

## The Application of Formulaic Expressions in The Conversation Texts of Senior High School English Textbooks

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study was to analyze the application of formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of senior high school English textbooks grade X, XI, and XII entitled “Bahasa Inggris” published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This topic was chosen because formulaic competence is a component of the communicative competence that helps the students to speak native-like. The researcher applied qualitative approach and used discourse analysis as the design of the study. The objects of the study were twenty-five conversation texts of English textbooks grade X, XI, and XII. They were analyzed based on the list of formulaic expressions proposed by Biber et al. (1999). The researcher found that the application of the formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the English textbooks was not fully done. There were only four out of five formulaic expressions types as formulated by Biber et al. (1999). They were lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. They did not frequently occur in the conversation texts of the textbooks. They were only 21.9% of the total expressions. It was concluded that the expressions were not native-like, so the conversation texts of the textbooks need to be improved.

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## INTRODUCTION

English is the foreign language obligated to be taught in Indonesia. The goal is for developing students to be able to communicate using English. Therefore, the language instruction must be integrated with the components of communicative competence. Celce-Murcia (1995), "communicative language teaching should be based on implicitly or explicitly on some models of communicative competence".

Celce-Murcia (2007) proposes a new model of communicative competence for language teachers. She adds formulaic competence as the new one and uses term interactional competence to replace actional competence. There are six competencies in her model. They are discourse competence as the core competence, sociocultural competence, interactional competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, and strategic competence.

Formulaic competence refers to fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interaction (Celce-Murcia, 2007). It is the ability in using formulaic expressions. The formulaic expressions are sequences of words appears to be prefabricated language. Wray and Perkins (2000) define "formulaic expressions will be a sequence, continuous, or discontinuous of words or other meaning elements, which is or appears to be, prefabricated". There are many names for and ways to describe formulaic expressions, such as lexical phrase, routine formulae, fixed expressions, formulaic speech, and formulaic language.

The formulaic competence is separated from the linguistic competence and it is needed to stand independently as one competence because Celce-Murcia thinks that the formulaic competence is as important as the linguistic competence. Celce-Murcia (2007), "formulaic competence is the counterbalance to linguistic competence". It means that the formulaic competence is as important as linguistic competence. The formulaic competence has

grown to be important. The students will speak fluently and native-like if they have formulaic competence. The statement is supported by Hunston in Celce-Murcia (2007), "fluent speakers of a language draw on formulaic knowledge of the target language as often as they use systemic linguistic knowledge". It is also in line with Biber et al.'s (1999) concept, "producing natural English is not just a matter of constructing well-formed sentences but of using well-learned lexical expressions in appropriate places". Therefore, the examples of formulaic expressions are important for students to achieve communicative competence. These reasons why the researcher chooses formulaic expressions as the topic of this present study.

In the present study, the researcher analyzed the application of formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of senior high school English textbooks entitled 'Bahasa Inggris' published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The main goal of the analysis is to determine the conversation texts are native like or not. It is important to be done because the textbooks are written by non-native speakers of English.

The researcher chose the textbooks because they are published by the Ministry of Education and Culture and used at all senior high schools in Indonesia which apply the 2013 curriculum. The textbooks contain examples of conversation texts and they are used as the role models for students in English teaching and learning. For this reason, the conversation texts should reflect the natural spoken language produced by English native speakers or native-like. By analyzing the application of formulaic expressions in the conversation texts will give insight about the quality of the conversation texts, they are native like or not.

The textbooks consist of three levels for senior high school. They are for grade X, XI, and XII. The researcher analyzed three textbooks to know the application of formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the textbook in every level of senior high school.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducts this study with the title "The

application of Formulaic Expressions in the Conversation Texts of Senior High School English Textbooks". In this study, the researcher identified types, frequency, and functions of the formulaic expression to analyze how formulaic expressions are applied in the conversation texts of the senior high school English textbooks.

## METHODS

In this study, the researcher applied qualitative approach and discourse analysis, as the research design to explore and describe the findings of the analysis. She described and explained the application of the formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the English textbooks. The objects of the study were senior high school English textbooks grade X, XI and XII entitled "Bahasa Inggris" published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The data were formulaic expressions, the source of the data were conversation texts. The units of analysis were minor and major clauses. The researcher used two instruments. They were observation sheet and the list of formulaic expressions based on Biber et al. (1999). The formulaic expressions were identified and classified based on Biber et al. (1999). After that, the frequency of occurrence, and functions of formulaic expressions were also analyzed in order to see whether the expressions in the conversation texts of the textbooks were native like or not. Finally, the findings were compared to Biber et al.'s (1999) theory and explained qualitatively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section specially presents the findings and discusses the formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the English textbooks of the 2013 curriculum. It presents all of what had been found out in the three English textbooks.

### Types of Formulaic Expressions

Based on the findings of data analysis, there are four types of formulaic expressions

found in the conversational texts of the English textbooks grade X, XI and XII. They are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. Most of the lexical bundles in the textbooks do not represent complete structural units, but they can be grouped into some categories according to their structure correlates.

The lexical bundles in the textbook grade X are classified into personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase (e.g. *I've got to go...*), yes/no question fragments (e.g. *do you have...?*) and wh-question fragment (e.g. *what do you think?*). There is only one example of the idiomatic phrase in the conversation texts of tenth grade's English textbooks, that is *look at*. The structure is preposition verbs.

The third type of formulaic expressions is collocations; grammatical and lexical collocations. The examples of grammatical collocations are *work in, come to, waiting for, and welcome to*. The examples of lexical collocations are *a great job, best friends, long weekend, go fishing, little brother, good idea, and special guests*.

The fourth type of formulaic expressions is inserts. Based on the findings of data analysis, there are several types of inserts occurred in conversational texts of the tenth grade's English textbooks. The inserts consist of interjections (e.g. *oh*), greetings (e.g. *hello, hi*), farewells (e.g. *see you later*), discourse markers (e.g. *well*), attention signals (e.g. *hey*), response forms (e.g. *yes, no*) and polite formulae (e.g. *thank you, please*). In short, there are seven types of inserts used in the conversational texts. These types can be used by the students in their actual conversation in order to sound natural.

The formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of eleventh grade's English textbooks are not much different in the formulaic expressions in the tenth grade's English textbook. There are also three structure categories of lexical bundles in the conversation texts. They are personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase (e.g. *I think I have...*), yes/no questions form (e.g. *Do you have any...?*) and wh-question form (e.g. *What can I do with it?*).

There are four idiomatic phrases in the conversation texts of the textbook such as *out of*

*style, come to life, well off, and pay off.* The idiomatic phrases have functioned to describe a noun. The collocations in the conversation texts of the textbook are lexical collocations (e.g. *aisle seat, sweetheart, wedding anniversary*).

The inserts in the conversation texts of the textbook are greeting form (e.g. *good morning*), farewell expressions (e.g. *have a nice, see you then*), polite formula (e.g. *please thank you, you are welcome*), response form (e.g. *yes, ok, no, my pleasure*) and expletive (*my God*).

The twelfth grade's English textbook has more varied formulaic expressions than the tenth and eleventh grade's English textbooks. There are six of out of fourteen lexical bundles structural as formulated by Biber et al. (1999) in the conversation texts of the textbook for class XII. They are personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase (PP + LVP), adverbial clause fragment, yes-no question fragments, verb phrase with an active verb, wh-question fragments, and personal pronoun with *be*.

The idiomatic phrases in the conversation texts of the textbook are *around the corner* and *look at*. The collocations in the conversation texts of the textbook are *go back, pass the exam, good quality, print out, pay attention, go to, take care, winter clothes, cooling down, and depending on*.

The inserts in the conversation texts of the textbook are greeting expressions such as *hello, hi*. There is only one the example of the attention getter, it is *hey*. There is some response formula in almost all the conversation such as *yes, sure, okay, you're right, really, yeah*. There are some examples of polite formula in the conversation texts of the textbook, such as *please, thanks, I am sorry to hear that, get well soon, excuse me, thank you, no worries, I see, you are right, and alright*.

#### Formulaic Expressions Frequency

The conversations of the tenth grade's English textbook excluding stage directions and character descriptions contain 878 total words. The average number of words in a conversational turn is 13 words. There are 70 formulaic expressions that occur in the conversation texts of the English textbook. The

total number of words comprising formulaic expressions is 147 words. It is only 17% in total words. It consists of 39 inserts, 12 lexical bundles, 18 collocations and 1 idiomatic phrase. There is no example of coordinated binomial phrase.

There are five conversation texts of the eleventh grade's English textbook. The conversations excluding stage directions and character descriptions contain 748 total words. The average number of words in a conversational turn is 10 words. The formulaic expressions occur 66 times. The total number of words comprising formulaic expressions is 149 words. It is 19.9% in total words. It consists of 40 inserts, 17 inserts and 6 collocations, and 3 idiomatic phrases.

The twelfth grade's English textbook consists of fifteen conversation texts, 97 take turns and 954 words excluding stage directions and characters descriptions. The formulaic expressions occur 95 times. The total number of words comprising formulaic expressions is 200 words. It is only 20.1% in total words. It consists of 58 inserts, 25 lexical bundles, 11 collocations and 2 idiomatic phrases.

Based on the explanation above, the three textbooks have almost the same of the distribution and the frequency of formulaic expressions. The frequency distribution of the formulaic expressions in the three textbooks is unbalance. The number of formulaic expressions is less than the number of non-formulaic expressions. It implies that the textbooks do not provide sufficiently the conversation texts which contain formulaic expressions.

#### Functions of Formulaic Expressions in the Conversation Texts

The lexical bundles in the conversation texts of the three English textbooks have functioned as stance expressions and discourse organizer. There are some examples of stance expressions in the conversation texts of textbooks. The first example is *I want to know...* It has functioned as stance expressions and expresses desire. The second example is *I've got to go...* It has the specific function as obligation

bundle. The next examples are *I don't think I...* It is epistemic stance bundles. The next example is *we are going to...* The expression has the specific function as a prediction, attitudinal stance.

The lexical bundles in the conversation texts of the textbooks also have functioned as discourse organizers. The examples are *what do you think? what do you mean?* The expressions have functioned as a topic introduction in the conversations texts.

There is only one idiomatic phrase in the tenth grade's English textbook. It is *look at*. It has a function to direct the attention of the interlocutor.

In this part, researcher presents some examples of the collocations. The grammatical collocations are *work in* and *come to*. The collocation *work in* has the function to reflect the adverb of phrase. The collocation *come to* has functioned as exclamatory exhortation to act. The examples of lexical collocations are *a great job* and *good idea*. The examples have functioned as the complement.

The inserts in the conversation texts of the textbooks for grade X have functioned as greeting, polite formula, response form, attention getter, discourse marker, and interjection. The greeting expressions are *Hello*, and *Hi*. The polite formula expressions are *please*, *thanks a lot*, *thank you very much*, and *good luck*. The response form expressions are *sure*, *yes*, *really*, *no*, *yes*, *I see*, and *okay*. The attention getter is *hey*. The discourse marker is *Oh* and the interjection is *Wow*.

#### The Application of Formulaic Expressions

In this part, the researcher answers the research questions "*how is the application of the formulaic expressions in the conversation texts*". The researcher evaluated the conversation texts of the English textbooks based on the findings of types, frequency and functions of formulaic expressions which have explained in the previous section.

The English textbooks are written by a non-native speaker of English. Therefore, there are needed to evaluate the application of the formulaic expressions as formulated by Biber et

al. (1999) in the conversation texts of the textbooks. In this part, the researcher explained the result of the evaluation in each textbook.

The application of formulaic expressions as formulated by Biber et al. (1999) in the conversation texts of the tenth grade's English textbooks is not fully done. Biber et al. (1999), propose five types of formulaic expressions which always occurred in the English native speaker's conversation but only four types are found in the conversation texts of the Textbook. They are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. There is no example of coordinated binomial phrases.

Biber et al. (1999), proposed fourteen categories of lexical bundles but only three categories are in the conversation texts. They are personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase, yes/no question fragments and wh-question fragments. Based on the corpus linguistic, most native speakers of English frequently use progressive tense in their conversation. Unfortunately, the expressions in the conversation texts of the textbook are in the simple present tense.

There is only one example of idiomatic phrase in the conversation texts of the tenth grade's English textbook, such as *look at*. The structure is preposition verb. It consists of verb followed by preposition. It is compared to Biber et al. (1999), English native speakers not only use activity verb but also mental verb (*believe*, *heard*, *know*) and communicative verb (*talk to*), causative verb (*call for*), occurrence verb (*fall into*), existence or relationship verb (*refer to*) and aspectual verb (*begin with*). It means that the textbook grade X only introduce one out of seven verbs types proposed by Biber et al.(1999) to the students.

The next type of formulaic expressions which is applied in the conversation texts of the tenth grade's English textbook is collocations; grammatical and lexical collocations in the conversation texts of the textbook. The examples of grammatical collocations are in the conversation texts in the textbook grade X are *work in*, *come to*, *waiting for*, and *welcome to*. The structure is verb + particle. The free combination of verb particle that found in the conversation

texts are different with the finding of corpus linguistic proposed by Biber et al. (1999). Corpus study tells that the conversation among English native speakers uses some directional particles not only *to, in, with*, but also *back, down, up*, and *on*. It means that many particles are used in the conversation of the English native speakers. It is clear that the examples free combinations of verb phrase are fewer than the English native speakers used in their conversation.

There are some lexical collocations in the textbooks grade X such as *great job, best friend, long weekend, little brother, good idea, special guests, aisle seat, sweetheart, good quality*, and *winter clothes*. The structure of the examples is adjective + noun. Based on McCarthy and O'Dell (2008:12) there are five different types of collocations that frequently used by English native speakers, the conversation texts of the textbook only present one of the structural collocations. It is adjective and noun.

Inserts are dominated in the conversation texts of the tenth grade's English textbook. It is compared to Biber et al. (1999), the frequency is not as various inserts in the corpus linguistic. The conversation of this textbook only present two examples of greeting formula and they are informal greeting, one interjection (*Wow*), one attention signals (*Hey*), four response forms, and two kinds of polite formula; thanking and requesting. In contrast, Biber et al. (1999) state that English native speakers have many more expressions of inserts.

In this part, the researcher also presents some examples of nonnative-like expression that are found in the conversation texts of the textbook.

Rahmi: Hello. *How are things going on*, Sinta?

Sinta : Hi. Good and you?

(Source: Bahasa Inggris, 2014:19-20)

The expression *How are things going on* is not native-like expressions. There is no expression in the Biber et al's (1999) list. The English native speakers usually use expressions *how are you* or *how's it going* for asking someone's condition.

In the eleventh grade's English textbook, the researcher found four formulaic expressions types. They are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. There is no example of coordinated binomial phrases.

The lexical bundles in the conversation texts of the textbook grade XI have the same category with the lexical bundles in the textbook grade X. They are three out of fourteen categories as proposed by Biber et al. (1999). They are personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase, yes/no question fragments and wh-question fragments.

Most examples of PP + LVP bundles are also used *I* as the personal pronoun and one example of a bundle with *we* as the personal pronoun such as *I think I have...* and *we would like you to...* The pronoun *I* is also used to report the negative state in the conversation texts in the textbook as in *I don't have a...* Similarly, the findings of Biber et al. (1999) study shows that English native speakers mostly use first personal pronoun *I* than the other personal pronoun (*you, we, he, she, it*) in their conversation. It means that there is a similarity between the uses of the pronoun *I* in the conversational sections of English textbook and the conversation among the English native speakers.

All utterances in the conversation texts in this textbook also use simple present tense. There is no example of expression with progressive tense. Unfortunately, it is different with the Biber et al. (1999), because, in the corpus linguistic, the most frequent tense is progressive tense.

The next type of formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the textbook is idiomatic phrases. There are four examples of idiomatic phrases in the conversation texts of this textbook, such as *out of style, come to life, well off and pay off*. They are in the second conversation. In contrast, English native speakers not only use activity verb but also the mental verb (*believe, heard, know*) and communicative verb (*talk to*), causative verb (*call for*), occurrence verb (*fall into*), existence or relationship verb (*refer to*) and aspectual verb (*begin with*). Not all types of idiomatic

expressions proposed by Biber et al.(1999) are applied in the conversation texts of the textbook.

The examples of grammatical collocations are in the conversation texts in the textbook grade XI is only one; *go back*. The structure is verb + adverb. It has semantic meaning and does not have idiomatic status. The meaning can be predicted from the parts. The examples of the grammatical collocations are also mentioned as a free combination of the verb phrase. The free combination of verb particle that found in the conversation texts is different with the finding of corpus linguistic proposed by Biber et al. (1999). Corpus study tells that the conversation among English native speakers uses some directional particles not only *to, in, with*, but also *back, down, up, and on*. It means that many particles are used in the conversation of the English native speakers. It is clear that the examples free combinations of verb phrase are fewer than the English native speakers used in the conversation.

There are some lexical collocations in the textbooks grade XI such as *aisle seat* (conv. 1), *sweetheart* (conv.2). The structure of the examples is adjective + noun. Based on McCarthy and O'Dell (2008:12) there are five different types of collocations that frequently used by English native speakers, they are adjective + noun, noun + verb, noun + noun, verb + adverb and adverb + adjectives. The conversation texts of the textbook only present one of the structural collocations.

The next type of the formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the textbook is inserts. Nearly all conversation texts of the textbooks contain inserts. They usually consist of either one or more words that can stand alone in the conversation texts. In the conversation texts, they have some functions such as greeting, farewell, interjection, attention getter, polite formula, and discourse markers.

The conversation texts of this textbook provide formal greeting (*good morning* and *good day*) and informal greeting (*hello*). It is contrasted with the conversation texts in the textbook grade X, which only present informal greeting. The examples of greeting expressions in the textbook grade XI are line with Biber et al. (1999) that

English native speakers have much more expressions of greeting and farewell such as *hiya, good morning, good afternoon, see you, bye bye, take care, good night and etc*. Unfortunately, the examples of greeting expressions in the conversation texts have not represented all the examples of greeting expressions which are used by English native speakers.

There are some examples of non-formulaic expressions are presented in the conversation texts of the textbook.

Conversation 2

M2: But I'll be disgraced!

M1: Disgraced? *What can you possible mean?* you will be the most beautiful woman there!

(Source: Bahasa Inggris, 2014: 70)

The expression "*what can you possible mean?*" is not formulaic expressions. English native speakers usually use the expression "*what do you mean?*" not "*what can you possible mean?*"

The next example of nonformulaic expressions in the conversation 5 of the textbook.

Y: Mr. Suharto, my husband and I are celebrating our 3<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. We would like you to join us.

S: Oh, Thank you! *I would be delighted to*. When is it?

(Source: Bahasa Inggris, 2014:85)

The expression "*I would be delighted to*" is not formulaic expressions because English native speakers usually use the expression "*I'd love to*" for accepting the invitation.

The application of the formulaic expressions as formulated by Biber et al. (1999) in the conversation texts of the English textbook grade XII is also not fully done. Biber et al. (1999), propose five types of formulaic expressions which always occur in the English native speaker conversation but only four formulaic expressions types are found in the conversation texts of the English Textbook. The types of formulaic expressions in this textbook are the same with the textbook grade X, and XI. They are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. There is no example of coordinated binomial phrases.

There are some examples of non-formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the textbook grade XII. The first example is conversation 1.

A: *May I help you?*

F: Yes, please.

(Source : Bahasa Inggris, 2014: 7)

The expression “*may I help you*” is not formulaic expressions because English native speakers usually use “*can I help you?*” for offering help.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to evaluate the application of formulaic expressions as formulated by Biber et al. (1999) in the conversation texts of senior high school English textbooks entitled “Bahasa Inggris” published by the department of education and culture. Based on the findings and discussion of the data in chapter 4, the result of this study can be summarized as follow.

The formulaic expressions types as formulated by Biber et al. (1999) are not fully applied in the conversation texts of the three textbooks. There are only four types of the formulaic expressions applied in the conversation texts of the textbooks. They are lexical bundles, idiomatic phrases, collocations, and inserts. Coordinated binomial phrases are not applied in the conversation texts.

The formulaic expressions do not frequently occur in the conversation texts of the three textbooks. The formulaic expressions only occur 17% in the conversation of the textbook grade X, 19.9% in the conversation texts of the textbook grade XI and 21.9% in the conversation texts of the textbook grade XII. The frequency of the formulaic expressions shows that the expressions in the conversation texts of the three English textbooks are non-native like since the number of formulaic expressions is less than the number of non-formulaic expressions.

The functions of the formulaic expressions in the textbooks are presented based on the types of formulaic expressions. The

lexical bundles in the conversation texts have functioned as stance expressions and discourse organization. The collocations and idioms in the conversation texts of the textbooks have functioned as adjectives. They have the same function for describing a noun. Some collocations have a function to give a compliment. The inserts in the conversation texts of the textbooks have functioned as a greeting, polite formula, response form, attention getter, discourse marker, interjection, hesitator, and expletive. The formulaic expressions in the conversation texts of the textbooks have crucial functions to build a discourse in the conversation text of the textbooks.

After analyzing the data, the researcher can conclude the pedagogical implication of this study. This study is the review of the quality of the conversation texts of the textbooks. The result of the analysis shows that the application of formulaic expressions as formulated by Biber et.al (1999) in the conversation texts of the English textbooks entitled “Bahasa Inggris” is not fully done. Most of the expressions in the conversation texts of the English textbooks are not native-like. Moreover, the result of the study can be a review of the textbooks and assist the readers especially the English textbook authors to be aware the important of formulaic expressions roles in the conversation since mastering of formulaic competence is very important to help the students speak fluently and native-like. Therefore the pedagogical challenge is to maintain a balance between language as system and language as a formula to achieve communicative competence.

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