used to gather and analyze data from various sources, these tools help the researchers to collect accurate and relevant data to achieve research objectives. This study ensured a mixed-methods approach to enhance data validity and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.6.1 Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The current research was carried out online as a convenient setting due to the current circumstances. It was conducted with the participation of 40 forty students, who were asked to respond to the questionnaire in order to explore their perspectives towards the use of formulaic expressions in their spoken language. They were very kind and helpful. The main reason behind choosing the MA students of the English department of the University of Zawia is that they are sufficiently exposed to different teaching techniques and different learning materials, and also due to the researcher's position which facilitates contact with the

students. Permission to distribute the questionnaire was obtained. A day later, the questionnaire was distributed through a link on Facebook and WhatsApp.

3.6.2 Administration of Students' Interview

The students' interviews were conducted online with a total number of ten participants, all of which were students from the Department of English at the University of Zawia. The interviews took place between 20th and 30th April. Every interview has taken approximately from 20 to 30 minutes. The primary aim of the interviews was to gain deeper insights into the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of formulaic expressions in English as a Foreign Language.

3.7 Analysis of Data

The questionnaire data were analyzed by statistical methods. This quantitative approach provided measurable insights into trends and group comparisons. In contrast, the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, where responses were first organized into overarching themes and then further broken down into specific codes to identify recurring patterns and meaningful insights. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to explore the nuanced perspectives of students and complement the findings from the quantitative phase of the study. By combining both methods, the study integrated numerical precision from the questionnaire with rich qualitative depth from the interview, offering a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to this study. Permission to share the questionnaire and interview through a link was obtained, ensuring participants' privacy and rights. Participants were informed about the study and asked to give their voluntary consent. Their privacy was protected through strict anonymity and secure data storage; all personal data were only accessible to the researcher such as names, e-mails, responses, recordings and transcript. The study was designed to avoid harm or discomfort and follow all ethical guidelines. The participants were informed that the participation is optional and withdrawing from the study is accepted at any time. Afterwards, participants would receive feedback and could ask

questions or share concerns. This approach ensured a responsible study that values participants' trust and contributed meaningfully to research.

3.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined the methodology for this study. It adopted the mixed-methods approach by integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. By employing structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the study aims to investigate the role of formulaic expressions in enhancing EFL students' fluency at the University of Zawia. To enhance the reliability and validity of the research study, a pilot study was conducted. Moreover, ethical considerations have been observed and taken into consideration to ensure the integrity of the study and the protection of participants' rights. This methodological framework provides a solid foundation for addressing the research questions and achieving the study's objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study that was gathered through questionnaire completed by 40 students of MA student at the Department of English at the University of Zawia and a semi structured interview conducted with 10 students from the same university to discuss the use of formulaic expressions. The quantitative data which were gathered through the questionnaire were organized and presented in charts obtained from Google forms. Also, the interview data were based on codes, and themes derived from responses to the interview questions.

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Questionnaire

To analyze the investigation of the use of formulaic expressions, the researcher has chosen a questionnaire which was distributed to 40 participants selected randomly from Google Forms using an electronic questionnaire to ensure a diverse range of opinions and educational backgrounds. The data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences system (SPSS) software. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was employed to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to explore three major aspects, which are: the role of formulaic expressions, the students' perspectives towards using formulaic expressions and the challenges that students may encounter when they are using these expressions. The total number of 40 participants have completed the questionnaire. The responses were analyzed through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to provide general understanding of the attitudes and experiences of participants. Data distribution refers to the way in which data are arranged across a range of values and how these values occur in a dataset. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2017), data distribution is systematic arrangement of data values that allows the researchers to observe and interpret the patterns, central tendencies, and variations within a dataset.

4.1.1 Students' Responses to the Questionnaire Items

Table 1: Mean Intervals for a Five-Point Scale

Score Range	Category
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree

Table 1 categorizes responses based on a five-point Likert scale, classifying agreement levels according to specific score ranges which are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, the purpose of this table is to provide a framework for understanding how participants evaluate various statements in the survey, aiding in better data analysis and identifying prevailing trends and opinions..

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
The Role of Formulaic Language in Enhancing Fluency	13	0.85
Students' Perspectives on the Role of Formulaic Language	3	0.82
Challenges Students Face in Understanding and Using Formulaic Language	2	0.78

Table 2 : Reliability Table with Cronbach's Alpha

With 13 items and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.85, this section shows strong reliability, indicating that the items consistently measure the intended construct.

- **Students' Perspectives on the Role of Formulaic Language**

This section includes 3 items and has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82, also indicating good reliability and suggesting consistent responses regarding students' views.

- **Challenges Students Face in Understanding and Using Formulaic Language**

Comprising 2 items, this section has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78, which is acceptable but slightly lower than the other sections, indicating some variability in responses.

No	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Agreement
1	Fluency is the ability to express one's own ideas in an accurate, smooth manner which may sound as a native-like speech performance	4.20	0.21	Agree
2	Formulaic expressions assist in conveying a message quickly and effectively	4.31	0.12	Strongly agree
3	Formulaic expressions contribute to fluency in language use by allowing speakers to express themselves more efficiently and effectively in various communicative contexts	3.78	0.32	Agree
4	The formulaic sequences affect the students' fluency level.	3.84	0.14	Agree
5	Employing formulaic sequences into your speech performance can enhance your oral proficiency.	3.72	0.36	Agree
6	Formulaic expressions are very important for EFL students to be sound natural in their speaking	4.29	0.23	Strongly agree
7	Learners reach a high level of fluency through the employment of formulas in their speech	4.10	0.46	Agree
8	Formulaic language has a positive contribution in developing the learners' fluency	3.92	0.11	Agree
9	The use of formulaic sequences decreases the processing overload for speech production by making the process shorter	4.18	0.37	Agree
10	Formulaic language facilitates communication	4.43	0.48	Strongly agree
11	Formulaic sequences enable the students to come across native-like speakers.	3.64	0.27	Agree
12	A fluent speaker should have a range of formulaic expressions	4.18	0.19	Agree
13	It is very important to implement the formulaic language in language teaching curriculum ²	4.37	0.31	Strongly agree
Overall		4.03	0.24	

Table 3: Questionnaire items related to the role of formulaic expressions in enhancing fluency

The results indicate the following:

- Fluency is regarded as the ability to express one's ideas accurately and smoothly, resembling native-like speech. This statement received a mean score of 4.20 with a standard deviation of 0.21, reflecting a strong consensus among participants.
- Formulaic expressions assist in conveying messages quickly and effectively, achieving a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.12, and indicating substantial agreement among respondents.
- The data suggest that formulaic expressions contribute to fluency by enabling speakers to express themselves efficiently across various communicative contexts, with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.32.
- The influence of formulaic sequences on students' fluency levels was also positively rated, with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.14. Incorporating formulaic sequences into speech performance can enhance oral proficiency, reflected by a mean score of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.36.
- It is evident that formulaic expressions are crucial for EFL students to sound natural in their speaking, achieving a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.23. The use of formulas in speech allows learners to attain a high level of fluency, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.46.
- The positive contribution of formulaic language in developing learners' fluency received a mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.11. Additionally, the use of formulaic sequences reduces processing overload during speech production, with a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.37.
- Formulaic language facilitates communication, earning the highest mean score of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.48. Formulaic sequences enable students to communicate like native speakers, reflected in a mean of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 0.27.

- A fluent speaker should possess a range of formulaic expressions, achieving a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.19. Lastly, the importance of implementing formulaic language in the language teaching curriculum was highlighted, with a mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.31.

The overall mean for all these statements is 4.03, indicating a strong consensus among participants regarding the significance of formulaic language in enhancing fluency.

No	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Agreement
1	Since the use of formulaic language is for making you a proficient speaker, you recommend your colleagues to enroll it in their speech	4.43	0.23	Strongly agree
2	As a student I think fluency is more important than accuracy	2.71	0.45	Neutral
3	A speech contains formulaic sequences is considered more fluent than a non-formulaic speech.	3.08	0.63	Neutral
	Overall	3.41	0.38	

Table 4: Students' Perspectives on the Role of Formulaic Language in Developing Fluency

The data collected reflects students' perspectives on the importance of formulaic language in enhancing fluency.

1. Proficiency Through Formulaic Language:

The highest mean score of 4.43 (strongly agree) indicates a strong belief among students that using formulaic language contributes significantly to becoming proficient speakers. This suggests that students recognize the value of formulaic expressions in achieving fluency.

2. Value of Fluency vs. Accuracy:

The mean score of 2.71 (neutral) for the statement regarding the importance of fluency over accuracy indicates a divided opinion. Students may value both aspects differently, suggesting that there is no clear consensus on prioritizing fluency over accuracy in language use.

3. Formulaic Sequences in Speech:

The mean score of 3.08 (neutral) regarding the perception of speeches containing formulaic sequences being more fluent than non-formulaic speeches shows a moderate view. This suggests that while some students recognize the potential for increased fluency through formulaic sequences, others may still be unsure of their impact.

The overall mean score of 3.41 indicates a generally positive attitude towards the role of formulaic language. However, the mixed responses on the importance of fluency versus accuracy suggest that further exploration may be beneficial in clarifying these concepts .

No	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of Agreement
1	As a student I find difficulties in retrieving formulaic language	3.16	0.54	Neutral
2	After using formulaic expressions, I can't adjust the language to formal or informal settings	3.34	0.43	Neutral
	Overall	3.25	0.46	

Table 5: Challenges Students Face in Understanding and Using Formulaic Language

The data collected shed light on the challenges students encounter with formulaic language:

1. Difficulty in Retrieval:

The mean score of 3.16 (neutral) suggests that students experience some challenges in retrieving formulaic language. This indicates a moderate level of difficulty, implying that while some students may find it easy, others struggle to recall these expressions in appropriate contexts.

2. Adjusting Language for Context:

The mean score of 3.34 (neutral) indicates that students feel somewhat challenged in adapting formulaic expressions to formal or informal settings. This reflects a recognition of the complexity involved in switching between different levels of formality, which can hinder effective communication.

The overall mean score of 3.25 demonstrates a general acknowledgment of challenges associated with understanding and using formulaic language. While students do not strongly agree or disagree, the neutral responses indicate that this is an area that may require additional support and instruction.

4.2 Students' Interview Analysis

The data collected from the semi-structured interview were analyzed by thematic analysis approach, thematic analysis is a method for developing themes which are patterns in the data (Joffe, 2012). The researcher transcribed and coded all the recordings of the ten participants. Coding is the main step in thematic analysis. It enables the researchers to break down and categorize qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), coding is the systematic process to identify, name, and organize features of data to generate themes. Thematic analysis coding systematically follows up six main steps which include familiarization with data, generating initial codes, collating codes and searching for themes, reviewing themes, naming themes and writing up the analysis. The researcher created conceptions of data regarding student perspectives towards using formulaic expressions to enhance EFL student's fluency in the University of Zawia/ MA program, as well as the challenges that students may encounter when they are using these expressions. Additionally, the transcriptions of the students' interviews were labeled as (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, and S10). The themes that emerged from the analysis of the student interviews are presented and explained in the next sections. The interviews provide valuable insights into the awareness and use of formulaic expressions, students perspectives and attitudes, challenges in using formulaic expressions and suggestions for teaching practice.

Theme 1: Understanding and Awareness

The participants highlighted their understanding about the term formulaic expressions by discussing both their general perspective on this concept and identifying the common types. This reflects the level of awareness with the use of formulaic expressions in spoken language. Participant1 demonstrated clear definition of formulaic expressions, defining them as *"words or phrases or chunks of expressions that we use more fluently to enhance our speaking fluency, to be more natural and speak like native speakers"*. S1 indicates the

functional and communicative role of formulaic expressions in developing fluency in speech. S1 also highlighted the role of formulaic expressions in discourse cohesion by stating that they *"help to connect phrases, sentences and speak more effectively"*. The participant identified phrasal verbs and discourse phrases as the most common phrases that are used. S1 stated that *"the expressions that I commonly used are phrasal verbs and discourse phrases"*. S2 described formulaic expressions as fixed or common phrases, the participant identified greetings, idioms, and collocations as the most common types. The participant did not recognize these expressions as only communicatively effective but they can also be integrated in the spoken interaction to enhance fluency. As she said, *"formulaic expressions are often used in conversations"*. She also stated that *"I often use the expressions like greetings such as good morning, idioms like break the ice, and some collocations like make a decision"*.

S3 demonstrated a basic understanding of the concept of formulaic expressions, recognizing them as commonly used, and fixed word combinations that are frequently employed by native speakers in everyday communication such as greetings and polite expressions which are used in social conversations. The participant identified the most common types as those which are related to everyday routine such as *"how are you"* and *"have a nice day"*. Additionally, the participant highlighted greetings, and polite expressions as the most common types that are used in daily conversations.

Participant 4 defined the formulaic expressions as fixed phrases or fixed expressions that convey specific meanings, the S4 response indicates her understanding of the concept formulaic expressions. The participant highlighted the functional value of formulaic expressions in conveying clear and specific messages, enhancing fluency, and facilitating productive conversations. She noted that formulaic expressions such as greetings and idioms, are the most common types that are used frequently and effectively.

S5 had expressed the general and functional understanding of formulaic expressions, recognizing their communicative role in everyday life. As she stated that *"they are expressions that we use in our daily life to facilitate the communication"*. The participant admitted not using these expressions a lot, but the participant identified the formulaic expressions that are mainly used for greetings and apologies, with a preference for idioms,

even though their classification is unclear to her. S5 said, *"In fact, I am using formulaic expressions a little bit, I am using some formulaic expressions like greetings, and some for apologizing like I am sorry, and the one that is used to say goodbye. They are considered as formulaic expressions". I can say that I use idioms more than the other types"*.

Participant number 6 demonstrated a clear understanding of formulaic expressions, describing them as fixed or semi-fixed phrases like idioms and collocations which are used in communication. S6 reported the frequent use of greetings and expressions that are related to classrooms such as *"let's get started"* and *"any questions"*, highlighting the practical nature of these expressions.

S7 expressed the unfamiliarity with the term "formulaic expressions," admitting it was her first time knowing this expression. The participant defined such expressions as words, or phrases that refer indirectly to meanings such as verbs not conveying literal interpretations. Collocations were identified as the most commonly used type, stating that *"I think collocations are the most used expressions"*.

S8 demonstrated a general awareness of formulaic expressions, particularly everyday phrases and idioms. The participant mentioned that everyday phrases are the most expressions that are used by her. As she said, *"Actually, I use everyday phrases more than the others"*.

S9 noted that it took her a long time to understand the concept of formulaic expressions. The participant defined the formulaic expressions as short expressions that are used in daily life, for example, *"good morning"* and *"goodbye"*, which help to convey complete ideas in daily conversations. Despite recognizing the expressions' value, the participant admitted to not using many formulaic expressions in her speech, preferring a simpler style of communication. Nevertheless, the participant believed that such expressions have a positive impact on fluency by enabling speakers to express themselves more easily and communicate without difficulty.

S10 revealed that the formulaic expressions are essential tools for enhancing communication and comprehension, particularly in classroom settings. The participant consistently emphasized that formulaic expressions help clarify meaning, prevent misunderstandings, and facilitate smoother interactions among students and teachers. The most commonly used types

of formulaic expressions are greetings, apologies, requests, and expressions of feelings that are especially used in everyday classroom communication. As she stated, "*the most common types that I used especially for my students at our daily life, for example, greetings, apologizing, and requests like this*".

To sum up, most participants demonstrated a clear understanding of formulaic expressions, commonly defining them as fixed words, phrases, or chunks frequently used in daily communication to enhance fluency and facilitate communication. The most common types that were mentioned by participants are greetings. Other common types include idioms, collocations, and polite or apologetic expressions.

Theme 2: Fluency Development and Communication Effectiveness

The students had mixed views on the contribution and the effectiveness of using of formulaic expressions to enhance EFL students' fluency.

The participants had a different experience. The first participant highlighted that formulaic expressions had a positive contribution to spoken language. The speaker speaks naturally without paying too much attention to the structures. S1 said, "*We just speak faster, more effective, the goal is to communicate, to express our opinion, to share information or knowledge*", ensuring that the formulaic expressions facilitate communication; boost confidence and smoothness. As she stated, "*Helps to speak more confident in a very smooth way*".

S2 had a positive view too on fluency development by mentioning that "*It helps me to speak more fluently, naturally, and confidently I don't have to care too much about what to say*". Also, S2 emphasized that they are effective tools that can facilitate social interaction.

Interviewee 3 emphasized that mastering formulaic chunks made her speech flow more smoothly. She explained that having such expressions will develop her fluency, boost her confidence, and reduce hesitations which can help her to express ideas appropriately. She added that using high-frequency multiword sequences correlates with faster, more fluent speech delivery.

S4 highlighted the functional value of formulaic expressions, emphasizing the essential and valuable role in conveying clear and specific messages, enhancing fluency, and facilitating language production. As she stated, *"well, if you depend on formulaic expressions, you will exactly convey the main points or the main message that you want to deliver, also they enhance fluency and create the productive conversations"*.

S5 emphasized the crucial role of formulaic expressions in enhancing fluency. The participant noted that speaking becomes easier and more fluently when these expressions are used, largely because such language chunks reduce the need to focus on grammatical rules. This belief aligns with the idea that formulaic expressions reduce the cognitive load during speech, thereby reducing hesitation and enabling more confidence in everyday communication. Also, S5 added that the native or fluent speakers often use formulaic expressions unconsciously. The participant pointed out that many people, including Arabic speakers, use these expressions without realizing they are formulaic expressions. This suggests that the natural use of such expressions is common and is often taken for granted, which further highlights their integration into everyday discourse.

The participant S6 emphasized the crucial role of these expressions in enhancing fluency and making speech sound more natural by reducing cognitive load during language production. As she stated, *"I believe that it plays a crucial role in making the language sound more natural, reduces the cognitive load, it helps me to convey the message in a more natural way and sounds smoothly"*.

S7 acknowledged the positive impact of formulaic expressions on fluency, suggesting that they help speakers to feel more relaxed and less constrained by grammatical rules, and structures, particularly among younger speakers like teenagers. The participant also pointed out that these expressions can act as communicative tools when a speaker forgets a word, that can allow him or her to continue expressing ideas more easily.

S8 believed that using a variety of formulaic expressions, rather than repeating the same ones, contributes to fluency development. This variety helps to build vocabulary and boosts the speaker's confidence. The participant emphasized the role of formulaic expressions in reducing repetition and enriching speech. As she said, *"by using many different phrases not*

only by repeating the same ones, in everyday conversations, to get more vocabulary, more phrases, idioms, so the speaker will be more confident". The participant ensures that good exposure to formulaic expressions will create the confidence in interaction.

Despite their value, S9 admitted not using many formulaic expressions in her speech. She said she prefers a very simple style of communication. Nevertheless, the participant believed that such expressions have a positive impact on fluency by enabling speakers to express themselves more easily and communicate without difficulty.

S10 was uncertain about the direct impact of formulaic expressions on language fluency, but she believed in their value in improving, understanding, and supporting effective communication. As she stated, *"to be honest, I am not sure If they help the language fluency, but I am sure that they help to understand the language, effective communication, improve comprehension and to clarify the questions"*.

In general, all the participants had positive views about the general impact of formulaic expressions in communication, and its crucial role in developing the language fluency.

Theme3: Contextual Usage

The participants expressed a range of preference of using the formulaic expressions in informal and formal settings. The majority of participants (S1, S2, S3, S4, and S6) expressed the belief that formulaic expressions are suitable for both formal and informal settings. S1 reported that *"I think that in both settings, it depends on the type of FE that you are using, some expressions are used in informal and some in formal cases, so I think It depends on the phrase that you are going to use"*. S2 has the same experience that the formulaic expressions are applicable in both formal and informal contexts. S3 and S4 commented the same point of view that formulaic expressions are useful in both formal and informal settings They help the speakers' conversations sound friendly in informal settings and polite in formal ones with emphasizing that the key to effective use depends on choosing the right expression based on the situation and the person being spoken to, and highlighting the importance of contextual appropriateness and pragmatic awareness. S6 stated that *"It's useful for both in the formal setting, like in academic teaching we use transition words to save the rhythm of the speech. In informal setting, it helps to use or helps us to convey the meaning in the natural and short*

way. So, it's useful in both". S6 believes that formulaic expressions are beneficial in both formal and informal settings, particularly in academic teaching, where transition phrases help maintain the rhythm and clarity of speech. From a teaching perspective, the participant believes that these expressions aid students' fluency, comprehension, and overall communication skills.

In contrast, the remaining participants (S5, S7, S8, S9, and S10) highlighted a preference for using formulaic expressions particularly in informal settings. Both S5 and S7 shared the same perspective noting that formulaic expressions are more appropriate for informal contexts rather than formal ones. S7 expressed additional view that the formulaic expressions are more appropriate in informal contexts, emphasizing that formal settings require restricted rules by stating that *"I think It is more useful in informal settings because with formal settings, there are rules and structures we need to follow"*.

S8 explained that formulaic expressions are more suitable for informal situations, because they allow the speaker to express ideas freely and resolve any misunderstanding by correcting. In contrast, formal contexts require a great attention to word choice.

S9 saw particular value in informal contexts rather than in formal ones, although the participant expressed that formulaic expressions could also be helpful in formal situations as well, especially during initial conversations.

The point of view that was expressed by S10 closely aligned with those of the other participants that the formulaic expressions are more useful in informal settings, suggesting that they are more practical rather the formal ones.

None of the participants referred to usage of the formulaic expressions in formal settings, suggesting that formal settings require specific word choice. Participants noted that misunderstandings are harder to correct in formal situations, making careful expression essential. Additionally, they highlighted that the use of formulaic expressions in formal contexts contributes to politeness.

Theme 4: Perceived Benefits of Formulaic Expressions

The participants' responses highlight several benefits of using formulaic expressions. For example, S1 demonstrated two main benefits, namely improving fluency, and comprehension. As she stated, *"improving fluency, speaking like native speakers"*. The second benefit is reducing the cognitive load by stating that formulaic expressions *"Organize your ideas without much care about the choice of words or structures of the sentences, we just speak to communicate"*. While S2 highlighted the positivity of using formulaic expressions in boosting confidence indicating that they can save time and reduce hesitation. She stated that using formulaic expressions *"helps me speak more fluently, naturally, and confidently"* and *"Saves time and reduces hesitation"*.

S3 mentioned that mastering formulaic chunks made her speech flow more smoothly. They facilitate the speed of speech production which indicates reduction of cognitive load. Additionally, S3 highlighted their essential role in developing social culture competence by using appropriate expressions, which support the idea that formulaic expressions do not only convey literal meaning but also pragmatic meaning. As she reported *"The main benefits of using formulaic expressions are enhancing fluency, and the speed of the speech. I mean they allow the speakers to speak very quickly without constructing the sentences word by word. And also, they help social culture competence. That means using them helps learners to sound polite or professional in formal settings or friendly in informal settings"*.

Participants 4 and 5 highlighted the functional value of formulaic expressions by emphasizing their role in conveying clear and specific messages, enhancing fluency, facilitating productive conversations, and lowering the cognitive load.

S6 emphasized the crucial role of formulaic expressions in enhancing fluency and making speech sound more natural by reducing cognitive load. As she stated, *"It is very important in terms of teaching, it makes the students to booster their fluency as well as their understanding"*.

S7 reported, *"The only benefit that I think the students I teach when I use such thing, they just feel free to speak to me, they will not be afraid of me"*. The participant noted that using such

expressions helps to create a more relaxing classroom environment, encouraging students to speak more freely and without fear.

S8 highlighted two main benefits: improving communicative efficiency and striving for native-like proficiency. The mention of "*to reduce repetition*", indicates a desire to speak more fluently and avoid redundancy, suggesting that the learner views formulaic expressions as tools for enhancing speech variety and flow. Additionally, the desire to "*sound like a native speaker*" reflects the goal of achieving authentic and natural language use, highlighting the perception that formulaic language contributes to sounding more proficient and culturally appropriate in communication.

S9 highlighted the communicative power of these expressions, noting that they can clearly describe actions or people and help listeners visualize scenarios, so it enhances the clarity and effectiveness of speech. She stated that "*It helps to describe the real situations or actions. It helps to make the listener feels like she or he presents that action, that you have told, and if you describe someone who is not beside you. So, the listener will imagine the real picture for them*".

S10 reveals a number of benefits including enhancing communication and comprehension, particularly in classroom settings. S10 emphasized that formulaic expressions help to clarify meaning, prevent misunderstandings, and facilitate smoother interactions among students and teachers.

Generally, all participants reveal a range of positive views about the main benefits of using formulaic expressions. All of them agreed that these expressions are beneficial for fluency development, booster confidence, reduce repetition and hesitation, prevent misunderstanding, convey clear messages, facilitate productive conversations, and lower the cognitive load.

Theme 5: Challenges and Avoidance

The interviewees' responses reveal several challenges that students have encountered when they use formulaic expressions, the most common challenges that the students have mentioned were memorization, understanding the meaning, and using theme in the right context. The students' responses revealed different experiences. For example, S1 found

difficulty in memorization and applying them in correct situations. She stated that *"I put it in a different context. It's difficult to memorize every idiom, every phrase, I avoid to use them not to make the idiom confused with its meaning"*. The second interviewee S2 demonstrated that she has memory issues; she has difficulty in recalling expressions in real time, and uses avoidance strategy due to uncertainty.

The other participants expressed similar experiences with similar challenges. For example, S4 and S7 explained that they have difficulty in understanding the meaning and using them in the right context because of uncertainty of FE meaning. S7 explained that she avoided using them to avoid misunderstanding. Also, S4 added, *"I avoided some FE because I am not sure about their meanings"*, while S3 and S8 reported difficulties in understanding the meaning and memorization. S3 reported that learning idioms and fixed phrases involved a heavy memorization burden, many expressions lacked transparent meaning, so their idiomaticity made them hard to understand. She noted that without obvious logic, the phrase *"slipped from memory"*, undermined her confidence and led her to hesitate in speech. She added, *"memorization of the FE can be a big challenge, because they are often longer than a single word which is difficult to memorize them as whole chunks, and for understanding the meaning they are idiomatic and their meaning is not always the literal meaning"*. S8 admitted that *"I am avoiding these expressions when I am speaking in formal situations, for example, with my supervisor because I am not sure about their appropriateness"*.

Both participants S9 and S10 expressed the same challenges. Both of them identified three challenges of using FE, namely memorization, understanding the meaning, and using them in the right context. S9 avoided using the FE because it is not easy to use them in the right situation. S10 said that *"they are tricky, not clear and difficult to understand"*. So, the difficulty and uncertainty of meaning lead to avoidance of usage of these expressions to minimize the risk of misunderstanding.

In contrast, S5 and S6 provided different insights towards the challenges and the avoidance strategy. For example, S5 expressed that the challenges are in the difficulty of using the right expression in the right context, and highlighted idioms as the most difficult type due to their non-literal meanings. This uncertainty often led to avoidance, as the speaker feared using expressions inappropriately, especially in unfamiliar or formal settings.

These findings highlight that most students have difficulty in memorization, understanding the meaning, and using FE in the right context. It is clear that all of them are avoiding the use of FE because of uncertainty of meaning or appropriateness. Guidance and support should be provided to help students navigate these challenges and make the anticipated benefits of using formulaic expressions to enhance the EFL' students fluency in their spoken language.

Theme 6: Perceived Difficulty of Formulaic Expressions

All participants had a range of experiences towards the most difficult type of formulaic expressions, and all responses had the same view except for S7 and S9 who had another opinion. S1, S2, S3, S4 S5, S6 and S10 reported that idioms are the most difficult due to their complexity, their figurative meaning, and they are tricky. As S1 said *"Idioms are more difficult to learn and to use because they are tricky and they are not translated literally"*. S2 stated that *"I think the idioms are the hardest ever, because we can't guess the right meaning of idioms, we may find some specific words with hidden meaning"*.

S3 said, *"the most difficult one is the idiom, because its meaning is often not literal, for example, spell the beans, it means to relief the secret, which is completely different from its meaning when the words are isolated"*.

Also, S4 had difficulty with idioms due to their hidden meaning whereas, S5 had difficulty with idioms due to the fact that they are collected words. She stated, *"idioms are more difficult than the other types, these collected words sometimes are not the same as the word itself."* S6 stated that *"of course, idioms are the hardest one, because they don't convey a literal meaning, they don't mean exactly what it sounds like"*. S10 said, *"yes, idioms are difficult, not clear, and tricky in the meaning"*.

In contrast, S7 had mentioned a different view. The participant admitted being familiar mostly with collocations, phrasal verbs, and idioms, finding other types difficult to use or comprehend without mentioning those types pretending that she didn't know or understand what they are.

S8 emphasized the same view expressed by S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 and S10 with a different reason, admitting that using other types did not obstacle her interaction. She said *"I think*

idioms are more difficult than others, because I usually feel relaxed, when I use the other types". S9 did not have an experience with formulaic expressions; she believed that all of formulaic expressions are difficult. This participant found difficulty in using all types emphasizing that all types needed to be memorized.

In summary, the majority of participants (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S8, and S10) had identified idioms as the most difficult type of formulaic expressions. Their reasons are commonly related to complexity, hidden meaning and difficulty in understanding, whereas S5 and S8 had different reasons for difficulty of formulaic expression. In contrast, S7, and S10 had different difficult types.

Theme 7: Pedagogical Implications and Considerations

The implementation of formulaic expressions into the language teaching curriculum has received a strong support. All interview participants expressed unanimous agreement to implement the formulaic expressions to enhance fluency.

Each participant acknowledged their pedagogical potential in facilitating language learning in educational contexts, and all participants agreed on the pedagogical value of implementing formulaic expressions in language teaching. Individual responses revealed a range of considerations. S1 strongly agreed with implementation to help the students be familiar with these expressions. S2 emphasized the value of formulaic expressions and their role in boosting confidence and learning skills by stating that *"They are very useful to triangulate formulaic expressions in our classes and that can be very useful to improve the students' confident and improve their learning skills"*. Interviewee 3's comments underscore the need for integrating idiomatic expressions into teaching, S3 strongly agreed to integrating such expressions into language teaching curriculum, noting that the formulaic expressions are essential for the learner to sound natural.

Participant number 4 expressed agreement with the implementation of formulaic expressions into language teaching curriculum, aligning with the previous views of participants. Also, she emphasized the importance of applying the right approach through a well-structured plan, and suggested workshops for teachers to ensure that the implementation is carried out effectively by saying, *"Yes, I do, I agree, but I hope when they implement them, they have an*

organized, well-structured plan. I hope they have workshops for the teachers, and of course to give them in the right way, because they are very effective. I recommend the implementation".

S5 expressed a strong support for curriculum integration stating that *"implementing this expression learning into the curriculum will be beneficial for the students. As we said before, learning them will facilitate communication and will make people more fluent"*. She believed that learning such expressions would benefit students by making communication easier and improving fluency.

S6 demonstrated a strong agreement for the integration of formulaic expressions into the curriculum, arguing that exposure to common and useful phrases would significantly enhance learners' fluency and understanding of formal language use. As she stated, *"Yes, certainly, I believe that formulaic expressions should be integrated in the curriculum, so if the student be familiar with them or if we have a subject or topic that gives the students the ideas for how to use famous and common ones, this will help to improve the fluency as well as the way they understand the formulaic expressions. So, definitely I recommend it to be a part of our curriculum, so the students will have an idea about how to use it"*.

S7 has a positive view about the implementation explaining that integrating these expressions into language instruction would have a positive effect by exposing students to richer, more diverse language, helping them get better understanding of the language. Also, S8 has a positive view about the integration of formulaic expressions into language teaching curriculum. She strongly supported integrating formulaic expressions into language instruction, believing this would enhance learners' fluency and help them become more familiar with a broader range of vocabulary and structures, especially when aiming to sound natural and confident in different contexts.

S9 supported incorporating formulaic expressions into the language curriculum, believing this would enhance students' fluency.

S10 said, *"yes, I think, if the formulaic expressions are applied inside the class, that can enhance learning the language and facilitate the communication with each other and also*

enhance the comprehension". Ensuring the positive impact of implementing the formulaic expressions into language learning curriculum.

To conclude, the findings indicate that all participants expressed unanimous agreement on the implementation of formulaic expressions into the language learning curriculum. All participants acknowledged their role to enhance language fluency. The overall perception of implementing was positive, highlighting some considerations such as workshops, applying them inside the class and exposing the students to rich and enough expressions.

4.3 Main Findings

To sum up, all of the data that have been gathered through platforms and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively have shown the following results:

- The questionnaire results indicate a high agreement on the value of formulaic expressions and their role in enhancing fluency.
- Most participants highly recommend using formulaic expressions to enhance fluency with some neutral views regarding whether fluency is more important than accuracy.
- The questionnaire indicates a neutral view about difficulty in retrieving formulaic expressions, and adjusting the language.
- The implementation of formulaic expressions had a high support to be integrated in language teaching curriculum.
- The interview provided valuable insights into the understanding and awareness regarding fluency development and communication effectiveness, contextual usage, perceived benefits of formulaic expressions, challenges and avoidance, perceived difficulty of formulaic expressions, and, finally, pedagogical implications and considerations.
- The majority of participants had an understandable insight of the term formulaic expressions. Among the most common types, the participants identified greetings as the most common type.
- Most participants revealed a range of positive views about the use of formulaic expressions. The findings showed that the formulaic expressions are beneficial for fluency development, booster confidence, reduce repetition and hesitation, prevent

misunderstanding, convey clear messages, facilitate productive conversations, and lower cognitive load.

- Challenges that most students encounter when they are using formulaic expressions are memorization, using them in the right context, and understanding their meaning.
- All participants had fears of using formulaic expressions due to complexity, and their figurative meaning.
- All participants expressed unanimous agreement on the implementation of formulaic expressions into the language learning curriculum.

4.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of collected data. The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews, the quantitative data were analyzed statistically and the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The results of this chapter confirm that formulaic expressions play a crucial role in developing students' fluency.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Discussion

This chapter presents the main findings of the current study. It draws connections between the current findings and those of previous studies, shedding light on the role of formulaic expressions in enhancing the EFL students' fluency. Following the discussion, the chapter also provides the conclusion, the limitations of the study, the implications, and recommendations for future research.

The findings of this chapter are discussed to shed light on research questions (see 1.4). This chapter starts with interpreting the results from both the quantitative and the qualitative data, followed by a reflection on how these findings are related to previous studies (see 2.11).

5.1 Common Types of Formulaic Expressions Used by EFL Students

The results of this study present several common types that are used by the EFL students who participated in this study. The majority of the interview participants refer to greetings as the most common type, they also mentioned other common types such as idioms, collocations, and polite or apologetic expressions. They highly rely on everyday routine expressions, greetings, and polite expressions such as *"how are you"* and *"have a nice day"*. They commonly use these expressions because these expressions help them to structure their speech easily without hesitation or pauses. They have mentioned that they do not need to think deeply before they speak. These findings align with Nation (2013), who asserted that the acquisition of core chunks such as greeting expressions, transactional phrases, and conversational management markers should be prioritized in early instruction to enhance basic communicative competence. Also, the participants mentioned collocations as the most common type that are used in their daily conversations. They asserted that they depend on all the expressions that are used in everyday routine, conversations, and social interaction. These findings are in line with Schmitt and Carter (2004), who highlighted the importance of collocations, noting that students who mastered these combinations were more likely to sound native-like rather than the student who did not.

5.2 Students' Perspectives towards Using Formulaic Expressions to Enhance Fluency

The study aimed to investigate the EFL students' perspectives towards the use of formulaic expressions to enhance fluency at the University of Zawia. The findings revealed that several students had positive perspectives. The majority of 40 participants believed that using formulaic language contributes significantly to becoming proficient speakers with a high mean score of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.23, which indicates a strong agreement about the value of formulaic expressions on fluency achievement. Most participants demonstrated a clear understanding of formulaic expressions that are frequently used in their daily communication to enhance fluency and facilitate communication. This suggests that students recognize the value of formulaic expressions in achieving fluency, which aligns with Wood (2006), who found that formulaic expressions contribute to more natural, and fluent speech.

The findings of this study also highlighted the students' perspectives on the importance of fluency and accuracy. The majority of the students expressed a neutral view. The findings indicate a neutral opinion about the importance of fluency over accuracy with a mean score of 2.71, which indicates that the EFL students have different preferences; there is no clear consensus on prioritizing fluency over accuracy in language use. Some students may value fluency, and some may value accuracy. They acknowledged the importance of fluency for smoother and confident communication. They also recognized that accuracy is important for conveying clear and correct messages. This suggests that students perceive both components as equally important and essential to learn language. This neutral opinion aligns with Ellis (2003), who noted that fluency contributes to natural and spontaneous interaction, whereas accuracy ensures grammatical correctness and appropriateness. This finding also aligns with Hymes (1972), who found that fluency and accuracy are both essential components of communicative competence, but their relative importance often depends on the learner's goals, context, and proficiency level. These findings highlighted the students' awareness of the importance of fluency and accuracy in language. This suggests that students value a balanced development of both aspects, which should inform pedagogical practices aiming to enhance overall communicative competence. Also, the findings indicate a neutral view about speech that contains formulaic expressions being more fluent than non-formulaic speech with a mean score of 3.08. The findings also suggest that students hold a more neutral view

regarding the relationship between formulaic expressions and fluency, while previous studies emphasized the positive impact of formulaic expressions on fluency.

The participants' perspectives of the formulaic expressions role in achieving fluency may vary due to the differences in individual experiences, exposure, or awareness of formulaic expressions. Previous studies indicated that the use of formulaic expressions contributes significantly to fluency in spoken language. For example, Wood (2006, 2009) demonstrated that students who practiced and incorporated formulaic sequences into their speech produced longer utterances, at a faster rate, with fewer pauses and more natural rhythm compared to those who did not. Similarly, Pawley and Syder (1983) argued that native speakers achieve fluency by drawing on a large repertoire of formulaic sequences, which allows them to produce language smoothly without constructing it word by word. Boers et al. (2006) also found that students who learned formulaic sequences performed more fluently in oral tasks than those who focused only on individual words or grammar rules. In general, the mean score of 3.41 indicates a positive perspective towards the role of formulaic expressions in developing fluency. However, the mixed responses on the importance of fluency rather than accuracy, and the effectiveness of the speech that contains formulaic expressions suggest that further exploration and discussion may be beneficial in clarifying these interesting concepts among students.

The majority of participants demonstrated that formulaic expressions assisted them to communicate easily and effectively. This finding is consistent with results made by Alhassan and Wood (2015), who found that these expressions helped the students feel more confident and prepared when speaking in real-time, especially in interview settings. Also, another study was conducted by Nguyen and Boers (2019), who found that the explicit instruction on formulaic sequences helped them use these phrases more effectively and with greater understanding.

5.3 Perceived Benefits of using Formulaic Expressions

The findings reveal several benefits of using formulaic expressions. First, formulaic expressions contribute in conveying messages quickly and effectively, achieving a mean score of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.12. This indicates a strong agreement among respondents. Moreover, the data suggest that formulaic expressions contribute to fluency by

enabling speakers to express themselves efficiently across various communicative contexts, with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.32. The influence of formulaic sequences on students' fluency levels was also positively rated, with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.14. This aligns with a previous study conducted by Boers and Lindstromberg (2012), who highlighted the role of formulaic sequences in increasing processing efficiency and reducing hesitation during speech. Integrating formulaic sequences into speech performance can enhance oral proficiency, reflected by a mean score of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.36. These matches findings reached by Wood (2009), who demonstrated that learners who incorporate the formulaic expressions in their speech are producing longer sentences with fewer pauses|. Also, it is evident that formulaic expressions are crucial and essential for the EFL students to sound more natural in their spoken language, achieving a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.23. The use of formulas in speech allows students to achieve a high level of fluency, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.46. This aligns with Pawley and Syder (1983), who argued that native speakers achieve fluency by drawing on a large repertoire of formulaic expressions, and this allow them to speak smoothly without constructing sentences word by word.

The positive contribution of formulaic language in developing learners' fluency received a mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.11. Additionally, the use of formulaic sequences reduces overload processing during speech production, with a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.37, This aligns with Wood (2009), who found that formulaic expressions play a key role in fluency development among EFL students as they allow students to retrieve chunks of language with minimal cognitive effort. Additionally, Formulaic language facilitates communication, earning the highest mean score of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.48. Formulaic sequences enable students to communicate like native speakers, reflected in a mean of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 0.27.

The interview results indicate that, all participants reveal several positive views about the perceived benefits of using formulaic expressions. All participants agreed that these expressions are beneficial for fluency development, booster confidence, reduce repetition and hesitation, prevent misunderstanding, convey clear messages, facilitate productive conversations, and lower the cognitive load. These findings align with the previous studies

which highlighted the benefits of formulaic expressions on fluency. For example, Wray (2002) emphasized the positive influence of formulaic expressions. Also, Wood (2006) found that, there was a positive relation between the formulaic expressions and fluency.

5.4 Challenges encountered by Students When Using Formulaic Expressions

In spite of the perceived benefits of using formulaic expressions, many students face several challenges in using formulaic expressions. The first challenge is memorization. The main findings highlighted that most students have difficulty in memorization. The memory issues led to the difficulty in recalling expressions in real time. They slipped from memory due to their structure or their figurative meaning. Also, the questionnaire results indicate a neutral view about retrieving these expressions. This comes in line with Boers et al. (2006), who found that without repetition and contextual recycling, learners quickly forget formulaic expressions, especially those that are idiomatic or structurally complex. The solution, they argue, is task-based instruction that requires repeated, meaningful use of these expressions in varied contexts. So, it is suggested that through repeated exposure and practical use in real interaction, the students become more confident and fluent because formulaic expressions reduce the cognitive load allowing student to produce language faster. This aligns with Boers and Lindstromberg (2008), who argued that teaching formulaic expressions, from a cognitive linguistics perspective, helps the students to recognize and retrieve them more effectively.

The second challenge is understanding the meaning. The findings indicate that most participants avoid the usage of formulaic expressions, because of uncertainty of the meaning of these formulaic expressions.

The third challenge is using formulaic expressions in the right context. Most participant are not sure about the appropriateness of these expressions, which can be also an obstacle in adjusting the language to formal or informal style. This aligns with a study conducted by Kecskes (2007), who emphasized the socio cultural and contextual barriers that learners must overcome in order to understand and use them appropriately, because they cannot translate them into their L2.

It is suggested that teachers should focus on teaching the formulaic expressions through repetition, adapting and using them meaningfully. The study highlighted the benefits of

using formulaic expressions, but also mentioned some challenges that should be taken into consideration by educational institutions and instructors to help the students overcome these challenges by providing support and guidelines to maximize the benefits.

5.5 Conclusion of the Whole Study

This study aimed to investigate the most common types of formulaic expressions, the students' perspectives towards the use of formulaic expressions, and the challenges that students encounter when they are using these expressions. A mixed method research design was used by integrating questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The findings consistently demonstrate that formulaic expressions play an essential role in facilitating smoother speech, and increasing communicative confidence. Incorporating formulaic expressions into language teaching can significantly enhance students' fluency.

The major findings demonstrated that the majority of the participants had positive attitudes towards using formulaic expressions. The participants believed that using formulaic expressions facilitates communication. They believe that formulaic expressions are beneficial for fluency development, booster confidence, reduce repetition and hesitation, prevent misunderstanding, convey clear messages, facilitate productive conversations, and lower the cognitive load. The findings are consistent with the previous studies which highlighted several benefits of using formulaic expressions. However, the study revealed some challenges that they may encounter such as memorization, understanding their meaning, and using them in the right context.

5.6 Implication of Teaching

The findings of this study have several important implications for language teaching. Firstly, the results underscore the pedagogical significance of formulaic expressions in developing students' fluency. The positive perspectives expressed by the participants highlight the need for teachers to consider the formulaic expressions as an important component of communicative competence. Secondly, the challenges that were encountered by the EFL students particularly with memorization, contextual appropriateness, and comprehension ensure that students require more instructional support and practice opportunities. These challenges suggest that it is not sufficient to expose the students to formulaic expressions, but also the teachers should adopt systematic and rich approaches to teach them. Finally, the

findings imply that curriculum designers should consider integrating formulaic expressions in language teaching as an essential tool to enhance fluency and teachers should make the students aware of the importance of these expressions.

5.7 Recommendations

Recommendations for curriculum designers

- Syllabi designers, and material writers should integrate the formulaic expressions systematically into textbooks and language courses, particularly those which aim to develop fluency.
- Providing training programs for teachers may also emphasize the teaching of formulaic language and prepare teachers with effective techniques for addressing common learner challenges.

Recommendations for teachers

- Integrating the formulaic expressions practice in authentic, communicative contexts, such as role-plays, discussions, and listening tasks, to help students use them naturally and confidently in classroom activities.
- Providing techniques for overcoming challenges, such as practicing formulaic expressions in varied contexts to strengthen contextual understanding.
- Ensuring that students should have personal lists of useful formulaic expressions and practice them regularly to enhance memorization and reduce hesitations in speech.
- Teaching a variety of formulaic expressions explicitly including collocations, idioms, and conversational routines, with highlighting their role in improving fluency.

Recommendations for students

- Practice using the formulaic expressions in speech rather than memorizing isolated words.

5.8 Limitations of the Study

The research study as any other study has limitations. This study was limited to the University of Zawia. It was carried out at the Department of English due to ease of access and cooperation from the institution, which helped the researcher to manage time. The scope of research does not extend to other universities, which may affect the generalization of the

findings. Although the researcher had initially intended to use classroom observation as one of the data collection instruments, this was not possible because of time constraints, and the nature of the students' course schedules, which made the implementation of observations difficult. In spite of these limitations, the researcher believes that the chosen methods provided sufficient data to meet the study aims.

5.9 Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study point to several directions for future research. To begin with, further studies can explore the effectiveness of specific teaching methods for overcoming the challenges that were identified here, such as memorization and contextual use of formulaic expressions. Also, from the stated limitations, it is substantial to suggest some recommendations for future research in the field. Therefore, researchers are recommended to investigate this research topic adopting a mixture of research tools such as classroom observation, and experimental design for achieving reliable and valid results. Moreover, more investigation on the impact of using formulaic expressions to enhance fluency should be carried out. This could involve conducting follow-up studies with the same group of students after they have finished their postgraduate studies to assess how the use of formulaic expressions has influenced their fluency.

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Appendices

Appendix1: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students, I am Sarah Alzawi, a MA student in the department of English at university of Zawia, I am conducting a research study for MA under the title "the use of the formulaic expressions to enhance the students' fluency".

The following questions are made for gathering data for my research paper, you are overly welcomed to be a part of validating the results by answering this questionnaire. The aim of this study is to explore the importance of formulaic expressions in developing the students' fluency in order to be English language proficient speakers. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality. Please, tick the best choice (s) that sound appropriate for you. Thanks for your incorporation.

This questionnaire is divided into four sections please make sure that you complete all the sections.

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1	Fluency is the ability to express one's ideas in a coherent, smooth manner, resembling native-like speech performance.					
2	Formulaic expressions assist in conveying a message quickly and effectively.					
3	Formulaic expressions contribute to language fluency by allowing speakers to express themselves more efficiently and effectively in various communicative contexts.					

4	Formulaic expressions affect students' fluency levels.					
5	Employing formulaic expressions in your speech performance can enhance your oral proficiency.					
6	Formulaic expressions are very important for EFL students to sound natural in their speaking.					
7	Learners reach a high level of fluency through the employment of formulas in their speech.					
8	Formulaic language has a positive contribution in developing learners' fluency.					
9	The use of formulaic sequences decreases the processing overload for speech production by making the process shorter.					
10	Formulaic language facilitates communication.					
11	Formulaic sequences enable students to interact with native-like speakers.					
12	A fluent speaker should have a range of formulaic expressions.					
13	It is very important to implement formulaic language in the language-teaching curriculum.					

14	Since the use of formulaic language improves speaking proficiency, I would recommend my colleagues to employ it in their speech.					
15	As a student, I think fluency is more important than accuracy.					
16	A speech containing formulaic sequences is considered more fluent than non-formulaic speech.					
17	As a student, I find difficulties in retrieving formulaic language.					
18	After using formulaic expressions, I cannot adjust the language to formal or informal settings.					

This is the link of the questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/XejC42UBJpKJ4EH58>

Appendix 2: Students' Semi-Structured Interview Questions

To gain deeper insights into the research objectives, a semi-structured interview was conducted consisting of ten well-structured and organized questions. These questions were carefully designed and divided into four sections to address the three main objectives of the study which are: the most common types of formulaic expressions that are used by EFL students, investigate the students' perspectives toward using these expressions, and the challenges that students may encounter when they are using these expressions in spoken language. The semi-structured format provided flexibility that the students could answer it at the mean time.

Section 1: Types of Formulaic Expressions

Q1- What is your idea about "formulaic expressions"?

Q2- What types of formulaic expressions do you use most often?

Q3- In your opinion, how do formulaic expressions contribute to fluency in spoken language?

Section 2: Students' Perspectives

Q4- How do formulaic expressions help you communicate more effectively?

Q5- Do you think formulaic expressions are more useful in formal or informal settings? Why?

Q6 – In your experience, what are the main benefits of using formulaic expressions?

Section 3: Challenges

Q7- What challenges do you face when learning or using formulaic expressions? Memorization, understanding meaning, using them in the right context?

Q8- Do you find some types of formulaic expressions more difficult to learn or use than others?

Q9- Have you ever avoided using formulaic expressions because you were unsure of their meaning or appropriateness? Why?

Section 4: Suggestions and Recommendations

Q10- Do you agree with the implementation of formulaic expressions in language teaching curriculum?

Appendix 3: Samples of Interview Transcript.

Sample one

The interviewer: hi, how are you? I hope that you are doing well, I am Sarah Alzawi, I am conducting a research study about using formulaic expressions to enhance the EFL' students' fluency in their spoken language. I am glad to speak with you. I would like to inform you that all the information you provide will be used for academic purposes as part of my master's thesis, your responses will be kept completely confidential, and your name or any identifying details will not be shared. If you're ready, we can start the interview.

The interviewee: hi, It is my pleasure to participate in your study, yeah I am ready let's start.

The interviewer: What is your idea about formulaic expressions?

The interviewee: well, I am quite familiar with the word formulaic expressions as they are fixed or semi-fixed phrases commonly used in communication like idioms, collocations.

The interviewer: ok well the second question is What types of formulaic expressions do you use most often?

The interviewee: actually, I often use the ones which are related to the classroom, as you know, we are teachers, for example, greetings and expressions like, let's get started, and any questions.

The interviewer: great, the third question is in your opinion, how do formulaic expressions contribute to fluency in spoken language?

The interviewee: I believe that it plays a crucial role in making the language sounds more natural and reduce the dependency on cognitive recognition, so it helps to sound smoother, and enhances the fluency in a very good way.

The interviewer: good, now let's move to question number four which is how do formulaic expressions help you communicate more effectively?

The interviewee: yes, sure, I believe that it helps me to convey the message in a more natural way, and it sounds more smoother, and it helps in expressing myself in an easy way.

The interviewer: yeah exactly, do you think formulaic expressions are more useful in formal or informal settings? Why?

The interviewee: It's useful for both, in the formal settings, like in academic teaching, we use transition words to save the rhythm of the speech, which is, in informal settings, it helps us to convey the meaning in a natural and short way, so it's useful in both.

The interviewer: question number six, in your experience, what are the main benefits of using formulaic expressions?

The interviewee: It's very important in terms of teaching, it makes the student foster their fluency as well as their understanding and comprehension.

The interviewer: great, now let's move to the seventh question, what challenges do you face when learning or using formulaic expressions? For example, memorization, understanding meaning, using them in the right context.

The interviewee: regarding the challenges, it's difficult to use them, you know, it's difficult to remember them, sometimes to use them in the correct context, or to understand them. Some formal expressions which are related to the culture, because, as you know, foreign speakers, or foreign people, so the culture plays a role, it affects our understanding and the use of these expressions.

The interviewer: you are right, the eighth question is do you find some types of formulaic expressions more difficult to learn or use than others?

The interviewee: of course, idioms are the hardest one, because they do not convey literal meaning, it doesn't mean exactly what it sounds like.

The interviewer: ok, the question before the last have you ever avoided using formulaic expressions because you were unsure of their meaning or appropriateness? Why?

The interviewee: yes, yes, sure, especially in academic settings, we sometimes, during the presentation, I avoid these expressions, as I am not sure of their meaning.

The interviewer: yeah, great now the last question do you agree with the implementation of formulaic expressions in language teaching curriculum?

The interviewee: yes, certainly, I believe that, formal expressions should be integrated in the curriculum, so if the student be at least familiar with it, or with them, if we have a topic or a subject which is give the student the ideas how to use it, some famous or common ones, so it will help to improve the fluency as well as the way they understand the formality expression, so definitely I recommend it to be a part of our curriculum, so the student will have an idea how to use it.

Sample two

The interviewer: hi, how are you? I hope that you are doing well, I am Sarah Alzawi, I am conducting a research study about using formulaic expressions to enhance the EFL' students' fluency in their spoken language. I am glad to speak with you. I would like to inform you that all the information you provide will be used for academic purposes as part of my master's thesis, your responses will be kept completely confidential, and your name or any identifying details will not be shared. If you're ready, we can start the interview.

The interviewee: I am glad to be here in this interesting interview, I am ready.

The interviewer: What is your idea about formulaic expressions?

The interviewee: my idea about formulaic expressions that they are commonly used as a combination of words that native speakers often use in daily conversations and everyday communication, such as greetings, for example, how are you, nice to meet you, or polite expression, for example, thank you very much, and so on.

The interviewer: ok well the second question is What types of formulaic expressions do you use most often?

The interviewee: the most used formulaic expressions are those which related to social everyday routines such as good morning, how are you, or how are you doing, have a nice day, nice to meet you.

The interviewer: great, the third question is in your opinion, how do formulaic expressions contribute to fluency in spoken language?

The interviewee: in my opinion, formulaic expressions play a big role in improving fluency in spoken language. I mean, when I am using these expressions, I don't have to spend too much time thinking how to form or construct a sentence, but when I use the fixed expressions as chunks of words which helps to speak more smoothly, and confidently, especially in daily conversations, that makes the conversation flow naturally, without too much pauses and hesitations, and breaks down.

The interviewer: good, now let's move to question number four which is how do formulaic expressions help you communicate more effectively?

The interviewee: It makes it easy for me to express myself and my ideas appropriately. For example, when I use these expressions, they help me sound more natural. I mean like a native speaker. Besides, these expressions save time and reduce hesitation, which is an important part in an effective communication.

The interviewer: yeah exactly, do you think formulaic expressions are more useful in formal or informal settings? Why?

The Interviewee. I think formulaic expressions are useful in both formal and informal sitting. For example, in informal sitting, it's good to use expressions like long-time Lucy or WhatsApp. Using these expressions helps to sound more friendly and natural. While in formal sitting, using these expressions helps to sound polite. For example, thanks for your attention. So, I believe they are useful in both sittings. But the most important thing here is to choose the perfect and the right expression. And it's depending on the person that you are speaking with or the situation and the context that you are in.

The interviewer: question number six, in your experience, what are the main benefits of using formulaic expressions?

The interviewee: the main benefits of using formulaic expressions are: enhancing fluency, and the speed of speech. I mean they allow the speakers to speak very quickly without constructing the sentences word by word. And also, they help social culture competence. That means using these expressions helps learners to sound polite or professional in formal sitting or friendly in informal sitting.

The interviewer: great, now let's move to the seventh question, what challenges do you face when learning or using formulaic expressions? For example, memorization, understanding meaning, using them in the right context.

The interviewee: I usually face two challenges in using formulaic expressions, one for memorization and the second for understanding the meaning. For the memorization, formulaic expressions can be a challenge because they are often longer than a single vocabulary, which is difficult to memorize them as a whole chunk. For understanding the meaning, they can be a challenge, because they are idiomatic, and their meaning are not always clear from the word themselves. For example, once on a blue moon, you can't understand these expressions.

The interviewer: you are right, the eighth question is do you find some types of formulaic expressions more difficult to learn or use than others? **The interviewee:** the most difficult one is the idioms, because their meaning are often non-literally, and often you can't understand it when translate it word by word. Another example here is spill the beans, its meaning is to relieve the secret, which is completely different from its meaning, when the words are isolated.

The interviewer: ok, the question before the last have you ever avoided using formulaic expressions because you were unsure of their meaning or appropriateness? Why?

The interviewee: I really avoided using them many times. To be honest most times, because I was not certain about the meaning, so I choose not to use them as a fear of misunderstanding.

The interviewer: yeah, great now the last question do you agree with the implementation of formulaic expressions in language teaching curriculum?

The interviewee: I strongly agree with including the formulaic expressions in language teaching curriculum as the goal of learning the language, which is to be as a native speaker's right. So, formulaic expressions are a huge part of how native speakers communicate, so teaching them helps the students sound more natural, and can promote like native alike.

Appendix 4: An invitation to Participate in an Interview

Dear students,

My name is Sara khalifa Alzawi, and I am a MA student at University of Zawia at English department. I am conducting a research study. This research is about using formulaic expressions which focuses on the common types of formulaic expressions, the students' perspectives towards using the formulaic expressions, and the students' challenges that they encounter when they are using these expressions.

I am reaching out because your background would be invaluable to this research. I would be delighted to interview you at a time that suits you. The interview will take approximately [30–45 minutes] and can be conducted via Facebook and WhatsApp.

Your participation is voluntary:

You are welcome to ask questions or withdraw at any time without consequence. All responses will be kept confidential in the findings.

If you are willing to participate, please reply to my email. I would be happy to provide further details or discuss any concerns.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to contribute to meaningful research. I look forward to speaking with you!

Best regards,

Sarah khalifa Alzawi