



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación

Trabajo Fin de Grado

**The implementation of the
Lexical Approach in foreign
language teaching: A
practical analysis in non-
compulsory Secondary
Education**

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Mayo, 2018

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Abstract

This dissertation provides an analysis of the role of lexis when learning English as a second language in the current Spanish education system, with the aim of highlighting the importance of lexical chunk awareness for communicative purposes. The theoretical part will examine the principles and pedagogical implications of the Lexical Approach, a recent method which advocates that lexis should be at the centre of foreign language teaching. Besides, the advantages of the Lexical Approach will also be explained. The practical part will be devoted to analysing how English lexical chunks are currently taught in levels 1 and 2 of non-compulsory Secondary Education (henceforth, *Bachillerato*). To do this, six textbooks from *Bachillerato* 1 and 2 will be analysed. Then, several proposals for teaching ‘real’ English expressions will be suggested.

Key words: Lexical Approach, lexical chunks, ‘real’ English, English language teaching

Resumen

Este trabajo proporciona un análisis del papel que juega el léxico al aprender inglés como segunda lengua en el actual sistema educativo español, con el objetivo de resaltar la importancia del conocimiento de fragmentos léxicos para fines comunicativos. La parte teórica examinará los principios y las implicaciones pedagógicas del enfoque léxico, un método reciente que defiende que el léxico debe ser el centro de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Además, las ventajas del enfoque léxico también serán explicadas en esta parte. La parte práctica está dedicada a analizar cómo se está enseñando el léxico actualmente en el primer y segundo curso de Bachillerato. Para ello, se analizarán seis libros de primero y segundo de Bachillerato. A continuación, se sugerirán varias propuestas para enseñar expresiones de inglés ‘real’.

Palabras clave: Enfoque léxico, fragmentos léxicos, inglés ‘real’, la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa

1. Introduction

Globalization and technological advances have enabled worldwide communication and English has been chosen as the language of global communication. This ‘lingua franca’ status has triggered an increasing need for adequate communication skills in the English language and, therefore, high-quality English language teaching is now more demanded than ever.

Nowadays, alternatives to the unsuccessful and traditional Grammar-Translation Method predominate in the foreign language teaching scenario. These alternative methods originated due to the increasing demand for oral communication between people from different countries. However, formal instruction of grammar structures is still prioritised in foreign language teaching.

This dissertation will propose a change of emphasis from grammar to lexis by highlighting the importance of understanding and having access to a large stock of lexical chunks to develop fluency and communicative competence in the foreign language. This change of emphasis is grounded on the Lexical Approach, a meaning-centred approach which considers lexis as the basis of language learning. As Wilkins (1972: 111-112) stated, “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Thus, lexis is considered central in creating meaning and the key element for developing communicative power.

In this sense, this dissertation will present a literature review together with a practical application to offer a complete image of the role of lexis when learning English as a second language in the current Spanish education system at a *Bachillerato* level. Moreover, the dissertation is divided into five main sections, starting with this introduction as the first section. The second section provides a review of the different foreign language teaching methods and approaches that have existed throughout history, paying special attention to the Lexical Approach and its principles. Then, the third section is devoted to the analysis of six different textbooks from *Bachillerato* 1 and 2. This section also includes general conclusions drawn from the analysis, as well as different pedagogical proposals for teaching ‘real’ English expressions. Subsequently, the fourth section presents the conclusions drawn from the information provided in the previous sections. Finally, the fifth and last section compiles all the references that have been used for the writing process of this dissertation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. History of language teaching

In this section, a general overview of the different methods and approaches that have occurred throughout history in foreign language teaching will be presented. This overview will serve as a background for the introduction of the main pillar of this dissertation, the Lexical Approach.

Foreign language learning has always been an important issue throughout history. Globalization has contributed to the promotion of multilingualism worldwide. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), it has been estimated that more than the 60 percent of the world's population is multilingual. This data proves that learning a foreign language is not the exception but the norm. Nowadays, English has become the most widely studied foreign language due to the globalization era we are living in. However, 500 years ago, Latin was the dominant language, as it was the language of education, commerce, religion, science and government in the Western world. Subsequently, in the seventeenth century, French replaced Latin as the language of international communication and diplomacy, and it remained as an international language until the mid-twentieth century, when French was replaced by English.

Although the international status of Latin decreased, the study of Latin remained in the school curriculum as an occasional subject. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the study of classical Latin became the model for foreign language study. At that time, children at schools were taught Latin grammar by learning grammar rules, translations, declensions, conjugations and some writing practices. Once students had achieved a basic proficiency, they were introduced to the advanced study of grammar and rhetoric.

In the eighteenth century, the study of 'modern' languages began to be introduced into the European school curriculum. These languages were taught following the same methods that were used for teaching Latin. The teaching procedure of these languages focused on the teaching of grammar rules, translations and lists of vocabulary, leaving speaking and oral practice out of the teaching goal (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). By the nineteenth century, this method of foreign language teaching, known as the Grammar-Translation Method, had become the standard approach of teaching foreign languages in

schools. The Grammar-Translation Method was considered by its leading exponents (Johann Seidenstucker, Karl Plotz, H. S. Ollendorf, and Johann Meidinger) as “the offspring of German scholarship,” having as its object “to know everything about something rather than the thing itself” (Rouse, in Kelly, 1969, as quoted in Richard & Rodgers, 2001). This method dominated the field of foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and although it is no longer the predominant method, modified forms of this method continue to be widely used today. However, this method tends to frustrate students because there is no rationale or justification to offer as there is no theory.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a general rejection and opposition to the Grammar-Translation Method arose in Europe and new alternatives to foreign language teaching began to appear due to the increasing demand for oral communication among European countries (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). However, these new approaches, suggested by individual language teaching specialists such as C. Marcel, T. Prendergast, and F. Gouin, did not achieve any lasting impact. The best known of these pre-reformers is the Frenchman Gouin. He developed an approach that uses “situations and themes as ways of organizing and presenting oral language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 8). His approach highlights the importance of a context in order to convey a clear meaning for new teaching items. Gouin’s approach later influenced other methods and approaches such as Situational Language Teaching and Total Physical Response.

By the end of the nineteenth century, teachers and linguists began to write about alternative methods and approaches to foreign language teaching. These new methods and approaches belong to the same phenomenon, the so-called Reform Movement. Linguists such as Henry Sweet, Wilhelm Viëtor and Paul Passy revitalised the field of linguistics with their practical ideas about language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These linguists emphasised that “speech, rather than the written word, was the primary form of language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 9). Speech production was considered the main object of study within this movement. Therefore, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was created to enable an accurate transcription of the sounds of any language.

Parallel to the Reform Movement, there was “an interest in developing principles for language teaching out of naturalistic principles of language learning, such as are seen in first language acquisition” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 11). This led to the so-called natural methods and ultimately led to the development of the Direct Method.

The Direct Method tried to assimilate the process of second language learning to the process of first language learning. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), this method, based on naturalistic principles, was first introduced in France and Germany and, unlike the traditional Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method promoted classroom instruction in the target language. Consequently, listening and speaking were the most exploited skills in class. This method paid attention to the teaching of everyday vocabulary through mime, demonstration and pictures.

The Direct Method achieved a great success in private language schools where teachers were native speakers or had native-like fluency in the target language. This helped learners to avoid the use of their mother tongue, and therefore, increase the use of the target language. Nevertheless, the use of the Direct Method had some limitations since the learners' success in the target language largely depended on the teachers' skills.

The creation of the Direct Method supposed the beginning of the 'methods era'. During the twentieth century, different teaching approaches and methods emerged. All of these approaches shared the common belief that foreign language learning will only be improved by changes in the teaching methodology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

After the Direct Method, the Reading Method appeared in the United States. This method consisted of developing learners' ability to read and comprehend different texts in the target language without having to translate (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Language teaching experts of that time assumed that mastering the reading comprehension ability would allow students to go on learning by themselves.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the new communication needs favoured the primacy of speech over writing in foreign language learning. The teaching method that appeared at the time was the Audiolingual method. It was inspired and based on insights developed by structural linguists and behaviourists which emphasised the importance of learning the language itself instead of learning about the language. The Audiolingual Method is also called 'the Army Method' as it was the method used to learn foreign languages when United States entered into World War II and Americans needed to become orally proficient in the languages of their enemies and allies.

Then, in the early sixties, the Audiovisual Method appeared and popularised the use of visual elements in foreign language teaching. This method proposed the use of

visual aids as the carrier of context and meaning. It made the target language recover its situational and social nature.

The next two methods that entered into the teaching scene had one thing in common: they tried to teach a foreign language by imitating the way children learn their native language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These methods were The Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) and Total Physical Response (Asher, 1968). Krashen's Natural Approach, on the one hand, considered meaning at the core of language learning and highlighted the importance of comprehensible input for the learning process. On the other hand, Asher's Total Physical Response proposed the teaching of a foreign language through physical activities.

After the appearance of the previous methods, a new group of methods and approaches emerged, the so-called Humanistic Methods. Within this group, three approaches can be identified: Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia and Total Physical Response. They all recognise "the primacy of affective and emotional factors within the learning process" (Tejada Molina et al., 2005: 180). A brief explanation of each approach is provided below.

- Community Language Learning is an approach that encourages interaction as a way of language learning. This method emphasises the importance of developing a sense of community in the classroom so that students can learn through interaction among community members.
- The Silent Way is a method based on the idea that teachers should remain as silent as possible in the classroom in order to encourage learners to use the target language. Although there is no direct instruction, the teacher can use mime when addressing the learners.
- Suggestopedia is a method based on the premise that the creation of a comfortable and relaxing environment stimulates learning and, in turn, makes students more receptive. This method requires the presence of breathing techniques, music, furniture and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher.

By the 1970s, a new approach, called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emerged as an alternative to the traditional and unsuccessful language teaching methods. This approach expected learners to acquire communicative competence and fluency in the target language. CLT established two main objectives: "to make communicative

competence the goal of language teaching and to develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 155).

In the so-called post-communicative era, other methods and approaches to foreign language teaching have appeared and are now revised. One example of a method from this era is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). It appeared during the 1980s and focused on the use of authentic language. The Task-Based Language Teaching proposed the use of meaningful tasks as a vehicle for learning the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Cooperative Learning is a different approach that belongs to the post-communicative era. This approach fostered real communication in the target language by the use of cooperative activities among students in the classroom.

Another approach to foreign language teaching from this era is the Lexical Approach, which is the main pillar of this dissertation (see section 2.2.). The Lexical Approach is based on the premise that “the building blocks of language learning [...] are lexis, that is, words and words combinations” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 132). Therefore, this approach focuses on the importance of lexis, especially on “chunks,” for foreign language learning.

2.2. The Lexical Approach

This section will introduce the basis of the Lexical Approach, as well as how this approach to foreign language teaching can be pedagogically implemented in English language lessons. Therefore, its principles, advantages, limitations and procedures will be presented in this section.

2.2.1. What is the Lexical Approach?

In the early 1990s, with the development of personal computers and the emergence of large corpora of different genres of authentic language, various linguists became increasingly aware of the lexical patterns of language. Several works proposing lexical-based approaches to language teaching appeared at the time, such as *The Lexical Syllabus* (Willis, 1990) and *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching* (Nattinger &

DeCarrico, 1992)¹. However, it was not until 1993, with the publication of Michael Lewis' book *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward*, that the term "Lexical Approach" was first coined. This term made reference to every approach in which lexis is considered the basis of language structure, teaching and learning.

"Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1993: 34) is the key principle of the Lexical Approach. It means that lexis is fundamental in creating meaning, and although grammar is important too, it just plays a subordinate role. As Lewis (1993: 51) stated "the primary purpose of language is the creation and exchange of meaning." Besides, the Lexical Approach claims that lexis should be one of the central principles of any meaning-based syllabus, as lexis has more communicative power than grammar: "words carry more meaning than grammar, so words determine grammar" (Lewis, 1993: 38). In fact, Lewis claimed that "grammar as a fact contributes little to meaning – using *womans* rather than *women* breaks the rules of grammar as fact, but does not convey less meaning" (Lewis, 1993: 78).

The Lexical Approach is based on the concept that language learning consists of being able to produce and understand lexical units as chunks. These lexical units have been labelled in different ways by various scholars²: "holophrases" (Corder, 1973), "prefabricated patterns" (Hakuta, 1974), "gambits" (Keller, 1979), "speech formulae" (Peters, 1983), "lexicalized stems" (Pawley & Syner 1983), "lexical phrases" (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992), "lexical items/chunks" (Lewis, 1997), or "prefabricated chunks" (Williams, 1998), among others. These lexical items usually transmit established social and pragmatic meanings within a particular community. Some lexical items can be peculiar to a given social group, such as family, professional, geographical or age-based groups. Lewis (1997b: 225) pointed out that "what is a lexical item in American English may not be so in British English" and also that "teenagers frequently use a whole range of lexical items that leave their parents' generation at a loss."

Within the Lexical Approach, special attention is paid to the role of collocations³. As Lewis (1997a: 204) pointed out: "there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic ways." Therefore, classroom procedures typically involve activities

¹ As cited in *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 132).

² These terms are mentioned in *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 132).

³ Lewis (1997a: 8) defined the term collocation as "the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency."

oriented to raise students' awareness of lexical collocations. These activities should enable students to discover and use collocations themselves, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Lexical Approach also assumes specific roles for teachers and learners. The teacher's role is that of creating an environment in which students can perform their tasks effectively, and also helping students manage their own learning. It implies teachers should "abandon the idea of the teacher as 'knower' and concentrate instead on the idea of the learner as 'discoverer' " (Willis, 1990: 131). In this way, the learner's role is that of data analyst who constructs linguistic generalizations by analysing authentic language samples from corpora.

As far as teaching sources and materials are concerned, there are some options that can be used to support the teaching of lexical approaches:

1. Complete packages including texts, tapes, or teacher's manuals.
2. Collections of vocabulary teaching activities, such as those that appear in Lewis's *Implementing the Lexical Approach* (Lewis, 1997).
3. "Printout" versions of computer corpora collections packaged in text format.
4. Computer concordance programs and attached data sets to allow students to set up and carry out their own analyses.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 136)

2.2.2. Types of lexical units

The Lexical Approach makes a distinction between vocabulary and lexis. Whereas vocabulary has been traditionally considered as a stock of individual words with pre-established meanings, the Lexical Approach does not only consider individual words as part of lexis but also multiple lexical units or 'chunks' of language. In fact, the Lexical Approach considers that language is made of meaningful chunks that are combined to produce continuous coherent language, and only a small percentage of spoken language is composed by novel creations. Hill estimated that "it is possible that up to 70% of everything we say, hear, read, or write is to be found in some form of fixed expression" (Hill, 2000: 53).

There is not a homogeneous classification of lexical units in the existing linguistic field. Throughout history, various linguists have proposed different classifications of

lexical items. Among them, the taxonomies proposed by Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992) and Lewis (1993) have been more widely accepted than others.

Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 36) established a distinction between lexical phrases and collocations, or ordinary syntactic strings that are not considered lexical phrases:

- *Syntactic strings* are strings of category symbols that imply a grammatical structure, for example ‘NP + Aux + VP’.
- *Collocations* are strings of specific lexical items that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance, such as *curry favour* or *rancid butter*.
- *Lexical phrases* are collocations that have been assigned pragmatic functions, such as *how do you do?* or *for example*.

After clarifying that lexical phrases should be distinguished from collocations and syntactic strings, Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 38-43) provided a division of lexical phrases based on structural criteria:

Types of lexical chunk	Examples
<p>Polywords: short phrases with no variability which function very much like individual lexical items. They are associated with a wide variety of functions.</p>	<p>Idioms: <i>kick the bucket</i> Summarizer: <i>in a nutshell, all in all</i> Topic shifter: <i>by the way</i> Topic relator: <i>for that matter</i></p>
<p>Institutionalized expressions: lexical phrases of sentence length, usually functioning as separate utterances. They are invariable.</p>	<p>Greeting: <i>how are you?</i> Closing: <i>nice meeting you</i> Objection: <i>give me a break</i> Disapproval: <i>get a life</i></p>
<p>Phrasal constraints: short- to medium-length phrases that allow variation of lexical and phrasal categories. They are also associated with a wide variety of functions.</p>	<p>Temporal relator: <i>a __ ago</i> Parting: <i>see you __</i> Qualifier: <i>as far as I __</i> Greeting: <i>dear __</i> Relator: <i>__ as well as __</i></p>
<p>Sentence builders: lexical phrases that provide the framework for whole sentences, containing slots for parameters or arguments for expression of an entire idea. They allow variation.</p>	<p>Comparator: <i>the __er X, the __er Y</i> Topic marker: <i>let me star by/with X</i> Summarizer: <i>my point is that X</i> Relator: <i>not only X, but also Y</i> Topic shifter: <i>that reminds me of X</i></p>

Table 1. Nattinger & DeCarrico’s classification of lexical chunks

Nevertheless, a year later, Nattinger (in Lewis, 1993: 91) proposed a completely different taxonomy of lexical chunks:

- *Polywords*: “short, fixed phrases whose meaning is often not analysable from the regular rules of syntax.” Idioms, euphemisms, slang, and two- or three-part verbs are also included within this category.
- *Phrasal constraints*: “short relatively fixed phrases with slots that permit some variation.”
- *Deictic locutions*: “short to medium length phrases of low variability whose function directs the flow of conversation.”
- *Sentence builders*: “phrases up to sentence length, highly variable containing slots for parameters or arguments.”
- *Situational utterances*: “complete sentences, amenable to the regular rules of syntax and highly dependent on social context.” They are used as frameworks for different social interactions.
- *Verbatim texts*: “entire text with extremely low variability, used for quotations, allusion, aphorisms, proverbs, etc. [...]”

In turn, Lewis (1997b, 8-11) suggested a simpler classification of lexical chunks. He classified the lexical items into four different basic types:

Types of lexical chunks	Examples
<p>Polywords: they are usually relatively short phrases (two or three words) that have a degree of idiomaticity.</p>	<p><i>By the way, upside down, on the other hand</i> Phrasal verbs: <i>put off, look up</i> Fixed order: <i>to and fro, butter and bread</i></p>
<p>Collocations: pairs or groups of words that naturally co-occur with high frequency.</p>	<p>Verb + noun: <i>chase/miss the bus</i> Adjective + noun: <i>rancid butter</i></p>
<p>Institutionalized utterances: chunks of language that are recalled as wholes, typically in spoken language. They tend to express pragmatic or social meaning within a given community. They often have a high degree of idiomaticity.</p>	<p><i>I'll get it, we'll see, it'll be all right, I'd wait, it'll take time</i> Idioms: <i>spill the beans, have an axe to grind</i></p>

<p>Sentence frames and heads:</p> <p>Chunks of language that are generally used to structure long passages of text, usually written.</p>	<p>Short sequences: <i>firstly, secondly, finally, etc.</i></p> <p>Longer sequences: <i>there are broadly speaking two views of...; What was really interesting was...</i></p>
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Table 2. Lewis' classification of lexical chunks

Since the previous classifications of lexical chunks have overlapping and complementing parts, the classification criteria of lexical chunks that this dissertation will follow is a combination of the previous classifications which can be summarised as: polywords (considered as short phrases that have a degree of idiomaticity, such as phrasal verbs, or idioms), collocations (treated as groups of words that frequently co-occur), institutionalized expressions (considered as chunks of language used as wholes in spoken language that express pragmatic or social meanings), and sentence frames and heads (treated as chunks of language used to structure texts). It is important to mention that all of these lexical items are placed somewhere in a continuum from absolutely fixed meaning to highly free meaning. Therefore, sometimes there are no clear boundaries between categories.

2.2.3. Advantages of the Lexical Approach

Some studies have shown that lexical chunks have a special role in the learning of a foreign language. A great knowledge of lexical chunks benefits communicative aspects such as fluency, accuracy, cohesion and motivation. Furthermore, the use of lexical chunks is also associated with an increase of motivation.

a) Promoting language fluency

Pawley & Syder (1983: 191) defined the term *native-like fluency* as “the native speaker’s ability to produce fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse.” It refers to the fact that native speakers frequently use prefabricated multi-clause utterances with fluency in spoken and written communication. Moreover, Lewis (1997b: 15) considered that “fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated items, which are available as the foundation for any linguistic novelty or

creativity.” It means that lexical items provide an easily retrievable frame for language production, and thus increase speakers’ fluency in written and spoken communication.

Lexical chunks are stored in the mental lexicon as wholes. Thus, they are easily retrieved without the need to compose new utterances through word selection and grammatical rules. As a result, the use of lexical chunks may significantly reduce the speaker’s time for language processing. Besides, lexical chunks enable speakers to produce stretches of language without hesitation and disfluency, but at the same time, they direct speaker’s attention to the main content of the discourse. So, it is considered that the use of lexical chunks promotes language fluency to a large extent. As Nattinger & DeCarrico explained:

“It is our ability to use lexical phrases, in other words, that helps us speak with fluency. This prefabricated speech has both the advantage of more efficient retrieval and of permitting speakers (and hearers) to direct their attention to the larger structure of the discourse, rather than keeping it focused narrowly on individual words as they are produced”

(Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992: 32)

b) Enhancing language accuracy

Lewis (1993: 87) argues that language consists of meaningful chunks which are frequently found in the utterances of native speakers, who combine prefabricated chunks of language to increase fluency and accuracy. So, in order to master a language, learners must be aware of the use of lexical chunks. Pawley & Syder (1983: 192-199) pointed out that native-like selection is one of the most complex tasks for English non-native speakers to learn because students often find difficult to select the most native-like utterances. They defined the term *native-like selection* as “the ability of the native speaker routinely to convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also native-like” (Pawley & Syder, 1983:191). Therefore, to acquire the ability of native-like selection, students should learn how to select natural and idiomatic expressions.

A large store of lexical chunks is needed for learners to achieve accuracy. Pawley & Syder (1983: 208) argued that lexical chunks “form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation.” They also added that lexical chunks come “ready-made” and “need little encoding work” (Pawley & Syder, 1983: 208). Therefore, learners are freed from the task of composing new utterances word by word,

which can avoid processing errors. It means that using lexical chunks will enhance the target language's accuracy.

c) Guiding language production

Lexical chunks often have defined roles in guiding the overall language production. As Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 60) claimed: "they are the primary markers which signal the direction of discourse, whether spoken or written." When they function as discourse devices, they point out whether the following information is in addition to, in contrast to, or is an example of, the previous information. Therefore, these discourse devices are lexical chunks that connect the meaning and the structure of the discourse.

To illustrate some lexical chunks functioning as discourse devices, a list of typical examples will be provided below.

Logical connectors:	<i>As a result (of X); nevertheless; because (of) X; in spite of X</i>
Temporal connectors:	<i>The day/week/month/year before/after ____; and then; after X then/ the next is Y</i>
Spatial connectors:	<i>Around here; over there; at/on the corner</i>
Fluency devices:	<i>You know; it seems (to me) that X; I think that X; by and large; at any rate; if you see what I mean; and so on; so to speak; as a matter of fact</i>
Exemplifiers:	<i>In other words; it's like X; for example; to give you an example</i>
Relators:	<i>The (other) thing X is Y; X has (a lot)/doesn't have (much) to do with Y; not only X but also Y</i>
Qualifiers:	<i>It depends on X; the catch is X; it's only in X that Y</i>
Evaluators:	<i>As far as I know/can tell; there's no doubt that X; I'm (not) absolutely sure/positive/certain (but) ____; I guess; at least; at all</i>

Summarizers: *To make a long story short; my point (here) is that X; OK (level intonation)*

(Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992: 64-65)

It is important to mention that the previous classification does not provide an exhaustive list of discourse devices. Nevertheless, it gives examples of lexical phrases that a language learner will need to use to achieve a minimum level of pragmatic and expressive ability in the target language. In fact, the correct use of lexical chunks not only guides language production but makes the language more comprehensible.

d) Increasing learners' motivation

Motivation has a considerably positive influence when learning a second language. Sometimes students become depressed when they are not able to construct creatively what they want to say in the target language. However, lexical chunks provide expressions that learners are not able to construct creatively from rules. It is possible because lexical chunks are stored in the mental lexicon as unanalysed wholes, so that they are ready to be used when the situation calls for them. In *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching*, Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 114) state that the use of lexical chunks in the target language “should ease frustration and, at the same time, promote motivation and fluency.”

Hakuta (1976: 333) emphasised in his study the importance for learners to express a wide range of functions from the beginning, as it may increase learners' interest and confidence in learning the language. He noticed that if learners always have to wait to acquire the rules for constructing an utterance before using it, then they may get serious motivational difficulties in learning the language. In order to solve this problem, Hakuta (1976: 333) suggested that students need to meet lexical items from the very beginning so that they can express different functions.

2.2.4. Limitations of the Lexical Approach

Like other methods and approaches in foreign language teaching, the Lexical Approach also has shortcomings. Many linguists do not consider the Lexical Approach as a real approach because it does not provide a consistent theory of language or language learning. For example, one of the first critics of Lexical Approach claimed that “the

Lexical Approach is not an approach, not in the strict sense, since it lacks a coherent theory of learning and its theory of language is not fully enough elaborated to allow for ready implementation in terms of syllabus specification” (Thornbury, 1998:12).

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001: 20), the term *approach* refers to “theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching.” In the Lexical Approach, Lewis provides a theory of language based on the principle that “language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar” (Lewis, 1993: 34). However, he does not provide the implications that this view of language has on the syllabus design. The only information Lewis provides about the syllabus design is that he does not favour a grammatical syllabus nor a lexical one: “the Lexical Approach [...] is specifically not a lexical syllabus” (Lewis, 1993: 109). Moreover, Lewis (1993: 112) recommends that “language material should be text and discourse, rather than sentence-based” but he does not offer clear guidelines about how these texts and discourses should be selected and organised. These shortcomings make it difficult to obtain a general idea of how the Lexical Approach works. As Thornbury (1998: 12) stated “Lewis offers us the prospect of a journey, even an exciting one, but it is a journey without maps.”

Although Lewis does not offer a clear theory about how languages are learned, he stands in favour of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis. This hypothesis emphasises the importance of comprehensible input for language acquisition: “listening, listening and more listening” (Lewis, 1993: 193). Following Krashen’s view, Lewis is also more sympathetic to language acquisition than learning, as he states that “there is no evidence that explicit knowledge helps performance” (Lewis, 1993: 62). Nevertheless, Lewis (1993: 195) differs with Krashen in the idea that “students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed,” particularly the recognition of lexical chunks: “accurate noticing of lexical chunks (...) help convert input into intake” (Lewis, 1997a: 53).

Lexical chunks are stored in memory and retrieved as unanalysed wholes. Thus, noticing them demands a great capacity of learner’s memory. However, Lewis does not offer clear specifications about how to select and grade them. He only encourages learners to use collocational dictionaries. Moreover, Lewis (1997a: 197) assumes that massive exposure to the target language will do the job: “it is exposure to enough suitable input, not formal teaching, which is the key to increasing the learner’s lexicon.”

2.2.5. Pedagogical implications of the Lexical Approach

Implementing the Lexical Approach does not involve a radical change in the teaching methodology, but a change of emphasis. This emphasis must lie on lexical structures. Therefore, lexis should be prioritised over grammar and formal instruction should be focused on raising students' awareness of the lexical chunks that frequently occur in language production. According to Lewis, (1993: 193), language lessons should be "a combination of input, awareness-raising, learner training, and language practice." However, although the Lexical Approach does not provide clear guidelines for the syllabus design, Lewis (1993: 194-195) suggested some methodological implications to ensure the students' maximum communicative power:

a) Emphasis on input through receptive skills

The Lexical Approach prioritises the value of comprehensible input and emphasises the importance of receptive skills (listening and reading) for future production, since "every piece of language which we ultimately produce comes from outside us and, as such, is initially based on receptive rather than productive skills" (Lewis, 1993: 194). Furthermore, the Lexical Approach considers the teacher's talk as a valuable source of listening for students. According to Lewis (1993: 193), "students learn best in language-rich classrooms and with language-rich materials." So, teachers should not be afraid of exposing their students to authentic 'real' English materials.

b) The importance of contrast in language awareness must be recognised

The Lexical Approach considers that the translation of lexical chunks and comparisons from the foreign language to the mother tongue help students to store them in their long-term memories. However, since literal translations are not always successful options, the translation of lexical chunks must be carried out chunk-for-chunk rather than word-by-word.

c) Reformulation should be the natural response to student error

The Lexical Approach holds that neither the avoidance of errors nor formal correction are productive aspects for the learning process because they may negatively affect future interventions. Students usually feel frustrated every time they make

mistakes, so they tend to remain silent and avoid future interventions. Lewis (1993: 195) claimed that “for students to feel that their oral contributions are valued, the teacher should respond to content rather than language.” It means that emphasis must lie upon content and also, that teachers should react whenever there is a lexical error, as it contributes much more to misunderstanding in communication than when there is a structural error, in which communication is normally successful. Besides, the Lexical Approach suggest that, instead of formal correction, “reformulation should be the natural response to student error” (Lewis: 1993: 195).

d) Pedagogical chunking should be a frequent classroom activity

The Lexical Approach holds that a large amount of pedagogical chunking is required to help students notice different lexical items that they are exposed to. Furthermore, the use of activities that focus explicitly on lexical chunks facilitates students’ retention and use of lexical chunks.

3. Practical Application

Considering the advantages of having a large stock of lexical chunks in the mental lexicon for communication aspects in a second language and the recentness of the Lexical Approach, this section will study whether the Lexical Approach is being implemented in the current Spanish education system, specifically in the first and second grade of non-compulsory secondary Education. In order to carry out the study, six English student's books (three books from *Bachillerato 1* and three books from *Bachillerato 2*) will be analysed. Subsequently, several pedagogical proposals for teaching 'real' English chunks will be suggested.

3.1. *Bachillerato 1* book analysis

3.1.1. *Bridges for Bachillerato 1*

The first book this dissertation is going to analyse is *Bridges for Bachillerato 1*. This book has nine content-based thematic units of twelve pages each. This content-based format provides students with meaningful vocabulary thematically contextualised, such as vocabulary dealing with *people* (in unit 1), *travels* (in unit 2) or *sports* (in unit 3). The main vocabulary of every unit is listed decontextualised on the first two pages as an introduction. Then, some exercises appear to assimilate the main vocabulary. Although there is no translation into Spanish, the Grammar-translation Method is quite present throughout this book. The presentation of grammar structures (such as *present/past simple*, *present/past continuous*, *present/past perfect continuous*, or *relative clauses*, *conditionals*) is developed and exemplified in green boxes throughout the grammar section. Inside the green grammar boxes, there is a note indicating to consult the grammar appendix at the end of the book for a more extensive and detailed explanation of the rules, uses and exceptions of the grammar structures. Below the green boxes, different activities are suggested to practice the grammar structures, with a predominance of the gap-filling exercises.

Even though the vocabulary section also presents grammar structures as part of vocabulary (such as the use of *used to/would*, *be/get used to*, *infinitives* or *gerunds*), some influence of the Lexical Approach can be noticed. Sometimes, the vocabulary section presents lexical chunks like idioms, phrasal verbs and collocations. In the case of idioms, they are the lexical chunks most often taught in this book, as they appear in each unit as

part of the vocabulary section. They are usually presented in pairs and illustrated with a picture that may help students to guess the meaning from context (see Figure 1 below). For example, *have a heart of gold* and *be a bad egg* (page 10), *have the wires crossed* and *be on the same wavelength* (page 87), or *get somebody's act together* and *get in on the act* (page 99).

4 Match the idioms to the correct pictures. What do you think the idioms mean? Are there similar idioms in your language?

1. He's got a heart of gold. 2. He's a bad egg.

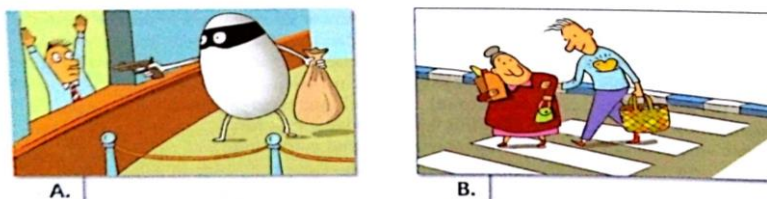


Figure 1. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise introducing two idioms

Concerning phrasal verbs, they only appear briefly on three occasions. Firstly, in unit 2 (page 22), some phrasal verbs dealing with holidays and travels (such as *check in*, *set up*, *set off*, *get to* and *take off*) are presented followed by an exercise to put the words in context. Then, in unit 5 (page 60), different phrasal verbs with the verb 'get' (such as *get across*, *get by*, and *get through*) are suggested to complete an exercise. Finally, in unit 7 (page 86), different meanings of the phrasal verbs 'turn up', 'turn down' and 'switch off' are presented and contextualised in an exercise. Regarding the teaching of collocations, they are taught only twice throughout the book. On the one hand, in unit 3 (page 34), different collocations dealing with sports (such as *keep fit*, *score a goal*, *win the match*, *break a record* and *enter a competition*) are presented, followed by two exercises to internalise them. On the other hand, in unit 5 (page 60), different collocations with the word 'language' (such as *official language*, *bad language*, *first language*, *sign language*, *foreign language* and *body language*) are suggested and practiced in an exercise (see Figure 2 below).

2 The following words collocate with the word language. Complete the sentences with the collocations below.

official	→ language
bad	
first	
sign	
foreign	
body	

- I could see from her that she felt very uncomfortable.
- In my opinion, there's too much on TV.
- is used by people who cannot hear.
- Martin has never learnt a
- Your is the language you learnt first and speak best.
- Arabic is the of Morocco.

Figure 2. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise that practices different collocations

As the Lexical Approach prioritises the use of high-frequency phrases, the writing section of each unit provides students with a box called “useful expressions” with some institutionalised expressions that the students can use in their personal writing and, therefore, in real-life situations. For example, the book suggests the use of institutionalised expressions such as *How are you?*, *I’m writing to...*, or *That’s all for now* for the writing of an informal letter (page 13) and the use of institutionalised expressions such as *In my opinion...*, *I think that...*, or *I agree that...* (page 63) for the writing of an opinion essay. Furthermore, the writing section often suggests some useful sentence frames and heads for the writing task. For example, *then*, *eventually*, *next* and *finally* (page 36), *in addition*, *furthermore*, *besides* and *as well as* (page 62), or *however*, *on the other hand*, *although* and *nevertheless* (page 88).

The Lexical Approach promotes the importance of authentic language input in learning a second language. Following the Lexical Approach, this book also considers the importance of input, as it provides learners with listening activities and diverse types of reading texts in each unit. However, it differs from the Lexical Approach in the authenticity of the materials used, as they have been designed and adapted to a specific academic level. Furthermore, both reading and listening tasks pay little attention to lexical units since the activities are concerned with choosing the correct answer, answering specific questions or choosing between true or false sentences, instead of making students aware of useful language structures.

3.1.2. Upgrade for Bachillerato 1

The following book, called *Upgrade for Bachillerato 1*, is composed by nine units of twelve pages each one, and as the previous book, all its units are thematically distributed. The key vocabulary of each topic is presented at the beginning of each unit in the reading section. This vocabulary usually appears with pictures so that the learner can associate the words with their meanings. Therefore, the influence of the Direct Method can be noticed in this way of presenting the vocabulary to the students. This method can also be appreciated in the way grammar structures (such as *present simple*, *present continuous* and *present perfect simple*) are inductively taught in this book through comic strips. Learners are required to find out the rules through the illustration of grammar structures in context. Then, the book presents different activities to practice and

internalise the grammar structures. Besides, at the end of each unit, the grammar structures and the different uses are explained in more detail to help students study.

Following the Lexical Approach, this book also pays attention to the teaching of collocations. However, they are only taught in three occasions. Firstly, in unit one (page 8), collocations with the verbs *have*, *take*, *spend* and *waste* (such as *have fun*, *take a break*, *spend your time* or *waste your energy*) are presented in two exercises. The first exercise asks students to copy the table in their notebooks and form collocations with the verbs from the box. The second exercise encourages students to write down sentences using the collocations from the table (see Figure 3 below). Secondly, in unit three (page 32), different collocations with the verbs *do*, *play* and *go* are formed in an exercise that consists in linking the verbs with some activities (for example, *go cycling*, *play basketball* and *do martial arts*). Thirdly, in unit seven (page 82), collocations with *do* and *make* are introduced in four exercises to make students differentiate the uses between these two similar verbs (for example, *do someone a favour*, *do your best*, *do an exam*, *make dinner*, *make money* and *make a suggestion*). At the end of these three units, the collocations that have been taught are represented in a collocation map that makes the learning process easier for students.

3 Copy the table into your notebook and complete it with the phrases below to make collocations.

<i>have</i>	<i>take</i>	<i>spend</i>	<i>waste</i>
<i>a bad time</i>	<i>a break</i>		

- a bad time
- a break
- an hour's rest
- an opportunity
- a laugh
- your (free) time
- your pocket money
- your morning
- fun
- energy
- a great time
- a rest

4 Write sentences about you using the collocations in 3 and the hobbies and free time activities on page 4.

I sometimes waste time watching sport on TV.

see page 15

Figure 3. Screenshot from the book illustrating some activities dealing with collocations

Other lexical chunks like phrasal verbs and idioms are also taught in this book. Regarding phrasal verbs, they are taught in three units. Firstly, in unit 2 (page 22), phrasal verbs dealing with the writing process (such as *write down*, *check over*, *work at*, *get across* or *turn over*) are practiced in four different activities. Then, in unit 5 (page 56), there is an activity that asks learners to substitute some underlined individual words for phrasal verbs, like *give off*, *give up*, *cut down*, *throw away* and *run out* (see Figure 4 below). Finally, in unit 6 (page 70), some phrasal verbs (such as *bring about*, *find out*, *look into*, *make up*, *point out* and *put forward*) appear in an exercise that asks learners to

match the phrasal verbs with their definitions. In the case of idioms, they are taught more frequently as they appear in the writing section of every unit. However, only one or two idioms are provided in each unit. For example, in unit 1 (page 12) only the idiom *time flies* is introduced, and in unit 6 (page 72) only the idioms *time will tell* and *cost an arm and a leg* are suggested.

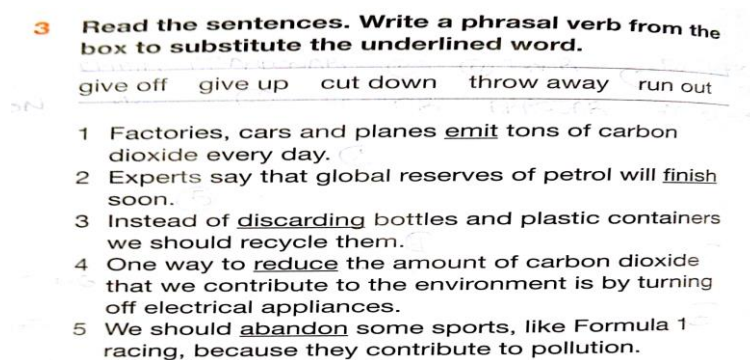


Figure 4. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise with different phrasal verbs

In the writing section, other lexical chunks like sentence heads and frames are suggested. These useful discourse connectors appear in brown boxes near other useful hints to guide students in the writing process. For example, sequencing words like *first*, *then* and *finally* (page 25), connectors of contrast such as *although*, *however* or *despite* (page 49), or connectors of addition like *besides*, *furthermore*, *what's more* (page 73). Moreover, the speaking section also includes blue boxes with institutionalized expressions that students are supposed to use in the speaking task. For example, *the story is about...*, *it's set in...*, *the main character is...* (page 23) or *you'll never guess what I just heard...*, *you won't believe this but...*, *apparently...*, *people are saying...* (page 95).

While the Lexical Approach focuses on developing receptive skills, this book is far from following this principle. On the one hand, the listening tasks from this book encourage learners to look for specific information and do not focus on expanding the learners' lexical repertoire by introducing new lexical chunks. On the other hand, the reading activities are based on scanning texts for specific information. Nevertheless, there are some activities in the reading section that emphasise specific word patterns from the text, such as collocations or phrasal verbs.

The Lexical Approach also pays attention to communication and pronunciation. However, the speaking sections of this book do not encourage the communicative aim that the Lexical Approach has, as the speaking tasks usually consist of pair work activities

with a question-answer structure. Moreover, although this book pays huge attention to the production of a correct pronunciation, it is reinforced through repetition drills instead of meaningful interactions.

3.1.3. Key to Bachillerato 1

The third book that is going to be analysed is *Key to Bachillerato 1*. It contains eight content-based thematic units of twelve pages each one. This content-based format presents meaningful and contextualised vocabulary related to a specific topic, such as vocabulary related to *experiences* (in unit 1), *the future* (in unit 2) or *entertainment* (in unit 3). The key vocabulary of each unit is presented decontextualised in a box on the first page of each unit as an introduction. It is followed by a speaking exercise that encourages learners to use the vocabulary from the list for the speaking task. The presentation of grammar structures (such as *past tenses*, *future tenses*, *relative clauses*, *reported speech*, or *modal verbs*) is developed at the end of the book, in the so-called “Grammar Workshop.” In this grammar workshop, the theoretical explanation of the grammar structures and extra practice exercises are presented. Moreover, the grammar section of each unit, which consists of two pages, only presents exercises to practice and assimilate the grammar structures.

Although there is a great influence of the Grammar-Translation method throughout this book, some influence of the Lexical Approach can also be noticed in the vocabulary section of some units. Apart from individual words, the vocabulary section sometimes presents different lexical chunks like phrasal verbs, idioms or collocations. For example, phrasal verbs are introduced twice in this book. Firstly, in unit 1 (page 12), four phrasal verbs with the verb *go* (*go through*, *go without*, *go back*, and *go on*) are introduced in an exercise consisting of matching the phrasal verbs with their meanings and finding an example of each phrasal verb in the previous text (see Figure 5 below). Then, different phrasal verbs related to the act of socializing, such as *meet up with*, *go along*, *come round*, *bump into*, or *call round*, are introduced in unit 2 (page 25) in an exercise that consists of completing a table with the blue phrasal verbs from the text and their meanings.

Vocabulary Phrasal verbs (go)

6 Match 1–4 with A–D. Then find an example of each phrasal verb in the text.

- A suffer or experience
- B return
- C happen
- D decide not to have something or be unable to have something

- 1 Once I went *without* sweets for two weeks.
- 2 We've *gone through* some very hard times together.
- 3 I went once but I'm never *going back*.
- 4 Something strange is *going on* in that old house!

Figure 5. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise dealing with phrasal verbs

As far as idioms are concerned, they are also taught twice in this book. Firstly, in unit 3 (page 36), some body idioms, such as *be thin-skinned*, *be a pain in the neck*, or *get butterflies in my stomach*, are presented in an exercise that consists of matching the blue idioms with their definitions. Then, in unit 4 (page 48), different idiomatic expressions, such as *be down in the dumps*, *be over the moon*, *be out of the blue*, or *be under the weather*, are presented in an exercise that consists of completing the sentences with the blue idioms from the text.

While the Lexical Approach emphasises the teaching of collocations, this book introduces this type of lexical chunks only once. It occurs in unit 8 (page 95), where different collocations related to travelling (such as *travel on a shoestring*, *day trip*, *return ticket* or *travel blog*) are introduced in an exercise that consists of completing the sentences with the words in the box (see Figure 6). Nevertheless, this book emphasises in each unit the teaching of other lexical chunks like institutionalized utterances and sentence frames and heads. For example, in unit 1 (page 11), the speaking section introduces different institutionalized expressions (such as *I'd like to...*, *I'd prefer...*, and *I like/don't like the idea of...*) that are useful to express the student's preferences. Furthermore, sentence frames and heads (such as *at first*, *later*, *eventually*, *before*, *while*, *after*, or *in the end*) are also introduced contextualised in different exercises of the writing section of each unit.

7 Complete the phrases in your notebook with the words in the box. Then check your answers in the text.

beach blog budget day return shoestring

- 1 travel ...
- 2 ... holiday
- 3 ... hotel
- 4 ... ticket
- 5 travel on a ...
- 6 ... trip

Figure 6. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise to practice different collocations

Following the Lexical Approach, this book also has in common the value of receptive skills as a tool for extracting useful lexical structures from different sources of input. For example, the reading section of every unit always exploits the lexis from the text by introducing an exercise that consists of finding the words or expressions in the text which match with the given definitions. Furthermore, the listening section tends to introduce some exercises that focus on lexis. For example, in unit 1 (page 17), a box with some institutionalized utterances that can be used when reacting to a story is introduced in an exercise that asks learners to recognise which phrases from the box has been used by Peter in the recording.

3.2. *Bachillerato 2* book analysis

3.2.1. *Award for Bachillerato 2*

The first student's book for *Bachillerato 2* that is going to be analysed is called *Award for Bachillerato 2*. It has eight content-based thematic units of ten pages each. Each unit presents vocabulary related to a specific topic, such as vocabulary dealing with *books* (in unit 1), *travels* (in unit 2) or *technology* (in unit 3). The book uses the Direct Method to present the topic words of each unit, as the key vocabulary appears on the first page of every unit contextualised with pictures and some exercises. Moreover, the presentation of grammar structures (such as *relative clauses*, *conditional sentences*, or *the passive*) is developed in blue boxes that present the uses and different examples of a specific grammar structure. Then, different exercises are suggested to practice and internalise the grammar structures.

It can be appreciated that this book emphasises more the teaching of grammar than the teaching of vocabulary, since two pages are devoted to the grammar section and only one page to the vocabulary section. Furthermore, after every two units, the book introduces a section called "Grammar Doctor" with schematic diagrams to review the grammar structures that have been taught in the previous units. This part also provides new exercises to check whether the learner has internalised the grammar structures or not. Moreover, the vocabulary section sometimes introduces grammar structures as part of vocabulary, such as the use of some gerunds or the structure *be used to/get used to* (page 70). Therefore, a clear predominance of the Grammar-Translation method can be noticed throughout this book.

Nevertheless, some influence of the Lexical Approach can also be noticed in this book, since the vocabulary section sometimes introduces lexical chunks like phrasal verbs and collocations. Regarding the teaching of phrasal verbs, they appear on three occasions. Firstly, in unit 3 (page 38), some phrasal verbs used in technological contexts (such as *sign in*, *turn down*, *switch on*, *set up* or *log on*) are introduced in three gap-filling exercises. Then, in unit 5 (page 60), an exercise asks students to replace the underlined verbs with the correct form of the phrasal verbs in the box. The phrasal verbs that are introduced are: *come round*, *look after*, *fight off*, *throw up*, *get over*, *pick up*, *give up* and *pass out* (see Figure 7 below). Finally, in unit 8 (page 92), an exercise provides some phrasal verbs (such as *let down*, *take after*, *split up*, *stand by* or *ask out*) to complete different sentences. Moreover, although idioms do not appear as part of the instructional content of this book, some collocations like *be good at*, *be frightened of*, *be interested in* and *be worry about* are taught in unit 2 (page 26).

4 Replace the words in italics with the correct form of the phrasal verbs in the box.

get over give up pick up pass out put on take up throw up come round look after fight off

- 1 I really must *stop* smoking.
- 2 It was so hot that he *lost consciousness*.
- 3 That smells horrible. I think I'm going to *vomit*.
- 4 She was unconscious for a while, but she has now *regained consciousness*.
- 5 No sport for you this week while you *respond* to the illness.

across cultures

Junk food banned
Famous British chef Jamie Oliver started a campaign to make school meals

Figure 7. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise that introduces several phrasal verbs

This book teaches other lexical chunks like sentence heads and frames in the writing section of each unit, such as time connectors like *then*, *while*, *when*, *by the time*, addition linkers like *and*, *also*, or *too*. However, unlike the previously analysed books that introduce these type of chunks in boxes as useful sources for the productive skills, this book introduces the lexical chunks contextualised in a text and, then, the book provides some exercises to practice the lexical chunks in context (see Figure 8 below). Furthermore, this book also suggests the learning of institutionalized expressions that are useful for the speaking tasks. For example, expressions like *do you fancy going/seeing...?* or *why don't we go/see/play...?* to make suggestions (page 42); or expressions like *I can't stand... or I hate...* to express dislikes (page 86).

6 Join the sentences using the words in brackets.

- 1 I can't go out on Friday. I have football practice. (because)
- 2 Mick is going to the party later. You can see him there. (so)
- 3 I tried to finish all my homework. I didn't have time. (but)
- 4 We'll all be there. We'll leave at twelve o'clock. (until)

Figure 8. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise that contextualises four sentence frames

The Lexical Approach also emphasises the importance of massive input from receptive skills, as they provide students with contextualised patterns of language that are useful for productive skills. Following the Lexical Approach, this book promotes the development of receptive skills with different texts and recordings. However, the activities from both reading and listening sections do not pay attention to lexical chunks. They only look for specific information with activities that consist of choosing the correct answer, answer specific questions or choosing between true or false.

3.2.2. *Get it right 2*

The second textbook is *Get it right for Bachillerato 2*. It is composed of seven units that are based on different topics, such as *home* (in unit 1), *society* (in unit 2) or *fame* (in unit 3). The main vocabulary of each topic is presented contextualised in the reading that appears at the beginning of each unit. Then, some exercises to extract the meaning of specific words from the text are suggested. The presentation of grammar structures (such as *present and past tenses, conditionals, reported speech, relative clauses, or passive*) is developed through blue boxes that explain and exemplify the different uses of a specific grammar structure. Then, the grammar explanation is followed by several exercises designed to practice different grammar aspects. At the end of the grammar section, an exercise called “get it right” always appears, which consists in correcting the errors in the sentences provided. This type of exercise demands a certain level of grammar proficiency from the students, since the grammatical content that needs to be corrected deals with grammar contents from the current unit and the previous ones. Therefore, since the book mainly focuses on the acquisition of grammar accuracy, a great influence of the Grammar-Translation Method can be noticed.

The influence of the traditional Grammar-Translation Method can also be noticed in the vocabulary section. In this section, individual words are listed decontextualised in a box that asks learners to translate them into their language and learn them by heart. Then, some exercises are suggested to facilitate the memorization process and to contextualise some words. Moreover, each vocabulary section introduces the so-called “language workshop,” which presents different grammar structures, such as the use of *had better* instead of *should/ought to* (in unit 4, page 47) or the structure *have/get something done* (in unit 6, page 67).

Even though there is a great influence of the Grammar-Translation Method in this book, some influence of the Lexical Approach can also be noticed in the vocabulary section due to the presence of some lexical chunks like phrasal verbs and idioms. This book pays special attention to the teaching of phrasal verbs, since they are taught in the vocabulary section of each unit. Nevertheless, only four phrasal verbs are presented in each vocabulary section. The phrasal verbs taught in this book are: *break down*, *clear up*, *come in* and *come over* (in unit 1, page 16); *go up*, *look after*, *set up* and *shut down* (in unit 2, page 26); *break into*, *come out*, *make up* and *take off* (in unit 3, page 36); *catch up*, *fill in*, *go over* and *go through* (in unit 4, page 46); *set up*, *sign up*, *turn up*, and *warm up* (in unit 5, page 56); *give away*, *take back*, *take off* and *try on* (in unit 6, page 66); *cheer up*, *feel up to*, *get on with* and *miss out on* (in unit 7, page 76). They are all introduced in an exercise consisting in matching the phrasal verbs with their definitions (see Figure 9).

4 Write the infinitive form of the red phrasal verbs in sentences 1–4. Then match them with the definitions in the list.

be unable to do (something) ♦ have a good relationship with ♦
 be able to ♦ feel happier

1 You don't look very well. Do you **feel up to** going out tonight?
 2 He **gets on well with** my sister because they like the same things.
 3 Julia **missed out on** the party because she was ill.
 4 Emilio **cheered up** when his girlfriend arrived.

Figure 9. Screenshot from the book illustrating the type of exercise used to practice phrasal verbs

Regarding the presence of idioms, they appear only once throughout this book. In unit 7 (page 76), five idioms dealing with feelings (*be on the same wavelength*, *be over the moon*, *feel down*, *feel under the weather* and *laugh your head off*) are presented in an exercise that classifies the idioms into positive and negative feelings (see Figure 10). Nevertheless, lexical chunks like collocations, which are often taught in similar books, are absent in this book.

Discussion: How are you feeling today?

Message 1 posted by Sally B. 10:24
 I'm **feeling down**. I did really badly in my maths exam.

Message 2 posted by Julio 10:30
 I'm in a very silly mood! I've just watched a hilarious film. I nearly **laughed my head off**!

Message 3 posted by Sheraz 11:05
 I got a good mark for my history project, so I'm **over the moon**!

Message 4 posted by Bea D. 11:07
 I'm **feeling a bit under the weather** – I've had a terrible sore throat for two weeks now.

Message 5 posted by Tom 11:20
 I think I'm in love! I've finally found someone who's **on the same wavelength** as me. We've got so much in common!

2 Put the bold idioms from exercise 1 in the correct column.

Positive feelings	Negative feelings
	<i>feeling down</i>

Figure 10. Screenshot from the book illustrating an exercise that introduces five idioms

Following the Lexical Approach, this book also emphasises the use of high-frequency phrases. In both the writing and speaking sections, some institutionalized expressions are presented in small boxes called “useful language,” which help students to develop their productive skills. For example, the book suggests institutionalized expressions to describe a place such as: *there is a view of..., the most interesting thing about ... is..., and what I like about... is...* (page 19); or institutionalized expressions to give arguments for and against such as: *there are advantages and disadvantages..., there is no clear answer to this question, or there are two sides to this question* (page 59). Furthermore, the book also suggests diverse sentence frames and heads for the writing task. For example, linkers of addition such as *also, moreover, in addition, for example* and *as well* (page 18), or linkers of contrast such as *whereas, but, however, on the one hand ... on the other hand* and *in contrast* (page 58).

While the Lexical approach emphasises the importance of receptive skills and the authenticity of their sources, this book is far from following this principle. Both texts and recordings are non-authentic sources of language since they had been specifically designed and adapted to the language level of this book. Moreover, both reading and listening activities have been designed to look for specific information and, therefore, little attention is paid to lexical units as the activities consist of choosing the correct answer, answering questions, or choosing between true or false.

3.2.3. Targets for Bachillerato 2

The last book is *Targets for Bachillerato 2*. It has seven content-based thematic units of ten pages each. The vocabulary of each unit is presented directly in the exercises that appear in the vocabulary section. The main vocabulary taught in each vocabulary section corresponds to individual words. However, phrasal verbs are an important part of the vocabulary section of this book, since they are taught in almost every unit. Both individual words and phrasal verbs normally appear in exercises consisting in matching the words with their meanings. Besides, the vocabulary section sometimes introduces other vocabulary aspects such as British words with their American equivalents (unit 1), antonyms (unit 5) or informal language and slang (unit 6).

The presentation of grammar structures (such as *reported speech, relative clauses, modals, or passive*) is developed in green boxes throughout the grammar section. These

grammar boxes explain the structures with little detail as they only present briefly some uses and examples. However, inside these boxes, there is a reference to the grammar appendix at the end of the book which provides a more detailed explanation in Spanish of the grammar structures by focusing on the rules and the exceptions. After the theoretical grammar part, some exercises are suggested in order to practice and assimilate the theory. They usually consist of filling the gaps or choosing the correct answer.

At the end of each unit, there is a section with different activities to self-check progress. In this section, two activities are devoted to reviewing the grammar structures while only one activity is devoted to reviewing the vocabulary content. The maximum score the learner can obtain for the vocabulary activity is 10 points, while the maximum score the learner can obtain for both grammar activities is 30 points. Therefore, a great influence of the Grammar-Translation method can be appreciated, since more emphasis is put on the teaching of grammar structures than on the teaching of lexis.

Nevertheless, since the book also focuses on the teaching of lexical chunks, some influence of the Lexical Approach can be noticed. Lexical chunks like phrasal verbs and idioms are frequently taught in this book. For example, phrasal verbs appear in five out of the seven units. Firstly, different phrasal verbs with the verb *turn* such as *turn down*, *turn off*, *turn on*, and *turn up*, are introduced in unit 3 (page 37). Then, phrasal verbs with the verb *look*, such as *look into*, *look for*, *look after*, and *look up*, are taught in unit 4 (page 48). After that, in unit 5 (page 60), phrasal verbs with the verb *go*, such as *go with*, *go along with*, *go off*, *go on*, and *go through*, are also introduced. Then, phrasal verbs with the verb *get*, such as *get around*, *get by*, *get over*, *get down*, *get back*, or *get on with*, are taught in unit 6 (page 72). And, finally, in unit 7 (page 85) phrasal verbs with the verb *put*, such as *put up*, *put off*, *put down*, *put forward*, and *put through to*, are suggested. All these phrasal verbs are introduced in exercises consisting in replacing the words in bold in the sentences with the correct form of the phrasal verbs from a list that appear above (see Figure 11).

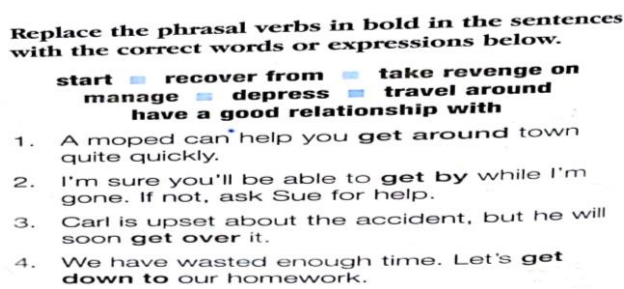


Figure 11. Screenshot from the book illustrating the type of exercise used to practice phrasal verbs

Apart from phrasal verbs, idioms are also introduced on three occasions. For example, idioms related to money, such as *pay through the nose*, *be in the red*, *a rip-off*, or *tight-fisted*, are first introduced in unit 1 (page 13) in an exercise that consist of matching the idioms to their meaning. After that, in unit 2 (page 25), idioms related to home, such as *like a house on fire*, *nothing to write home about*, or *home away from home*, are taught in an exercise consisting in matching the idioms with their definitions. Finally, some idioms related to acting, such as *get my act together*, *get stage fright*, and *put on an act*, are introduced in unit 3 (page 37) with an exercise consisting in replacing the words in bold in the sentences with the idioms that appear in the box.

Unlike the Lexical Approach which focuses on the teaching of collocations, this textbook does not emphasise the teaching of collocations, since they are only taught once in unit 2 (page 25). In this unit, different collocations with the verb *take* are introduced, such as *take advice*, *take for granted*, *take note of*, or *take place*. These collocations are graphically represented in a diagram in which students are encouraged to write them down on their notebooks and complete the diagram with as many collocations as possible (see Figure 12). This way of presenting the collocations is useful for students because it helps them to memorise and revise the collocations before doing the exam.



Figure 12. Screenshot illustrating an exercise that introduces collocations with the verb 'take'

Following the Lexical Approach, this book emphasises the instruction of institutionalized expressions as well as the instruction of sentence heads and frames. On the one hand, in the speaking section of each unit, different institutionalized expressions are suggested to help students with their speaking task. For example, expressions like *It would be difficult for me to...*, *I'd be sad/happy to...*, or *I might feel depressed because...* are suggested in unit 2 (page 30) to express feelings. On the other hand, in the writing section of each unit, different sentence heads and frames, such as *although*, *moreover*, *despite*, *nevertheless*, or *moreover* (in unit 2, page 28), are presented contextualised with

examples. Then, one or two exercises are suggested to practice and assimilate the uses of the sentence frames and heads.

The Lexical Approach considers receptive skills as a valuable source of input, as they provide useful lexical structures in context. In this book, receptive skills are developed through exercises based on different texts and recordings. These listening and reading exercises usually look for specific information with exercises that typically consist of choosing the correct answer, or choosing between true or false, rather than focusing on lexical structures. However, the reading section always introduces an exercise consisting of making the students identify specific words or expressions from the text.

3.3. General conclusions from the textbook analysis

After having conducted the analysis of the six *Bachillerato* textbooks, it can be concluded that these books pay little attention to the teaching of lexical chunks. Achieving grammatical accuracy is the focal point of these books, since more space is devoted to the teaching of grammar structures than to the teaching of lexical structures. Furthermore, grammar structures are also taught as part of the vocabulary in these books. Otherwise, individual words are often introduced decontextualised as the main vocabulary taught in every unit. So, a great influence of the Grammar-Translation method can be noticed.

Nevertheless, some influence of the Lexical Approach can also be ascertained in these books, since they all introduce the teaching of lexical chunks. Institutionalized expressions and, sentence heads and frames are the type of lexical chunks that most often appear. They tend to appear listed in small boxes in both writing and speaking sections in order to guide students with their productive tasks. Regarding other lexical chunks like phrasal verbs, idioms and collocations, they tend to appear less frequently throughout these books. They appear in random units and only a small number of lexical chunks are taught each time.

All these books provide learners with different sources of language input, such as recordings and readings. However, the input provided by these books comes from non-authentic materials, since all the materials have been artificially designed for teaching purposes. Thus, learners are not exposed to the peculiarities of real language (changes in the register, noises, slang, or different accents). Furthermore, the activities from the

listening and reading sections do not tend to focus on lexical patterns. They mainly ask learners to look for specific information from the text or listening source with exercises that consist of choosing between true or false, filling the gaps, or choosing the correct answer.

3.4. Pedagogical proposals for teaching ‘real’ English expressions

All languages are affected by changes and, in the case of English, its constant linguistic change is sped up by its global presence as *lingua franca*. Thus, keeping foreign language students of English up to date with ‘real’ English expressions should be an ongoing task for English teachers, since traditional resources (textbooks, grammars, and dictionaries) do not provide students with updated ‘real’ English vocabulary. Even going on study abroad programmes do not guarantee being in contact with ‘real’ English expressions, as students may not recognise the recent expressions that they should include in their lexicon. Therefore, English teachers need to find a way to raise students’ awareness of ‘real’ English expressions. To do this, they should put aside traditional resources and supply learners with authentic materials.

Pérez Cañado (2009: 3-5) launched several pedagogical proposals to illustrate innovative ways of teaching ‘real’ English words and multi-words items. She proposed the use of authentic sources of input such as telecollaboration, sitcoms and TV series, podcasts, internet texts, and best-sellers to expose the students to updated ‘real’ English. Following these proposals, some activities will be suggested to supplement the teaching of ‘real’ English expressions in the textbooks analysed previously:

1. Activity using telecollaboration. This activity consists of learning ‘real’ English vocabulary through the online interaction between foreign language students and native speakers of English. Foreign language students must be encouraged to communicate with native speakers of English within the classroom context through an online platform called ‘unicollaboration’. In order to guide students’ performance to certain expressions, the teacher will establish a specific task. In this case, the task will consist of talking about the similarities and differences when visiting each other’s hometown. In their conversations, students should make suggestions for a day and night out in their own town. Furthermore, since all conversational exchanges are recorded on the platform, the teacher can raise students’ awareness to the most relevant expressions.

2. *Activity using a sitcom.* Watching popular sitcoms or TV series is a motivational way of learning English expressions which are actually used. In this activity, the teacher will play a fragment of one of the most popular American sitcoms: *Modern Family*. Then, in order to increase students' awareness of some lexical chunks, the teacher will provide students with the script from the fragment of the sitcom that they have just watched, including some gaps to fill in. After this activity, students will be asked to translate the expressions into Spanish.

3. *Activity using podcasts.* The World Wide Web offers unlimited and updated access to diverse sources, such as auditory files or written texts, which deal with attractive topics for the students and provide them with useful 'real' English expressions. This activity consists of asking students to choose one or two podcasts to listen to for homework (from authentic 'English' language sources such as YouTube, BBC, iTunes or NPR) and write down at least ten expressions with figurative meaning, such as idioms or phrasal verbs. In the next class, all students will explain and discuss the meanings of the expressions they have chosen.

4. *Activity using best-sellers.* Reading recent best-sellers by authors from different English-speaking countries has been proved to be a valuable source of extensive input for students, as they constantly receive updated 'real' English expressions. The proposed activity will consist of encouraging students to read at home a recent best-seller every two months. At the end of the second month, the teacher will make an exam including different exercises (for example, translation of 'real' chunks, choose the correct answer, or gap-filling exercises) to test whether learners are aware of the different 'real' English expressions that appear in the book. Some examples of recent best-sellers that can be read in this activity are: *Turtles All the Way Down*, by John Green; *The Way I Used to Be*, by Amber Smith; *One of Us Is Lying*, by Karen M. McManus; and *The Sun Is Also a Star*, by Nicola Yoon.

All these pedagogical proposals for teaching 'real' English lexical chunks follow the pedagogical principles of the Lexical Approach. However, the Lexical Approach is not the only recent method that is present in these activities. Other recent methods such as *Cooperative Learning*, *Task-Based Learning (TBL)*, *Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)* or *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)* also take part in the development of these activities.

4. Conclusion

Throughout this project, the importance of being aware of ‘real’ English lexical chunks when learning English as a foreign language has been underscored. Having access to a large store of lexical chunks plays crucial role in achieving communicative competence in the foreign language, as lexical chunks provide students with an easily retrievable frame for language production. Thus, a large inventory of lexical chunks is the key to achieve native-like fluency and accuracy in the target language.

In order to make students notice and be aware of different lexical chunks when learning a foreign language, teachers should prioritise the teaching of lexical patterns over other language aspects. This shift of emphasis towards lexical chunks should follow the principles of the Lexical Approach, a content-based method that considers lexis as the building blocks of language. This recent approach suggests the teaching of lexical chunks through discovery-based procedures with the aid of pedagogical chunking, translations and, high-quality input based on extensive reading and listening.

Considering the importance of lexis when learning a foreign language, the practical application of this dissertation has offered a complete view of the role of lexis in the current Spanish education at a *Bachillerato* level by analysing six textbooks from *Bachillerato* 1 and 2. This analysis has shown that grammar is still prioritised over lexis and, although lexis plays an important role within language teaching, the teaching of individual words represents the main vocabulary that is taught in this type of books. Regarding lexical chunks, the number of lexical chunks and activities that these textbooks offer is substantially reduced. Furthermore, lexical patterns are not emphasised with authentic sources of listening and reading, as the Lexical Approach suggests.

However, although there is still a huge influence of the traditional Grammar-translation method when learning English as a foreign language in the non-compulsory secondary levels, this dissertation has proved that the Lexical Approach is gradually making its way into the language textbooks used in *Bachillerato* 1 and 2. Moreover, the classroom implementation of practical proposals for teaching ‘real’ English lexical chunks, like the ones that have been put forward in this dissertation, can contribute to promote the learning of lexical chunks and to fully incorporate the Lexical Approach into the language teaching field.

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