

Lexical Awareness and Pattern Grammar in the EFL Online Classroom: A Focus on
Conversational Native-like Fluency for Upper-Intermediate Learners of English

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ABSTRACT

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching English as a foreign language is effective instruction of lexical items and their associated patterns in English grammar. As single units of meaning embodied in a multi-word phrase, lexical items often function in an unintuitive, complex manner that is difficult for non-native speakers to master. Nevertheless, lexical items and the patterns they form are essential to achieving language fluency, particularly in spoken English. For example, while a student may understand the concept of the moon and the meaning of the word *over*, the lexical phrase *over the moon* may remain beyond his or her grasp. The student may have difficulty understanding how the known vocabulary relates to the concept of joy as well as the phrase's inability to be adapted to *over the sun*. In such a scenario, neither students' vocabulary knowledge nor their understanding of relative concepts will help them to understand the phrase's meaning. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) scholars such as Willis, Nattinger and DeCarrico, and Lewis have each offered unique definitions of lexical items as well as innovative strategies for teaching the types of language represented by these phrases and the patterns behind them. This paper examines these scholars' diverse and innovative teaching methods and proposes my own approach to teaching lexical items and pattern grammar based on combining these methods in a complementary manner. I present two unit plans containing three lessons, each employing various strategies from extant EFL literature. The unit plans support the development of English-language fluency by adapting these strategies into the lessons designed for upper-intermediate to advanced adult online EFL learners. I discuss the implementation of these lessons and offer suggestions for the wider adoption of these adaptive strategies in diverse language classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

While learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) face numerous challenges, some of the most difficult linguistic components to learn are lexical items or lexical phrases. Nattinger and DeCarrico define their preferred term, *lexical phrases*, as “‘chunks’ of language of varying length . . . multi-word lexical phenomena that exist somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax” (1). As the work of Nattinger and DeCarrico, Lewis, and Willis demonstrates, such lexical phrases or items are essential to achieving English-language fluency, making it extremely important for EFL teachers to help learners achieve mastery of these complex linguistic components.

Lewis classifies these lexical items into four categories: (1) words, which can carry meaning independent of additional language; (2) collocations, or words that tend to appear together (for example, *chased* and *after*); (3) fixed expressions, including social greetings, politeness phrases, phrasebook language, and idioms; and (4) semi-fixed expressions, which include nearly fixed expressions, politeness phrases with fixed blanks, expressions with few possible options to fill fixed blanks, sentence heads, and extended frames used in formal or academic contexts.

Despite vigorous past research considering the most effective means by which such complex linguistic components can be taught, there remains little consensus as to an optimal teaching approach. In this paper, I argue for a combined method of teaching lexical items in terms of their patterns and structural and functional behavior. After considering the history of the terminology, the various instructional methods proposed by educational scholars, and the benefits and shortcomings of various theories, I offer an overview of how to develop an adaptive approach to language teaching in an online English language teaching environment for upper-

intermediate to advanced adult EFL learners. This overview is presented in two unit plans containing six lessons.

I argue that these lessons build effectively upon extant EFL research to offer a varied and flexible approach to teaching lexical items and pattern grammar. I particularly focus my teaching on lexical items that are useful for spoken language. My hope is that this emphasis will enable language students to speak English fluently and comfortably in everyday conversation, an essential basis for much English language learning.

Section 1: Lexical Items

1.1 What are Lexical Items?

*While without grammar little can be conveyed,
without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.*

—David Wilkins, 1972

Before the 1970s, the most common method in foreign language teaching was called Grammar-Translation. This method emphasised the instruction of language as two distinct parts — lexis, or vocabulary, and grammar — and relied heavily on the use of dictionaries and the explanation of grammar rules (Richards and Rodgers 7). However, by the 1970s, linguists started to challenge this method of English language teaching by arguing that translation and the traditional separation of vocabulary and grammar in the classroom were not a natural way to learn language. At this time, teachers began focussing on communication and meaning through demonstration, objects, and pictures (Richards and Rodgers 11). This soon led to an analysis of the relationships between words. Linguists began to realize that language consists of not only individual words but also *lexical items*, which “[function] as a single meaning unit, regardless of the number of words [they contain]” (Schmitt 2). James R. Nattinger and Jeanette S. DeCarrico describe these items, or *lexical phrases*, as “‘chunks’ of language of varying length” (1). David Wood, on the other hand, calls them *formulaic language units*, which he defines as “fixed phrases and idiomatic chunks, such as *on the other hand*, *all in all*, or *hold your horses* and longer phrases, clauses, and sentence-building frameworks of words such as *the bigger the better* or *if X, then Y*” (Wood 2).

Various terms have been coined to refer to these single meaning units of language. This table lists some of the most common terms that are found in the literature. Some terms are more common than others, and this is by no means an exhaustive list (see Table 1).

Table 1

Various Terms used to Express Single Meaning Units

Chunks	Lexemes
clusters	lexical bundles
clichés	lexical items
collocations	lexical phrases
composites	lexical units
fixed expressions	lexico-grammatical units
formulaic language-units	meaning units
formulaic sequences	multi-word units
frozen forms	multi-word items
gambits	prefabricated chunks
gestalt	prefabricated routines
idioms	syntactic strings
language chunks	

Sources: Hunston 25, Schmitt 2, Nattinger and DeCarrico 1,34, Nation, Learning Vocabulary 317, Jones 769, Wood 2, Greaves 453, Peters ix, Lewis 7, Hakuta 288.

Although these terms arguably have similar meanings, there are differences between them. The next section will explain how four linguists define the concept of *lexical meaning groups* and how they further divide them into categories.

1.2 Categories of Lexical Items

1.2.1 Michael Lewis's Four Categories of Lexis

The forerunner in putting this multi-word lexical phenomenon into practical use in the classroom is Michael Lewis. Lewis explains that lexis falls into one of four categories: words, collocations, fixed expressions, or semi-fixed expressions. The category that is the largest and most well known in the lexicon is *words*. These include lexical items such as *quiet* and *voilà*, which can stand alone and simultaneously convey a complete meaning. The second category is *collocations* which Lewis defines as “words [that] co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency” (8). For example, it is grammatically accurate to say, “Don’t chase the bus!” However, the words *chase* and *bus* do not typically occur together. One would more likely say, “Don’t miss the bus!”

The last two categories of lexical items that Lewis describes are *fixed* and *semi-fixed* expressions. Fully fixed expressions cannot be altered and are often used for spoken communication in everyday situations. Lewis describes four different types of fully fixed expressions: social greetings, politeness phrases, phrasebook language, and idioms. Social greetings are expressions that English speakers typically use when they are greeting other people or departing from them (e.g., *Good morning. How are you? / Okay. / Great! Have a wonderful day.*). Politeness phrases are expressions speakers typically use when they want to ask something or say something in a polite way (e.g., *No thank you, I’m fine. / I’d love to, but I can’t.*) Phrasebook language is the language that travelers who are not fluent in a language typically use in everyday situations while traveling and includes questions or statements. For example, *Excuse me, Where’s the restroom?* or *I’d like to make a reservation* are examples of phrasebook language. Lewis’s last type of fully fixed expressions includes idioms. While the previous three

types of fully fixed expressions are categorized by the situations in which the expressions are used, idioms are a broader category. *The New Oxford American Dictionary* defines an idiom as “a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g. over the moon, see the light)” (“Idiom”). English is filled with idioms that learners must learn as fixed expressions in order to become fluent English speakers.

Semi-fixed expressions, on the other hand, offer some variation. They are more common than fixed expressions and occur in both spoken and written language. These include almost fixed expressions (e.g., *It's/That's not my fault*), spoken sentences with a simple slot (e.g., *Could you pass _____ please?*), expressions with a slot that must be filled with a particular kind of slot-filler (e.g., *Hello. Nice to see you. I haven't seen you + for/since + time expression*), sentence heads (e.g., *What was really interesting/surprising/annoying was _____*), or more extended frames used for a formal letter or an academic paper (e.g., *There are, broadly speaking, two views of _____. The more traditional, usually associated with _____ and his/her colleagues, suggests that _____, while the more progressive view, associated with _____, suggests _____*) (Lewis 11).

1.2.2 Nattinger and DeCarrico's Four Categories of Lexical Phrases

Nattinger and DeCarrico prefer to use the term *lexical phrases* when referring to lexical meaning groups. They define lexical phrases as

“chunks” of language of varying length, ... multi-word lexical phenomena that exist somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax, conventionalized form/function composites that occur more frequently and have

more idiomatically determined meaning than language that is put together each time. (1)

While Lewis groups lexis into four rather straightforward categories, Nattinger and DeCarrico categorize their four types according to structural and functional characteristics. These characteristics are in turn analyzed based on the following four criteria: (1) the grammatical level of the phrase, (2) whether the phrase is canonical or non-canonical, (3) whether the phrase is variable or fixed, and (4) whether the phrase is continuous or discontinuous (Nattinger and DeCarrico 38).

First, in order to determine the grammatical level of a phrase, one must determine whether the phrase is at the word level or at the sentence level. For example, phrases such as *by the way* or *for the most part* are at the word level, but expressions such as *How are you?* or *There you go*, which form complete sentences, are at the sentence level. Second, a canonical phrase is a syntactically basic or elementary phrase, such as *She read the book* or *Don't forget to take out the trash*, but a non-canonical phrase does not follow such a simple structure. For example, *Off with his head* is a non-canonical phrase because it does not contain a verb. And *by and large* is non-canonical because we do not typically see a preposition followed by a conjunction and then an adjective (Nattinger and DeCarrico 33). Third, in order to determine if a lexical phrase is variable or fixed, one must see how much of that phrase can possibly change and still make sense. For example, the phrases *What on earth?* or *so to speak* are fixed phrases. They cannot be changed. A speaker cannot say *What on moon?* or *so to talk*. This differs from the phrase *a week ago*, which is a somewhat variable phrase because we can change *a week* to *a month* or *a year*. Finally, a phrase such as *not only X, but also Y* is highly variable because more of the sentence can be altered than not. One might say, "Not only are people beginning to move back into the

area, but many new buildings are being constructed” or “Not only are they cheaper, but they are also better”. Lastly, a phrase is continuous if it “consists of an unbroken sequence of words” and discontinuous if it is “interrupted by variable lexical fillers” (Nattinger and DeCarrico 38). *So far so good* is a continuous phrase, while *the _____er X, the _____er Y* is discontinuous.

Nattinger and DeCarrico use this analysis of lexical phrases to divide them into four categories. These categories are (1) polywords, (2) institutionalized expressions, (3) phrasal constraints, and (4) sentence builders (Nattinger and DeCarrico 38-44). *Polywords* are “short phrases which function very much like individual lexical items” and can be used for a variety of functions, such as summarizing (e.g., *in a nutshell*), shifting a topic (e.g., *by the way*), or disagreeing with someone or something (e.g., *not on your life*) (Nattinger and DeCarrico 38). While Lewis describes lexical items such as *nevertheless*, *moreover*, and *however* simply as multi-unit words, Nattinger and DeCarrico classify them as a subclass of polywords.

Institutionalized expressions are quite similar to polywords in that they consist of fixed, continuous language. However, the term generally refers to “proverbs, aphorisms, formulas for social interaction, and all of those chunks that a speaker has found efficient to store as units” (Nattinger and DeCarrico 39). These expressions can be general phrases that all English speakers use to express a message, such as *How do you do?* or they can be more idiosyncratic, based on the preference of the individual speaker, such as *long time no see*. Institutionalized expressions are continuous, but they can also be combined to create framed chunks of an entire text. For example, *Once upon a time . . . and they lived happily ever after* is a narrative framed chunk. Each phrase is continuous, but the language in the middle of the two phrases is variable (Nattinger and DeCarrico 40).

The third group consists of *phrasal constraints*. Phrasal constraints are short- to medium-length phrases that allow for some variation (Nattinger and DeCarrico 41). Like polywords, these phrases can be used for a variety of functions, such as greetings (e.g., *good morning, good afternoon, good evening*), topic shifters (e.g., *as I was saying, as I was mentioning*), or comparators (e.g., *the sooner the better, the bigger the better*). However, unlike polywords, phrasal constraints are not fixed expressions (Nattinger and DeCarrico 42). For example, the phrase *as well as* allows for numerous substitutions that could be inserted before and after the phrase (e.g., *She's going to eat rice as well as tofu! Please check for spelling errors as well as grammar errors!*, or *The pronunciation as well as the meaning may differ from setting to setting*). Others do not have as many options for substitutions, such as transitional phrases used with the preposition *for* (e.g., *for example* or *for instance*). Also, some phrasal constraints permit null substitutions, which means that in addition to taking a word or phrase as a substitution, the phrase can stand alone (Nattinger and DeCarrico 41). For example, *see you _____* allows a null substitution because one could say, “See you,” “See you later,” or “See you soon.”

Sentence builders which comprise the final group of lexical phrases are common phrases used to create the framework for entire sentences. These types of sentences are generally used when one wants to talk or write about a particular idea or argument. The phrases are typically canonical because, although they can be continuous or discontinuous, they usually consist of basic structures such as *I think (that) _____* or *It's only in _____ that _____* (Nattinger and DeCarrico 43). Sentence builders can be used to make assertions (e.g., *I think (that) _____*), to relate things (e.g., *not only _____, but also _____*), to summarize (e.g., *My point is that _____*), to evaluate (e.g., *I'm a great believer in _____*), to start a topic

(e.g., *Let me start by/with _____*), and to shift topics (e.g., *That reminds me of _____*), to name a few (Nattinger and DeCarrico 43-44).

The classification of some lexical phrases is not always fixed; some may belong to more than one category (Nattinger and DeCarrico 46). For example, consider this sentence builder frame: *not only _____, but also _____*. Using it as a sentence builder, one might say, “I’m excited because *not only am I turning 16 tomorrow, but also I’m getting a new car!*” However, this frame can easily be considered a phrasal constraint if the lexical items within the slots consist of two adjectives rather than two larger chunks of language (e.g., *I am not only hungry, but also sleepy*). As another example, the lexical phrase *to make a long story short* is continuous like a polyword, but it allows for some syntagmatic variation: *to make a **rather** long story short* or *to make a **very** long story **relatively** short*. Because the phrase is not completely discontinuous, it lies somewhere between a typical polyword and a typical phrasal constraint.

Thus, Nattinger and DeCarrico represent these lexical phrases as part of a continuum that leads from polywords to sentence builders. The possibility for lexical variation and discontinuity increases as the categories jump from word-like units to grammar-like frames. Polywords and institutionalized expressions are similar because they are both fixed and continuous, while phrasal constraints and sentence builders are variable and often not continuous (45). For example, *at any rate* is a fixed lexical phrase, while *a _____ ago* offers a considerable amount of variation. The lexical phrases between a typical polyword and a typical phrasal constraint allow intermediate degrees of variation. *So long* is a polyword. However, *so long for now* is also a possible option. This means that the lexical phrase *so long* offers optional variation after *long* (e.g., *so long for now/until next time/Anna*). *For better or for worse* is an example of a phrase with medial variation. The *for* is optional (e.g., *for better or (for) worse*).

1.2.3 David Willis's Four Categories of Lexical Phrases

David Willis categorizes lexical phrases in much the same way as Nattinger and DeCarrico do. They all consider polywords to be one type of lexical item; however, instead of using the categories of institutionalized expressions, phrasal constraints, and sentence builders, Willis uses frames, sentences and sentence stems, and patterns. Moreover, Willis's analysis of these categories differs from Nattinger and DeCarrico's in a few key ways. For example, Willis broadens the definition of polyword to include phrasal verbs (e.g., *look at*, *break out*, *catch up with*), time adverbials (e.g., *last week*, *the day before yesterday*), and sentence adverbials (e.g., *in fact*, *by and large*) (7.4). However, the primary difference is his use of a category called *patterns*.

Willis considers patterns to be a subclass of lexical phrases that, in a way, are very similar to frames. However, they differ in that the words that complete the patterns are, to an extent, predictable. Willis illustrates this by analyzing the word *about*. He first determines the various meanings for *about*, then the common patterns *about* is used in, and lastly the predictable sets of words that typically occur in patterns used with *about* (7.5) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Willis's Analysis of *About*

<i>About</i>	Meaning 1	Meaning 2	Meaning 3
Meaning	Concerning a particular subject	Approximately	To indicate general spatial orientation
Example	<i>Think about it. I read a book about that recently.</i>	<i>It takes about two hours to drive to London. It'll cost about a hundred quid.</i>	<i>It's late. There's nobody about. We spent the morning just walking about town.</i>
Predictable sets of words	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Verbs (e.g., <i>think, forget, talk, read</i>)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">nouns denoting items that communicate (e.g., <i>book, programme, story, article</i>)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">nouns denoting acts of communication (e.g., <i>advice, agreement, opinion</i>)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">adjectives describing attitudes toward information, states, or events (e.g. <i>happy, pleased, sorry</i>)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">numbers (e.g., <i>a hundred, a thousand, a dozen</i>)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">measurements (e.g., <i>kilometre, an hour and a half, a ton</i>)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><i>hanging, lying, waiting</i></div>

Source: Willis 7.5

1.3 How are Lexical Items Acquired?

It is important to recognize that lexical phrases account for a limited portion of the lexicon. Hunston and Francis make the following claim:

Collections of lexical phrases are, ultimately, fairly random lists of phrases, organised either according to their relative fixedness, or their function (discourse

organising, opinion-giving and so on), or to one of their core words [such as the analysis of *about* in table 2]. They are an attempt to account for a portion only of the lexicon. (14)

Nevertheless, lexical phrases are critical for language learners. Students need to understand that language consists of prefabricated, multi-unit phrases that appear in chunks. In order for students to both understand and use the language fluently, they need to know a great deal about a given word or lexical item. For example, consider the word *about*, as presented in Table 2. If a student can define all three meanings of *about*, then the student understands one aspect of the word. However, if the student can also determine predictable sets of words or phrases as well as patterns that typically occur with that word, then the student understands all aspects of the word.

There are two major contrasting views within the literature regarding how phrasal structure is acquired. Most researchers today, including Nattinger, DeCarrico, Ann Peters, Norbert Schmitt, Kenji Hakuta, and Lily Wong-Fillmore, agree that the language acquisition process depends heavily on prefabricated expressions (Nattinger 24-25, Peters 4, Schmitt 17). Hakuta and Wong-Fillmore have both concluded from their research that children acquire language first as prefabricated routines and then as prefabricated patterns (Hakuta 287, qtd. in Nattinger 25). This means that children first learn a phrase such as *What is it?* as an unanalyzed unit of language; they cannot yet construct the phrase from its constituents. As children begin to hear and use the phrase in different situations and syntactic environments, they begin to learn whether and how that phrase can become part of a pattern. For instance, at a later point in the children's language development, they may start to say, *What is this? What is that?* or *What is this cup doing here?*

According to Hakuta, these chunks of language that children initially memorize as units and for which they later acquire particular patterns are all part of the creative rule-forming process of language construction:

In order to be on an equal level with other speakers of the target language community, the learner must induce the “latent structure” of the language and come to grips with the variables contributing to speaking a language with full native proficiency; but until that point, it is conceivable that the learner will employ a strategy which “tunes in” on regular, patterned segments of speech and employs them without knowledge of their underlying structure, but with the knowledge as to which particular situations call for what patterns. They may be thought of as props which temporarily give support until a firmer foundation is built. (288)

Hakuta’s research is relevant to this paper because he points out that learners develop their own strategies for using patterns before they learn the structure of the language. This means that learners rely on patterns to communicate meaning before they analyze the patterns.

In *The Units of Language Acquisition*, Peters discusses her research on the language development of Minh, a child she began to observe at the age of seven months. She quickly realized that Minh was learning words not only in the traditional sense (such as *doggie*, *kitty*, or *cookie*), but also as complete sentence-like utterances (such as *Look at that! What is that?* and *Open the door!*). Of particular interest to this paper is the fact that children appear to follow the same pattern outlined by Hakuta and Peters when acquiring a second language. One of the most complete studies on prefabricated speech in second language acquisition was conducted by Wong-Fillmore. In the study, Wong-Fillmore analyzed the language of five Spanish-speaking

children acquiring English in an English-speaking kindergarten. She found that the majority of the language that the children were using was prefabricated (qtd. in Nattinger and DeCarrico 25).

Other researchers, however, disagree on the level of importance of such expressions. For instance, Krashen and Scarcella argue that “routines and patterns, while useful in establishing and maintaining relations, . . . do not serve a primary role in language acquisition and performance” (283). They criticize Wong-Fillmore’s study, asserting that the children in the study were pressured to create language that they did not have the linguistic competence to create: “Fillmore’s subjects were under great pressure to produce early and get along in the classroom and playground. Their use of routines and patterns was due to the fact that their communicative needs exceeded their linguistic competence, and they were forced to make the most of what they had” (294).

Therefore, according to Krashen and Scarcella, Wong-Fillmore’s conclusions were not accurate because the children were exposed to routine and predictable language rather than language that required them to be creative (Krashen and Scarcella 295). Overall, Krashen and Scarcella believe that:

Routines and patterns are essentially and fundamentally different from creative language [and that] routines and patterns may be very useful for establishing social relations and encouraging intake. They could conceivably serve as intake for the creative construction process. This intake, however, is probably insufficient for successful language acquisition. (298)

While Krashen and Scarcella view the creative use of language and the use of routines and patterns in first language acquisition as two separate entities, Hakuta, Wong-Fillmore, and many researchers today consider both aspects of language development to be crucial to the

overall acquisition of a language (Nattinger and DeCarrico 26). For example, Alan Cruttenden describes two stages of language learning that occur on all levels: item learning and system learning. He explains that children first learn the intonational, semantic, and syntactic elements of a language at the item level. Then, as they progressively acquire the language, they begin to analyze the individual pieces of a chunk and attach meaning to those pieces. He makes the following claim:

A child has to learn individual items by straightforward imitation to allow his mind to worry at, and play with (like a dog with a bone), such individual items in order to extract the system from them (like the marrow from the bones). He will begin to extract the system when he recognizes some part of the item being used in another utterance (phonology, intonation, morphology, and syntax) or the whole item being used in different situations or with different referents (semantics) ... there is at least a strong possibility that some form of item-learning is an essential prerequisite to any type of system-learning. (87)

Norbert Schmitt's views buttress Cruttenden's. He explains that lexical chunks are wholes and therefore fall into the category of item learning, while grammar falls into the category of system learning. He makes the following assertion: "These two types of learning are not mutually exclusive; rather, they feed into one another. Thus, once a chunk is known, it can be analyzed and segmented into its constituent words. In this way, unanalyzed chunks can be analyzed to provide additional vocabulary" (128). Although the studies mentioned above are based on children's language acquisition, Nattinger and Decarrico state that "there is no reason to think that adults would go about the task completely differently" (27). In fact, adults who acquire a second language in this manner benefit in various ways. First, the situations and

language that many adults encounter every day are quite predictable and habitual. This means that the language used in these situations is useful for the adult learner on a daily basis. Also, many adult learners want to produce language that is native-like and that will help them convey a particular meaning. Although they may not yet be able to construct the chunk of language from their current linguistic system, they can store it in their lexicon as an unanalyzed prefabricated unit. Learners may not understand the individual components of the phrase, but they can at least use the entire phrase to convey a message.

Section 2: Pattern Grammar

2.1 Lexical Items and their Patterns

A knowledge of how to put words together is as important, perhaps more important than a knowledge of their meanings.
—Hornby, 1954

It should be noted that lexical items cannot be considered completely separate from pattern grammar (Willis 7.1). Susan Hunston and Gill Francis point out that phrases such as “*It is hard to believe that*_____, *be interested in* _____, *the fact that*_____, or *apologize to* _____ *for* _____ *ing*” are considered lexical phrases but could also be considered part of pattern grammar (14). This lack of distinction between lexical items and pattern grammar means that there are more similarities to the two approaches to language analysis than differences. Because both approaches are based on the idea that vocabulary does not fit nicely into the rules of grammar, but rather that vocabulary determines the grammar, it is easy to confuse them. However, the ways in which lexical item researchers and pattern grammar researchers analyze the language are quite different. Hunston and Francis make the following claim:

It would be wrong to suppose ... that grammar patterns are simply a special case of lexical phrases. ... [Lexical phrases] are an attempt to account for a portion only of the lexicon. Grammar patterns, on the other hand, constitute an attempt to describe the whole of the language (or rather, all the frequently-occurring items in the language) in a principled way, and the lists of words collected in a given pattern are not random. The two approaches are far apart theoretically and in terms of language description in general. (14)

In other words, researchers on lexical items focus on the apparently random collocations of words that make up lexical items, while researchers on pattern grammar take a step back and focus on the typical grammar structures in which certain lexical items occur. As Hunston and Francis state, researchers of pattern grammar “draw parallels and make generalizations” (77). Pattern grammar explores the idea that certain elements of language are highly predictable even though the sentence, or utterance, is completely unique. An analysis of the following sentence highlights the differences between these approaches: “*It is somewhat ironic how people in general react to the circumstances in their lives*” (Hunston, “How” 357). If we applied a lexical item approach to the sentence, we would say that the phrases *in general* and *react to* are multi-unit lexical items, or polywords. The words *circumstances* and *lives* are collocates with each other, and “*It is somewhat ironic how _____*” could be considered a semi-fixed expression, a phrasal constraint, a sentence builder, or a frame, depending on the lexical environment around it and who is defining the lexical unit. We can also determine that the sentence “feels” natural because it follows a particular pattern of English.

A pattern grammar analysis of this sentence, in contrast, would focus on the verbs, nouns, and adjectives in this sentence and determine that a verb pattern with *it* is being used. In this

particular instance, the verb pattern is **it V adj wh**. This notation means that the sentence starts with *it* and is then followed by a verb phrase, an adjective phrase, and a wh-word (i.e., *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*). Many different words and phrases can be used in this pattern. For example, consider the following two sentences: (1) *It is not clear why some patients develop MODS and others do not* and (2) *It is not certain why women live longer than men* (Davies). The lexical items from these two examples are categorized below to fit the **it V adj wh** verb pattern (see Table 3).

Table 3

Verb Pattern for **it V adj wh**

Example	<i>It</i>	Verb group	Adjective group	Wh-clause
	Subject	Verb	Complement	Clause
(1)	It	is	not clear	why some patients develop MODS and others do not.
(2)	It	is	not certain	why women live longer than men.

Source: Mason

The pattern **it V adj wh** is only one of many examples of a *grammar pattern*, “a phraseology frequently associated with (a sense of) a word, particularly in terms of the prepositions, groups, and clauses that follow the word” (Hunston and Francis 3). These patterns “describe the whole of the language (or rather, all the frequently-occurring items in the language) in a principled way, and the lists of words collected in a given pattern are not random” (Hunston and Francis 14).

2.2 The Importance of Pattern Grammar in Language Acquisition

Pattern grammar analysis highlights the fact that only certain lexical items from certain word classes in a pattern are actually used by fluent English speakers. Again, grammatical patterns are “words which share pattern features, but which may differ in other respects in their phraseologies” (Greaves 454). It is important for learners to learn and be able to use thousands of lexical items and their patterns in a natural way if they want to communicate fluently in English.

A. S. Hornby was one of the first “to blur the distinction between lexis and grammar,” foreshadowing later pattern grammar research (Hunston and Francis 7). He believes that an understanding of language usage is more beneficial to the learner than language analysis. He explains that learners can become confused by grammar if they do not know the typical patterns that different lexical items take: “Because ‘He began talking about the weather’ means about the same as ‘He began to talk about the weather’, the learner may suppose, wrongly, of course, that ‘He stopped talking about the weather’ means the same as ‘He stopped to talk about the weather’” (Hornby v). What Hornby is saying here is that grammar cannot be taught without an awareness of grammar patterns. Although *began* and *stopped* are both verbs, they cannot always be used interchangeably within a particular pattern because they share the same word class.

2.3 Identifying Patterns

Lexical items can occur together quite frequently, but whether a given sequence of lexical items forms a pattern can be debatable. Distinguishing between words that simply occur together frequently and words that create patterns together is a problem for researchers as well as for modern computers. A computer can analyze language only as individual words; it can easily determine the words that typically occur next to each other but not why they co-occur. On the

other hand, the human brain understands word class, phrases, and patterns in a systematic way—a way that computers have not yet mastered.

As an example of this difficulty, researchers of lexical items may consider the italicized words in the following examples to be single meaning units acquired by the speaker, observing the frequency with which they co-occur (Hunston and Francis 71):

1. ... he formally *trained as* a painter, and kept at that throughout his life ...
2. ... and one of the brothers, as we know, *trained in* Yemen ...
3. ... Lawmakers worked with \$58 billion less than what was *available in* 2002
...
4. ... this data is *available from* the factory directory website and was easy to collect ... (Davies)

These researchers as well as pattern grammar researchers might agree that *trained as* and *trained in* occur together quite frequently and are therefore considered a single meaning unit. However, pattern grammar researchers would further determine that *train* is a verb that typically follows particular patterns: **V as n**, **V n as n**, **be V-ed as n**, **V in n**, **V n in n**, **or be V-ed in n** (Hunston and Francis 71).

In addition, pattern grammar researchers would analyze hundreds of examples of *available + preposition* from concordance lines—lines of text taken from a collection of naturally occurring written and spoken English. Under further analysis of the lexical items *available in* and *available to*, for example, they would determine that (1) the prepositional phrase usually indicates a time or place, (2) the phrase could be moved to a different part of the clause and still make sense, and, consequently, (3) the prepositional phrase and *available* are not dependent on one another (Timmis 18, Hunston and Francis 73). In other words, line three in the

previous example, “Lawmakers worked with \$58 billion less than what was *available in* 2002,” could be rephrased without the use of *available*, but with the use of the preposition *in* (e.g., “In 2002, lawmakers worked with \$58 billion less than what they do today”).

On the other hand, after further analysis of the lexical item *trained as* from line 1, “he formally *trained as* a painter, and kept at that throughout his life,” pattern grammar researchers would determine that *trained* and *as* are dependent on each other because the phrase could not be rephrased without the word *train* (e.g., “As a painter, he was formally instructed and kept at that throughout his life”)(Hunston and Francis 73-74).

Consequently, not all apparent patterns are genuine; words that occur frequently together are not always part of a grammatical pattern. Table four shows some additional examples of adjectives occurring in the pattern **ADJ in n**, distinguishing between those that form genuine pattern groups and those that do not. The lexical items in the genuine pattern group are dependent on the preposition that follows them. This means that the lexical item and the preposition act as one chunk of language. On the other hand, the items that are not genuine are not dependent on the preposition that follows them and do not act as single chunks of language. Students need to learn the difference between pattern groups that are genuine and ones that are not in order to speak and write English fluently (see Table 4).

Table 4

Adjectives Commonly Used in the Pattern **ADJ in n**

Group	Lexical items	Concordance lines
Genuine pattern groups	absorbed, bogged down, disinterested, embroiled, engaged, engrossed, enmeshed, entangled, immersed, implicated, interested, involved, locked, mixed up, tied up, uninterested, wrapped up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . . . pretending to be <u>absorbed in the book</u> she was reading . . . • . . . students are actively <u>engaged in the lesson</u> . . . • . . . too much of our costs were <u>tied up in that infrastructure</u> . . .
Groups that are not genuine	adamant, forthright, firm, frank, loud, resolute, steadfast, unequivocal, vehement, vocal, vociferous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . . . we are <u>adamant in</u> our likes and perhaps even more <u>adamant in</u> our dislikes . . . • . . . She is quite <u>vocal in terms of</u> women's rights . . . • . . . Dawkins started to become more <u>vocal in the</u> locker room . . .

Source: Hunston and Francis 75-76

The examples in this section focus on adjective patterns. In the following subsections, I will focus on some of the most common patterns from three of the major word classes: nouns, verbs, and adjectives.¹

2.3.1 Verb Patterns

Traditionally, courses have limited the teaching of verb patterns to “particular verbs which are typically followed either by a to-infinitive, a present participle, or both” (Hunston,

¹ However, for a more detailed discussion of word classes and subclasses, refer to 7.2 *Some ‘new’ word classes* in Susan Hunston and Gill Francis’s *Pattern Grammar: A Corpus-Driven Approach to the Lexical Grammar of English*.

Francis and Manning 208). In these courses, students learn the basic grammatical patterns that these verbs follow. For instance, they learn that the verb *finish* can be followed by a present participle, but not a *to*-infinitive (e.g., *He finished eating his supper*, not *He finished to eat his supper*). The verb *appear*, on the other hand, is never followed by a present participle, but it may be followed by a *to*-infinitive (e.g., *He appeared to be winning the game*, not *He appeared winning the game*). However, teaching the grammar of individual verbs “can be extended far beyond these traditional observations” (Hunston, Francis, and Manning 208). Not only do different verbs follow different patterns, but the patterns of nouns and adjectives are also often dependent on the pattern of a particular verb. For example, in the following sentence, *wrote* follows the verb pattern **V n n**: *I wrote John a letter*. The nouns *John* and *a letter* cannot be replaced with *a dog* or *a cup*. This is because the verb *wrote* determines which noun groups can and cannot follow the verb.

Although teachers may feel that adapting this concept of teaching verbs and their patterns into their course syllabi might be confusing for learners, it is important to remember that the connection between words and their patterns is not random, and therefore, “the load upon the language learner is not as great as it looks” (Hunston, Francis and Manning 210-211). Once students learn the patterns that are typically associated with a sense of a verb or the various patterns that a particular verb follows, they will feel more confident in their speaking and writing and may even be able to guess the meaning of a verb from the context based on the pattern that the verb follows.

One way that verb patterns can be presented and explained is by listing the various senses of an individual word along with the verb patterns that occur with each sense. The table below

represents the senses and patterns of the verb *change* along with an example of each of the patterns being used.

Table 5

Verb Senses of *change* from the COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary

Meaning	Patterns	Examples
If someone or something changes from one thing to another, that person or thing stops using or doing the first one and starts using or doing the second one.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V <i>to</i></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V <i>from</i></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Her hair began to <u>change to</u> gray.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">She <u>changed from</u> being an expressionist figurative painter to a realist.</div>
When something changes or when someone changes it, it becomes different.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V n <i>into</i> n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V <i>from</i> n <i>to</i> n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V -ed</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V -ing</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">It's interesting to think about how people <u>change</u> throughout their lives.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">They need to <u>change</u> the law.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">The caterpillar <u>changed into</u> a butterfly.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">The fixture was <u>changed from</u> brass to silver.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Her dad was a <u>changed</u> man.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">We need to prepare students for a <u>changing</u> world.</div>
To change something means to replace it with something new or different.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V n</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">We had to <u>change</u> a tire.</div>

When you change your clothes or change, you take some or all of your clothes off and put on different ones.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V into</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">get V -ed</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V out of</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I just need to shower and <u>change</u>.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I just need to <u>change my shirt</u>.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I quickly <u>changed into</u> my swimming suit.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;"><u>Get changed</u> first and then we'll go!</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">I've got to <u>change out of</u> my wet clothes.</div>
When you change a bed or change the sheets, you take off the dirty sheets and put on clean ones.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V n</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">I <u>changed the sheets</u> today.</div>
When you change a baby or change a nappy or diaper, you take off the dirty one and put on a clean one.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V -ed</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">How often do you feed and <u>change him</u>?</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">She needs her <u>diaper changed</u>.</div>
When you change buses, trains, or planes or change, you get off one bus, train, or plane and get on to another in order to continue your journey.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V n</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">We got off the train at Jefferson, where we had to <u>change</u>.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">We'll <u>change buses</u> at Irving.</div>
When you change money, you exchange it for the same amount of money in a different currency, or in smaller notes, bills, or coins.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">V n</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">V n into</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I went to <u>change money</u> at the airport.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">I need to <u>change my Euros into</u> dollars.</div>

Source: "Change." COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Kindle only edition. 8th ed., 2014.

Another way of presenting patterns is to list common verbs that share a single pattern.

These verbs also often share similar meanings (Hunston and Francis 211). The table below shows some of the most common verbs that follow the verb pattern **V about n**, from the Cobuild series *Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs* (see Table 6).

Table 6

Verbs with the **V about n** Pattern

Meaning group	Verb group	Example
The “talk” group	ask, complain, argue, talk, bicker, chat, fight, quarrel, joke, brag, rant, whine, go on	They <u>argued about</u> the game for hours.
The “think” group	wonder, worry, dream, daydream, forget, fantasize, know, think, obsess, speculate, theorize	Sometimes I <u>wonder about</u> Tom.
The “learn” group	hear, learn, read, find out	Have you <u>heard about</u> the paleo diet?

Source: Mason 148-149

2.3.2 Noun Patterns

The most common noun patterns, according to Francis and Hunston, are preceded by a determiner, a possessive determiner, an adjective, another noun, or a specific preposition and are explained and presented below (see Table 7).

Table 7

Most Common Noun Patterns

Pattern	Explanation	Example
poss N	A possessive determiner (e.g., my, your) typically precedes the noun.	Have you put away <u>your toys</u> ?
a N; the N	A definite or indefinite article appears before the N.	<u>The dog</u> is friendly. Did you find <u>an apartment</u> ?
adj N	An adjective appears before the noun.	That’s an <u>ugly painting</u> .
n N	Two nouns appear together in the same clause.	You can buy one at the <u>ticket office</u> .
prep N	The most common prepositions preceding a noun are <i>at, by, from, in, into, on, out of, under, with, and to</i> .	I just got home <u>from work</u> .

Source: Hunston 56-58

2.4 Patterns and Language Fluency

When students learn the meaning of *noun* or *verb*, they learn what type of language the class represents. For example, they learn that a noun is a person, place, or thing and a verb is a word used to describe an action; however, when they learn the patterns of a noun or a verb, they learn how the language is actually used—not simply what the word class is defined as. They learn, for instance, that the verb *talk* can be used in the verb pattern **V about n** (e.g., *We talked about money*), but not **V in favor of n** (e.g., *We talked in favor of money*). Thus, patterns are crucial for language learners. In order for learners to understand and produce language fluently, they need to learn both the various patterns that a word typically follows and the words that typically follow a certain pattern.

Section 3: Lexical Items and Pattern Grammar in the Classroom

3.1 The Importance of Language Learning Strategies

As Lewis states, “Describing a language and teaching it are two very different things” (Lewis 44). When a teacher describes a grammar point to students, the students learn why the language behaves the way it does, but they do not necessarily learn how to spontaneously use the language in their own speaking. Students must learn how to produce the language fluently through exposure to a large number of lexical items and their patterns in natural contexts. Therefore, because classroom exposure is a small part of the total exposure necessary to attain fluency, the teacher’s most important role is to teach students who are at an upper-intermediate to advanced level strategies for recognizing, recording, practicing, and memorizing the language so that they can ultimately produce the language naturally and spontaneously. The remainder of

this section focuses on five helpful strategies that Lewis proposes students need to understand and use when studying English.

Focusing on specific language is the first language learning strategy. Learners do not need to understand everything that they listen to or read. It is better for students to understand key lexical items than to spend time looking up the meaning of every single word they do not know (Lewis 47). Students often say to me, “Teacher, this video is too difficult. I can’t understand everything they are saying.” I tell them that it is okay. Students need to learn how to focus on several key chunks of language and patterns while reading or listening rather than becoming overwhelmed with trying to look up the meaning of every word that they do not understand in the dictionary.

The second language learning strategy is that being confused and making mistakes is a good thing! Mistakes mean that the learner is starting to understand and is making progress (Lewis 48). When students feel like they need to understand everything, they get overwhelmed and discouraged. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to stress to learners that they need to focus on the lexical items and patterns that they do know and practice using them in new and different contexts.

The third language learning strategy is that in order to improve their grammar, students need to focus on building their vocabulary. Grammar practice will help learners improve their knowledge of grammar, but it will not necessarily help them to produce language grammatically. This is because grammar is determined by vocabulary — not the other way around (Lewis 48). Therefore, increasing students’ vocabulary helps them utilize the language in more ways than grammar practice can provide. The traditional separation of grammar and vocabulary in coursebooks does not help students become fluent English speakers; however, when students

expand their knowledge of vocabulary, they also expand their knowledge of lexical items and patterns.

The fourth language learning strategy is to learn lexical items in expressions rather than individually (Lewis 48). Students need to be aware of the words surrounding the key language. Recording, practicing, and memorizing an expression rather than an individual lexical item may be more time consuming and require more effort on the student's behalf, but the language will be more useful to the student.

The final strategy that learners need to implement is to both practice the lexical patterns they have already learned as well as create new examples that are similar to the original pattern. For example, when students learn that the verb *manage* is used in the pattern **V to-inf**, they should practice using this pattern and then practice using other verbs such as *continue* or *appear* in the same pattern. Lewis states, "It is not wasting time to explore certain words slowly and carefully" (Lewis 48). If students know most of the patterns of a particular lexical item, they will be able to use it naturally in many different contexts and situations. If, on the other hand, students know many lexical items but do not know the words that typically surround those items, the lexical item will not be helpful to them during spontaneous language use. Therefore, Lewis believes, class time is best spent recording patterns that certain lexical items take rather than teaching individual lexical items (Lewis 48).

3.1.2 Lexical Pattern Practice in the Classroom

Nattinger and DeCarrico divide the teaching of lexical items into two sections: spoken discourse and written discourse. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on their approach to teaching lexical items in spoken discourse, specifically conversation, because the goal for my target students is to speak English fluently in everyday conversations. My target students are

upper-intermediate to advanced EFL adult learners who have spent many hours studying grammar points and vocabulary words but still find it difficult to communicate fluently and effectively during everyday English conversations. Therefore, they need to learn lexical items and the patterns that are commonly used in spoken discourse.

As I mentioned in Section 1.3, lexical items are first acquired as unanalyzed chunks of language and then as part of a pattern, and lastly they are incorporated into creative language use. Nattinger and DeCarrico have adapted this process of acquiring language to form a method for teaching lexical phrases in the classroom. Their method consists of three stages: (1) pattern practice drills, (2) substitution drills, and (3) segmenting and constructing new patterns (Nattinger and DeCarrico 116-117).

In the first stage, students gain fluency by learning basic fixed routines (e.g., *I'm sorry* or *Don't forget*). Therefore, when using this method, teachers should not teach lexical items with limited slots, such as polywords or phrasal constraints, but rather lexical items that are closer to pattern structures, such as sentence builders (Nattinger and DeCarrico 117). Lexical items with limited slots are phrases such as *by the way* or *as I was saying* because they are closer to word-like units than patterns. However, a phrase such as *It has been some time since* is closer to a pattern than a lexical item because some slots can be altered (e.g., *It has been a while since* or *It has been a few days since*). Once students can recall the fixed routine and use it comfortably on their own, they are ready to learn how the phrase can be altered. In the subsequent stages, students learn to substitute and expand upon the basic fixed routines that they have already learned.

In the second stage, substitution drills, students learn that the fixed routines they previously learned in their pattern practice drills were actually part of a pattern in which various

lexical items can be substituted, added, or deleted from the routine. This is where they learn, for instance, that the phrase *It has been some time since* is not a fixed phrase. In this particular instance, they would learn that lexical items such as *a while*, *a few days*, or *several years* could all be substituted for *some time*.

As learners become more confident using the language with various alterations, they begin to analyze the patterns further. This is the third stage, in which students need to learn how to not only analyze the chunks that they learn in the classroom, but also segment and construct new patterns on their own using the same strategies (Nattinger and DeCarrico 117). For instance, after students learn multiple lexical items that could be substituted for *some time* in *It has been some time since*, they may start to notice on their own that a pronoun, or noun, typically follows the word *since* (e.g., *It has been some time since we last talked* or *It has been a while since I saw her*). This is where creative control of the language begins to take place.

In other words, Nattinger and DeCarrico aim to teach learners the strategies needed to help them construct language fluently on their own outside the classroom. This is very similar to Lewis's approach to strategy teaching mentioned previously, but Nattinger and DeCarrico focus specifically on how to implement these strategies into lessons. This three-stage method will be implemented into the first three lessons in Section Four.

3.2 Communicative Tasks

While Lewis focuses on the strategies that learners can use to help them recognize, record, practice, and memorize the language, Willis's teaching method takes into consideration the subconscious strategies that learners already use when producing a language. He points out that students use different learning strategies when they construct sentences than they do when they communicate effectively in real time (3.1). He states, "Learners who are concerned to

produce messages to convey meanings rapidly and efficiently will adopt quite different strategies from those involved in constructing sentences” (3.1). In other words, when students have the time to think about what they will say or write, they pay attention to their grammar and word choices; however, when they need to spontaneously produce the language, they rely on phrases and expressions that they already have stored in their mental lexicons. This means that classroom activities need to cater to these two different learning strategies in order for students to become fluent and confident English speakers.

Willis first addresses the strategies that learners apply in order to use the language to communicate rapidly and fluently. The learners begin by memorizing chunks of language as unanalyzed lexical items. In order for teachers to help students learn and use lexical items at this stage, teachers can incorporate communicative tasks into the classroom. These tasks focus on the construction of meaning rather than the production of sentences. According to Willis, communicative tasks consist of five phases: preparation, task, planning, reporting, and reading (or listening). Each one of these phases will be explained and will correlate with Lessons Four and Five presented in Section Four.

The first phase, preparation, involves the teacher reviewing and introducing new lexical items to the students. Some of the lexical items are related to a news story that the students will be presented with later in the lesson, and the others are distractors. The distractors are lexical items that the students have seen before in previous lessons (3.1.1).

The second phase is the task phase. This involves students trying to predict what they think the news story is about before they are presented with the story. They are given information, such as the setting, the characters, props used in the story, and/or an excerpt from the story. They are then asked to predict what they think will happen in the story. This

encourages students to improvise and spontaneously produce language that they may not yet feel very confident using. During this phase, students are “grappling with meaning and so they don’t have enough time or spare mental capacity to pay much attention to form” (Willis 3.1.1).

The third phase is the planning phase. Here, students use the information they learned during the task phase to construct their own unique predictions of the news story. The teacher asks the students to write down several lexical items that they will later refer to when they present their story to the class. The teacher then explains to the students that their main concern during their presentation will be how well the listeners understand them and how well they present themselves to the class. Students therefore take this planning time to think about how they should word the story before they report it to the class. During this phase, students have the opportunity to develop language that makes sense to them without the presence of a teacher (Willis 3.1.1). In this way, they can experiment with lexis and grammar to create sentences they believe to be accurate.

The fourth phase is the report phase, in which students report their story to the class. They refer to the notes they took during the planning phase while focusing on meaning, accuracy, and the needs of their listeners. They are also concerned with listening to other speakers’ stories and jotting down differences between their own stories and those of their peers (Willis 3.1.1).

The last phase is the listening or reading phase. During this phase, students can either listen to a video of the news story or read a news article about the news story. By this point, they are interested in finding out what really happened, so they pay close attention to meaning. They also recognize some of the key language that was introduced to them in the task phase, so they begin to engage with the language and explore how it is being used. For homework, they are

asked to identify key language from the news story transcript that will be discussed in the next class.

3.3 Language-Focused Exercises

While communicative tasks encourage learners to use the language as memorized chunks, language-focused exercises encourage learners to recognize, build upon, and explore other ways those memorized chunks can be used (Willis 3.2). For instance, in the last phase of the communicative task in Section 3.2, students began looking at the language in more detail. This attention to detail encourages students to start recognizing the form of the language that they were introduced to during the communicative phases and prepares them for using different types of patterns in the future.

At the beginning of a language-focused lesson, students learn that the language they were asked to highlight and bold in the previous lesson was actually part of a pattern that other lexical items follow as well. The teacher introduces these patterns to the students by showing them how the patterns are used with different lexical items. As a class, the students then use this information to determine which pattern the sentences in a list follow.

Finally, students build upon the patterns they have just learned and explore the verbs commonly used in those patterns. Students learn that many of the verbs used in the patterns have similar meanings and that the lexical items that act as opposites to those verbs are not always easy to recognize. This section of the lesson thus promotes students' recognition of meaning groups, which in turn helps them to build upon and explore the language further. Once they learn which verbs follow certain patterns, they will learn to look for those patterns when they come across those verbs in the future.

For homework, the students are asked to complete an activity in which they recall language from the news story. This exercise may seem rather easy to the native English speaker; however, unlike the native English speaker, the English language learner does not yet have “a thorough command of the referential systems of English” (Willis 3.6). Therefore, the student cannot always predict which lexical items occur together and which do not. This exercise pushes students to rely on the referential systems that they have developed up to this point. Students can then easily refer back to the news story transcript or the video to see if their guesses were correct.

In addition to using these methods to teach new language, Lewis also emphasizes the importance of motivating students through reviewing the material they have already learned. When students feel that they could actually use the language they have learned, they feel more confident and motivated to continue learning. Lewis states, “What is important is to encourage learners to look back at the language they have recorded and do something—perhaps anything—with it” (Lewis 49). It is important for the teacher to continue to review the language the students have already learned throughout the course.

Section 4: Unit Plans

4.1 Target Students

These lessons are intended for adult EFL learners at the upper-intermediate to advanced levels of English who are interested in improving their overall English fluency and accuracy in American English by taking classes in real time online. As a general rule, students should understand about 80% of the content they are exposed to in these lessons. Therefore, they need to feel confident utilizing basic grammar rules and vocabulary words. These students have studied and understand the rules of grammar up to the upper-intermediate level and have an extensive

knowledge of individual vocabulary words; however, they have not yet studied lexical items and their patterns.

One interesting aspect of these unit plans are that they do not require the students to work together in groups as they might in a traditional classroom setting. This is because these lessons are intended for working people who do not necessarily have the time to meet outside of class with other learners in order to complete homework activities. I have attempted to arrange meetings in the past where students work together with other students outside of our regular class, but they have not been successful. Students are motivated by what the teacher provides — a set class time, a lesson, strategy building, guidance, corrections, and encouragement. Most of the students who benefit from these lessons are not necessarily preparing for an exam, such as the TOEFL or TOEIC. I tell students that the language and strategies that they learn in these lessons will be helpful during an exam; however, the goal is to increase their conversational fluency. In other words, students need to be intrinsically motivated more than extrinsically motivated if they want to become fluent in conversational English. I do not at all discourage group activities outside of class, but I have found that they are not realistic for working people who are self-motivated learners.

4.2 Teaching Environment

The lessons in these unit plans are designed to be used in Google Drive; however, other file-sharing options would work fine as well, just as long as all of the students can access the document together in real time. Classes are conducted over Google Hangouts, Skype, or other online learning platforms and are designed for a class of three to five students. Both the teacher and the students converse and type notes in the Google Document during the lesson while

students take turns answering questions and participating in group activities and exercises that help them increase their knowledge of lexical items and pattern grammar.

The lessons in this paper are geared to teach learners whose primary concern is to converse naturally and fluently in English during everyday conversations. Therefore, the content, chunks of language, and patterns that are chosen for these lessons reflect daily real life conversations. However, the stages used to create these lessons could apply to other areas of English, such as conversational business English, academic English, or English for special purposes. These lessons were designed to demonstrate how the stages explained above could be applied in the online classroom to teach conversational English; however, they were not created for a specific curriculum. Moreover, the lessons could be used or adapted for individual tutoring lessons or traditional classroom use.

Because these lessons aim to help students become active and fluent English speakers, it is essential that the teacher is fluent as well. Lewis stresses that non-native teachers need to be confident with real English, not just English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Non-native teachers, he states, “must be prepared to handle unfamiliar or novel language without seeing it as a threat to their own knowledge, competence or status.” (194).

4.3 Unit Plan One

Section four consists of two unit plans. The first plan follows Nattinger and DeCarrico’s three-stage method (Lessons one to three) and the second one follows Willis’s two stage method (Lessons four to six). The first unit plan is designed for a class that meets once a week for fifty minutes. There are three parts to each lesson. The first part is completed by the students before the class starts. The second part consists of the content we will focus on in class, and the third

part consists of the homework activities that the students complete after class. Each lesson is designed to stretch over the course of five days and requires about 160-170 minutes to complete.

4.3.1 Lesson One: Pattern Practice Drills

The objectives for Lesson One focus on pattern practice drills and are as follows. First, the lesson will bring the learners' attention to several chunks of language that they will learn more about later in the lesson. Second, it will allow learners to discuss the language chunks in detail with the teacher and other students. Third, it will explain what a grammar pattern is and introduce learners to the pattern *VP prep/adv*. My target students have already learned different types of lexical items prior to this lesson; however, this will be the first time that they will be introduced to patterns.

4.3.1.1 Part One of Lesson One

At the end of the previous class, the teacher will explain to the students over Skype or Google Hangouts what they need to do to prepare for this particular lesson. The teacher will tell the students that they need to watch a twenty-five minute episode of a T.V. sitcom called *The Big Bang Theory* on their own before the next class. She will then explain that they need to listen for chunks of language that are listed under bullet points in part one of this lesson while they are watching the video, but not to worry if they cannot understand everything. During this time, the teacher reiterates to the students Lewis's first strategy to language learning discussed in Section 3.1.

Lesson One: The Big Bang Theory – Pilot

Part One → Before Class:

Day 1: Watch the video below. Don't worry if you can't understand everything. We will discuss the following chunks of language in class, so listen for them in the video:

Pilot → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PhYRzNqIeo

- **I do yearn for ... (1:51)**
- **... she winds up with a toddler ... (1:55)**
- **Are you still mad about ...? (2:37)**
- **I could go on, but I think I've made my point. (8:00)**
- **It has been some time since ... (12:24)**
- **...out of my league ... (19:50)**
- **Dinner's on me. (21:07)**

4.3.1.2 Part Two of Lesson One

In the second part, the teacher starts the class with discussion questions. She asks the students a series of questions about the episode and takes notes in the space provided in the Google Document. The teacher either bolds or underlines key lexical items that students use in their responses or suggests lexical items that fluent English speakers might use when responding to that particular question. The teacher's main goal in this part is to raise students' consciousness of useful lexical items that the students will: 1) encounter again in the future and 2) eventually be able to spontaneously use in their own speaking (if they do not already). This part of the discussion should take about ten to fifteen minutes depending on class participation.

Part Two → In Class:**Day 2: Learn language chunks and grammar patterns****1) Discussion Questions**

1. What do you think Sheldon and Leonard think of their new neighbor? Do they like her? Why or why not?
 - a.
2. What favor did Penny ask Sheldon and Leonard to do for her? Do you think they should have done the favor for her? Why or why not?
 - a.
3. Do you think Penny would ever be interested in a guy like Sheldon? Why or why not?
 - a.

Next, the teacher and students discuss the meaning of the language chunks the students were asked to listen for in the video. The teacher starts this discussion by clicking on the link to the episode provided in the first part of the Google Document and then replays the parts where the language chunks were spoken in the episode. The teacher asks the students if they can guess the meaning of the chunks based on the context and the language around them. Here, the teacher focuses on Lewis's fourth strategy by encouraging students to be aware of the words surrounding the key language. The teacher discusses the meaning of the chunks with the students and types simplified meanings and examples of the chunks being used in sample sentences or dialogues in the space provided in the Google Document. The teacher might use translation, if she shares the students' native language, or simplified English to explain the meaning of the chunks to the students. This part of the discussion will take between fifteen to twenty minutes based on student participation and the length of the teacher's explanations.

2) Language Discussion

- **I do yearn for ... (1:51)**
 - **Meaning →**
 - **Example →**
- **... she winds up with a toddler ... (1:55)**
 - **Meaning →**
 - **Example →**
- **Are you still mad about ...? (2:37)**
 - **Meaning →**

- Example →
- I could go on, but I think I've made my point (8:00)
 - Meaning →
 - Example →
- It has been some time since ... (12:24)
 - Meaning →
 - Example →
- ... out of my league ... (19:50)
 - Meaning →
 - Example →
- Dinner's on me (21:07)
 - Meaning →
 - Example →

4.3.1.3 Part Three of Lesson One

Finally, the teacher introduces the concept of patterns to the students. She explains that different words follow different patterns and that the pattern students will learn in this lesson is **V P prep/adv**. The teacher explains that the chunk of language the students will learn for this pattern is *wind up with*. She reads the following phrase from the episode out loud: ... *she winds up with a toddler who doesn't know ...*, and then explains to the students how each word in the phrase matches the **V P prep/adv pattern**. She does this by referring to the table provided. She explains that the subject (*she*), verb (*winds*), particle (*up*), and prepositional phrase (*with a toddler who doesn't know ...*) are divided into four sections in the table. By looking at the phrase in the following table, the students can see how the chunk of language matches the verb pattern.

Part Three → In Class:**3) Grammar Pattern**

Let's look at today's grammar pattern below:

V P prep/adv
... she **winds up with** a toddler who doesn't know... (1:55)

	Verb group	Particle	prep. phrase/ adverb group
Subject	Verb		Adjunct
she	winds	up	with a toddler who doesn't know...

The teacher proceeds by asking the students to complete sentences which follow the same pattern in the second table provided. The verb, particle, and preposition are already given in the second table; however, the students need to think of a new subject or prepositional phrase to complete the sentence. Next, the teacher types the student's examples into the spaces provided in the Google Document.

Can you complete the sentences below?

e.g. Before he got married, he didn't want any pets, but somehow, he **wound up with** two dogs and a cat.

	winds	up	with a black eye.
	wound	up	with the bill.
I always	wind	up	with

The teacher continues by pointing out that the prepositions *with*, *without*, *in*, *at*, *next to*, and *in front of* typically follow the phrase *wind up*. This is a fun fact for students and encourages them to notice the types of words that often surround a given lexical item. This portion of the lesson will take about ten minutes to complete.

The teacher finishes Part Three of Lesson One by completing two language exercises with the students that encourage them to notice strong word partnerships and collocational

opposites. In the first exercise, the teacher asks the students to determine which lexical items from a list commonly occur with the verbs *make* and *sound*. The teacher points out that each lexical item can only be matched with one of the two verbs or neither of the verbs. She then types the students' responses into the table provided in the Google Document and gives suggestions if need be. This following exercise will take about five minutes.

4) Language Exercises

**Which of the following words make strong word partnerships?
(Exercise type 3 from Lewis 92)**

the dishes dinner noise fun loud
a point interesting yourself like vocal

Make		Sounds	

For the second exercise, the teacher first asks the students what collocations are. These students have studied lexical items before, so they are familiar with collocations. The teacher continues by explaining that a collocational opposite is the word that collocates with a given lexical item, but has the opposite meaning of the original collocate. Collocational opposites can be difficult for learners because they are not obvious opposites. For example, the collocational opposite of *light blue* is *dark blue*; however, the collocational opposite of *light suitcase* is not *dark suitcase*, but *heavy suitcase*. The teacher refers to the table provided in the Google Document which is divided into three sections: 1) collocation 2) collocational opposite and 3) lexical item.

What are the collocational opposites of the items below? (Adapted from exercise type 4 from Lewis 93)

collocation	collocational opposite	lexical item
significant		improvement (3:14)
undergoing		stress (5:22)

Two lexical items and their collocations from the video are already provided in the table; however, the students need to think of possible collocational opposites. The teacher asks the students if they know what the collocational opposites might be. She proceeds by typing any correct responses into the spaces provided or telling the students common collocational opposites that fluent English speakers typically use. This portion of the lesson will take about five minutes to complete.

4.3.1.4 Part Four of Lesson One

The fourth part of Lesson One consists of a variety of exercises that students complete as homework over the course of the next three days. Each day, the students spend about ten to fifteen minutes completing these exercises. The exercises help the students memorize the lexical items and encourage them to start noticing and using the pattern they were introduced to in the lesson. The students can ask the teacher any questions they might have about the homework by sending the teacher a private message, or asking the teacher at the beginning of the next class. The teacher corrects the students' homework before the following lesson and gives them feedback in their Google Document on how they can use the language they are learning fluently. She might type some additional examples into the document or explain in detail why a particular answer is correct and another is not.

On day three, the students will complete three activities. The first activity requires the students to rearrange three sentences that they learned in the lesson to create fixed expressions by using the verb *make*.

Part Four → Homework:

Day 3: Complete the following activities

Rearrange the following sentences to create fixed expressions using the verb (*make*). (Adapted from exercise type 7 from Lewis 94)

e.g. me on dinner's → dinner's on me

1. I could on go, but I've think my point I made (8:00)
 - a.
2. No, only it worse you'll make (11:08)
 - a.
3. At home yourself make (6:23)
 - a.

The second activity requires the students to correct three expressions that they learned in the lesson that contain a wrong word and then translate those expressions into their first language.

Each of the following expressions contains a wrong word. Correct the mistake and then translate the expression into your first language. (Adapted from exercise type 8 from Lewis 95)

e.g. It's right up the hall. → It's right **down** the hall.

1. I think here is the place (1:04)
 - a.
2. Oh, have your time (1:08)
 - a.
3. ...and above top of everything else, I'm ... (11:43)
 - a.

The last activity requires students to match three sentence heads with the correct list of possible options. There is only one possible match for each sentence head. The students proceed by creating their own sentence with each of the three sentence heads.

Match the sentence heads from list one with their correct matches in list two. Then create your own sentence in the space provided. (adapted from exercise type 9 from Lewis 95)

List one	List two
I do yearn for... (1:51)	<div data-bbox="685 409 1047 470" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">that</div> <div data-bbox="685 470 1047 531" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">what I said</div> <div data-bbox="685 531 1047 592" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">what happened the other day</div>
Are you still mad about ...? (2:37)	<div data-bbox="685 716 899 777" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">we've talked</div> <div data-bbox="685 777 899 837" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">the accident</div> <div data-bbox="685 837 899 898" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">I last visited her</div>
It has been some time since ... (12:24)	<div data-bbox="685 974 1187 1035" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">simpler times and a slower lifestyle</div> <div data-bbox="685 1035 1187 1096" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">freedom, justice, and universal solidarity</div> <div data-bbox="685 1096 1187 1157" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Matrimony</div>

On day four, the students will complete three additional activities. The first activity requires them to insert intensifiers, such as *very* or *really* into three sentences they heard in the video. The students need to determine where the intensifiers belong in the sentences. This teaches them that they can emphasise what they want to say by adding a word or two to the sentence.

Day 4: Complete the following activities

The words in brackets are used to intensify an expression. Do you know where these words belong in the sentence? (Adapted from exercise type 10 from Lewis 96)

e.g. Ok, thanks for your time. (so much) → Ok, thanks **so much** for your time.

1. Oh, take your time. (please) → 1:08
 - a.
2. Think about that. (really) → 1:37
 - a.
3. I know that moving can be stressful. (extremely) → 5:20
 - a.
4. No, you'll only make it worse. (far) → 11:08
 - a.

In the second activity, the students learn that they can also de-emphasise a sentence by adding words such as *a bit* or *pretty much* to soften the meaning and they add de-emphasising words to three sentences.

The words in brackets are used to soften an expression. Do you know where these words belong in the sentence? (Adapted from exercise type 11 from Lewis 96)

e.g. I was upset when I found out. (a bit) → I was **a bit** upset when I found out.

1. I just... I can't believe... (quite) → 11:00
 - a.
2. I'm done with her. (pretty much) → 19:50
 - a.
3. Oh good. Then you won't be disappointed. (too) → 12:56
 - a.

The last activity teaches students that some expressions carry stronger emotions than others. The students need to determine if the expressions belong in group *a* (expressions which carry a strong emotion) or group *b* (expressions which don't carry much emotion). There are two expressions for each number in this activity and four numbers.

Each number below has two expressions. Determine which expression belongs in group *a* and which one belongs in group *b*. (Adapted from exercise 15 from Lewis 98)

- a. Expressions which carry a strong emotion
 - b. Expressions which don't carry much emotion
 - e.g. Please, hang on a moment. → **b**
 - Just hang on! → **a**
1. What, are you kidding? (1:28) →
Is that so? I didn't know that. →
 2. ...think about that. (1:37) →
...just, whatever you do, don't think about that! →
 3. I just ... I absolutely can not believe ... →
I just... I can't believe ... (11:00) →
 4. We don't mean to interrupt. (3:29) →
We do not mean to interrupt. →

On day five, the students complete three activities. In the first activity, the students are reminded that the phrasal verb *wind up* follows the grammar pattern **V P prep/adv**. Next, the students are introduced to two similar phrasal verbs that also follow the same pattern: *end up* and *finish up*. The students need to complete the sentences in the table and create one of their own sentences.

Day 5: Complete the following activities

In the lesson this week, you learned that the phrasal verb *wind up* follows the grammar pattern **V P prep**. There are two additional phrasal verbs that follow this pattern as well: *end* and *finish*.

Complete the sentences below with your own language. Then, create your own sentence with one of the phrasal verbs that follow this pattern (Mason 2.1, Davies).

V P prep

	Verb group	Particle	prep. phrase/ adverb group
Subject	Verb		Adjunct
she	ended	up	with
	finished	up	at the scene just after midnight.
	ended	up	without insurance.
John	wound	up	with
		up	

In the second activity for day five, the students need to fill in the blanks with: *point, a point, the point, my point* or *points*. They are then asked to answer a question, “What do you think is **the point** of learning English? What are your **strong points** and **weak points**?”. This activity helps students understand how the word *point* is commonly used in different phrases and expressions and encourages them to look at the words that commonly occur before and after the word *point*.

Complete the following sentences with *point, a point, the point, my point* or *points* (adapted from exercise type 27 from Lewis 104, Davies).

1. What's your _____? (0:14)
2. I could go on, but I think I've made _____? (8:00)
3. What's _____ of playing if you're going to cheat?
4. ...with all due respect, you've missed _____ entirely.
5. I like him because he's made some good _____.
6. Do I like him? No. Do I believe in him? That's beside _____. Any politician that gets 70 million votes is tapped into something larger.
7. I'm great at math, but spelling is not my strong _____.
8. We'll have to make it _____ to go visit your uncle next month.

What do you think is **the point** of learning English? What are your **strong points** and **weak points**?

4.3.2 Lesson Two: Substitution Drills - Expanding upon Previously Learned Vocabulary Items

The objectives for Lesson Two focus on Substitution drills and are as follows. First, the lesson will bring students' attention to the stress and pausing in the language and why it is important to understand this. Second, it will expand upon three chunks of language that the students learned in Lesson One. Third, it will introduce the students to four grammar patterns that the three language chunks follow and require them to complete grammar tables with the missing lexical items. Lastly, the lesson will give the students the chance to practice using chunks of language they were exposed to in previous lessons.

Before the class starts, students are asked to watch the twenty-five minute video from the previous lesson again and to listen for specific chunks of language. Next, the students highlight the stressed syllables and indicate any natural pauses the speakers make with a slash (e.g. Oh good./ Then you won't be disappointed) in the Google Document. Students will already be familiar with this activity, so they will understand what they are expected to do. The reason why this activity is included at the beginning of this lesson is to encourage learners to recognize spoken language as meaningful chunks rather than individual words. They learn to listen for chunks of language and stress in the language. By being aware of this, and repeating the stressed and paused chunks of language out loud on their own, they begin to learn the natural rhythm of the English language which ultimately helps them sound more natural when they speak English.

Part One → Before Class:

Day 1: Watch the video again. This time, listen for the following chunks of language. Highlight the stressed syllables and indicate any pauses with a slash:

e.g. Oh good./ Then you won't be disappointed.

Pilot → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= PhYRzNqIeo>

- **Oh, take your time. (1:08)**
- **Significant improvement over the old neighbour. (3:14)**
- **We don't mean to interrupt. (3:29)**
- **What do you guys do for fun around here? (5:51)**
- **No, you'll only make it worse. (11:08)**
- **I could go on, but I think I've made my point (8:00)**
- **I'm done with her. (19:50)**

The teacher begins the lesson on Google Hangouts or Skype by asking the students if they have any questions about the activity they were asked to complete before class. She asks a few students to read some of the phrases out loud with the correct stress and pausing. She goes on to explain to the students that in this lesson, they will expand upon three chunks of language that they learned in Lesson One by using the chunks in new and different ways. She starts the language discussion with the class by introducing some common phrases to the students that are typically used with the chunks. She introduces this to the students in the Google Document and then creates example sentences or dialogues to better explain how the phrases are naturally used. This section of part two will take about fifteen minutes to complete.

Part Two → In Class:**Day 2: Expand upon previously learned vocabulary items**

Last week, you learned chunks of language used in everyday conversations. In this lesson today, you will learn how to use those chunks in new and different ways.

You are already familiar with the following vocabulary items. Let's see how you can use what you already know to create new language!

- You know ...
- It has been some time since ...
- Make yourself at home.

1. Language Discussion

- You know what I mean.
-
- You know what I mean?
-
- You know something?
-
- You know that's not true.
-
- It's been a few months since I've seen you.
-
- It's been awhile since we've all gotten together.
-
- Make yourself a drink.
-

The teacher continues by introducing the grammar patterns. She explains that the phrases the students just learned in the language discussion follow one of four grammar patterns. These patterns are: 1) **V wh**, 2) **V that**, 3) **it V n/amount before/since**, and 4) **V pron-refl n**. The teacher explains to the students that each pattern is presented in a table in the Google Document where they can see how the phrases are divided into their individual grammatical parts. In addition, the verbs used in each pattern for this lesson are: 1) know, 2) know, 3) has been, and 4) make. Next, the teacher explains to the students that each table is missing certain lexical items

and that the students need to determine what possible language can be inserted into the tables.

The teacher proceeds by filling in one or two spaces in the grammar tables with examples of the language that could be used in each pattern and then asks the students to think of additional examples to be inserted into the remaining spaces. This will take about fifteen minutes to complete.

2. Grammar Patterns adapted from Mason

1. know → V wh

	Verb group	Wh-clause
Subject	Verb	Clause
You	know	what I mean./?
You	know	how
You	know	why
You	know	who
You	know	where
You	know	when

2. know → V that

	Verb group	that-clause
Subject	Verb	Clause
You	know	that?
You	know	that I only want to help.
You	know	that
You	know	that

3. has been → *it* V n/amount before/since

<i>it</i>	V (verb group)	noun/amount	since
It	's been	awhile	since I've seen your face.
It	's been	a few months	since we broke up.
It	's been	some time	since
It	's been		since
It	's been		since

4. make → V pron-refl n

	Verb group	Reflexive Pronoun
Subject	Verb	Object
	Make	yourself comfortable.
	Make	yourself a plate.
	Make	yourself
	Make	yourself
	Make	yourself

In the last class activity of the second section, the students practice using language they were exposed to in previous lessons by creating dialogues based on two hypothetical situations.

The teacher asks one of the students to read this situation to the class.

Situation one: You're at a restaurant and the people at the table next to you are talking about your favorite celebrity. You just heard them say that the celebrity will be eating dinner at the restaurant in two hours. You don't want to be rude, but you want to find out more information.

You:

People at the other table:

Next, the teacher asks another student to determine what chunk of language from the list provided would most likely be used in that particular situation. This list is presented below.

- **Don't think like that.**
- **What, are you kidding?**
- **What's your point?**
- **We don't mean to interrupt, but ...**
- **Well, what do you want to do?**
- **Oh, take your time.**

The teacher goes on to encourage the students to create a dialogue together as a class by asking them, "What could the first person in this dialogue say in this situation? Can the conversation start by using one of the chunks provided, or will we use the chunk in the second person's response?" The teacher does the same for the second situation which is presented below. This class activity will take about ten minutes to complete.

Situation two: Your friend is sick and hasn't gotten much sleep because he is preparing for an exam. You want to show your sympathy towards your friend and encourage your friend to look on the bright side.

Friend:

You:

In the third section of the Lesson Two, the students have the opportunity to practice using the language covered in the lesson outside of class by inserting the correct language chunks into given dialogues and creating their own dialogues. As they did in Lesson One, the students take the following three days to complete these homework activities. Again, the teacher gives the students feedback on how they are doing and how they can improve in their Google Drive documents. Throughout this lesson, the teacher utilizes Lewis's third strategy by expanding upon

the vocabulary items the students have already learned. The activities for each day will take the students about fifteen minutes to complete.

Part Three → Homework:

Day 3: Complete the dialogues below with the vocabulary items we expanded upon in this week's lesson.

1. **Situation:** Two women run into each other at the grocery store after not seeing each other for quite some time.
 - a. **Mary:** Tina? Is that you?
 - b. **Tina:** Mary?
 - c. **Mary:** Wow! Hi! I hardly recognized you. When did you get a new haircut?
 - d. **Tina:** Ohhh... a while back now, but I guess I haven't seen you. How are you?
 - e. **Mary:** Yeah. _____ now. I'm doing great! How about you?

2. **Situation:** A mother wants her son to finish his homework before he goes to soccer practice. The boy finished drinking his water on the table, but hasn't finished his homework yet.
 - a. **Mother:** Have you finished?
 - b. **Boy:** Yes, I finished!
 - c. **Mother:** Really? It doesn't look like you have.
 - d. **Boy:** Yes, I finished drinking the glass of water!
 - e. **Mother:** _____

3. **Situation:** A young couple is having an argument.
 - a. **Girl:** Where were you last night?
 - b. **Boy:** ... at Marks playing video games. Why?
 - c. **Girl:** Well I heard you were at the Pub with Angela.
 - d. **Boy:** Oh come on. _____. I always hang out with Mark on Wednesday nights.

Day 4: Complete the dialogues below with the vocabulary items we expanded upon in this week's lesson.

4. **Situation:** A young girl has terminal cancer and doesn't have much time to live. She's talking with a good friend and reflecting on her life.
 - a. **Friend:** I know it's been hard, but you're really pushing through and I'm proud of you.
 - b. **Young girl:** Thanks. But, I know that any day could be my last. And

_____? I'm okay with that. I'm okay with that because I've done so much in the short time I've spent on earth. I'm happy with what I've done and the relationships I've made.

5. **Situation:** You just showed up at a party. The host is welcoming you and wants you to feel comfortable and included.
- Host:** Hey Kevin! How are you? So happy you could make it. Come right in. I'll take your coat.
 - (You) Kevin:** Thanks!
 - Host:** No problem. Feel free to _____.
Everything's in the kitchen.
6. **Situation:** You point out to a friend that two people are brother, but they look nothing alike.
- You:** Hey, did you know that Tom and Jared are brothers?
 - Friend:** No, I had no idea.
 - You:** I know! They don't look anything alike. _____?
 - Friend:** Yeah. I would have never guessed.

Day 5: Choose two-three of the following chunks of language below to create your own dialogue (adapted from Davis 45)

- **What, are you kidding?**
- **What's your point?**
- **Well, what do you want to do?**
- **Oh, take your time.**

Person one:

Person two:

Person one:

Person two:

Person one:

Person two:

4.3.3 Lesson Three: Segmenting and Constructing New Patterns

The objectives for Lesson Three focus on segmenting and constructing new patterns. The lesson will revisit common idioms that the students heard while watching the first three episodes

of *The Big Bang Theory* and require them to read the explanations, example sentences, and dialogues for those idioms. Second, the lesson will determine how well students remember the whole phrase or idiom that they previously learned by requiring them to complete a series of in-class activities. Third, it will require students to recall an idiom or phrase that they heard in one of the first three episodes of the T.V. sitcom and then have other students guess what the idiom is. Lastly, the lesson will give the students the chance to review and recall the language they learned previously and to expand upon that language so they feel comfortable using it in new and different situations.

Lesson Three incorporates Nattinger and DeCarrico's third stage of lexical pattern practice in the classroom. In an actual course, the students would have had by now several weeks of lessons similar to Lesson one and Lesson two. This particular lesson is intended to be a review of what the students have learned throughout the last six lessons. It also encourages students to start taking creative control of the language by further analyzing the patterns they have learned.

First, before the class starts, students complete the "before class" activity in their Google Drive document for this lesson. In this activity, the students revisit six of the idioms they heard while watching the first three episodes of the T.V. sitcom. They have the option to go back and watch the episodes at the points where the idioms were said (e.g. Pilot → 1:55). Explanations and examples of how the idioms are used in everyday context are provided in order to help them further understand the natural usage of the idioms. This "before class" assignment encourages students to recognize language they have been introduced to, but have not yet studied in class. It will take about fifteen to twenty minutes for the students to revisit the idioms in the YouTube videos and read through the explanations and examples.

Part One → Before Class:

Day 1: The following are common idioms you heard while watching the first three episodes of The Big Bang Theory. Revisit the idioms in the videos and read the explanations, example sentences, and dialogues below. We will review the idioms in class.

- **... pin ... hopes on ... (Pilot → 1:55)**
 - To pin your hopes on something = to have all hope be on one thing
 - She'd pinned her hopes on going to college out of state.

- **Guess that's about it (Pilot → 10:29)**
 - (I) guess that's about it = That is all I have to say or do
 - Situation: A man just finished helping his friend move into a new apartment
 - Mark: Hey John, did you grab the last box from the truck?
 - John: Yep, I did!
 - Mark: Okay, I guess that's about it then.
 - Situation: A couple just broke up.
 - Tina: I really don't want you to leave, but I know there is nothing I could say or do to make you change your mind.
 - Tom: Yeah.
 - Tina: Okay, well ... guess that's about it. I'll see ya around.
 - Tom: Yeah, see ya around.

- **I'm so sorry I dragged you through this. (Pilot → 19:30)**
 - I'm (so) sorry I dragged you through this = to be sorry for making someone do something with you that was not a pleasant experience
 - What a horrible trip! Traveling with Michael and Tonya was the worst!
I'm so sorry I dragged you through this.

- **Penny for your thoughts (Episode 2 → 3:24)**
 - (A) penny for your thoughts = What are you thinking about?
 - Situation: A young boy is about to go overseas for the first time for college
 - Father: Are you ready son? Today's a big day!
 - Son: Yeah.
 - Father: Are you sure? You haven't said much today.
 - Son: I know ...
 - Father: Penny for your thoughts.

- **I don't know if I can take it (Episode 2 → 9:10)**
 - I don't know if I can take it = I can't handle the feelings I am experiencing (e.g. stress/sadness/anxiety)/ My feelings are too strong and I feel pain
 - This month has been the worst month of my life! My mom went into a comma and is in the hospital and I lost my job. Everything that can go wrong is going wrong. I don't know if I can take it.

- **You're in for a treat (Episode 2 → 9:56)**
 - You're in for a treat = You are going to be happy about something that will happen in the future
 - Situation: You are talking on the phone to a friend who lives in Australia.
 - Friend: I can't wait to come visit next week!
 - You: I know! I hope you're ready for some snow!
 - Friend: Oh, I hope there is snow! I've never seen snow before.
 - You: Oh really? Well, you're in for a treat! We've gotten a lot of snow this year, and I'm sure it will still be here once you arrive!

The first activity that the students do together in class requires them to recall part of a phrase or idiom that they learned in a previous lesson. The teacher first asks a student to read one of the ten phrases or idioms out loud to the class that are presented in the Google Document. A part of the phrase or idiom is already provided; however, the students need to recall the remaining part. In order to help spark the students' memory, the first letter of each word of the missing phrase is given in parenthesis. If a student cannot remember the phrase or idiom, the teacher asks the class to help the student recall the language. This activity takes about ten minutes to complete.

Part Two → In Class:

Day 2: Produce common idioms, collocations and sentence stems that you were introduced to and practiced using in the last six lessons.

The goal of this activity is to see how well you remember the whole phrase or idiom you previously learned. The letters in parenthesis are the first letters of each word of the missing phrase. You will take turns reading the expressions out loud. Try to say the expressions as naturally as possible with the correct stress and pausing (adapted from Lindstromberg 84)

- e.g. Oh, **take** your time. (t)
1. I could go on, but I think _____. (l.m.m.p)
 2. She'd pinned _____ going to college out of state. (h.h.o)
 3. It has been _____ we've all gotten together. (s.t.s)
 4. Guess _____ it. (t.a)
 5. You're in _____ (f.a.t)
 6. Penny _____ (f.y.t)

7. No, you'll _____ worse (o.m.i)
8. _____ I can take it. (i.d.k.i)
9. I'm so sorry I _____ this (d.y.t.t)
10. We _____ interrupt. (d.m.t)

For the next activity, students read an excerpt from the previous episodes out loud to the class with a partner. Some of the words and phrases that were learned in the previous lessons are not provided, so the students are expected to recall those phrases in real time. If a student has a hard time recalling a particular phrase, the teacher might ask the class to help the student recall the phrase. This activity will take about ten minutes to complete.

What comes next? For this activity, you will read an excerpt from the episodes out loud with a partner to the class. Some words and phrases that we learned in previous lessons are not provided. Can you remember what the expressions are? (adapted from Lindstromberg 88)

1. Pilot (12:18)

- a. Sheldon: Well, this is an interesting development.
- b. Leonard: How so?
- c. Sheldon: **It has been** _____ **since** we've had a woman take her clothes off in our apartment.
- d. Leonard: That's not true

2. Episode 1 (9:37)

- a. Leonard: **Do you** _____ if Penny wakes up, **there is** _____ **as to why** we're here.
- e. Sheldon: I just **gave you** _____.
- f. Leonard: No, no, you gave me an explanation. It's reasonableness will be determined by a jury of your peers.
- g. Sheldon: Don't be ridiculous. I have no peers.

3. Pilot (19:30)

- a. Leonard: Sheldon, **I'm sorry I** _____.
- b. Sheldon: It's okay. **It wasn't** _____ pantsing and **it won't be** _____.
- c. Leonard: And you were right about my motives. I was hoping to establish a relationship with Penny that might have someday led to sex.
- d. Sheldon: Well you got me out of my pants.
- e. Leonard: Anyway, I've learned my lesson. She's out of _____. I'm done with her.

4. Episode 2 (3:24)
 - a. Sheldon: for your thoughts.
 - b. Raj: the matter?
 - c. Leonard: I'm fine. Penny's fine. The guy she's kissing is really fine.
 - d. Howard: Kissing? What kind of kissing? Cheeks? Lips? Chaste? French?

2. Pilot (17:34)
 - a. Leonard: I'll do the talking.
 - b. Penny's boyfriend: Yeah?
 - c. Leonard: Uh, hi. I'm Leonard. This is Sheldon.
 - d. Sheldon: Hello.
 - e. Leonard: Uh, we're here to pick up Penny's TV.
 - f. Penny's boyfriend: Get .
 - g. Sheldon: Okay. Thanks for .

The last in-class activity is a game which is similar to a game called Twenty Questions.

For this activity, one volunteer student thinks of an idiom or phrase that he or she heard in one of the first three episodes of the T.V. sitcom. The other students ask yes/no questions to try to guess the idiom or phrase. The teacher provides and explains some questions that the students might want to ask to get the game started. Some example questions are provided in the lesson. If no one guesses the expression correctly by the time twenty questions have been asked, the volunteer student wins! The time allotted for this game is about ten minutes, but it could vary depending on the amount of time spent on earlier activities in the lesson. Students can play this game until the end of the class.

Guess my chunk! We're going to end class today with a game. Have you ever played Twenty Questions? This activity is very similar. One volunteer student will think of an idiom or phrase that we heard in one of the first three episodes of *The Big Bang Theory*. The other students will ask yes/no questions to try to guess the idiom or phrase. If no one guesses the expression correctly by the time twenty questions have been asked, the volunteer student wins! Adapted from Lingstromberg 91)

Questions you may want to ask:

- Was the phrase or idiom in the first/second/third episode?
- Does it consist of more than 3/4/5 words?

- Is it a phrase/idiom?
- Is it used to express a feeling?
- Does the first word have more than 3/4/5 words?
- Does it contain a preposition?
- Did Leonard/Sheldon/Penny say it?
- Does the first/second letter of the first/second word start with a *d/f/g/s*?

Lastly, the students complete a series of homework activities over the course of the next three days. These activities are designed to encourage learners to review and recall the language they have previously learned and to expand upon that language so they feel comfortable using it in new and different situations. As in Lessons One and Two, the teacher gives the students feedback on how they are doing and how they can improve in their Google Documents.

On day three, the students complete an activity where they make educated guesses about the language they learned. They answer five questions about idioms they learned in previous lessons and then complete sentence stems with possible phrases they might use in everyday situations.

Part Three → Homework:

Day 3: Make an educated guess

1. When might you **pin your hopes on** somebody or something?
2. Translate the phrase ***Guess that's about it*** into your first language.
3. What other phrases in English could you say which means the same as **Penny for your thoughts?**
4. Translate the phrase ***I don't know if I can take it*** into your first language.
5. When might someone say ***You're in for a treat?***
6. Complete the sentence stems below with possible phrases you might use in everyday situations.

Sentence Stem	Phrase
I'm so sorry	I dragged you through this.
I'm so sorry	
I'm so sorry	

On day four, the students complete an activity in which they are presented four verbs and need to determine which of those verbs collocate with the language chunks in the eight sentences. They need to type the correct verb in the blank space provided.

Day 4: Complete the following activity

Which of these verbs collocate with the following chunks of language?

- keep
- sounds
- have
- got

_____ like a lot of fun!

Please, _____ an eye on him while I run outside for a moment.

Just _____ your mouth shut!

I think she's _____ her eye on you.

_____ like your neighbor's home.

Do you think I _____ a chance?

Oh, I've _____ it!

I've _____ my eye on you.

The second activity on day four that the students need to complete is filling in a table with either a collocation or the collocation's opposite. This activity helps students realize that opposites are not always straightforward. For example, the adverb *hardly* collocates with the chunk *think so*. Therefore, one might think that *easily* is the opposite of *hardly* and subsequently collocates with *think so*. However, we do not say *easily think so*, but we do say *really think so*.

Fill in the following table with the collocation or it's opposite

Collocation	Collocational Opposite	Lexical Item
	a lack of	stress
hardly		think so
lower		the odds
	not much of an	improvement
put together		media center

On day five, the students complete another activity where they need to make an educated guess about the language they think will be used in the next episode of *The Big Bang Theory*. They are provided a dialogue and need to fill in the blank spaces with the language they think they will hear in the next episode.

Day 5: Make an educated guess

The following two dialogues are excerpts from the next episode of *The Big Bang Theory*. Can you guess what the missing language might be?

Leonard: Morning

Sheldon: _____.

Leonard: You're _____ for breakfast?

Sheldon: This isn't breakfast. It's an experiment.

Leonard: Huh. Cause it looks a lot like breakfast.

Sheldon: I finally have time to test my hypothesis about the separation of water molecules from the egg protein and its impact vis-a-vis taste.

Leonard: Sounds _____.

Penny: How come you didn't _____ work today?

Sheldon: I'm taking a sabbatical because I won't kowtow to mediocre minds.

Penny: So, you got canned huh?

Sheldon: Theoretical Physicists do not get canned... but yeah.

Penny: Well, maybe it's all for the _____. You know, I always say, when one door closes, another one _____.

These activities incorporate what Lewis stresses in his fifth language learning strategy that was discussed in section 3.1. The activities for each day will take the students about ten to fifteen minutes to complete.

4.4 Unit Plan Two

There are three lessons in the second unit plan which utilize Willis's communicative tasks and his language focused exercises. Each lesson is designed for a thirty-minute class and revolves around a news story about a man who lost his wallet. Lessons Four and Five take into account the five phases of the communicative task while Lesson Six consists of language focused exercises.

4.4.1 Lessons Four to Five: Communicative Tasks

The first three phases of the communicative task - preparation, task, and planning - are covered in Lesson Four while the last two phases of the communicative task - reporting and reading (or listening) -are covered in Lesson Five.

4.4.1.1 Lesson Four: Create the Story

The objectives for Lesson Four focus on the first three stages of the communicative task and are as follows. First, the lesson will prepare the students for the news story that they will be introduced to in Lesson Five. Second, the lesson will require the students to make educated guesses about the lexical items they might see in the news story. Third, the lesson will require the students to predict what they think will happen in the story. Fourth, the lesson will introduce the students to some of the language they will encounter in Lesson five. Lastly, the lesson will give the students the opportunity to discuss what they think will happen in the story based on the information they were given in the lesson.

In the first activity, the teacher takes the first ten minutes of class to ask the students to look at a list of lexical items and determine which of the phrases they might expect to see in a

news story about someone who lost their wallet and why these lexical items might be relevant to the story. This first activity utilizes Willis's first phase, preparation, and is presented below.

Which of the following lexical items might you expect to see in a news story about someone who lost his wallet?

- Micro-chipped
- dropped it
- cancelled credit cards
- replaced license
- catch the culprit
- alarm system
- It may be one of the worst feelings when...

Next, the teacher explains to the students over Google Hangouts or Skype that they will predict the outcome of the news story by looking at some photos and vocabulary items. The photos give the students clues as to what the story will be about and the vocabulary items give more specific information about the setting, characters, and props. The teacher then asks the students what they think the story will be about based on the photos and the vocabulary items.

This activity takes about five minutes.

You are going to **predict the outcome** of a news story about someone who lost his wallet. Use the photos and vocabulary below to get some ideas about the context of the story (adapted from Willis 3.1.1):



Fig. 1. Bradshaw, Maxwell. *Lost Wallet*. Digital Painting.



Fig. 2. Trillet, Thibault. *Photo of Concert Band during Night Time*.
29 June 2014. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-concert-band-during-night-time-167605/>. 25 November 2016.



Fig. 3. Bradshaw, Maxwell. *Mailbox*. Digital Painting.

Setting: Concert hall in Brooklyn New York/ an apartment

The characters: music enthusiast, good Samaritan (stranger), news reporter

The props: a wallet, a letter

The next in-class activity requires two students to read a short excerpt out loud to the class from the video they will watch in Lesson Five. The excerpt is a conversation between the man who lost his wallet and the news reporter. By reading this conversation out loud, the students not only receive clues about the story, but also encounter some of the same language

they will hear when they listen to the video of the news story in Lesson Five. This activity also takes about five minutes to complete and is presented below.

Below is a part of a conversation between the man who lost his wallet and the News Reporter. What else can you determine about the story based on the information from the conversation?

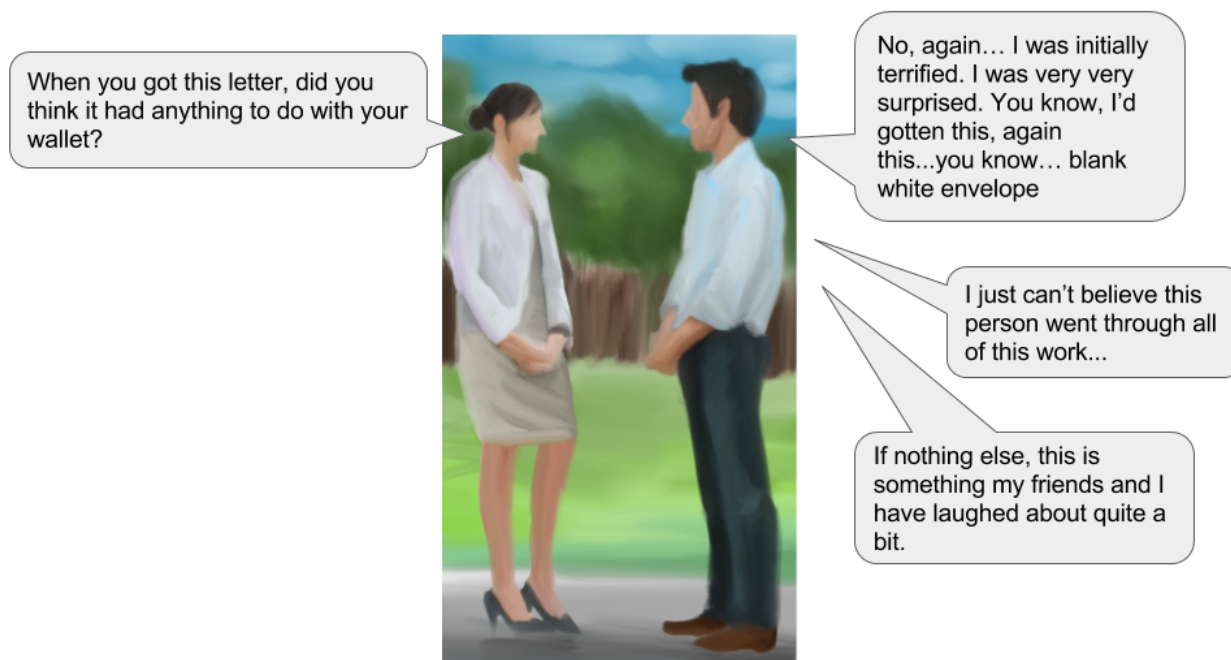


Fig. 4. Bradshaw, Maxwell. *Conversation*. Digital Painting., Gingras

The teacher then explains to the students that they will spend the next ten minutes brainstorming as a class about what they think happened in the story based on the information previously provided. The teacher asks the students a series of six questions designed to encourage them to think more about what they already know and infer what they do not yet know. As the students are brainstorming and discussing each question together as a class, the teacher takes notes in the Google Document that the students can refer back to later. These notes help the students with the homework activity they are required to complete for this lesson.

The questions for this brainstorming activity are presented below.

Class Discussion

Let's brainstorm!

1. Who do you think lost his wallet and where was he when he lost it?
 - a.
2. Who do you think found the wallet?
 - a.
3. What do you think the person who found the wallet did with the wallet?
 - a.
4. What do you think was in the envelope the man got in the mail?
 - a.
5. Do you think the man got his wallet back?
 - a.
6. Why do you think the man says, "If nothing else, this is something my friends and I have laughed about quite a bit"?
 - a.

These first three activities utilize Willis's second phase, task. For homework, the teacher asks the students to think of their own version of what they think may have happened in the story and prepare to tell their version out loud in the next class. The teacher emphasises to the students that they can write down lexical items that will help them explain their story, but not to write complete sentences because they will not be reading their story word-for-word, but rather expressing their thoughts naturally and spontaneously to the class. This homework activity utilizes Willis's third phase - planning - and takes the students fifteen to twenty minutes to complete.

Homework

Now it's your turn to tell the story!

In class, we talked about what may have happened in the news story. In our next lesson, everyone will tell their version of the story. You can use the ideas and language from our class discussion, but try to make your story unique. Jot down some lexical items we talked about in class below to help you tell the story to the class, but **do not write complete sentences**.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)

4.4.1.2. Lesson Five: Tell the Story

The objectives for Lesson Five focus on the last two stages of the communicative task and are as follows. First, the lesson will require the students to report what they think will happen in the story to the class and take notes on what other students report. Second, the lesson will require the students to listen to the video as a class so they can learn what really happened in the story. Third, the lesson will require the students to discuss as a class what they thought of the video and how it compared to the stories the students reported in the class prior. Fourth, the homework section of the lesson will prepare students for the language-focused exercises they will complete in Lesson Five.

The students spend the first fifteen minutes of class taking turns telling their stories to the class over Google Hangouts or Skype. The students can refer to the notes they took as homework to help them tell their story. The teacher reminds the students that their goal is to express the meaning of their stories, so they do not need to worry about their grammar. The teacher also asks

the students to listen closely to other speakers and to take notes on some of the key language that they hear other students use that is different from the language they used in their own stories.

This first activity focuses on the fourth stage of the communicative task, reporting.

It's time to tell your story!

Last class, we predicted what might have happened in a news story about a man who lost his wallet. You learned that the story took place at a concert hall and an apartment, there were three characters in the story, and two props: a wallet and a letter. Tell the class what happened you think happened in the story. You can refer to the notes you wrote down as homework to help tell the story. Remember, you want to express meaning in this activity, so don't worry about correct grammar.

Listen closely to other speakers and jot down some key language that makes their story different from yours!

1.

- -
- -
- -

2.

- -
- -
- -

3.

- -
- -
- -

4.

- -
- -
- -

The last fifteen minutes of the class are spent watching a video of the news story and having a class discussion about the video. The teacher asks the class three questions about the video and takes notes on these questions in the Google Document. The students can refer back to the notes later. The link to the video and the discussion questions are presented below.

Let's watch the News Story below to find out which speaker's story was closest to the original!

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Stranger>Returns-Mans-Lost-Wallet-with-Hilarious-Note-Reilly-Flaherty-369056491.html>

Discussion Questions

1. Whose story do you think is most similar to the real story? Why?
 - a.
2. If you were the man who lost his wallet, what would you think if you received a letter like this one?
 - a.
3. What sort of advice would you give the man who lost his wallet?
 - a.

For the homework activity, students take ten to fifteen minutes reading the transcript from the video and highlighting any phrases that use the preposition *to* and then bolding the preposition and the verb before the preposition (e.g., **Yesterday I went to the gym.**) The purpose of this activity is to prepare students for the language-focused exercises they will complete in the next class and is presented below. This entire lesson utilizes phase four and five of Willis's communicative tasks - reporting and listening (or reading).

Homework

Read the following excerpts from the video transcript below and highlight any phrases that use the word *to* and bold the preposition and the verb before the preposition (e.g., **Yesterday I went to the gym.**) We will talk about these phrases together in our next class! (Source: Gingras)

Reporter: It may be one of the worst feelings when you lose your wallet. No credit cards. No license. No cash. It happened to Reilly Flaherty. The music enthusiast believes he dropped it while attending a concert in Brooklyn.

Reporter: "When you got this envelope, did you think it had to do with your wallet?"

Reporter: And just within the last few hours, the Brooklyn theater where this concert was held got wind of what happened and reached out to Reilly and offered him free tickets to an upcoming concert and told him to leave his wallet at home. On the lower east side, I'm Brynn Gingras. News 4 New York.

4.4.2 Lesson Six: Language Focused Exercises

The objectives for Lesson Six focus on recognizing, building upon, and exploring other ways to use previously learned chunks and patterns of language and are as follows. First, the lesson will require the students to recall the phrases they highlighted and verbs they bolded in the previous lesson. Second, the lesson will introduce two grammar patterns that the highlighted phrases and bolded verbs follow. Third, the lesson will require the students to recognize the patterns in sentences. Fourth, the lesson will require the students to create their own sentences using the two grammar patterns. Fifth, the lesson will require students to explore additional verbs and phrasal verbs which are commonly used in the two patterns. Lastly, the homework section of this lesson will require students to recall chunks of language from the video as well as words and phrases from this unit that they think they might use in real life.

4.4.2.2 Lesson Six: Find Patterns in the Story

The teacher starts the Google Hangouts or Skype class by taking the first two minutes to ask the students what phrases they highlighted and words they bolded for homework in the last lesson. She continues by typing these phrases into the Google Document and bolding the verb and the preposition *to*.

Class Discussion

For homework, I asked you to highlight the phrases from the transcript that contain the preposition *to* and to bold the preposition and the verb that occurs before the preposition. What phrases did you highlight? What verbs did you bold?

-
-
-
-

The teacher spends the next three minutes pointing out to the students that the language they highlighted can follow one of two patterns: 1) **V to n** or 2) **V n to-inf**. The teacher goes on to explain each pattern to the students and gives them examples of how the patterns can be used. She first explains that the **V to n** pattern consists of a verb with a prepositional object and was used in the story in the sentence, “It **happened to** Reilly Flaherty”. The teacher then goes on to explain that additional verbs can also follow this same pattern. In this particular lesson, the teacher explains to the students that the words *apologize* and *confess* are two common verbs that often follow this pattern (e.g. I **apologize to** him/ She **confessed to** the crime). She proceeds by explaining that the **V n to-inf** pattern consists of a verb with two objects and was used in the story in the phrase, “... **told** him **to** leave his wallet at home”. She explains to the students that the verbs *order* and *ask* are two common verbs that also follow this verb pattern (e.g. He **ordered** her **to** stay at home/ He **asked** him **to** hang around).

Pattern 1: **V to n** → Verb with prepositional object

- It **happened to** Reilly Flaherty.
- I **apologized to** him.
- She **confessed to** the crime.

Pattern 2: **V n to-inf** → Verb with two objects

- **told** him **to** leave his wallet at home
- He **ordered** her **to** stay at home.
- We **asked** him **to** hang around.

The teacher continues by spending the next five minutes asking the students to take turns reading ten sentences and indicating if the sentences follow pattern 1 or pattern 2. This helps students notice the difference between the two patterns.

Which of the sentences below follow Pattern 1? Which ones follow Pattern 2?

1. I need to speak to him soon.
a.
2. First up, new study reveals sixty percent of parents confess to going through their kids' emails, texts and Facebook messages.
a.
3. I need to discipline myself to read more and work less.
a.
4. The company didn't authorize its board to use it.
a.
5. I have to admit to you, I had my doubts.
a.
6. We can programme the computer to look for relevant information.
a.
7. He was thought to be not worthy of a scholarship.
a.
8. I could've complained to the landlord if I wanted to.
a.
9. It helped me to recognize the most important things in life.
a.
10. He was also very kind and never talked down to us or ridiculed our mistakes.
a.

The next activity for this lesson takes about ten minutes and requires learners to create sentences together as a class by using the two patterns they previously learned and a given verb.

The given verbs for the **V to n** pattern are *speak*, *complain*, and *read* and the verbs for the **V n to-inf** pattern are *ask*, *teach*, and *pay*. The teacher asks each student to create a sentence with each of the six verbs. If a student cannot think of a sentence, the teacher asks the class to help the student.

Build upon the patterns you have just learned!

Can you create sentences like the ones above with the following verbs?

Pattern 1 → **V to n** → Verb with prepositional object

- speak; complain; read

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Pattern 2: **V n to-inf** → Verb with two objects

- ask; teach; pay

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the last activity of this lesson, the teacher encourages the students to think more about the verbs and phrasal verbs that are commonly used in the two patterns. A list of the phrasal verbs and verbs that are commonly used in these patterns are provided below. Next, the teacher asks the students six questions about the phrasal verbs and verbs from the lists. This activity helps students make connections between the verbs and their meanings. Students can and should use a dictionary for this activity. The teacher can explain unknown lexical items to the students; however, students need to feel comfortable using the dictionary as well.

Let's explore more about the verbs commonly used in these patterns!

Please use a **dictionary** for this activity if you do not understand the meaning of some of the lexical items.

Common verbs that occur in pattern 1 → **V to n** are:

- admit; agree; apologize; cave in; come around; complain; confess; consent; hold; keep; lie; move; open up; overreact; own up; progress; read; reply; report; return; speak; stick; submit; subscribe; succumb; suck up; surrender; switch; talk; talk down; talk back; transfer;

1. What words above have to do with talking?
 - a.
2. What words above have to do with submissive behaviour?
 - a.
3. Which words above are the opposite of: calm; fight; leave; reject;
 - a.

Common verbs that occur in pattern 2 → **V n to-inf** are:

- advise; allocate; allow; ask; believe; challenge; delegate; discipline; discover; encourage; feel; forbid; pay; permit; persuade; pressure; remind; require; teach; train; trust; motivate;

1. What words have to do with communicating something to someone?
 - a.
2. What words have to do with trying to make someone do something?
 - a.
3. What words have to do with inspiring someone to do something?
 - a.

There are two activities that the students need to complete for homework. The first activity requires students to read the first few lines of the transcript from the news story video and to fill in the missing gaps with the correct language. Then, they are asked to listen to the video to see if they were correct.

Homework

Below you will find the first few lines of the transcript from the News Story video. Try to fill in the missing gaps with the correct language. Then, listen to the video to see if you were correct.

Reporter: It may be one of the _____ feelings _____ you lose your wallet. No credit cards. No license. No cash. It happened to Reilly Flaherty. The music _____ believes he _____ while attending a concert in Brooklyn.

Reilly: “So it was more of...kinda...a freak-out reaction”

Reporter: Two weeks later, a letter _____ mail.

Reporter: “When you _____ this envelope, did you think it had _____ your wallet?”

Reilly: “No... again... I was initially terrified. I was very, very _____. You know, I had gotten this, again...you know...blank white envelope”

The second activity requires the students to think of five words and three phrases from this unit that they think they might use in real life. This homework should take the students about fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. The next lesson would start with a class discussion about the words and phrases that the students’ chose and why they chose them.

Can you think of **five words** and **three phrases** from this unit that you think you might use in real life? We will start our next lesson with a class discussion about the words and phrases that you chose and why you chose them.

Words

- -
- -
- -
- -
- -

Phrases

- -
- -
- -

CONCLUSION

There are many obstacles to achieving fluency in the EFL classroom. As instructors working to teach the English language to non-native speakers, we need to support our students as they work to overcome these barriers and become proficient English language speakers. One of the greatest frustrations with which EFL learners must contend in the language classroom is the hurdle of learning lexical items or phrases. While these phrases, when mastered, make it much easier for EFL learners to speak English in an everyday context and modify language to express distinct meanings, they are often far from intuitive and require vigorous study and practice. In this paper, I offered a thorough overview of the concept of lexical items—as defined by such scholars as Nattinger and DeCarrico, Lewis, and Willis—and their relationship to pattern grammar, highlighting various EFL teaching methods.

I have concentrated primarily on the means by which we can overcome the challenge of teaching lexical items and pattern grammar in the classroom through an adaptive, integrated approach that utilizes elements from Nattinger and DeCarrico's three-stage method for pattern development, Willis's two-stage method of communicative use and sentence construction, and Lewis's five strategies for language learning. By examining each of these strategies and exploring various associated sample exercises, I offer an effective method for teaching lexical items that is multifaceted and wide-ranging in its approach. This suggested means of instruction allows students to not simply memorize phrases but rather to understand the dynamic functionality of the English language while simultaneously learning how to utilize new lexical items and patterns in everyday speech.

I applied this focus on learning spoken, vernacular English in the unit plans and lessons that I developed. Because I primarily work with students who are learning American English in

real time online, many of these resources utilize online, free tools, such as Google Drive, Google Hangouts, Skype, and YouTube. In particular, the usage of American English in popular culture texts, such as current television shows (i.e., *The Big Bang Theory*), news reports, and popular games (i.e., Twenty Questions), renders their contents applicable to everyday conversation in an American context.

These lessons help students become acquainted with American vernacular English in lieu of formal English, thus improving the effectiveness of their spoken communication in their daily interactions. This process allows individuals to become more comfortable speaking and writing English informally and thus helps them develop confidence in their ability to apply their knowledge of lexical patterns in daily conversations and interactions.

While my students primarily consist of upper-intermediate to advanced level online EFL learners, my intention in completing this research and providing these lesson plans was to provide English language instructors with tools that they may adapt to more effectively teach lexical awareness and pattern grammar across levels. These lesson plans may be modified for instruction that takes place via the internet in real time, such as my own teaching practice, online in non-real time, in the traditional classroom, in tutoring sessions, and beyond. Furthermore, in recognition of the complications that accompany teaching these intricate lessons as well as learning them, I have included teaching notes to support instructors' efforts, highlighting some of my own questions and challenges and how I managed them. Given that developing fluency in spoken conversation leads to more frequent English language usage, enabling learners' mastery of lexical items and patterns through effective EFL instruction is critical for achieving true language proficiency.

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