

Linguistic Projects

Do you have a Chinese/Korean High School or University Student cohort to work with?

Research has shown that formulaic sequence knowledge for language learners improves language fluency. However learners are often very weak in this aspect of fluency and learning materials do not focus on them. This stems from a lack of resources. In fact, high-frequency formulaic sequence identification is a very complex, time-consuming process in which much research is still needed. Rogers (2017) PhD research constituted a major step forward in that it created a new methodology for identifying useful formulaic sequences to study directly, and did extensive research on Japanese students' knowledge of these. In addition to the list made for Japanese students, this also led to the creation of two of the first large-scale English formulaic sequence lists custom-made for Chinese and Korean learners. These two lists were released as the smartphone applications (apps) 通用英语大师 and General English for Koreans.

Usage of educational apps for English education certainly also has the potential to improve language fluency by making learning more efficient. However knowledge in regards to how this can be achieved is still in its early stages. Certain types of apps certainly have advantages over others, such as those which space the intervals between when items are shown (spaced repetition), and when users are able to give input on items as being easy or difficult which also affects the interval in which they are shown (a Leitner algorithm). The apps 通用英语大师 and General English for Koreans feature such an algorithm, along with a variety of other unique features that should result in more efficient learning. However, much more research is still needed.

Thus, gaps in the research exist in regard to the above mentioned issues for Chinese and Korean learners. It is still unknown what Chinese and Korean high school or university students' knowledge of these formulaic sequences is. Furthermore, does more knowledge of the formulaic sequences correlate with higher TOEIC scores for these two learner groups? In other words, is the testing instrument valid? Moreover, if these learners use the app, will it more learning occur in comparison to using a paper list? And finally, there is a gap in the research regarding how many formulaic sequences can be learned and retained using such an app.

Doctoral Research

For many years now, researchers have agreed that learning a second language through the direct study of formulaic chunks is ideal for a number of reasons. It is not only much more efficient than studying of isolated vocabulary, but through the chunks learners are actually developing three things: vocabulary, collocations, and subconsciously, grammar. Mastering formulaic language also helps learners process and produce language quicker and more naturally. But despite all of these virtues, such a method is not prevalent in second language education. A majority of textbooks still mostly highlight isolated vocabulary in reading passages, and many students still study word lists. This PhD project will create the first large-scale general English formulaic chunk list for learners of English of a specific background. This project has already been completed for Japanese, Chinese and Korean learners through a

new unique method. However, large gaps still exist for large English learner groups from countries **such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India**, and thus PhD candidates from these backgrounds are encouraged to apply. L1-L2 congruency analysis is a part of this project. Previous research has shown that approximately 11,000 chunks commonly occur in general English. However, such an amount cannot be practically taught directly, and should not be, because L1-L2 congruency should first be taken into account. For direct study, 2-3,000 items are recommended. When a chunk is said in a different way between languages, that chunk has a higher learning burden. It is more difficult to remember and also learners have a higher chance of producing an error when they directly translate from their L1. By translating chunks, giving them a congruency rating, and only selecting items which are different to an extent that results in 2-3,000 items, a practical resource can be created. These steps have already been taken for Japanese, Chinese and Korean, and thus the current research gap is other large L1 groups of English learners.

With L1-L2 congruency ratings assigned, a balanced sample can be taken from the 11,000 items to create a test to determine learners' knowledge of them. Standardized test scores, such as TOEIC scores should be obtained and as many learners as possible with a wide variety of proficiency levels should take the test. The 11,000 items also have frequency and semantic transparency ratings from previous research, and thus these factors will also be used to select a balanced sample to determine if any of these factors play a role in determining learner knowledge of the items.

If L1-L2 congruency is proven to be a factor that determined learner knowledge of an item, then that justifies additional focus on such items. If this is shown, then the next logical step would be to create a subset of 2-3,000 items that have low L1-L2 congruency. Such a list is a more manageable size that could then be studied directly. Leitner algorithm-based smartphone apps have been shown to be highly efficient tools to study such items, and apps that contain a subset of the 11,000 chunks for Japanese, Chinese and Korean learners have already been created. Thus, another component of this PhD project could be the creation of the same app but for a new group that shares an L1, which can then be studied for a semester with an experimental group and their TOEIC gains can be compared to a control group.

Potential PhD candidates from language backgrounds which are **not** English, Japanese, Chinese, or Korean are strongly encouraged to apply, to extend upon the existing research.

Masters Research

Parts of the research suggested above could also become a master's research project. In addition, a variety of other small-scale experiments can also be conducted with the current resources already researched. Reading passages could be created that contain the chunks and experiments could be conducted that determine if any incidental learning of the chunks occur. Experiments examining the efficacy of steps such as highlighting or pre-teaching the chunks to improve upon the efficacy of extensive reading materials are also a possibility. Thus, such research can be done by any language speaker.