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Research Article

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USING PREFABRICATED PATTERNS AND BEING FLUENT IN EFL SPEECH

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ABSTRACT
Fluency has been the focus of a bulk of studies in second language teaching field. This study was an attempt to investigate the role of prefabricated patterns in Iranian Englishforeign language (EFL) learners` fluent speech.To do so, 30 EFL fluent speakers were selected. To ensure their fluency in speech, two questions from IELTS speaking testwere selected and the participants were asked to answer the questions orally.The participants answers were recorded and were analyzed based on the definition of fluency which was used in this study. The number of prefabricated patterns used in the speech of the participant's wasalso calculated. The results of Pearson correlation showed that there was a strong correlation between using prefabricated patterns and being fluent in EFL speech.

Keywords: *Prefabricated Pattern, Fluency*

INTRODUCTION
Fluency is an important element of speech proficiency, which is usually measured by temporal variables of speech such as speed, pauses, length of runs of speech and the number of words or syllables uttered between hesitations (Wood, 2007). In order to create the conditions in which foreign language learners increase their fluency, the language teachers need to know how fluency develops (Chambers, 1997). Wood (2007) reminded that for fluency building, it is important that learners betaught chunks, collocations, and formulaic sequences (Wood, 2007).
Prefabricated patterns, which are multi-word utterances stored and retrieved holistically from memory, received the researchers' attention from many years ago, and due to their dominance over freely generated utterances and their role in reducing the processing-load, they result in fluent speech (Wray, 2002). Also according to Kecskes (2007) the use of prefabricated patterns indicates a speech community's preference of language use in certain situations thus; it makes language performance appear 'native-like' (Kecskes, 2007).

Review of Literature
Due to the strengthening position of English as a language for international communication or, in other words, as a lingua franca, the need for mastery in English speaking as dramatically increased. It is very important to find and use the best instructional methods, materials, activities, media, and other requirements that will help the learners master speaking skill with realizing the high importance of speaking fluency in EFL programs.
A fluent speaker of a foreign or second language can be determined as an individual who can speak at length about a variety of topics, with few pauses, while using humor, sarcasm and a range of semantic and grammatical complexities. Using language chunks is an important part of oral fluency because they are easy to process and produce. Some of those chunks of language that will help students avoid awkward or misplaced pauses are formulaic sequences, which are one of the most commonly perceived signs of non-fluency (Rossiter, 2009).
In studies of using formulaic sequences in fluency foundation (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Wray, 2000) and research associating with spoken fluency and its development (Wood, 2009; Oberg, 2013) have shown that native speakers or highly fluent second language learners most often have longer runs and shorter pause time, which are usually regarded as key indicators of fluency. It likely attributed to fluent speakers having a larger repertoire of formulaic sequences to help balance skills,

attention, and planning during speech. Pawley and Syder (1983) argued that mastery of a body of lexicalized sentence stems have a direct role on achieving fluency. They proposed that native speakers do not produce speech word-for-word rather they focus on rhythm and variety, combine memorized chunks and produce creative connections of lexical strings as well as concepts. It seems likely that fluency greatly will be enhanced by having control on a large number of formulaic sequences. They said that only minority of spoken clauses is novel, and that memorized chunks form a high proportion of the speech of everyday conversation(Pawley and Syder, 1983).

Drawing upon many researchers, (Pawley and Syder, 1983; Wray, 2000; Wood, 2001) definitions of formulaic sequences considerably focus on the notion that they are multi-word units or strings of language, and they are stored in and retrieved from long-term memory as if they were single lexical units in spontaneous speech production. In addition, researchers have noted that formulaic sequences help learners cope with the complexity of various social situations, make orderly and clear communication, and develop a sense of group identity.

Research Question

1. Is there any relationship between the number of prefabricated patterns in speech and fluent speech?

Research Hypothesis

Based on the research question mentioned above, the following hypotheses emerged:

H0. There is no relationship between prefabricated patterns and fluent speech.

Significance of the Study

Improving students' speaking fluency has always been a challenge for English foreign language (EFL) teachers (Nazara, 2011). The importance of prefabricated patterns in fluent speech, and the lack of knowledge about them by non-native speakers, may be one of the factors resulting in poor performance. For achieving native-like competence and fluency, English foreign language learners need to be informed that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and utilize formulaic language as unanalyzed chunks (Oberg, 2013).

No studies published on analyzing the spoken discourse of second language learners in detail with regard to the nature and functions of formulaic sequences in fluency gain in Iran. So, the significance of this study emerged from following reasons: To see whether using prefabricated patterns in speech has any relation with being fluent among EFL fluent speakers or not and to determine the extent to which EFL learners` fluent speech is affected by knowledge of prefabricated patterns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

Participants

This study conducted in some private institutes in Kermanshah. Based on the purpose of the study, 30 fluent speakers of English participated in this study. All participants were native speakers of Persian who have been learning English as a foreign language. As this study was conducted to study fluent speech, the participants` gender was not considered. They all had studied English for at least 5 years in private institutes.

Instrumentation

In order to carry out this study several instruments were used. To measure prefabricated patterns in the speech of the participants, at first IELTS speaking test was used and the participants were asked to participate in this speaking fluency test.

As the researcher needed to analyze the participants` speeches and to mark the number of prefabricated patterns that wereused by every participant, the participants` speeches were videotaped during the time they were answering the IELTS speaking tests.

Procedure

In order to collect the data for the present research, 37 fluent speakers of English as a foreign language were selected by the researcher. The results of IELTS speaking test based on Farrokhi`s definition of fluency that has been used in this research (Farrokhi, 2014), showed that 30 participants were fluent in

speaking English. Then the researcher asked each participant to answer each question orally according to IELTS allocated time and recorded some videos from the participants when they tried to answer the questions. After that, the researcher analyzed the sample video recording speeches based on the number of formulaic speeches that every participant used in answering the questions and the rate of speech for each participant.

Data Analysis

Participants` language productions were analyzed based on the following detailed variables:

a) Fluency:

- Rate of speech (in syllables per second) was calculated by dividing the total number of syllables produced in each turn by the number of seconds taken to produce it; including all the syllables contained in repetitions, repairs and lexical fillers multiplied by 100 minus the number of dysfluency markers that each participant had. Rate of speech appears to be one of the main indicators of fluency (Wood, 2006).

b) Formulaic language

- The number of prefabricated patterns in speeches;
- The number of collocations that participants used;
- The number of idioms in speech samples;

Since the research question tried to measure the relation between the number of prefabricated patterns and fluent speech, the researcher used Pearson correlation to find whether there was any relationship between the number of prefabricated patterns and fluent speech.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to compare the obtained results, Pearson product-moment correlation, rate of fluency, the number of prefabs were calculated and their percentage tables are drawn.

The Analysis of Speech Samples for Each Participant

One type of quantitative studies has investigated speech rate, generally understood, as the amount of speech produced over a period of time, such as the number of syllables emitted per second. This led to a suggested norm of six syllables (plus or minus one) per second (Hieke, 1985). Of course, this is dependent on the type of speech, where a basic distinction may be made between prepared and impromptu speech. In table 1, the data gathered for this study is shown.

Table 1: Data description in this study

1.	Total number of participants in this study	30
2.	Total sample time of the participants speech	180 min
3.	Total number of prefabricated patterns used in participants speech	930

As table one show, the total sample speeches recorded from all 30 participants through answering the IELTS speaking questions were 180 minutes and the total numbers of prefabricated patterns used by participants were930 prefabricated patterns.

Table 2: Correlation between prefabricated patterns and fluent speech

		RF	**NP**
1.	Pearson correlation	1	.832
2.	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
3.	N	30	30

***.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

The speech samples that were recorded for each participant were analyzed separately based on Farrokhi`s (2014) definition of fluency. So the rate of fluency for each participant was calculated exactly by counting the number of syllables plus the number of syllables/phonation time ratio multiplied by 100 minus the number of dysfluency markers (silent and substitutions). Pauses have not considered as dysfluency

markers since they used for getting time to think and shaping new ideas (Lewis, 1993). In addition, the researcher based on the speech samples counted the number of prefabricated patterns that were used by each participant. Then, the null hypothesis, which was stated as follows, was tested. Table 2 points the results of Pearson correlation.

As shown in table 2, the correlation between fluent speech and the number of prefabricated patterns was .832 and the sig (2-tailed) was less than α decision level, which was set at (0.05). So the research hypothesis can be rejected and it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between EFL fluent speech and using prefabricated patterns.

To examine the extent of correlation coefficient between the rate of speech and using prefabricated patterns, there should be positive correlation between the two variables. To this end, the following scatter was provided.

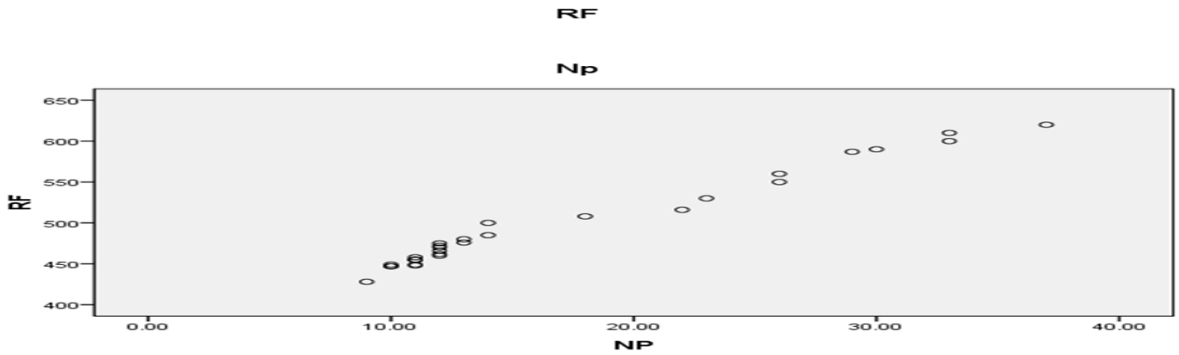

Figure 1: The relation between using prefabs and being fluent in EFL speech

Based on figure 1, there appears to be a positive correlation between the two variables that is to, being fluent in EFL speech is associated with higher levels of using prefabricated patterns.

Conclusion

Oral speech is very creative but does not consist of unique and independently creative utterances and it is the free flowing form of language use. Formulaic sequences connect these unique and independent utterances like glue. This is why formulaic sequences are an integral part of fluent oral communication, since they help solve many of the problems identified as non-fluency. Formulaic sequences can increase the rate of speech, reduce false starts and reformulations and limit self-repetitions and frequent pauses for language learners by providing the fixed chunks of language that begin, continue and conclude effective oral communication. Without these fully formed phrasal sequences at the ready of the language user, communication can become slow, disconnected and awkward. The findings of this study are important becausethey provide evidence that the use of prefabricated patterns can improve Iranian student's ability to be fluent in EFL learning. Taken together, the quantitative results in this study clearly confirm the hypotheses and indicate the role for formulaic sequences in the development of fluent second language speech.

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