



EXPLORING MOROCCAN EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION: INSIGHTS INTO ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT

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Abstract:

The present paper reports on a quantitative study that explored Moroccan EFL high school students' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction of formulaic language (FcL). A survey with 12 closed-ended items was sent to 51 students via Google Forms. The aim of the survey was to elicit the students' perceptions of explicit instruction, vocabulary retention, language proficiency, motivation, and engagement. The overall findings revealed that the participants have positive perceptions of explicit instruction and explained that the treatment increased their vocabulary repertoire and language proficiency. This study offers comprehensive results of EFL learners' perceptions of the explicit instruction of FcL and its effects on their language development, motivation, and engagement. These findings can yield important insights for better and more effective teaching practices in EFL contexts.

Keywords: vocabulary retention, motivation, formulaic language, explicit instruction, EFL

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة دراسة كمية استكشفت مواقف وتصورات طلاب المدارس الثانوية المغربية من دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه التدريس الصريح للمفردات الاصطلاحية. تم إرسال استبيان يحتوي على 12 سؤال مغلق إلى 51 طالبًا عبر برنامج جوجل فورم. كان الهدف من هذا الاستبيان هو استقصاء تصورات الطلاب بشأن التدريس الصريح، وتثبيت المفردات، والكفاءة اللغوية، والتحفيز، والمشاركة. أظهرت النتائج العامة أن المشاركين لديهم تصورات إيجابية حول التدريس الصريح، وأفادوا بأن هذا النهج ساعدهم على توسيع مفرداتهم وتحسين كفاءتهم اللغوية. تقدم هذه الدراسة نتائج شاملة حول تصورات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بشأن التدريس الصريح للعبارات الاصطلاحية وتأثيره على تطورهم اللغوي، وتحفيزهم ومشاركتهم. ويمكن أن تسهم هذه النتائج في تقديم رؤى قيمة نحو ممارسات تدريسية أكثر فاعلية في سياقات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تثبيت المفردات، التحفيز، اللغة الاصطلاحية، التدريس الصريح، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

1. Introduction

Formulaic language has been labeled and given different interpretations, and therefore, it is not a very easy notion to grasp since it encompasses a number of theories. Wood (2015) and Schmitt & Carter (2004) explained that FcL operates as an umbrella collective term covering a range of different terminologies such as formulaic sequences, prefabricated terms, language sequences, lexical phrases, lexical bundles, phrasal verbs, collocations, etc. More simply put, Schmitt (2010) mentions that a formulaic sequence is similar to any multi-word unit, but what distinguishes language sequences is that their words co-occur with others and together constitute a fixed word combination. Wood (2015) explained that the terms formulaic language and formulaic sequences can be used interchangeably.

Exposing beginner and intermediate EFL students to instances of FcL in context, particularly those that are composed of words and expression that they already know is found to be effective (El Garras et al., 2025). EFL learners can greatly benefit from expanding their vocabulary repertoire of FcL (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Nergis, 2021; Peters, 2014; Saito, 2020; Wood, 2010, 2015). The Moroccan EFL context is characterized by a paucity of studies on vocabulary acquisition (Seffar, 2014), and particularly that of formulaic sequences.

What has inspired this investigation is the need to contribute to existing research on FcL acquisition and explicit instruction. Despite a strong theoretical foundation on nature and benefits of FcL, L2 pedagogy has not allocated enough research attention for FcL learning and teaching. The current research aims at exploring Moroccan EFL students' attitudes of the benefits and effects of explicit instruction of FcL on vocabulary retention and their language proficiency at large.

2. Formulaic Language and Language Learning

Formulaic language is now recognized as an essential part of lexicon which requires more attention and focus in language classes. Wood (2002) argued that *"formulaic language ... has important implications for how language is dealt with in the classroom"* (p. 2). What explains

the critical role that formulaic sequences occupy in language learning is their ubiquity and the characteristics they possess. FcL has been argued to happen due to a procedure in the human mind called *chunking*, which is the result of repetition of expressions amongst native language users (Bybee & Beckner, 2010; Ellis & Simpson-Vlach, 2009; Lewis, 1993). In addition, several studies have generally pointed out a strong connection between FcL and language proficiency (AlHassan & Wood, 2015; Pellicer-Sanchez & Boers, 2018; Peters & Pauwels, 2015; Rafieyan, 2018; Wood, 2010). In turn, (Wray, 2013) has evidently claimed that FcL plays a critical role in both first and second language.

First of all, according to Schmidt (1994), learning happens after noticing takes place. Accordingly, learners should first pay attention to linguistic forms within the input. Attention is thought to be an “*essential prerequisite*” for noticing (Long, 2015, p. 51). The latter condition is vital in language acquisition, and without it, very little progress can happen.

Expanding FcL knowledge requires a deeper attention level on the part of language learners, along with teacher-led noticing of these sequences in context. Schmidt (2001) maintained that noticing vocabulary in the input is critical for L2 acquisition. In EFL classes, learners can expand their vocabulary repertoire by picking up or learning words and phrases from multiple sources of input, including reading, listening, or audio-visual materials. Having a good vocabulary size of formulaic sequences according to the related literature improves and facilitates language proficiency (Durrant & Schmitt, 2009; Kremmel, Brunfaut, & Alderson, 2017; Pellicer-Sanchez, 2017). According to Pellicer-Sanchez (2017), some of the factors that contribute to vocabulary learning are word or phrase frequency and the number of encounters. Concerning the latter, some researchers reckoned that for retention to take place, learners need to encounter a word six to ten times (Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010; Webb, 2007).

3. Explicit Vocabulary Instruction- Form-focused Instruction

Explicit instruction is one of the teaching methods that has been suggested to increase L2 learners' uptake of FcL (Laufer, 2006). Using form-focused instruction deserves more attention and research in language classes, mainly in teaching formulaic sequences. It is logical, therefore, to provide learning opportunities for L2 students to be aware of FcL and get engaged in more explicit learning. It seems plausible also to provide room for focus on FcL in language teaching materials. On the other hand, Hill (1999) maintained that most L2 learners have poor lexis because they lack strong collocational competence, and it is critical for learners to exploit their knowledge of single words to foster their FcL acquisition. In Celce-Murcia's (2007) Model of Communicative Competence, she illustrated that having a good FcL knowledge or competence is essential for achieving the communicative competence. According to Archer and Hughes (2011), explicit instruction is “*a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures*” (p. 1). In this study, explicit instruction is

defined as the kind of teaching that targets language forms, and it is usually associated with drawing learners' attention to notice forms in input, along with providing overt and direct teaching for learners to engage with target linguistic forms with multiple supports and scaffolds.

Form-focused instruction (FFI) is very similar to explicit instruction and has two different modes of instruction: *focus on form* and *focus on forms*. There is a distinction between *focus on form* and *focus on forms* (Long, 1991). According to Long, *focus on forms* refers to activities and lessons in which linguistic forms are targeted inside the classroom following a clear syllabus that often lays out what language teachers are to cover and in which order. This teaching approach attempts to directly target language forms in a systematic manner. In contrast, *focus on form* usually happens in learning situations that are meaning-oriented. Teachers applying this procedure avoid overtly targeting language forms since the emphasis is on communication. *Focus on forms* is operationally defined as a direct, explicit form of teaching FcL, while *focus on form* is meant to refer to a more implicit and communicative form of instruction.

Thanks to this role, vocabulary learning has been drawing the attention of researchers in second language acquisition, in terms of how vocabulary learning takes place, what effective learning methods there are, and what teaching strategies could best facilitate its teaching and learning. All these areas have been the focus of researchers in applied linguistics (Lewis, 2008). Wray and Lawson (2018) added that mastering vocabulary is critical for successful communication for EFL learners and stated that the main goal is to "*achieve communicative competence*" (p. 605). In turn, McCarthy (1990) has expressed a strong argument explaining "*that no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way*" (p. 8). Finally, considering what language learners spend time on inside the classroom and the kinds of struggles they face, it seems that "*the lexicon may be the most important language component for learners*" (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013, p. 164).

Establishing vocabulary instruction is a cornerstone of language learning, and drawing language learners' attention to notice formulaicity of language is essential for familiarizing them with this category of vocabulary. In fact, L2 learners are found to have limited knowledge of FcL (Lee-Thi et al., 2017). In a study by Macis and Schmitt (2016), learners of English were reported to know only about 33 % of the collocations tested. As mentioned above, FcL occupies a significant portion of the English language, and as such, deserves equal attention as that given to individual words in vocabulary learning. Martinez and Schmitt (2012) stated that "*it is mostly to the advantage of all interested parties that formulaic vocabulary be eventually seen as simply being 'vocabulary'*" (p. 317). There is no doubt that knowledge of FcL and lexis in general is claimed to positively correlate with overall language proficiency (Jiang & Grabe, 2011; Martinez & Murphy, 2011; Rafieyan, 2017, 2018). Therefore, expanding learners' vocabulary and recognizing how its acquisition takes place inside the classroom is a critical step towards paving the way for its development.

Some studies adopted and favored incidental methods of teaching vocabulary (Ellis et al., 2008; Wood, 2015); this assumption is encouraged by Krashen (1989) whose famous work on the importance of comprehensible input is well-known amongst SLA researchers. While this perspective is accurate to a certain extent, EFL learning contexts demand a step further in the explicit teaching direction. EFL contexts lack authentic input and learners, particularly lower-level ones who do not have the ability to notice formulaic sequences in context.

3. Research objective

This study aims to explore EFL Moroccan high school students' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction.

3.1 Research question

The study at hand attempts to find an answer to the following research question:

- What are Moroccan EFL high school students' attitudes and perceptions of explicit vocabulary instruction?

4. Methodology

This study followed a **quantitative descriptive research design** to explore EFL students' attitudes towards explicit instruction of formulaic language. Data was collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The statements in the survey were carefully crafted and aimed at eliciting students' perceptions regarding their participation in the treatment sessions. Under each item, there was a 5-point Likert scale through which respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement.

4.1. Context and Participants

The total number of participants in this study is 51 Moroccan EFL students from the region of Marrakech, Morocco. They were selected based on a **convenience-sampling** method. The participants share several features, including their linguistic background (Amazigh language), number of hours of English per a week (3 h), and belonging to the same age group. They were exposed to a 10-week intervention targeting the teaching of a list of formulaic sequences. EFL settings are characterized by a paucity of authentic linguistic input, and therefore, a need for more systematic inclusion of direct instruction of multi-word units due to their multiple benefits in language development.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

This research is descriptive in nature since it aims to explore perceptions and attitudes of Moroccan EFL students about the explicit instruction of formulaic language. The participants were sent a self-administered survey with 12 items, which was validated by three EFL inspectors. After the treatment, the students were sent a Likert scale survey.

For each close-ended item, students can choose from the following degrees (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). This scale is useful since it allows for measuring attitudes on a spectrum. The purpose of the survey was to elicit students' attitudes and perceptions on themes such as motivation, engagement, perceived usefulness of explicit instruction, vocabulary retention, and language proficiency development. The survey was administered via Google Forms. To analyze the data, the researchers provide descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) using Excel and SPSS software to summarize teachers' perceptions and attitudes.

5. Findings and Discussion

After collecting the surveys and cleaning the data, the researcher initiated the analysis of learners' responses, which mainly included means, percentages, and standard deviations for each participant. Before laying out this analysis, it is essential to account for the reliability of the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Table 1 shows that Cronbach's Alpha is .92, which is a high reliability score of internal consistency.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.92	.92	12

Table 2 illustrates the learners' degree of satisfaction. The overall mean score of all the survey items was 4.02/5, meaning 'agree', as shown in Table 2. The participants' responses indicated higher degrees of agreement with the majority of the statements in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Students' overall agreement with the survey items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall mean	51	1.25	4.67	4.02	.64
Valid N (listwise)	51				

Table 3 below shows all the survey statements with numerical data, with percentages of learners' ratings and degrees of agreement or disagreement for each statement. Their feedback indicated their approval of most statements in the survey. Items 5, 7, 10, and 12 reveal very favorable views of the treatment. The responses with higher ratings confirmed that the 10-week intervention was very useful and rewarding for the participants.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the EFL learners' feedback

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	T
1. I have become more confident in reading in English.	3.8	9.6	7.7	71.2	7.7	100%
2. The texts that I read have been very useful for my learning and development.	1.9	1.9	9.6	44.2	42.3	100%
3. The texts that I read have been challenging.	5.8	13.5	13.5	57.7	9.6	100%
4. I am better at reading in English after this training.	3.8	1.9	13.5	55.8	25	100%
5. I have learned more vocabulary.	1.9	1.9	11.5	55.8	28.8	100%
6. I can now use more and new vocabulary when I write and speak.	1.9	7.7	5.8	65.4	19.2	100%
7. The in-class activities that I was exposed to have been useful for remembering target expressions.	1.9	3.8	9.6	55.8	28.5	100%
8. I am prepared to read more in English.	5.8	-	5.8	63.5	25	100%
9. In comparison to individual words, I think the expressions that I have learned in class are more useful for my learning.	5.8	-	1.9	51.9	40.4	100%
10. The in-class instruction and practice activities have been useful for improving my level.	1.9	3.8	3.8	53.8	36.5	100%
11. After this training, I will keep working on myself to develop my level.	1.9	1.9	11.5	51.9	32.7	100%
12. Generally, this 10-week training was effective and useful for my learning.	1.9	1.9	5.8	46.2	44.2	100%

*[SA= strongly agree, A= agree, N= neutral, D= disagree, SD= strongly disagree]

The survey statements were carefully designed to elicit learners' attitudes and personal reactions towards treatment sessions and the type of instruction that they were exposed to inside the classroom. Some of the themes that were targeted in the respondents' subjective evaluations include their motivation and engagement, development of vocabulary size, reading comprehension, the impact of form-focused instruction, and their overall language development.

5.1. Perceptions of Vocabulary Growth and Retention

The items that aimed at measuring learners' perceptions of their vocabulary growth and retention were items 5, 6, and 7. From the first glance at the output, it could be inferred that a great number of learners expressed higher ratings of the explicit instruction and reported that this treatment allowed them to increase their vocabulary size, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Learners' vocabulary growth

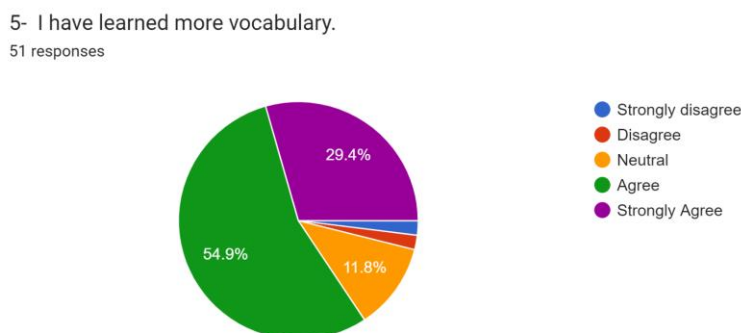
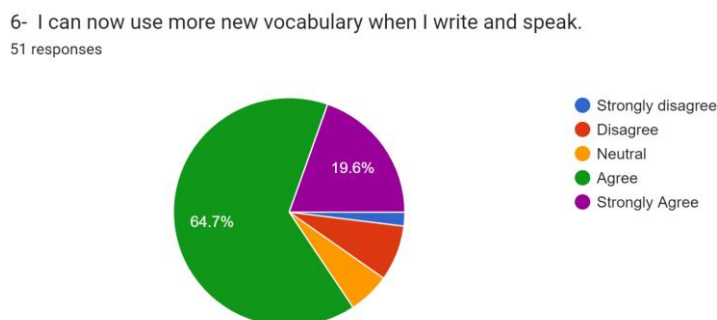


Figure 1 indicates that more than 83% reported that they expanded their vocabulary repertoire after the treatment. The same observation can be applied to the graph shown in Figure 2. More than 80% of the respondents expressed that their enlarged vocabulary size helped them express themselves better in writing and speaking.

A key factor for language proficiency is seen in one's vocabulary size. The bigger one's vocabulary repertoire, the more chances they have for achieving an advanced proficiency level. The survey indicated that more than 83 % reported that the treatment significantly increased their vocabulary repertoire (Item 5). Previous research concluded that language learners often have a limited working memory of formulaic language. For example, Macis and Schmitt (2016) found that EFL learners' knowledge of the form and meaning of collocations is very limited (33%). Besides, Durrant and Schmitt (2009) reported that a lot of students have a limited command of FcL. It is considered a valuable asset to have a large vocabulary size since it is essential for good reading comprehension (Susosy & Tanyer, 2019), and it is a strong predictor of one's language proficiency (Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011; Staher, 2009). In turn, Boers and Lindstromberg (2009) recommended that FcL be explicitly taught to language learners because, even though they are frequent in a variety of contexts, they raise learning challenges for EFL learners and are usually complex in nature.

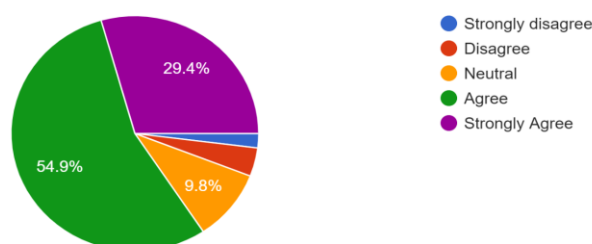
Figure 2: Learners' perceptions of their vocabulary growth and other language skills



In addition, their ability to retain vocabulary and formulaic sequences in particular, has significantly improved. The notion of retention was a key element that this research aimed to investigate. Figure 3 below shows that more than 83% of the participants indicated that the type of learning and classroom activities that they undertook paved the way for them to strengthen their vocabulary retention skills.

Figure 3: Learners' perceptions of the impact of the treatment on their retention

7- The in-class activities that I was exposed to have been useful for remembering target expressions.
51 responses

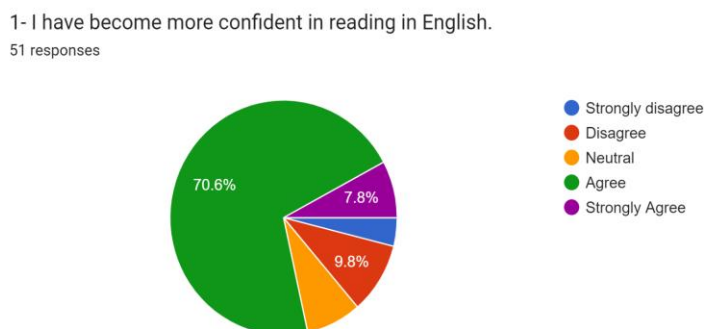


An important aspect of vocabulary knowledge is learners' ability to retain words and phrases after a period of time. The 7th item in the survey indicated that about 83 % of the students had favorable perceptions of treatment activities inside the classroom, arguing for an increase in their retention ability. They seemed to express positive views of their vocabulary retention skills after the implementation of form-focused instruction. In language classes, retention of vocabulary items needs to meet a few conditions, among which are the quality of instruction, meaningfulness of the teaching materials, and learners' interest (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). According to Ramezanali (2017), we can claim that students have good retention when they show the ability to retain a vocabulary item over a two-week period. Another important factor in strengthening learners' retention is the frequency of exposure. Hopkins et al (2018) argued that learners tend to have strong retention when they have multiple opportunities to retrieve a word or phrase from memory. Research evidence shows that language learners need to encounter a vocabulary item more than six times for retention to take place (Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010; Webb, 2007).

5.2. Perceptions of Language Proficiency Development

Items 1, 3, and 4 in the survey assessed participants' attitudes toward their confidence in reading English. Figure 4 below shows that around 75% of the respondents expressed that classroom activities allowed them to enhance their motivation and reading ability and feel more comfortable engaging with reading materials in English.

Figure 4: Learners' perceptions of their reading ability



On item 4 of the survey, the learners were asked to evaluate their development in terms of reading skills. It seemed that more than 80% of the responses were in favor of the treatment. Apparently, this mode of teaching had positive effects on the learners' perceptions, which can be observed in the participants' reactions in Figure 5.

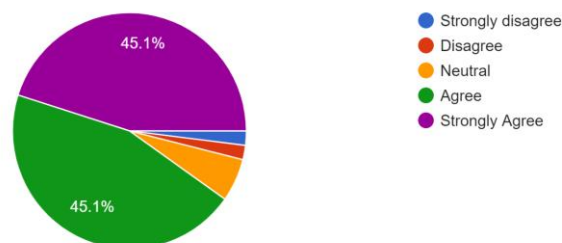
Figure 5: Learners' perceptions of their reading development



Based on the high estimates given by the participants to the fourth statement above (80.8%), it can be assumed that they associate high levels of importance with the treatment and type of learning they had been involved in. This also suggests that learners' interest in reading improved. In turn, Figure 6 shows that the 12th item in the survey focused on participants' overall satisfaction with the treatment and required them to rate the extent to which explicit instruction helped in developing their overall English language proficiency. It indicates that 90.4% of the respondents expressed a high rating of the treatment, which implies that the intervention was successful and effective for them.

Figure 6: Learners' overall assessment of the treatment

12- Generally, this 10-week training was effective and useful for my learning.
 51 responses



The 10th item on the survey enquired about the extent to which the treatment improved learners' overall level in English. Around 90 % of the students affirmed their satisfaction with the intervention that they received and expressed that FcL explicit instruction positively contributed to fostering their language proficiency. Several studies suggested positive correlations between formulaic language knowledge and proficiency (Boers, Frank & Lindstromberg, Seth, 2012; Qi & Ding, 2011; Rafieyan, 2018; Saito, 2020). Martinez and Schmitt (2012) stated that *"research has now established that [formulaic language] is fundamental to the way language is used, processed, and acquired in both the L1 and L2"* (p. 299). Good knowledge of FcL can be decisive in achieving advanced levels of proficiency. Wray (2002) argued that teaching collocations, for example, not only contributes to more competence, but also to better fluency and accuracy.

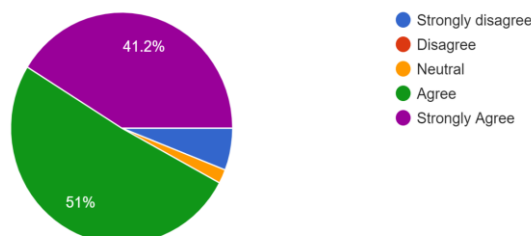
Overall, the participants attributed high ratings to most survey statements. The average mean was at 4.02 out of 5, indicating that focused instruction of FcL successfully contributed to their English language development in different language skills. The 2nd statement in the survey asked participants to assess the extent to which the reading materials used in the treatment facilitated their learning and progress. The mean for item 2 was (M=4.2), which shows high degrees of agreement with the survey statement.

5.3. Perceptions of FcL Instruction, Engagement, and Motivation

One of the main objectives for administering this survey was to enquire about learners' perceptions towards form-focused instruction of FcL itself. This experience allowed them to engage with formulaic sequences of high utility in the daily English discourse of native speakers. Figure 7 indicates that an overwhelming majority (92.3%) of the sample maintained that having a good command of formulaic sequences has more benefits to their learning in comparison to learning single words. This perception can be associated with what related research found, i.e., formulaic sequences are claimed to be processed faster and easier than single words (AlAli & Schmitt, 2012; Conklin & Schmitt, 2012; Vilkatie & Schmitt, 2019).

Figure 7: Learners' perceptions of focusing on formulaic sequences in class

9- In comparison to individual words, I think the expressions that I have learned in class are more useful for my learning.
 51 responses

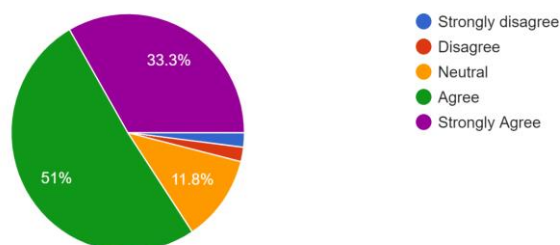


Another interesting development that we have noticed inside the classroom is learners' increased interest. Their motivation to explore and engage with vocabulary, particularly formulaic sequences, was apparent during classroom tasks. The participants revealed that knowledge of formulaic sequences is more valuable in comparison to single words. In their reaction to the 9th item, (92.3 %) of the respondents are convinced that having a good command of formulaic sequences has more benefits to their learning than individual words. Research in this area suggests that learners process formulaic sequences faster and more easily than single words.

Analyzing learners' reactions in Figure 8 gave the impression that the treatment was effective and useful for their learning. In fact, 84.6% of the participants confirmed that they are willing to use and apply the knowledge and skills that they acquired in their future English learning journey. Their awareness of the importance of FcL and motivation to keep learning would facilitate and promote the development of different language skills.

Figure 8: Learners' plans for future engagement with English

11- After this training, I will keep working on myself to develop my level.
 51 responses



In terms of learners' reading comprehension development, most respondents showed very positive reactions to the fourth item in the survey: *I am better at reading in English after this training*. More than 80 % confirmed that the implementation of explicit instruction had a critical impact on their reading ability. Martinez and Murphy (2011)

concluded that the presence of FcL in a text caused less comprehension to language learners. This is an indication that formulaic sequences deserve more attention in language classes and in reading comprehension, in particular. Activities such as *chunking* can be effective in helping learners notice and recognize different types of FcL (Boers et al., 2006; Wood, 2015). In addition, Laufer (2006) suggested that presenting and teaching FcL in isolation could be more effective in comparison to teaching them explicitly within meaning-focused activities.

Students' feedback and attitudes revealed that in-class instruction and practice activities were effective for acquiring target formulaic sequences. The *focus on forms* mode of teaching seemed to have a critical impact on learners' performance, in terms of both vocabulary retention and reading comprehension. The different stages of learning presented participants with ample opportunities to recycle and use the target FcL in different contexts.

EFL students can benefit significantly from direct instruction since any given text in English would include a good portion of formulaic sequences. When learners can recognize FcL, they would have a better chance of guessing its meaning from context. Nation (2013) and Schmitt (2010) suggested that a good repertoire and knowledge of FcL can promote better reading comprehension. The majority of the participants appeared to be motivated and confident in their mastery of target formulaic sequences. In relation to reading ability, FcL is thought to constitute an important factor for successful reading comprehension (Martinez & Murphy, 2011). In fact, effective text comprehension not only depend on mastery of a large pool of individual words, but it also depends on knowledge of formulaic sequences, such as idioms (Martinez & Murphy, 2011). There is empirical evidence that concluded that Knowledge of FcL promotes reading comprehension (Kremmel, Brunfaut, & Alderson, 2015).

After analyzing the results in light of the data elicited from the post-treatment survey, it was confirmed that the treatment that the learners had been exposed to was effective in improving their knowledge of FcL as well as their perceptions of explicit instruction. In this respect, more than 80 % of the participants agreed with the 12 survey statements, indicating significant levels of motivation and engagement.

Motivation and engagement have been given considerable attention in the field of applied linguistics (Bonney et al., 2008; Chang & Huang, 1999; Dornyei, 2001) due to their relevance in language learning. Motivation is a prerequisite for reaching high levels of language proficiency. For example, motivation in reading has multiple facets, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, reading goals, and social motivation for reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In turn, Dornyei (2001) stated that "*motivation is an abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do*" (p. 42). On the other hand, Hiver (2021) explained that engagement is seen in a student's commitment to learn and engage in given tasks and "*the extent to which that physical and mental activity is goal-directed and purpose driven*". Psychology of education maintains that engagement is considered a state of involvement and attention in learning tasks (Philp &

Duchesne, 2016). In academic research, engagement is directly related to realizing one's academic goals (Christenson et al., 2012).

6. Conclusion

Overall, most participants seemed to have very positive attitudes about the treatment and the in-class instruction. The intervention offered in-class focused instruction of the 40 target FcL, which were targeted both within context and in isolation. Nation's (2013) three vocabulary teaching stages were applied in covering each unit and in implementing the form-focused instruction. A variety of tasks and activities focused on providing multiple receptive and productive practice opportunities, along with using sample sentences for facilitating their intake and creating more encounters of FcL. The in-class teaching in this study aimed at drawing the participants to the meaning and use of formulaic sequences as well as using them in generating new texts around them. These teaching techniques were useful at enhancing learners' intake of target FcL. Furthermore, the respondents showed high ratings of appreciation of the treatment and expressed their willingness to continue learning and applying their knowledge of FcL in their future language learning. Raising the participants' awareness of the usefulness of formulaic sequences made them realize their importance and utility in text comprehension and achieving higher levels of proficiency. Learners' motivation and positive attitudes of the intervention were supported by their engagement in class activities. Inside the language classroom, both explicit and implicit methods of FcL have a role to play in second language acquisition (El Garras et al., 2024; Youngblood, 2014). In EFL contexts, vocabulary teaching sometimes requires clear, explicit presentation of target words or phrases with contextualized illustrations to facilitate their intake.

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Conflicts of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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