

## Speaking in chunks: How the use of formulaic language makes us fluent

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Speaking fluently is a complex task: producing language with a reasonable speed while keeping the number of hesitations and disfluencies at a minimum not only requires us to plan ahead while speaking, but also to monitor the results of these planning processes. For bilingual speakers, the task is even more challenging, as both of their languages compete for selection (Bergmann, Sprenger & Schmid, 2015). In their seminal paper, Pawley and Syder (1983) identified the use of *formulaic language* as an important source of nativelike fluency. That is, they proposed that the direct retrieval of large chunks of language from long-term memory not only identifies a speaker as a member of a linguistic community, but also significantly eases the speakers' processing load during production. Consequently, the speaker is less error prone and there is less need for corrections. However, apart from Kuiper's (1996) analysis of *Smooth Talkers* (i.e., speakers who – due to the circumstances – strive for maximum fluency), only very little research has been done to directly test this claim. In my talk I will present the results of a study in which we analyzed spontaneous speech data from native speakers, L2 learners and L1 attriters with respect to the use of formulaic language and the way in which it affects their speech fluency. I will show that in our data a formulaic advantage mainly arises from the use of lexical collocations, with native and bilingual speakers differing in the number of chunks, but not their relative distributions. I will discuss these findings in the context of the superlemma theory of idiom production (Sprenger, Levelt & Kempen, 2006), which I will use to pinpoint the locus of a formulaic processing advantage. In addition, I will discuss whether figurative and non-figurative formulaic language can be captured by the same model.

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