

Individual Paper Session 26
Lexicon/Vocabulary
Thursday, July 6
3:15-3:45pm

**Incorporate vocabulary into second language syllabus: collocations,
fixed/semi-fixed expressions, and idioms**

Jeng-yih (Tim) Hsu
National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology
gogotim@ccms.nkfust.edu.tw

Over the past decade, the importance of multiword lexical units has been receiving an extraordinary amount of attention, and is now almost a must-have component in the practice of English language teaching. The field of English for Business Purposes was among the first to recognize the uniqueness of multiword units, establishing the initial attempt to accommodate longer lexical items in coursebooks. A bigger scale attempt began in the year 2003 when major commercial textbook writers started to face such “lexical chunk” phenomenon by wholeheartedly incorporating “exercises” or “activities” targeting multiword lexical phrases. It is now routine to see ELT textbooks designing tasks for a variety of multiword lexical units (MLUs): lexical collocations, fixed/semi-fixed expressions, and idioms¹.

The current study intends to examine multiword lexical units enthusiastically promoted by textbook publishers from a more cautious perspective. A profile of multiword units is established, based on three series of contemporary ELT textbooks published between 2003 and 2005, including Communication Strategies (Paul, 2003), Touchstone (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005), and Totally True (Huizenga & Huizenga, 2005). Within this profile, major multiword lexical units are recorded, categorized, and compared. This study aims to report whether:

- (1) there are types of multiword lexical units considered most important and should be taught immediately
- (2) there is a suggested acquisition order for multiword lexical units
- (3) there is an agreed-on collection of common multiword lexical units among these textbooks

By presenting the analysis of multiword lexical units from the latest published textbooks, this study offers possible direction for choosing ideal coursebooks.

¹ Lexical collocations consist of words whose meaning associations are arbitrary. The study focuses on lexical collocations only as they have caused most learning problems and have been the center of previous studies.