Introduction

Traditionally, language is viewed as consisting of words, on the one hand, and of grammatical structures, on the other. But what if we got rid of this dichotomy and focused on both at the same time? The activities in this book attempt to do just that: to focus on units of language, such as chunks and patterns, that straddle the border between vocabulary and grammar. The idea of merging vocabulary with grammar is not new in itself and has been convincingly argued by the likes of Dave Willis and Michael Lewis. Drawing on recent research in both corpus linguistics and second language acquisition, this book reinforces the important role that chunks play not only in textual cohesion and fluency, but also in forming the raw material for grammar acquisition. The practical part of the book includes classroom suggestions and activities for making grammar teaching more lexical, and for making vocabulary practice more grammatical.

1 Chunks in language

What is a 'chunk'?

A chunk is a group of words customarily found together. Some chunks are fixed expressions, for example *as a matter of fact*, while others are combinations of words that allow variation such as *see you later/soon/tomorrow.*

Is a chunk the same as collocation?

Some chunks can indeed be described as collocations. Collocation is a kind of chunk which consists of two lexical (content) words:

pursue a career (verb + noun)
a scenic route (adjective + noun)
a chance encounter (noun + noun)
ridiculously expensive (adverb + adjective)
examine carefully (verb + adverb)

However, many frequent multi-word combinations do not fall neatly into the above categories with two identifiable parts of speech (verb + noun, adjective + noun, etc.). Chunks also comprise other types of multi-word units such as:

see you later (speech formula)
come to think of it (discourse marker)
as the study suggests (linking phrase)
at all costs (prepositional phrase)

Chunks can also be structures which have traditionally been associated with grammar. They can include stems that can be used to build various sentences in English:

If I were you
It's been a while since
It took me a long time to

Finally, some full sentences can also be considered chunks:

It's none of your business.
There's no doubt about it.
What are you gonna do?

Is everything chunks, then?

Yes, to a large extent. Evidence suggests that our mental lexicon does not consist of individual words but chunks. Chunks can vary greatly in length (some consist of two words while others, as seen above, can be full sentences) but what makes them chunks is the fact that they are stored in the brain as single units. Research shows that about 50–80% of native-speaker discourse consists of recurring multi-word combinations (Altenberg, 1987; Erman and Warren, 2000).

Is the idea of chunks new?

Linguists, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and lexicographers have used different terms to describe multi-word units throughout the years: multi-word strings, prefabricated routines, ready-made expressions, lexicalized stems, and so on. However, the terms all mean essentially the same thing. Although their existence was pointed out a long time ago, chunks came to the fore with the advent of **corpus linguistics**. A corpus (from Latin: body; plural = corpora) is a searchable database containing samples of text. Text is referred to here in its broader sense and includes fiction, newspapers, magazines and academic journals, as well as transcripts of TV shows, radio interviews, business meetings and informal conversations. Once the domain of linguists, many corpora are now openly available on the internet, with the British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) being probably the most popular resources. For example, this is what random lines – known as concordances – taken from the BNC reveal about how the word *matter* is used:

erm when whatever you in whatever you do, every you do, no MATTER **how** effective you are, that you're That when you leav
hes to strongly speak to a new point or a new angle on this MATTER I'd really prefer to call on the convenor to sum up.
and that is my submission, it is not a matter of law but a MATTER **of** fact a and practice. Thank you Mrs. At this stage
king union? Oh yes, I've al I was always in the union. As a MATTER **of** fact er yes I, I, I joined at sixteen on the union
every day and er you was allowed to have a cup of tea. As a MATTER **of** fact, a lot of the firms provided the cup of teas,
d our a minute! our people need the work! I said that, as a MATTER **of** fact, absolutely so! Yeah. You try telling John th
e there. I le I left there starting to work on me own. As a MATTER **of** fact, there was about, I got four month in this on
when you There were started up? There were There were. As a MATTER **of** fact, when I'm talking about, let me see er fifty
ll be sent instructions on what, who to write to and it's a MATTER **of** sorting those out and erm sending out letters to g
cided that we were going to go for quality because it was a MATTER **of** survival. The industry which we are part of is in
e matter out too many of us went onto it convinced that the MATTER **was** already sorted out. Their minds made up, their st
ou. I've got Mr and Mr . Thank you Madam Chairman. Erm, the MATTER **was** debated very clearly er at the last meeting and s
ards for instance, applications remain entirely portable no MATTER **what** database you employ, and all of your programmers
tight budget because it's the only way you can get them no MATTER **what** people are telling you erm about the recession b
then you go down and make food do you? I go down, yeah. No MATTER **what** time it is? No and eat chips. two plates packed
lly help them and you feel dead sorry for them Yeah. but no MATTER **what** you say you still end up doing what they want Ye
buying, and erm to reduce the costs, wh which are there no MATTER **who** gets paid for what, the there are some costs. And
doesn't . >From the dinner time to tea time. No. What's the MATTER **with** her? Well at least she's, he hadn't been doing e
, very helpful boy, are you feeling happier now? what's the MATTER **with** him? he's, he's not very well, he's fi , look ho
you seen her hair yet? Mum? She's had it permed What's the MATTER **with** you? she's had it cut into bob and permed. Oh! H

Figure 0.1: Search result for *matter* from the British National Corpus

Studying these real-life text samples has helped corpus linguists to discover common patterns of use for particular words: *no matter how*, *what's the matter with*, etc.

Although the first corpus of authentic English texts was compiled in the 1960s, corpus linguistics didn't begin in earnest until computers had become powerful enough to hold vast amounts of data and to enable much more rigorous analysis, that is, the 1980s. That is when a joint venture between the University of Birmingham and Collins publishers, known as COBUILD (Collins Birmingham University Language Database) saw the creation of the Bank of English, at that time the largest electronic corpus of contemporary English texts. The project was founded and led by the renowned linguist John Sinclair (1933–2007). Corpus research, and particularly the COBUILD project, has provided some fascinating insights into how real language works and led Sinclair to conclude that language is largely formulaic, i.e. it consists of ready-made chunks. As Sinclair argued in his seminal work *Corpus Concordance Collocation*:

> *A language user has available to him a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases* [chunks] *that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments.* (1991: 110)

If the language we use is comprised of ready-made lexico-grammatical units, the boundary between what we have traditionally called 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' is somewhat blurred.

How do chunks blur the boundary between vocabulary and grammar?

The blurred boundary between vocabulary and grammar refers to the tendency of certain words to occur with certain grammatical structures and vice versa. For example, the verb *to found* is likely to be used in the passive (e.g. *The company was founded in 1957*) and the verb *to mind* is normally used in questions and negative statements (e.g. *Do you mind if I, I don't mind*).

This close link between grammar and vocabulary means that while there may be many possible ways of correctly combining grammar with words to make sentences, we tend to go for conventionalized combinations. For example, all the sentences below are grammatically correct and some of them exhibit a very advanced control of English grammar:

Could I make a call using your phone?
Could I call from your phone?
May I place a call by means of your phone?
Could I use your phone?

Yet most competent speakers would choose the last example when talking to a friend. The other examples may sound awkward and unnatural, even though they are grammatically possible. This demonstrates how pieces of language are stored in the brain as whole units, i.e. chunks. Even if language learners possess full control of grammar and can produce correct sentences, they may not always opt for the most natural-sounding – and often, most concise – way of saying something. This is one of the reasons why chunks need to be taught explicitly – see more on this below.

Is there more to knowing a language than just reproducing chunks we have encountered?

Traditional language descriptions tend to treat grammar rules separately from vocabulary, giving the impression that any word can be inserted into any grammatical structure. For example, you could produce a sentence like this: *Colourless green ideas sleep furiously*. Although the sentence does not make sense, it conforms perfectly to the rules of English grammar.

A new theory of language acquisition known as **lexical priming** (advanced by Professor Michael Hoey, University of Liverpool) poses a radical challenge to this 'words-and-rules' view of language. Hoey (2005) argues that as we acquire new words we take a subconscious note of words that occur alongside (collocation) and of any associated grammatical patterns (colligation). Through multiple encounters with a new word, we become primed to associate it with these recurring elements. According to Hoey's theory, our brain is like a giant corpus where each word is accompanied by mental usage notes. Language production is not a matter of simply combining words and rules but rather a retrieval of the language we are primed for, i.e. the patterns and combinations we have previously seen or heard. This accounts for why some sentences that are perfectly grammatical may not sound natural: the words in these awkward sentences do not conform to their primings.

The theory explains why, when producing language, our first port of call is our mental store of pre-fabricated chunks. However, this does not completely negate the role of generative grammar. Knowledge of grammar rules is still important to fine-tune chunks so that they fit new contexts. Because we are only primed to repeat language we have encountered in particular contexts, if we find ourselves in a new communicative situation, we might not have any ready-made language to draw on. This is when grammar knowledge can help us produce completely new sentences. Hoey argues, however, that even when we create completely new language we still follow general primings.

How do chunks promote fluency?

If by fluency we mean fast processing, knowledge of chunks is essential: it is much quicker to process a few larger units (chunks) than a lot of smaller ones (words). For example, without having the chunk *I haven't seen you for ages* at your disposal, you would have to go through a series of lexical and grammatical choices every time you bumped into an old friend. You would have to gather the right words, then apply the appropriate grammar rules. Instead, fluent speakers recall *I haven't seen you for ages* as a unit, rather than assembling the phrase word by word. Freeing up processing energy allows more time for speakers to plan what to say next.

Fluent speakers possess a large bank of memorized chunks ready to be used in various communicative situations and contexts. When it comes to receptive skills (reading or listening), recognizing frequently recurring strings of words allows us to process linguistic input more quickly. It has been shown that a listener recognizes a word more quickly when provided with a word that collocates with it. Likewise, it's quicker to read strings of words which consist of familiar chunks, as shown by studies tracking readers' eye-ball movements (Siyanova-Chanturia et al, 2011).

In summary, chunks are fundamental to language processing and production: they allow us to produce language naturally and fluently and they aid reading and listening comprehension. In recent years, however, there is growing evidence that chunks memorized as whole units of language can also actually drive the process of grammar acquisition. This is the topic of the next section.

2 Chunks in language acquisition

How can chunks promote grammar acquisition?

Memorized chunks can be used by learners to produce situationally appropriate and well-formed language, such as *I haven't seen you for ages*, when their own grammatical competence doesn't yet

allow them to generate new sentences in the present perfect. This boosts learners' motivation and allows them to be communicative in the earlier stages of learning a second language (L2). But the role of chunks doesn't end there. Holistically stored chunks gradually evolve into more productive patterns as learners begin to experiment with them, teasing them apart and using them as templates to create new sentences:

I haven't seen you for ages.
I haven't seen her for ages.
I haven't seen him since high school.
I haven't heard from her for ages.

Is it similar to how children acquire their first language?

Very much so. According to contemporary cognitive theories of language acquisition, children acquiring their first language (L1) start out by recording pieces of language encountered during their day-to-day interaction. Early language production starts with repetition of this previously heard language, i.e. words (e.g. *dog*) or multi-word phrases (e.g. *Let me do it*, *Where's the ball?*). Children then slightly modify the encountered language to suit various communicative needs:

Where's the ball?
Where's the dog?
Where's Daddy?

Only later do abstract categories and schemas, such as the subject–verb–object word order or inversion in interrogatives, begin to form from these specific instances of language use. Michael Tomasello, author of *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*, is clear on this point:

> *… children's comprehension and production of relatively complex utterances are based on a simple retrieval of stored expressions, whereas in other cases they are based on the cutting and pasting together of stored linguistic schemas and constructions of various kinds and degrees of abstraction. This would seem to be the way that people master a variety of cognitive skills, and there is no reason to think that language is any different in this regard.* (2005: 327–328)

This view, known as a **usage-based** approach to language acquisition, rests on the idea that language knowledge comes from actual language use – listening, reading, speaking and writing – with grammar being the result of the process of acquisition rather than a precondition for it.

Is there evidence that L2 learners go through the same process?

Evidence that L2 learners can extrapolate rules from naturally occurring language is less plentiful, yet fairly convincing. Second language acquisition (SLA) studies have shown that new grammatical structures are often learned initially as unanalysed wholes and later on broken down for analysis. For example, a study conducted at Southampton University (Myles, Hooper & Mitchell, 1998) showed that secondary school learners of French learned *Je m'appelle* (*My name is*) as a chunk and used it in early production without understanding all of its constituent parts. Gradually, as learners became

aware of all the elements it consists of (*Je / m' / appelle*) they began to build new sentences using the chunk as a prototype:

Elle s'appelle
Il s'appelle

Or, to give an example from English, learners may learn the *going to* future form as a chunk, such as *I am going to write about* for writing essays (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002), before adapting the structure to include other verbs: *I am going to take/try/make,* etc.

Drawing on various SLA studies investigating the role of chunks in grammar acquisition, Rod Ellis (2006) advocates delaying the teaching of abstract grammar rules until learners have acquired a stock of ready-made chunks which they can use in various communicative situations. This also echoes an appeal made by one of the founding fathers of the communicative approach to language teaching, Henry Widdowson:

> *The more natural and more effective approach would be to […] begin with lexical items and show how they need to be grammatically modified to be communicatively effective.* (1990: 95)

Can learners acquire L2 from a rich diet of chunks alone?

Children effortlessly acquire their mother tongue from examples using their pattern-finding ability. So why is the process of L2 acquisition sometimes so laborious with many learners never reaching native-like performance? One of the main reasons is quite simply a lack of exposure. L1 proficiency comes as a result of thousands of hours of exposure to incredibly rich language input. The exposure L2 learners receive is often not sufficient to enable them to identify patterns from specific examples.

Even when there is plenty of input there are additional factors which may hinder the process of L2 acquisition. For example, although it is one of the most frequent words in English, the contracted form of the verb *have* – *'ve* – is not always easily identifiable in spoken phrases like these:

I've been busy.
I've finished.
How long've you been waiting?

Without hearing *'ve,* the learner may not consciously register its presence and therefore presume that these sentences do not contain *have/'ve* at all:

I been busy.
I finished.
How long you been waiting?

An item may appear frequently in the input but it will not be readily acquired by the L2 learner if it is not **salient**, i.e. if it is not noticeable and prominent in relation to its surrounding words. Salience – or the lack of it – may explain why certain grammatical forms are notoriously difficult for learners to acquire. Many grammatical cues in English (for example tense marking, the third person singular *-s* and articles) are not salient. Grammatical words tend to be unstressed in English, making them more difficult to perceive aurally. We stress *know* in *I don't know*, not *don't*, which results in something sounding like *I dunno* in spoken English. We stress *taken* in *You should have taken an umbrella*, which is reduced to *You should've taken an umbrella*, or even *You shoulda taken an umbrella*.

Studies show (see Bybee, 2002 for overview) that extremely frequent chunks, like *Lemme see, I wanna do it* or *Whatcha gonna do,* are subject to more articulatory reduction. For example, the first person pronoun *I* is the most common pronoun occurring with *don't* and reduction of *don't* to *dun* occurs almost exclusively when it is used in conjunction with *I* and followed by verbs that occur most frequently after *don't*, such as *know*, *think*, *have*, *want* and *care*. In a similar fashion, the sequences *did you*, *would you, that you*, *last year* are prone to palatalization because their high frequency makes them highly automatized.

So are chunks new grammar?

To be precise, chunks themselves are not grammar but it has been argued that they provide raw data for the development of grammatical competence. This insight is supported by converging evidence from two disciplines: corpus linguistics (discussed earlier) and psycholinguistics (discussed in this section). Each discipline uses different research methods, different thinking approaches and has its own object of enquiry: corpus linguistics investigates language use through the study of samples of real language while psycholinguistics examines the processes of the human mind responsible for language acquisition and proficiency. However, the latest insights from each field dovetail perfectly with each other and point to the experiential, data-driven nature of language learning. Both disciplines place more premium on holistic memory than on the ability to put words together using content-less grammar rules. They also reject the traditional grammar/vocabulary dichotomy.

More recently, the convergence of these two viewpoints has found support in what is called **complexity theory**, which views language as an emergent system. First proposed in the field of physics and mathematics, complexity (or 'chaos') theory studies complex systems that emerge as a result of the interactions of their components. This theory has been used to study, among other things, the weather, the human brain or consumer behaviour in a market. When applied to linguistics and language acquisition, complexity theory can explain why language evolves over time and how the learner's grammar develops and organizes itself from the bottom up. According to this view, complex grammar and grammatical systems arise from the learner's exposure to language data – specifically, frequently recurring chunks – in the course of social interaction and simple cognitive processes, such as pattern detection. In this sense, the grammar is said to be 'emergent'.

Keeping in mind the 'chunky' nature of language and the role chunks potentially play in language acquisition, we shall now turn to the practical implications of the theories we have discussed.

3 Chunks in language teaching

Why don't chunks feature more prominently in ELT methodology?

Coursebooks tend to separate grammar and vocabulary, with occasional pages devoted to functional language (suggesting, apologizing, inviting, etc.). It may seem that ELT methodology has not taken into account the corpus research findings outlined earlier – but this is not entirely true. There have been a few notable attempts to bridge the gap between vocabulary and grammar in recent ELT publications. The first major pedagogical development based on corpus research was the publication of the *Collins Cobuild English Course* in the late 1980s. Instead of focusing on a specific grammar structure (e.g. present simple or past continuous), each unit in the coursebook presented several frequent English words and highlighted common patterns associated with them. The decision to

abandon a traditional grammar syllabus in favour of an entirely lexical syllabus was groundbreaking. One of the authors, Dave Willis, later wrote this in the introduction to *The Lexical Syllabus*:

> *Teachers and researchers have been aware for many years that 'input' does not equal 'intake', that what teachers claim to be teaching bears only a tenuous relationship to what learners are actually learning. But in spite of this, coursebook writers continue to act on the assumption that language can be broken down into a series of patterns* [Willis means here grammatical structures] *which can then be presented to learners and assimilated by them in a predictable sequence. It does not seem to worry people a great deal that this assumption flies in the face of our experience as teachers.* (1990)

The next two developments in the field emerged in the early 1990s. On one side of the Atlantic, Nattinger and DeCarrico attempted to organize conventionalized lexical phrases (the term they used to describe chunks) according to the functions they perform and suggested ways of teaching them. On the other side of the Atlantic, Michael Lewis (probably the most influential figure in promoting the importance of chunks in language teaching) developed his Lexical Approach, which can be summarized by this key quote: 'Language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar' (Lewis, 1993). Lewis derived many of his ideas directly from the corpus linguistics insights outlined above, particularly John Sinclair's work.

While Lewis argued for a syllabus based on chunks, his detractors criticized the lack of clear specification of which chunks should be taught and in what order. Another shortcoming often pointed out in Lewis's approach is the sheer number of chunks – hundreds of thousands – which learners need to commit to memory. Opponents of the Lexical Approach argue that equipping learners with generic grammar rules requires less time and effort and therefore ensures faster progress. However, critics may be missing a crucial point in Lewis's work: Lewis convincingly argued for 'chunking' as a primary pedagogical activity, where students are explicitly taught to divide language into meaningful units, paying attention to which words occur with other words and their associated grammatical patterns. This aspect of language learning fosters independent learning, provided students are adequately trained to identify and record chunks. Regarding the cognitive load, learning complex grammatical structures, for example the third conditional (*if* + past perfect + *would have* + past participle), is arguably more demanding than memorizing a typical expression containing the target structure such as *If I'd had the time I would've helped you* (Jones, 2015). These principles were effectively put into practice in the *Innovations* series of coursebooks by Hugh Dellar and Andrew Walkley (Heinle-Cengage, 2004–8).

What is missing in current teaching practice?

Effective language teaching should reflect the nature of language and be the best possible match for the process of natural language acquisition. As we have seen, language acquisition is much more holistic than was traditionally believed: modern usage-based theories of language acquisition and corpus research convincingly argue that breaking language down into discrete grammar items is at odds with accounts of how language is stored, acquired and produced. Of course, some itemization of language is inevitable for teaching purposes but chunks seem to be the most likely candidates for items of learning, rather than individual words or discrete grammar rules.

The learning of new structures should ideally start off as gradual exposure to and accumulation of chunks containing the target structures. As the number of stored chunks grows, chunks exhibiting the same pattern will gradually feed into the grammar system. This is when grammatical competence with

a particular structure begins to emerge. For some learners this 'tipping point' will occur earlier, for others later. However, no amount of incidental exposure can come close to the amount of linguistic data that native speakers are exposed to – about 7,000 utterances per day (Sheffler, 2015). To speed up the process of chunk accumulation and pattern detection – and therefore create favourable conditions for the tipping point to occur sooner – chunks need to be taught explicitly.

Since chunks can provide raw material for grammar development, it may be worthwhile directing learners' attention to chunks containing certain grammatical structures. Learners can practise and learn the chunks lexically before moving on to any kind of grammar explanation, i.e. they should be encouraged to memorize before they analyse. This does not suggest a return to behaviourist models of instruction (where no explicit analysis of grammar takes place at all) but rather that teachers use memorization as a useful additional tool before introducing any grammar analysis.

The teaching and learning of chunks can be approached in much the same way as the teaching of grammatical structures: clarifying meaning and form, checking understanding, practising in meaningful contexts (Jones, 2015). For example, we can explicitly teach a range of chunks (e.g. *I don't know*, *I don't believe it*, *I don't care)* and only later focus on the role of *don't* in the formation of negative sentences in the present simple.

Should single words be banished completely when teaching vocabulary?

Recently, vocabulary has gained greater significance in ELT, evidenced by the amount of research into L2 vocabulary acquisition which has been published in the last twenty years. Much of this research agrees that vocabulary learning is a daunting task: learners require knowledge of around 9,000 word families – not to mention tens of thousands of chunks – to understand texts. New items also need to be frequently re-encountered for learning to take place.

The sheer number of new words learners need has led L2 vocabulary acquisition researchers to reassess whether picking up words from input (e.g. from extensive reading) is sufficient for vocabulary learning. Learning vocabulary out of context – characteristic of earlier language-learning approaches – fell out of favour when more communicative teaching approaches became popular. However, in recent years many researchers concur that learning decontextualized lists of words can in fact be a useful strategy, particularly for learning the basic vocabulary of English. The problem is that basic vocabulary items – the 2,000 most frequent words of English, including *any*, *by*, *get*, *there*, *way*, etc. – also carry the most common grammatical patterns. There is clearly a contradiction here. On the one hand, learners quickly need to get to a level where they can engage in simple communication and comprehend texts – and any means will do to reach this threshold, including decontextualized vocabulary learning using flashcards or word lists. On the other hand, these basic words are essential for acquiring grammatical competence. So, quick gains in learning individual, decontextualized words may actually inhibit grammar development. This book takes the view that vocabulary should be taught in chunks because exposure to surrounding language (co-text) is of such great importance. This way learners can pick up not only collocations – essential for appropriate and natural use of vocabulary – but also the grammatical patterns those new words occur in. For example, when teaching *look for* it is worth pointing out that it often appears in the present continuous:

He's looking for a job.
What are you looking for?
I'm looking for my glasses/keys. Have you seen them?

What are the central principles underlying this book?

This book aims to bridge the gap between vocabulary and grammar by teaching both elements alongside each other. It contains several chapters of practical activities for teachers of all levels of experience. Below are some general principles underlying the activities provided:

Learners need a lot of linguistically rich and meaningful input (reading and listening)
A lot of input doesn't mean that learners should only be given long texts. Intensive listening and reading of short texts (for example the ones on http://tinytexts.wordpress.com/) has a high pedagogical value. This is not to detract from the benefit of extensive listening and reading: graded readers, for example, provide exposure to new items in context and help learners to consolidate language learned in class.

Draw learners' attention to lexical and grammatical patterns
Many classroom activities should focus on highlighting chunks in reading and listening input. Such receptive, awareness-raising activities can be gradually combined with more productive ones, where learners manipulate the chunks they have encountered to fit different communicative situations and scenarios. However, before learners are expected to produce correct grammar, they should be trained to recognize new grammatical structures in their input. A lot of priming needs to take place before learners can produce more abstract forms like the present perfect continuous (*have* + *been* + v + *-ing*), for example.

Chunks before grammar
Ease learners into new grammar areas through chunks. For example, *Have you ever been to* can be presented in the context of travel or holidays, without delving into a grammatical analysis of the present perfect. Similarly, *Have you seen* can be presented when discussing films in class. Start by getting learners to practise and memorize chunks containing a new grammatical structure, resisting the temptation to move too quickly into any grammar explanation. Remember, grammar rules are best learned when learners can already draw on a stock of accumulated samples: memorized chunks can guide the learners into the grammar.

Learners need opportunities to produce language in meaningful contexts
Getting learners to produce new language – as opposed to just encountering it in input and recording it – is an essential pedagogical activity. Using new grammatical structures, however partially or provisionally understood, promotes fluency and acquisition of these structures. It also allows learners to produce language which is structurally beyond their present level of competence. It is, therefore, the teacher's role to encourage learners to incorporate new structures in their output and 'push' them beyond their comfort zone.

Chunks help activate passive vocabulary
Coursebook exercises such as matching words and definitions, matching parts of collocations, gapfills and clozes are all important in helping learners understand various aspects of new vocabulary. However, they are not enough to activate passive knowledge. Although coursebooks help students practise new lexical items, it is still up to the teacher to create opportunities for meaningful output and push learners towards integrating new items into their active lexicons.

Chunks play a crucial role in helping learners to activate new and partially learned vocabulary. For example, learners don't need to fully understand the meaning of *stiff* in *I was scared stiff*. It's enough