



## **Bakalářská práce**

# **Acquisition of lexical phrases in English lessons with the focus on alliteration and assonance**

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na vzdělávání

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## Zadání bakalářské práce

# Acquisition of lexical phrases in English lessons with the focus on alliteration and assonance

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## Zásady pro vypracování:

Znalost lexikálních frází a schopnost je vhodně používat jsou nezbytné pro dosažení plynulého a přirozeného jazykového projevu. Tato bakalářská práce se bude zabývat osvojováním lexikálních frází při hodinách anglického jazyka. V teoretické části se bude věnovat různým druhům lexikálních frází, posoudí jejich význam při osvojování cizího jazyka a popíše historický vývoj přístupu k výuce zdůrazňující význam znalosti lexikálních frází. Dále vymezí pojmy aliterace a asonance a popíše jejich vliv na zapamatování a vybavování lexikálních frází. Praktická část bude obsahovat kvantitativní a komparativní analýzu tří vybraných učebnic anglického jazyka. Metodou mé práce bude nejprve rešerše odborné literatury vztahující se k tématu osvojování lexikálních frází. Další metodou bude kvantitativní analýza tří učebnic (četnost výskytu lexikálních frází a jaká část z nich obsahuje aliteraci a/nebo asonanci) a následně komparativní analýza těchto učebnic.

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## Poděkování

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## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tzv. lexikálními frázemi a jejich významem při osvojování si anglického jazyka. V teoretické části se věnuje různým kategoriím lexikálních frází, výzkumu zaměřenému na jejich roli při osvojování si anglického jazyka a možnému využití aliterace a asonance pro lepší zapamatování si lexikálních frází studenty. Obsahem praktické části této bakalářské práce je analýza čtyř učebnic. Cílem je zjistit a následně porovnat, jak velké množství lexikálních frází je studentům v daných učebnicích prezentováno, jaké procento z nich obsahuje aliteraci či asonanci a zda se výskyt těchto řečnických figur nějak liší mezi různými kategoriemi.

## **Klíčová slova**

aliterace, asonance, lexikální fráze, osvojování cizího jazyka, učebnice anglického jazyka

## **Summary**

This bachelor thesis deals with the so-called lexical phrases and their role in acquiring the English language. In the theoretical part, different categories of formulaic language are presented as well as the research concerning its role in acquiring the English language. The possible utilization of alliteration and assonance for easier memorization of lexical phrases by students is also described. The practical part of this thesis analyses four English textbooks. The goal is to find how many lexical phrases are presented to students in each of the textbooks, how many of them are alliterated or assonant, and finally if the occurrence of these figures of speech somehow differs among different categories of lexical phrases.

## **Keywords**

alliteration, assonance, English language textbooks, foreign language acquisition, lexical phrases

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	11
2	What I mean by the term lexical phrase .....	15
2.1	Categories of formulaic language.....	15
2.1.1	Idioms .....	15
2.1.2	Collocations .....	17
2.1.3	Phrasal verbs.....	18
2.1.4	Proverbs .....	19
2.1.5	Metaphors .....	20
2.1.6	Clichés .....	21
2.1.7	Binomials (Trinomials).....	22
2.1.8	Exclamations.....	22
2.1.9	Gambits, discourse markers, and other phrases.....	23
2.2	Lexical phrases according to Nattinger and DeCarrico.....	24
2.3	Situation-bound utterances (SBUs).....	26
3	Research on formulaic language from a historical perspective .....	28
3.1	Research on formulaic language .....	28
3.2	Formulaic language and second language acquisition .....	30
4	Alliteration, assonance, and foreign language acquisition .....	33
4.1	Alliteration.....	33
4.2	Assonance.....	34
4.3	The role of Alliteration and Assonance.....	35
5	Methodology of textbook analysis.....	37
5.1	Research questions .....	37
5.2	Criteria for including a lexical phrase in the study.....	37

5.3	Which lexical phrases contain alliteration or assonance .....	42
5.4	Lexical phrases, collocations, and pragmatic function.....	43
6	Analysis of four English textbooks.....	43
6.1	English Plus 4: Student's Book .....	44
6.1.1	Arrangement of the textbook .....	44
6.1.2	Quantitative analysis of the textbook.....	45
6.2	Project 5 Fourth Edition .....	46
6.2.1	Arrangement of the textbook .....	46
6.2.2	Quantitative analysis of the textbook.....	47
6.3	English File Intermediate .....	49
6.3.1	Arrangement of the textbook .....	49
6.3.2	Quantitative analysis of the textbook.....	49
6.4	English File Advanced .....	51
6.4.1	Arrangement of the textbook .....	51
6.4.2	Quantitative analysis of the textbook.....	51
7	Comparison of English textbooks.....	53
7.1	Textbooks of the same English level.....	53
7.2	Textbooks of different English level .....	54
8	Conclusion .....	55
	References.....	57
	Appendixes.....	60



## Tables

Table 1: English Plus 4.....	45
Table 2: Project 5.....	47
Table 3: English File Intermediate.....	49
Table 4: English File Advanced.....	52
Table 5: Same-level textbooks I.....	54
Table 6: Same-level textbooks II.....	54
Table 7: Different-level textbook I.....	55
Table 8: Different-level textbooks II.....	55

## Graphs

Graph 1: English Plus 4.....	46
Graph 2: Project 5.....	48
Graph 3: English File Intermediate.....	50
Graph 4: English File Advanced.....	52

## List of Abbreviations

BNC	British National Corpus
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
e.g.	for example (exempli gratia in Latin)
Etc.	et cetera
L1	first language
L2	second language
SBU	situation-bound utterances
SLA	second language acquisition

# Theoretical part

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of learning a foreign language is mainly to be able to communicate, both orally and in written form, although in my thesis it is principally the oral communication that I have in mind. To be able to communicate does not mean only the ability to structure a sentence – a statement, a question, or an answer, but to achieve communicative competence. Marianne Celce-Murcia (1995) presents a model of communicative competence that comprises five interrelated parts – discourse competence, sociocultural competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, and strategic competence which in her scheme surrounds, and incircles the other competencies. She also emphasizes the importance of “lexico-grammatical building blocks” that belong to more than one area, specifically in actional and discourse competencies.

The “lexico-grammatical building blocks” or chunks play a very important role in spoken as well as written English. The corpus research shows that people tend to group individual words and use these sequences of words as single units. The presence of these expressions in natural language is so common that “the idiom principle .... may be the basic organizing principle in language production” (McCarthy 1990, 11). It also implies that teachers of English should not focus only on teaching their students individual words, but also on recurring fixed forms, the chunks. The approach to foreign language teaching that places emphasis on the knowledge of multi-

word chunks calls Michael Lewis the Lexical Approach. As he explains in his book (1993), this approach emphasizes lexis because it carries more meaning than grammatical structure. It "... develops many of the fundamental principles advanced by proponents of Communicative Approaches. The most important difference is the increased understanding of the nature of lexis in naturally occurring language, and its potential contribution to language pedagogy." According to this approach "language is not analyzed in terms of sentence-level grammatical structures and the vocabulary items that are slotted into them ... language is considered to comprise prefabricated expressions and phrases, usually referred to as lexical units or chunks" (Racine 2018).

Despite these theories, the usual practice adopted by most English teachers which focuses on two areas – grammar and vocabulary – often prevails. Students learn about the structure of sentences in which to slot particular words. But although the knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary greatly helps us to express our thoughts, to voice what we think we want to say and what we think our message is, it does not always get the message across. Because native speakers use thousands of ready phrases apt for particular situations and if students of the language are not acquainted with them, their speech sounds unnatural, and they can even be misunderstood. Widdowson (1990) illustrates this problem through the distinction between the two terms - usage and use. By the knowledge of language usage, we can demonstrate our knowledge of the language system. We manifest that we can construct a correct sentence. But in daily life we mainly use the language for some communicative purpose, we speak with some intention. For this purpose, the knowledge of language

usage is not sufficient. We need to know the rules of language use. Language usage is more like the written form of the language. But if the language resembling the written form is being introduced and emphasized in language classrooms, the speech of learners tends to be very unnatural.

Widdowson (1989, 135) also claims that

communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as and when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual standards.

To acquire the rules of use, the knowledge of many such formulaic expressions is necessary. Another reason is that we do not communicate only the “content” of our sentences but also a social message, and a social attitude. By using “correct” words but words not suitable or usual for the occasion we might send a wrong or even harmful message.

The ability to use fixed or semi-fixed phrases not only helps learners to sound more native-like, but it has also a positive psychological effect on them. Almost every learner of the English language is aware of his or her limited abilities to express their thoughts in the proper way. Knowing the right phrase for a particular situation greatly enhances the speaker’s self-confidence. These expressions often include

structures that the learner would not be able to construct with his or her current knowledge – they are either too complex or idiomatic – so being able to use such expressions the learner realizes his English reaches a higher level and he or she feels more comfortable and confident in using the language. Moreover, real communication often includes expressions of attitude or emotion. Thanks to the capability to use suitable lexical phrases this kind of communication can be carried out even by beginners or students on a very low English level.

However, there is increasing recognition of the importance of knowing lexical phrases among scholars and teachers of English in the last decades. The research, based on corpora, lists thousands of formulaic expressions that are used by native speakers of English. Some of these expressions were included in English textbooks and became part of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the question of which of these many phrases should become part of English textbooks persists. Apart from the criteria of the most frequent phrases according to the corpora (the number of them being still very high) I suggest another criterion in my thesis. This second criterion is motivated by the ease of remembering by students. I present some research that shows the influence of alliteration and assonance on better memorization of lexical phrases by students of English. In the practical part of my thesis, I examine four English textbooks regarding the number of lexical phrases contained and the proportion of lexical phrases that alliterate or assonate.

## 2 What I mean by the term lexical phrase

The term “lexical phrase” which I chose to use in my thesis firstly emphasizes lexis as opposed to grammar and, secondly, the word “phrase” implies a string of words that are usually said in a particular situation or/and have a particular function in communication. They also display a certain level of fixity. The “content” of the term lexical phrase in my conception is rather broad. From my point of view, the term lexical phrase subsumes all types of well-established lexical combinations or formulaic expressions characterized by specific aspects mentioned above. However, the variability of such formulaic expressions is so high that there is a problem with their categorization, and what is more, it is not always possible to draw a sharp line among individual categories in case they are specified.

### 2.1 Categories of formulaic language

Let me first present a rather standard categorization of formulaic language.

#### 2.1.1 Idioms

A special category of formulaic language is represented by idioms. They are characterized by a considerably fixed structure, a small range of variability, and specific behavior in language use. The distinctive feature of idioms is that their meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of their parts. Thus, A Dictionary of Stylistics defines an Idiom as follows: “... idioms most usually denote phrases or strings of words which are idiosyncratic (idiomatic) in that they are language-specific, not easi-

ly translated into another language and in that their meaning is not easily determined from the meaning of their constitutive parts” (1994, 231). For example, we cannot arrive at the sense of the idiom *to spill the beans* (to reveal a secret) from understanding its parts. But there are idioms that contain one word with a literal meaning and the other with a special, often metaphorical, connotation. An example of such a ‘semi-opaque idiom’ is *foot the bill* (pay the bill) where the word *foot* has a figurative and the word *bill* has a literal meaning. On the other hand, some idioms are relatively transparent. For instance, the idiom ‘*to see the light*’ which means to understand. Most of the students would probably guess its meaning, especially if encountered in a context.

#### 2.1.1.1 Using idioms accurately

Some idioms are more grammatically fixed than others. An example of an idiom that is grammatically restricted to a very high degree is the informal idiom ‘*like it or lump it*’ meaning accept the situation as it is because it cannot be changed. We can put the idiom at the beginning of a sentence and say: *Like it or lump it, we must pay the debt.* Or we can say: *This is all he is going to get, and he can like it or lump it.* But the idiom itself must stay unchanged. Some idioms are a little bit more flexible. For instance, the idiom *to bite the dust* means to die. It is possible to say *he bit the dust* or *it would have probably bitten the dust* or *they are all biting the dust now* but expressions *he deserves dust-biting* or *he bit some dust* are not acceptable (McCarthy 1990, 6). As the author of the Oxford dictionary of current idiomatic English points out, the variability of an idiom can vary both in kind and degree. This fact is demonstrated in the idiom *burn one’s boats*. The verb *burn* can be used in many of the pos-



sible tenses while the noun boats can be used only in the plural. Moreover, the word boats can be substituted for the word bridges, but not for example the word ships (Cowie 1991). For this reason, “it is probably best to think of idioms as revealing degrees of idiomaticity in respect of opaqueness and grammatical fixity” (Wales 1989, 231). Considering the unique variability of each idiom in the sense of its degree of grammatical and lexical fixity, the ability to use idioms accurately is viewed as a mark of native-like command of the English language.

### 2.1.2 Collocations

Collocations are usually defined as combinations of words that frequently occur together. Thus, there are no general syntactic or semantic rules which could be applied to them, and every learner of English if he or she wants to produce natural-sounding speech or writing must learn these special word combinations by heart. For example, we consider the words *little* and *small* virtually as synonyms, but we say *small fortune* (in the sense of a quite large amount of money) and never *little fortune*.

Collocations are usually considered to lie somewhere between idioms and free word combinations what concerns their fixedness as well as their semantics. Idioms, as stated previously, are highly fixed expressions in form, and their meaning as a whole cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual constituents. Free word combinations that lie on the other end of the scale, have the property that each word can be replaced by another without any restrictions as far as the text or speech makes sense. Besides, if we omit a word from any free word combination, it becomes extremely difficult for a reader to infer this missing word from the remaining

ones. Individual words in collocations contribute to the overall semantics of such word combinations. We have also usually more options while deciding which collocate to use with a particular word. In this sense, collocations enable us to be more accurate in expressing our ideas. For example, we can say:

We went to a good restaurant and had a good meal there.

But we can be more precise and tell:

We went to an excellent French restaurant and had a delicious four-course meal there.

However, collocations can be also ranged on a kind of cline (Oxford Collocations dictionary for students of English 2003) from a fairly 'weak' collocation *see a film* (which elementary students learn as a 'chunk' without pausing to reflect that this is not quite the literal meaning of see) through the 'medium strength' *see a doctor* to the 'stronger' collocations *see danger/reason/the point*.

Knowledge of such combinations of words is essential for the communicative competence of learners of the English language.

### 2.1.3 Phrasal verbs

The phenomenon of phrasal verbs is considered to be one of the most characteristic features of the English language and one of the most difficult to master by its learners at the same time. Phrasal verbs consist of two, occasionally three, components – a verb and at least one particle which is usually an adverb or a preposition.

Sometimes, phrasal verbs are regarded as part of a group of idioms. However, their idiomaticity varies which illustrate these sentences (Vodička 1992):

I must wear a belt to hold my trousers up.

Look at these bills! I have been held up again!

The meaning of the first sentence is easy to grasp by English learners, however, for understanding the second sentence any learner of the English language must know the idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb *hold up*. These sentences also demonstrate the fact that some phrasal verbs can be used in more senses. Here are examples of three phrasal verbs' structures:

*I have been looking for my keys all morning.* (verb + preposition)

*I looked up the word in the dictionary.* (verb + adverb)

*He looks down on other people.* (verb + adverb + preposition)

#### 2.1.4 Proverbs

Proverbs are usually whole sentences that summarise people's experiences or wisdom. They give advice or warn, provide instruction or explain and communicate common experiences and observations (Wood 2015, 47). They are succinct and usually easy to remember which makes them a very useful tool for communication. Their quotability is also enhanced by the fact that they almost always occur in mutually contradictory pairs (Simon 1946)! Considering practically opposite proverbs

*Look before you leap* and *He who hesitates is lost* we must admit that their usage is remarkably flexible and therefore we must take their advice with a grain of salt. Other examples of proverbs are:

Better late than never.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

It is better to be safe than sorry.

Actions speak louder than words.

The early bird catches the worm.

### 2.1.5 Metaphors

“In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kövecses 2010). For example, when we speak about life, we often liken it to a journey. We use expressions such as *to go far in life*, *to be without direction in life*, *to reach the end of the road*, *to be at a crossroads*, or *to get a good start*. So, we use expressions taken from the domain of journey when thinking about an abstract domain of life. These phrases Kövecses terms metaphorical linguistic expressions whereas the phrase *Life is a journey* he calls conceptual metaphor. According to Wood (2015) metaphors consist of a so-called *vehicle*, which is the part we cannot understand literally – for example crossroads, the end of the road, a good start, or direction – then a *topic* which in our case is life and finally the *grounds* which are the analogies or shared features be-

tween the topic and the vehicle. Thus, in the metaphor *life is a highway*, life is the topic, the highway is the vehicle and grounds are the analogy between the passing of time and covering of distance. In a similar way, we liken life to a journey, we associate arguments with wars or ideas with food, and so on:

*He attacked every weak point in my argument.*

*All this paper has in it are raw facts, half-baked ideas, and warmed-over theories.*

*You are the apple of my eye.*

*He is a walking Encyclopaedia.*

### 2.1.6 Clichés

Clichés are phrases or sentences usually expressing a popular or common thought that were upon their inception new and original but through repetition and overuse became mundane and unimaginative. Nevertheless, they are an important part of communication as well. “They enable the speaker to express his or her thoughts concisely and vividly, provide the utterance with a meaning which would be difficult if not impossible to achieve by other means (Karpova 2010). Nattinger (2009) defines clichés by putting them in contrast to idioms. They are – like idioms – relatively frozen, but unlike idioms, their patterns usually consist of larger stretches of language and their meaning is possible to derive from the constituents. These are a few examples of clichés:

*All for one, and one for all.*

*There is no doubt about it.*

*Accidents will (or do) happen.*

*Add insult to injury.*

### 2.1.7 Binomials (Trinomials)

Binomials are sequences of two words (in the case of trinomials there are three words) that are tight together semantically and syntactically. The link between these words is usually *and*. As idioms and collocations, they can be also ranged on a kind of scale that concerns their “frozenness”. There are binomials that are irreversible, for example, *odds and ends*, *by and large*, *north and south*, but there exist also reversible binomials as *honest and stupid* or *slowly and thoughtfully* (Benor 2006).

### 2.1.8 Exclamations

Exclamations are regarded as one of the sentence types, beside statements, questions, or commands. They follow their own grammatical rules. For example, we consider these sentences to be exclamations: *The dinner was fantastic!* or *What beautiful flowers I got!* However, in my thesis, I am interested in the kind of exclamations that are mostly short and idiomatical. As with all exclamations, they show strong emotions, such as surprise (It’s amazing!), shock (How incredible!), rejection (No way!), agreement (Absolutely!), etc.

### 2.1.9 Gambits, discourse markers, and other phrases

Gambits are “conversational strategy signals” (Keller 2011). These are regular phrases we use when starting a conversation, closing it, joining it, when we want to change the topic, let the other person speak, etc. As Eric Keller (2011) puts it:

The polished conversationalist is a familiar figure. He breaks smoothly into conversation, picks up the thread effortlessly, holds his listeners enthralled as he develops his point, and then elegantly bows out of the conversation.

Although this might be a rather exaggerated description, to be such a perfect conversationalist requires probably other qualities, the knowledge of these phrases enables the speaker to lead a conversation or a dialogue fluently and coherently.

Examples of gambits are:

*Excuse me for interrupting, but...*

*You may not believe this, but...*

*By the way...*

*May I ask something?*

*Anyway, ...*

Discourse markers, as Bruce Fraser (1999) defines them, are lexical expressions that signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. They are drawn primarily from the syntactic

classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. Among discourse markers, we include expressions such as *however*, *nevertheless*, *in spite of this*, *so*, *essentially*, *furthermore*, *thus*. They are an important part of written, as well as spoken communication, as they provide it with coherence, logic, and fluency.

The categories listed above are not at all exhaustive. These are the categories I decided to distinguish and describe as I consider them typical examples of formulaic language with which most people with an interest in the English language are acquainted. However, researchers often set their own categories of formulaic language. In my thesis, I would like to present two of such categorizations.

## 2.2 Lexical phrases according to Nattinger and DeCarrico

Nattinger and DeCarrico in their book *Lexical Phrases and language teaching* (2009) divide language into three main groups: (1) Syntactic strings which are generated by syntactic competence, (2) Collocations which are strings of specific lexical items such as *rancid butter*, and (3) Lexical phrases which are collocations, such as *how do you do* and *for example* that have been assigned pragmatic functions. These they describe further according to their structural and functional criteria into four categories. Phrases belonging to all four categories can be either canonical or non-canonical, canonical meaning conforming to syntactic rules and non-canonical meaning phrases which albeit follow the general syntactic rules, but are non-compositional in meaning, e.g. *off with his head* or *as it were*. The other criteria are the length and grammatical status, variability as opposed to fixedness, and continuousness or dis-



continuousness which means whether the phrase is an unbroken sequence of words or not. The four categories of lexical phrases are:

*Polywords* are short phrases functioning very much like individual lexical items. They can be both canonical and non-canonical and are invariable and continuous.

Examples: *what on earth?, at any rate, in a nutshell, by the way, you know, by and large, as it were, so far so good*

*Institutionalized expressions*, which are proverbs, aphorisms, formulas of social interaction, and other chunks stored by the speaker as units. They are of sentence length, usually separate utterances, mostly canonical, invariable, and mostly continuous.

Examples: *nice meeting you, give me a break, be that as it may, there you go*

*Phrasal constraints*, which are short to medium phrases. They can be both canonical and non-canonical, allow variation, and are mostly continuous.

Examples: a \_\_\_\_ ago (day, year, moment), as I was \_\_\_\_\_ (saying, mentioning), good \_\_\_\_ (morning, evening), see you \_\_\_\_\_ (soon, later), as far as I \_\_\_\_\_ (know, can tell)

*Sentence builders*, which are lexical phrases that provide the framework for whole sentences. They can be also both canonical and non-canonical, are variable, and can be continuous but are often discontinuous.

Examples: I think (that) X, not only X, but also Y, my point is that X, let me start by/with X, that reminds me of X, the \_\_\_\_er X, the \_\_\_\_er Y

However, as the authors mention in their text (ibid:46), there are no sharp boundaries among the individual categories.

## 2.3 Situation-bound utterances (SBUs)

There is a particular type of formulaic expression that Istvan Kecskés termed Situation-bound utterances (SBUs). As their name implies, they are phrases closely connected with the situation in which they are uttered. In other words, in everyday conversation, we tend to use phrases that firstly, we do not put together every time but just use as a whole, and secondly, we use the expressions that fit our current situation. To put it in Istvan Kecskés' own words: "SBUs are highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations" (2000). Kecskés further classifies SBUs according to their relationship to the communicative situation they are used in. SBUs can be either 'plain' or 'loaded' or 'charged' by the situation (2000):

*Plain SBUs* are semantically transparent which means that their communicative meaning is the same or almost the same as their semantic meaning. It demonstrates this short conversation:

*What can I do for you?*

I need a book of stamps.

Jim, is that you?

Oh, hi Bill. *It's so good to see you.*

*Loaded SBUs* are frequently used SBUs such as greetings, closings, apologies, and other rituals that become easily delexicalized. So, they are 'loaded' with a relatively new function that remains with them regardless of the present situation. Their occurrence is strongly tied to conventional, frequently repeated situations. Therefore, when we hear expressions such as *Welcome aboard* or *Help yourself*, we connect them with a particular situation even if we do not know the instant context in which they are uttered.

*Charged SBUs* exhibit pragmatic ambiguity. Their basic semantic function is extended pragmatically. When we hear them in no context, we cannot distinguish them from their freely generated counterparts. The situation 'charges' them so they cover other referents or meanings. Kecskés shows it in the expression *get out of here*. Depending on the context, the meaning of this phrase can be either 'go away, leave' (1) or 'do not fool me, do not put me down' (2). Put it in context, it becomes clear what function the expression has:

*Get out of here.* I do not want to see you anymore.

John, I think you really deserved that money.

*Oh, get out of here.*

The acquisition of SBUs by English learners requires their knowledge of the socio-cultural background of this language as their use is governed by pragmatic rather than syntactic rules.

## 3 Research on formulaic language from a historical perspective

### 3.1 Research on formulaic language

The research on formulaic language itself was at first often conducted outside the linguistic area. It was for example M. Parry in the 1920s and 1930s who turned his attention to formulaic language in his study of epic sung poetry. There were anthropologists and folklorists who studied languages of various cultures and noticed formulaic expressions in everyday speech, magical incantations, or child language play. In the 1960s philosophers and sociologists during the study of everyday communication focused more and more on the use of routine utterances accomplishing speech acts. In the late 1960s, the first studies of fluent speech implied a possible role that formulaic language plays in fluency, giving the speech also a certain pace and rhythm. (Pawley 2007 quoted by Wood 2015).

Formulaic language research became more intensive in the 1970s. Linguists began to focus on different areas of the field, e.g., they gathered information about multiword chunks themselves, examined speech acts, or devoted themselves to the study of pragmatics. The study of spoken discourse was greatly influenced by John McHardy Sinclair.

With the corpora coming into existence, research on formulaic language got another dimension. By means of the data from large corpora, linguists were able to examine real language – spoken or written – and seek formulaic sequences in it. One

of the most important figures in corpus linguistics was above mentioned John McHardy Sinclair who was a Professor of Modern English Language at Birmingham University from 1965 to 2000. He held the opinion that language should be studied in naturally occurring contexts of use and also attached importance to lexis, namely lexical units larger than a word. This thought is central to Sinclair's work - *Trust the Text* (2004). With his approach, Sinclair belonged to the so-called Firthian tradition. John Rupert Firth (1890 – 1960) was an English linguist who is known for his famous quotation: “You shall know a word by the company it keeps” (1957, 11). Charles J. Fillmore, who was an American linguist and Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1971 to 1994, also emphasized the importance of corpus data and believed that every word in a dictionary should be linked to an example sentence from the corpora. This idea he implemented in the project called *FrameNet* – an online structured description of the English lexicon – which he started at the International Computer Science Institute.

Apart from Nattinger, DeCarrico, and István Keskész mentioned in chapters [2.2](#) and [2.3](#), many other scholars have conducted research on formulaic language. These include for example Alison Wray and David Wood.

Alison Wray – a Research Professor in Language and Communication at Cardiff University – contributed significantly to the discussion on formulaic language. In her two books, *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon* (2002) and *Formulaic Language – Pushing the Boundaries* (2008) she seeks answers to many questions concerning this phenomenon. She asks not only about the identification and nature of formulaic language, but also for example about its possible role in learning another

language or in the communication of persons with language disorders. She also examines for instance if formulaic language constrains what we say and what we think, or to what extent should we use formulaic language when teaching language to computers.

David Wood, currently a Director of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies at Carleton University, has written three books and many articles about formulaic language, which is his main research interest. He examines this “elusive phenomenon” as he calls it (2015) from different perspectives. He is interested in the role formulaic language plays in facilitating speech fluency, spoken communication, second language acquisition, or corpus analysis. Teacher education belongs also to his field of expertise.

### 3.2 Formulaic language and second language acquisition

Hints on the formulaic language and its role in foreign/second language acquisition appeared during the 1970s mainly in connection with the research on fluent speech.

In 1978 Stephen Krashen and Robin Scarcella published an article titled *On Routines and Patterns in Language Acquisition and Performance* which they conclude with the assertion that the use of routines and patterns may be useful for the second language, not yet very competent acquirers in case of conversational demands, and also in establishing and maintaining relations. However, they did not

think routines and patterns play a primary role in language acquisition and performance (Krashen 1978).

Wood (2015, 14-15) makes a brief account of research concerning child as well as adult language acquisition with a focus on formulaic language. The role of formulaic language in the first language acquisition of children was examined for example by Lily Wong Fillmore in the 1970s and later by A. M. Peters in the 1980s. Wray and Perkins, in 2000, distinguished four stages in which children use formulaic language during first language acquisition in different ways. At first, they extract multiword sequences as a whole without analysis, then the analytic stage comes when grammar and vocabulary are perceived. In the next stage, there is a fusion of sequences and the use of processing shortcuts that is finally followed by a kind of balance which though favours holistic processing and only exceptionally analytic processing.

With regard to the adult language acquisition and usage of formulaic language, Wood concludes from the research of Carlos A. Yorio, Richard W. Schmidt, Nick C. Ellis, and Maria Bolander that adult learners in natural L2 environments tend to acquire and use formulaic sequences similarly to children. However, adults' route to language acquisition generally, especially concerning the use of formulaic sequences, is influenced by many factors. Therefore, some adults are more analytic and tend to infer rules from language chunks while others rely on language chunks as a whole and do not attempt to break them.

A great amount of research has been done and published from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the topic of formulaic language and foreign/second language acquisition. Apart from those already mentioned above, such as Alison Wray or David Wood, there are many more scholars who are interested in the topic. The state-of-the-art account of different aspects of the formulaic language provides publication with the title *Understanding Formulaic Language: A Second Language Acquisition Perspective* published in 2019. This book contains texts of the leading researchers in this field who deal with the acquisition, processing, and use of formulaic language as an L2, viewed from three perspectives – cognitive and psycholinguistic, socio-cultural and pragmatic, and finally pedagogical.

Proponents of insightful chunk learning are also Seth Lindstromberg and Frank Boers. They consider it important to firstly draw learners' attention to formulaic sequences, secondly to stimulate their interest in this phenomenon with the help of special dictionaries and corpora, and finally to help learners to memorize these formulaic sequences. However, conscious of the huge amount of various language chunks which learners of English might need to acquire and the difficulty in choosing which of these expressions to include in the learning process, they propose the third criterion - after the frequency and utility – and that is the phonological phenomena such as alliteration and assonance.



## 4 Alliteration, assonance, and foreign language acquisition

### 4.1 Alliteration

Alliteration is generally described as the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighbouring words. Other terms for alliteration are *head rhyme* or *initial rhyme*. The online *YourDictionary* defines alliteration in this way: “a literary device in which a series of words begin with the same consonant sound” (Parent). That means that alliterative words do not have to begin with the same letter, but with the same sound. They also do not have to follow each other directly but can be interrupted by one or a few non-alliterative words. This literal device is very common in tongue twisters (*Seven sisters slept soundly on the sand*). In the hope of catching the attention of potential customers, some companies use alliteration in their brand names (*Coca-Cola, Pay-Pal*) and we can also find alliteration in some famous fictional character names (*Mickey Mouse, Peppa Pig, Bob the Builder*). Finally, a lot of lexical phrases also make use of alliteration (Parent). These are for example: *busy as a bee, fit as a fiddle, dead as a doornail, home sweet home, last laugh, make a mountain out of a molehill, money matters, life-long learning, few and far between, good guess, fast food, no news, sink or swim, below the belt, bite the bullet, pick-pocket, wage war, Trick or treat!, stand still, spick and span*.

## 4.2 Assonance

A similar figure of speech to alliteration is assonance. It is also based on the repetition of sounds in adjacent or nearby words. However, in the case of assonance, it is a vowel sound that is repeated. One of the definitions of assonance reads as follows: “Assonance is a literary device in which the repetition of similar vowel sounds takes place in two or more words in proximity to each other within a line of poetry or prose. Assonance most often refers to the repetition of internal vowel sounds in words that do not end the same” (“Definition of Assonance”). The repeating sounds in assonance can occur anywhere in the word, whereas in the case of alliteration it must be either in the first syllables of the words or on the stressed syllables of the words. Many lexical phrases use assonance as well:

- *After a while, crocodile*
- *Motion of the ocean*
- *Goodnight, sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite.*
- *When the cat's away, the mice will play.*
- *In great shape*
- *It is safe to say.*

Both alliteration and assonance belong to figures of speech that are utilized by many poets. They give their poems melody and rhythm. They make them more interesting and memorable. The same can be said about lexical phrases featuring these literary devices.

### 4.3 The role of Alliteration and Assonance

We are probably all aware of the fact that texts that rhyme are more memorable than texts which do not. The children's poetry is the evidence. With regard to the fact that alliteration and assonance are also two kinds of sound repetition, Lindstromberg and Boers explore the possibilities of using the mnemonic effect of these two figures of speech in second language acquisition (SLA). The next motive is their finding that alliteration in lexical chunks is very common. They estimate that "no fewer than 17% of the entries in the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms show some type of alliteration (Boers 2005).

Lindstromberg and Boers carry out experiments that examine if phonological phenomena such as alliteration can facilitate the recall of multi-word expressions. Their results, however tentative, show that phrases which alliterate are more memorable than phrases that do not have any salient phonological pattern.

In the article *The Mnemonic Effect of Noticing Alliteration in Lexical Chunks* (Lindstromberg 2008a) they describe three of their experiments. In experiment 1 they try to verify that phrases containing alliteration are more memorable for L2 learners than phrases without this literal device. This premise was proved, however with the suggestion that some mental operation is needed which prompts the mnemonic effect of alliteration. In experiment 2 they explore the possibility that learners of English are more likely to notice chunks that alliterate. This experiment showed that students are not likely to notice alliteration on their own but need some pointing out by a teacher. Finally, based on the result of experiment 2, experiment 3 "assesses the ef-

fect on the recall of alliterative chunks of very brief teacher-led noticing of the phonemic/orthographic repetition involved” (Lindstromberg 2008a). The “tentative” conclusion of this last experiment suggests that even the occasional, brief notice by a teacher to alliteration in phrases is worth the effort.

Assonance is also a common feature of English idioms (*pave the way, false dawn, jump the gun*) as well as English binomials (*cakes and ale, cut and run, the cut and thrust of, all mouth and trousers*). Although it is considered a less salient phonemic feature than alliteration, the experiment described in the article *Phonemic repetition and the Learning of lexical chunks: The power of assonance* (Lindstromberg 2008b) indicates that assonance has a marked mnemonic effect as well.

## Practical part

### 5 Methodology of textbook analysis

#### 5.1 Research questions

The research questions of the practical part of this thesis are: How many lexical phrases are presented to students in the four examined English textbooks? (1), What proportion of these lexical phrases show alliteration or assonance? (2), and finally, Is there any difference in the occurrence of alliteration and assonance among the various categories of lexical phrases? (3)

#### 5.2 Criteria for including a lexical phrase in the study

For the purpose of this study, only lexical phrases which are presented to students deliberately as part of a curriculum are considered. Lexical phrases which appear incidentally in texts are not taken into account. The reason is as follows. Reading texts are included in textbooks mainly for students to note the gist of the text, not to analyze it. Therefore, students are not likely to learn and memorize phrases they read in such a text. However, phrases that were highlighted and connected with further tasks were counted. Also, lexical phrases included in an exercise even if this exercise is not focused on them are taken into account. In this case, it is assumed that students are likely to notice the formulaic expression during the work on the exercise.

As chapters 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 illustrate, the categorization of formulaic language can vary. What is more, it is also often difficult to decide if a particular expression should be considered as a “syntactic string which is generated by syntactic competence” (Nattinger and DeCarrico 1992) or as a phrase. In other words, are the individual words of an expression put together with the help of syntactic rules, or are they stored in the speaker's mind as a language chunk? In short, is a particular combination of words formulaic or not?

Identifying the lexical phrases in English textbooks was more difficult than I expected and as I later found out this was a vexing issue more researchers were trying to solve, with various conclusions. One example of the criteria for chunks' identification is based on Peters (1983, 1985) and Weinert (1995):

1. at least two morphemes at length;
2. phonologically coherent, that is fluently articulated, non-hesitant;
3. unrelated to productive patterns in the learners' speech;
4. greater complexity in comparison with the learners' other input;
5. used repeatedly and always in the same form;
6. may be inappropriate (syntactically, semantically, or pragmatically) or otherwise idiosyncratic;
7. situationally dependent;
8. community-wide in use.

These criteria are generally true although, in my opinion, every criterion is not applicable in all instances. For example, formulaic expressions are not always used

in the same form. There are some fixed expressions such as “be that as it may”, but there is a vast number of semi-fixed expressions as well. They usually work as patterns in which we slot suitable words. With regard to the last criterion “community-wide in use”, I think some formulas are not used very often, but we consider them as formulas all the same. Language is also not static and while some formulaic expressions might be popular and commonly used at one time period, they can be replaced by other phrases in the next time period.

As can be seen above, there do not exist unambiguous rules for lexical phrases’ identification. Nevertheless, the goal of the practical part of my thesis is the comparison of English textbooks. Therefore, I consider it important to apply the same principles during analyzing each of these textbooks to be able to make such a comparison.

The principles I observed while identifying lexical phrases are as follows:

- I bore in mind to include all lexical phrases which I could clearly assign to one of the categories from chapter 2.1, that is idioms, collocations, phrasal verbs, proverbs, metaphors, clichés, binomials, exclamations, etc.
- A lot of expressions I classified as collocations. However, the border between collocation and a free word combination is not always clear. Again, the issue of defining criteria for formulaicity comes back and it is a question of great complexity, especially with regard to collocations, as their fixedness varies. When hesitant if a particular word combination to consider as a collocation, I used the software Sketch Engine and its section called “Word Sketch - Collocations and Word Combinations”. Here, I examined the frequency of occurrence of this word

combination in BNC (British National Corpus). If a word combination in question appeared in this section, I included it in my list.

- The difficulties also came when I encountered a word sequence or a whole sentence that I could not easily label as an idiom, metaphor, proverb, etc. If we imagine a scale illustrating the fixedness of word combinations, there will be fixed idioms like *It is raining cats and dogs* on one end and general free word combinations like *Jane had a bowl of cornflakes for breakfast* at the other end. A lot of expressions, however, lie somewhere between these two ends with variable fixedness. When in the dilemma if a certain string of words I should regard as a lexical phrase or not, I applied several methods to come to the conclusion. Firstly, I looked at how a particular expression is presented to students. For instance, if the sentence “Did you have a good journey?” was part of an exercise focused on holding a conversation with a visitor, I considered it a lexical phrase (or an institutionalized expression or SBU, see chapters [2.2](#) and [2.3](#)) and usually classified it as an “other phrase”. I assumed that learners thus tend to memorize and retain the sentence as a chunk. In case the same sentence was included in an exercise for practicing the formation of questions in the past simple tense, I took it as a free combination of words. However, the boundary between habit and rule has never been clear, as Nattinger and DeCarico (1992, 35) express when they write about the part which patterned phrases play in language.
- Nevertheless, my final decision if a word combination is collocational or not was often taken rather intuitively. The reason is that it is usually a question of each L2 learner if he or she holds a particular word combination in mind as a whole chunk or as separate words put together. What is more, the L1 of learners also plays its



role. Some L2 word combinations have their equivalent in L1 and some have not. I presume that the latter ones tend to be learned as whole chunks because they cannot be translated directly from L1.

- Compound words were also included in my lists of lexical phrases although they are not “phrases” in the true sense of the word. I consider compound words as special combinations of words similar to collocations.
- Phrasal verbs, as I mentioned in chapter 2.1.3, are sometimes regarded as idioms. The reason for this is probably that their meaning is, similarly to idioms, not possible to deduce from the meaning of their constituents. Nevertheless, I listed the phrasal verbs separately.
- I decided to put Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, and Clichés in one group as it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between these expressions and there is no great importance in doing so for the purpose of this thesis.
- I included in the list of lexical phrases also a category of so-called Sentence builders. This category is defined by Nattinger and DeCarico (1992) as “lexical phrases that provide the framework for whole sentences” and they are often “discontinuous”. They are phrases into which a learner can slot various words or expressions to create a whole sentence. These phrases are of great help to English learners thanks to their variability and therefore multiple utilization. Their discontinuity and length, however, cause difficulties in deciding if they contain alliteration and assonance or not. I am addressing this issue in the next chapter.

### 5.3 Which lexical phrases contain alliteration or assonance

I encountered difficulties not only during the identification of lexical phrases but also during deciding if a particular phrase contains alliteration or assonance. The decision was usually simpler in the case of alliteration. The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (Cuddon 1992) defines alliteration as “a figure of speech in which consonants, especially at the beginning of words, or stressed syllables, are repeated.” Therefore, if I met the collocation *a fillet of fish*, or the phrase *I can't make up my mind* I identified as alliterative. However, the above definition also implies that alliterative consonants do not have to be always at the beginning of words, but happen to be also in other stressed syllables. Nevertheless, for the purpose of my analysis, I did not consider expressions like *get together with*, or *public space* as alliterate. I only considered as alliterate words, in which the repeated consonant sound was at the beginning.

Another issue that concerns both alliteration and assonance is when the same words appear in a phrase, for example *as far as I can see...* This is an illustration of repetition, not alliteration or assonance.

Another problem I dealt with that concerned both figures of speech was the problem of the closeness of alliterative/assonant words. The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (Cuddon 1992) says that assonance “consists of the repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually close together, to achieve a particular effect of euphony”. So, the proximity in which alliterative/assonant words should be is not exactly defined. Generally, I took into account words that were part of one sentence or phrase.

## 5.4 Lexical phrases, collocations, and pragmatic function

Another feature that Nattinger and DeCaprio assign to lexical phrases is their pragmatic function. Therefore, the knowledge of lexical phrases contributes to the pragmatic competence of English learners. It means that lexical phrases have many different functions in discourse, for example, shifting topic (*by the way*), summarizing (*in a nutshell*), giving advice (*if I were you*), greeting (*how do you do*), or parting (*have a nice day*) to name just a few. Specific function in communication is what Istvan Kecskés attributes to SBUs, see chapter [2.3](#). Nattinger and DeCaprio do not classify collocations as lexical phrases, because according to them, they do not possess particular pragmatic functions. Collocations are just “strings of specific lexical items, . . . , that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance” (1992, 36). In spite of this, I included collocations in my research, because I regard the ability to use collocations as something which greatly contributes to the native-like sound of the language.

## 6 Analysis of four English textbooks

Originally, I was going to analyze only three English textbooks that were intended for students aged 12 to 16 of approximately the same level of English, that is B1 (A2-B2 according to Oxford University Press) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These textbooks are: *English Plus 4: Student's Book*, *Project Fourth Edition 5*, and *English File Intermediate: Student's Book*. I wanted to find out to what extent each of the three English text-

books implies the lexical approach in the teaching-learning process it presents. Nevertheless, during my examination of these textbooks, I decided to add another textbook to my research which is of a different English level. I wanted to assess whether the quantity of lexical phrases presented to students varies in textbooks for diverse English levels. Specifically, I wanted to find out if the amount of presented phrases increases with a higher level of English. To answer this question, I included also the English textbook *English File Advanced: Student's Book* in my research.

Therefore, I am to present two kinds of comparisons. First, I will present the quantitative analysis of three English textbooks which are determined for young learners of approximately the same level of English, and then, I will compare two English textbooks of the same publishing house but aimed at students of different levels of English.

The identified lexical phrases in all four textbooks I divided into eight groups: Collocations and Compounds (1), Phrasal verbs (2), Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés (3), Binomials (4), Gambits, Discourse markers (5), Exclamations (6), Other phrases (7) and Sentence builders (8).

## 6.1 English Plus 4: Student's Book

### 6.1.1 Arrangement of the textbook

The book consists of a Starter Unit and eight main Units. Each main Unit has its special topic and is further divided into these parts: Vocabulary, Reading, Vocabulary and Listening, Speaking, and Writing. Chapters called Reading and Vocabulary

and Listening have an additional page labelled Language Focus which is dedicated to grammar. At the end of the book, there are extra sections that can be added to each unit. These are Extra listening and speaking, Curriculum extra, and Culture. Additionally, Units 1, 2, 5, and 6 can be enhanced by a Project, and Units 4 and 8 can be complemented by sections that deal with a piece of English literature.

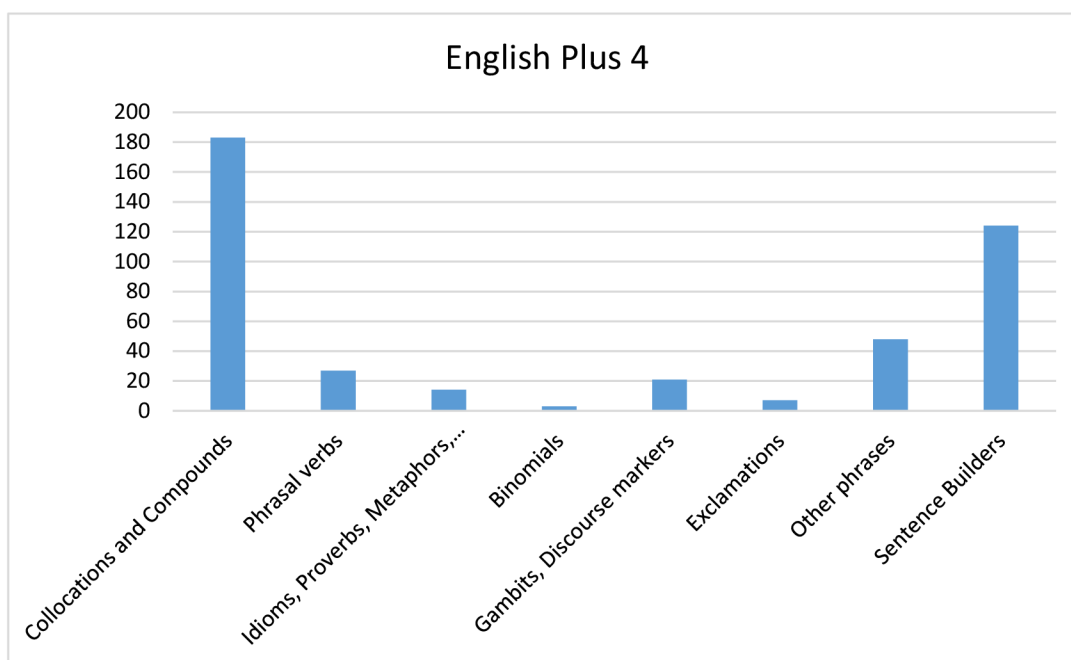
### 6.1.2 Quantitative analysis of the textbook

There are 114 pages with 50 912 words of learning material in this textbook. The number of identified lexical phrases and the number of phrases with alliteration or assonance are shown in the following table and chart. The percentage of phrases with alliteration or assonance is rounded off.

*Table 1: English Plus 4*

<b>English Plus 4</b>			
	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>Collocations and Compounds</b>	183	15 (8 %)	7 (4 %)
<b>Phrasal verbs</b>	27	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés</b>	14	4 (29 %)	3 (21 %)
<b>Binomials</b>	3	1 (33 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Gambits, Discourse markers</b>	21	0 (0 %)	1 (5 %)
<b>Exclamations</b>	7	2 (29 %)	1 (14 %)
<b>Other phrases</b>	48	3 (6 %)	3 (6 %)
<b>Sentence Builders</b>	124	4 (3 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Total</b>	427	29 (7 %)	15 (4 %)

Graph 1: English Plus 4



As can be seen from both the table and the graph, the biggest number of lexical phrases which are presented to students in this textbook constitute Collocations and Compounds, then so-called Sentence builders and Other phrases. Students do not learn many Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, or Clichés yet. 7 % of identified lexical phrases alliterate and 4 % use assonance. The biggest percentage of alliteration is among binomials (33 %) whereas the biggest percentage of assonance is among Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, or Clichés (21 %).

## 6.2 Project 5 Fourth Edition

### 6.2.1 Arrangement of the textbook

The textbook is divided into six Units and a part called Introduction. Each unit has its main general topic. The Unit topics are Problems, The future, Risks, Can I

ask...?, Buying and selling, and Protest. Each unit has got four subparts labelled A, B, C, and D with different subtopics. Furthermore, at the end of every unit, there are sections called Culture, English Across the Curriculum, Revision, and Your Project. At the end of the textbook, there are sections dedicated to Pronunciation and Reading. These two sections are again divided into six parts each belonging to a particular unit. This textbook comprises a great deal of reading texts, a lot of listening exercises, and some grammar.

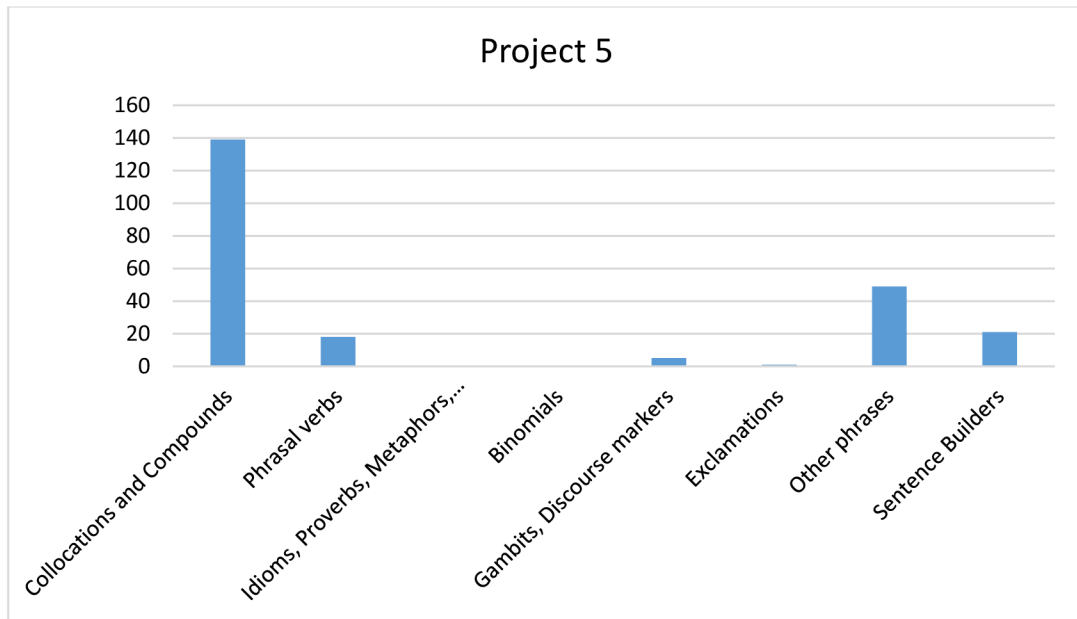
### 6.2.2 Quantitative analysis of the textbook

This textbook is smaller in volume than the previous one, it consists of 60 pages (25 196 words) of learning material. Subsequently, the number of identified lexical phrases is also smaller as demonstrated in the table and chart below.

*Table 2: Project 5*

<b>Project 5</b>			
	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>Collocations and Compounds</b>	139	3 (2 %)	9 (6 %)
<b>Phrasal verbs</b>	18	1 (6 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés</b>	0	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Binomials</b>	0	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Gambits, Discourse markers</b>	6	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Exclamations</b>	1	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Other phrases</b>	49	0 (0 %)	2 (4 %)
<b>Sentence Builders</b>	21	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Total</b>	234	4 (2 %)	11 (5 %)

Graph 2: Project 5



The biggest number of lexical phrases in this textbook also belong to the group called Collocations and Compounds. There is a considerable amount of expressions classified as Other phrases and students are also taught several Sentence builders and Phrasal verbs. However, there are no expressions under the heading Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés, and Binomials. There are very few Gambits and Discourse markers and only one Exclamation which is presented to students. Only 2 % of identified lexical phrases alliterate and 5 % use assonance. The biggest percentage of alliteration is among Phrasal verbs (6 %) whereas the biggest percentage of assonance is among Collocations and Compounds (also 6 %).



## 6.3 English File Intermediate

### 6.3.1 Arrangement of the textbook

The textbook is divided into five units. Each unit has got two parts: A and B with a special topic. For example, the title of unit 1 part A is “Mood food”, and part B is named “Family life”. After the second and fourth units, there are two pages intended for revision called Revise & Check whereas units one, three, and five are followed by sections called Practical English. In every unit, there are exercises focused on various aspects of language, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, and grammar. These exercises often include a link to the back part of the textbook. Here, students can further practice their communication skills, and writing, learn more about grammar (in the so-called grammar bank) or expand their knowledge of vocabulary (in the vocabulary bank).

### 6.3.2 Quantitative analysis of the textbook

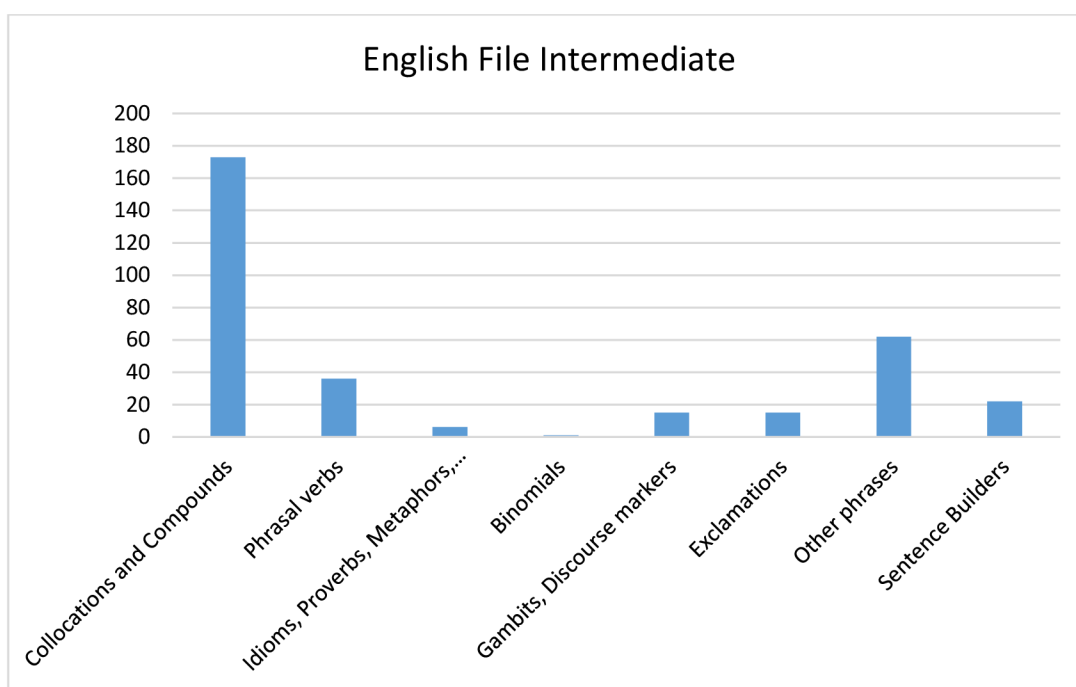
There are 78 pages of learning material in this textbook with 34 551 words. Numbers of various lexical phrases presented to students show the following table and chart.

*Table 3: English File Intermediate*

<b>English File Intermediate</b>			
	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>Collocations and Compounds</b>	173	17 (10 %)	8 (5 %)
<b>Phrasal verbs</b>	36	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

<b>Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés</b>	6	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Binomials</b>	1	1 (100 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Gambits, Discourse markers</b>	15	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Exclamations</b>	15	0 (0 %)	1 (7 %)
<b>Other phrases</b>	62	1 (2 %)	1 (2 %)
<b>Sentence Builders</b>	22	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Total</b>	330	21 (6 %)	10 (3 %)

Graph 3: English File Intermediate



The greatest part of lexical phrases which are students taught belongs to the group Collocations and Compounds (173). There is also a considerable number of Other phrases (62) and Phrasal verbs (36) presented in this textbook. On the other hand, students working with this textbook are not taught many Gambits or Discourse

markers (15) and only a few expressions under the heading Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés (6) are introduced. 6 % of identified lexical phrases alliterate and 3 % use assonance. The biggest percentage of alliteration is among Binomials (100 %). However, this number is distorted by the fact that there was only one binomial. The biggest percentage of assonance is among Exclamations (7 %).

## 6.4 English File Advanced

### 6.4.1 Arrangement of the textbook

This schoolbook contains ten units. Each unit is further divided into two parts – A and B with its own topic implied by the title, for example, Self-portrait, Nice work! (Unit 1). Each lesson includes exercises on various aspects of language such as listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, spelling, or writing. Some of these are often linked to special exercises at the back of the book. These exercises are focused (and titled) on communication, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. After every two units, there is a part for revision called Revise & Check. Additionally, there are five, two-page sections named Colloquial English in the textbook.

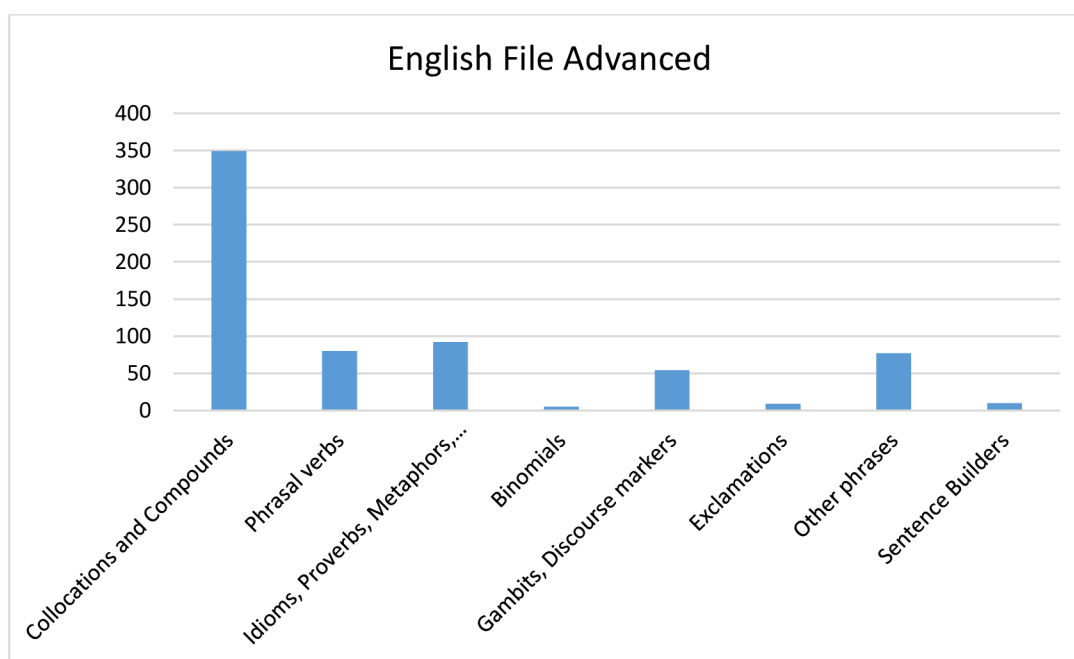
### 6.4.2 Quantitative analysis of the textbook

There are 154 pages (86 561 words) of learning material in this textbook which means it is the biggest volume textbook in my research. The number of identified lexical phrases and the number of phrases with alliteration or assonance are shown in the following table and chart.

Table 4: English File Advanced

<b>English File Advanced</b>			
	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>Collocations and Compounds</b>	349	21 (6 %)	14 (4 %)
<b>Phrasal verbs</b>	80	1 (1 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés</b>	92	5 (5 %)	7 (8 %)
<b>Binomials</b>	5	2 (40 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Gambits, Discourse markers</b>	54	0 (0 %)	1 (2 %)
<b>Exclamations</b>	9	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Other phrases</b>	77	3 (4 %)	1 (1 %)
<b>Sentence Builders</b>	10	1 (10 %)	0 (0 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>32 (5 %)</b>	<b>24 (4 %)</b>

Graph 4: English File Advanced



As can be observed, the greatest number of lexical phrases belong again to the group of Collocations and Compounds. However, it must be noted that students

learning according to this textbook are taught also many expressions under the heading Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés (92), Phrasal verbs (80) as well as Other phrases (77). On the contrary, the number of Binomials, Exclamations, and so-called Sentence builders is low. 5 % of identified lexical phrases alliterate, and 4 % use assonance. The biggest percentage of alliteration is among Binomials (40 %) whereas the biggest percentage of assonance is among Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés (8 %).

## 7 Comparison of English textbooks

In order to compare the amount of lexical phrases presented to students and subsequently the percentage of phrases that make use of alliteration or assonance in each textbook, I related the number of lexical phrases to the total number of words in the textbooks.

### 7.1 Textbooks of the same English level

For this analysis, I chose three textbooks for young learners aged 12 to 16 of approximately the level of English B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These textbooks are English Plus 4: Student's Book, Project 5 Fourth Edition, and English File Intermediate: Student's Book, Fourth edition.

Table 5 shows how many lexical phrases are presented to students in each textbook, specifically, the number of words per one lexical phrase. The smaller number of words per one lexical phrase means a bigger “density” of phrases in a textbook.

*Table 5: Same-level textbooks I*

	<b>Number of words</b>	<b>Number of lexical phrases</b>	<b>Number of words per one lexical phrase</b>
<b>English Plus 4</b>	50 912	427	119
<b>Project 5</b>	25 196	234	107
<b>English File Intermediate</b>	34 551	330	104

Table 6 shows the percentage of alliteration and assonance in identified lexical phrases in each textbook.

*Table 6: Same-level textbooks II*

	<b>Number of lexical phrases</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>English Plus 4</b>	427	29 (7 %)	15 (4 %)
<b>Project 5</b>	234	4 (2 %)	11 (5 %)
<b>English File Intermediate</b>	330	21 (6 %)	10 (3 %)

## 7.2 Textbooks of different English level

For this analysis, I chose the textbooks English File Intermediate and English File Advanced, Student’s Books. The first one is for students of the English level B1 and the second one is for students of the English level B2-C1. Table 7 shows how many lexical phrases are presented to students in each textbook. We can see that more lexical phrases are presented to students working with the book English File Intermediate.

Table 7: Different-level textbooks I

	<b>Number of words</b>	<b>Number of lexical phrases</b>	<b>Number of words per one lexical phrase</b>
<b>English File Intermediate</b>	34 551	330	104
<b>English File Advanced</b>	86 561	676	128

Table 8 demonstrates how many of the lexical phrases are alliterated or assonant.

Table 8: Different-level textbooks II

	<b>Number of lexical phrases</b>	<b>Alliteration</b>	<b>Assonance</b>
<b>English File Intermediate</b>	330	21 (6 %)	10 (3 %)
<b>English File Advanced</b>	676	32 (5 %)	24 (4 %)

## 8 Conclusion

In this thesis, I wanted to find out to what extent four English textbooks employ the so-called lexical approach - the approach to foreign language teaching that places emphasis on the knowledge of multi-word chunks (Lewis 1993). I investigated how many lexical phrases are presented in each of the textbooks and subsequently how many of them are alliterative or assonant.

I found out that the number of lexical phrases presented to students of approximately the same level of English differs. In the book English Plus 4 there was one lexical phrase per 119 pages, in Project 5 there was one lexical phrase per 107 pages and in the textbook English File Intermediate there was one lexical phrase per 104 pages. Therefore, it can be concluded that the English textbook English File Interme-

diate presents students with the biggest number of lexical phrases related to the number of words.

Afterward, I did the same examination with two textbooks for students of different English levels – English File Intermediate and English File Advanced. I found that more lexical phrases were presented to students of a lower level of English. It was one lexical phrase per 104 pages in the case of English File Intermediate compared to one lexical phrase per 128 pages in the case of English File Advanced.

In the second part of my research, I asked how many of the lexical phrases that I identified are alliterative or assonant. I found out that the proportion of alliteration is smaller than estimated by Boers and Lindstromberg (17%), see chapter [4.3](#). The average in all four textbooks was 8 % of phrases in group Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés that alliterate and 9 % that are assonant. However, these numbers are only indicative because of a relatively small number of identified phrases in this group.

The presence of alliteration or assonance in lexical phrases that I identified in examined English textbooks was most likely random. If further research proved that language chunks containing these figures of speech were easier to memorize by students, it would be worth considering intentionally including more such phrases in the curriculum.



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## Appendixes

1. List of lexical phrases – English Plus 4
2. List of lexical phrases – Project 5
3. List of lexical phrases – English File Intermediate
4. List of lexical phrases – English File Advanced

# 1. List of lexical phrases – English Plus 4

## Collocations and Compounds

spend **time online** \_ check your phone \_ update social media profiles \_ share links \_ post comments \_ follow celebrities \_ chat to the other players \_ download and stream music \_ reset password \_ connect to WIFI \_ games console \_ remote control \_ satellite TV \_ **spellchecker** \_ video calling \_ keep souvenirs \_ beg **for food** \_ satellite maps \_ tough plastic container \_ brand new \_ to go rotten \_ memory stick \_ personal message \_ become damaged \_ valuable collection \_ **common objects** \_ popular films \_ spotlight \_ punk movement \_ mainstream fashion \_ fashion trend \_ song lyrics \_ football pitch \_ scorpion venom \_ **computer printer** \_ beauty channel \_ internet celebrities \_ fashion blogger \_ music promoter \_ **hip hop** artist \_ **hip hop** concert \_ shop assistant \_ shop window \_ football match \_ football shirt \_ maths teacher \_ maths exam \_ film star \_ film industry \_ shopping trip \_ shopping centre \_ shopping basket \_ shopping list \_ special offers \_ special effects \_ special event \_ special occasion \_ consumer spending \_ consumer goods \_ consumer rights \_ consumer society \_ shopping frenzy \_ natural resources \_ natural disaster \_ natural gas \_ natural world \_ water pollution \_ water sports \_ water filter \_ water bill \_ social inequality \_ social media \_ social life \_ social issues \_ social impact \_ computer game \_ sports equipment \_ dealing with money \_ pay for things \_ **check the change** \_ four-legged \_ long-haired \_ one-eyed \_ broken-hearted \_ **big-brained** \_ open-minded \_ cold-blooded \_ blonde-haired \_ left-handed \_ well-behaved \_ blue-eyed \_ pale-skinned \_ horse riding \_ radar system \_ become extinct \_ beneficial skills \_ teamwork \_ tall ship \_ easy-going \_ hard-working \_ skatepark \_ railway line \_ pedestrian **walkway** \_ public space \_ leisure facilities \_ ancient ruins \_ open-air cinema \_ **sports stadium** \_ **city centre** \_ heavy traffic \_ industrial site \_ green space \_ music venues \_ bike lanes \_ public transport \_ fun events \_ **pickpocket** \_ shoplifter \_ **too tough** \_ not **tough enough** \_ bank manager \_ newsreader \_ police officer \_ landmark \_ **hidden history** \_ become resistant \_ team player \_ changing room \_ window shopping \_ bar codes \_ **status symbols** \_ luxury brands \_ good value \_ work experience \_ raise money \_ gain con-

fidence \_ revise for exams \_ give results \_ try out something new \_ a rip-off \_ to spend money on \_ **save** for **something** \_ chilling out \_ take a year off \_ speech therapist \_ careers officer \_ career options \_ to **take place** \_ electronic devices \_ to train to become \_ involved with \_ change lifestyle \_ have in common \_ to be friends with \_ follow the news \_ get to know \_ get involved with \_ get together with \_ get used to \_ get ready \_ get the chance \_ get in touch with \_ get rid of \_ fed up with \_ relax with \_ interested in \_ keen on \_ **sport scientists** \_ get onto a train \_ be late for school \_ change my mind \_ jump/run straight in \_ take **my time** \_ **make up my mind** \_ consider all the options \_ keep my options open \_ on display \_ looking forward to \_ as a reward \_ being **out and about** \_ think twice \_ for a long time

183 / 7 / 15 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Phrasal verbs**

speed up \_ turn up \_ cheer up \_ turn on \_ sing along \_ turn down \_ work out \_ turn off \_ calm down \_ slow down \_ take off \_ try on \_ get into \_ come across \_ belong to \_ look back on \_ stick with \_ try out \_ go for it \_ take up (running) \_ take part in \_ get on with \_ put off \_ drop out \_ rush into (a decision) \_ get a lot out of \_ get it back

27 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés**

Look on the **bright side**. \_ Take me as you find me. \_ Stand **out** from the **crowd**. \_ He's got his head in the clouds. \_ He's got his feet on the ground. \_ We don't always see eye to eye. \_ She's as **cool** as a **cucumber**. \_ I'm over the moon about my results. \_ I'm **down** in the **dumps**. \_ I am in two minds. \_ Birds of a **feather flock together**. \_ A problem shared is a problem halved. \_ The **grass** is always **greener** on the other side. \_ Don't judge a book by its cover.

14 / 3 / 4..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Binomials**

light and portable\_ **chalk and cheese** \_ lost and found

3 / 0 / 1..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Gambits, Discourse markers**

the moment that \_ **by the time** \_ meanwhile \_ just as \_ afterward \_ in the end \_ for a start \_ one more thing \_ whereas \_ in contrast \_ on the one hand ... on the other hand \_ in the first place \_ furthermore \_ finally \_ however \_ although \_ in addition \_ for instance \_ for example \_ anyway \_ What about you?

21 / 1 / 0..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Exclamations**

**When was** that? \_ **Where was** that? \_ What did **you do**? \_ What's the story behind that? \_ Really? \_ Why not? \_ No way!

7 / 1 / 2..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Other phrases**

Don't worry. \_ You'll never guess what happened. \_ Honestly! It was him/her. \_ What are you up to? \_ There's not much time left. \_ I have been thinking about it for ages. \_ I can't **make up my mind**. \_ It's up to you. \_ What are your options? \_ Which do you reckon (is best)? \_ Have you considered that? \_ Are you still coming? \_ I can't make it. \_ Something's **come up**. \_ Can we do it another time? \_ I'm terribly sorry. \_ **Not to worry**. \_ I **suppose so**. \_ I'm the opposite. \_ I'm the same. \_ Me too. \_ That's a good question. \_ Let **me see**. \_ Could I have a word with you? \_ I'm afraid so. \_ I'm afraid not. \_ I didn't realize. \_ I'll let you off this time. \_ It won't happen again. \_ What do you think would be right? \_ It's a bit much, isn't it? \_ That seems fair, doesn't it? \_ I think that would be fair/unfair. \_ I think that was too harsh. \_ That's about right, in my opinion. \_ **Look right / left / up/ down**. \_ I've never heard

of them. \_ What do you reckon? \_ What else? \_ I can imagine. \_ I am really sorry/sad/surprised/amazed to hear that. \_ don't bother.

48 / 3 / 3..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### Sentence builders

both .... and.... \_ ....as well as.... \_ not only ... but also... \_ that reminds me of... \_ guess who... \_ you mean to say you actually ....? \_ how good are you at..... \_ I am pretty good at... \_ I am someone who... \_ I am no good at... \_ ... is /isn't something I enjoy. \_ this will appeal to ... \_ if you are a .... you'll love it. \_ it's (not) recommended for ..., though. \_ the only downside is that... \_ the best thing about it is ... \_ I think (that) it'll be .... \_ I get quite/so ... when ... \_ I am not that bothered by... \_ there is nothing ... about ... \_ it makes me feel really ... when ... \_ what I find most .... is ... \_ you must feel... \_ it's hard to imagine life without... \_ I think that someone needs to invent... \_ I can't think of anything better than... \_ ... is/are at the top of my list. \_ an important goal now is to... \_ I think the thing we'd **miss most** is... \_ I am (definitely) in favor of/against... \_ it is my opinion that ... \_ I am writing to ... \_ I would be grateful if you could... \_ I look forward to... \_ I'd like to do something that involves... \_ I see myself as... \_ I suppose I'm a(n)... \_ I'd say/Most people say (that) I'm... \_ a (challenging) experience in my life was when.... \_ there isn't/aren't enough... \_ there's a lack of... \_ there's too much/too little... \_ there are too many/too few ... \_ I think ... \_ I wish we had ... \_ .... is/isn't as .... as... \_ ....is more .... than ... \_ one of the arguments for ... is. \_ personally, I am (not) in favour of ... \_ how about ... instead? \_ is ... any good for you? \_ what's happening on ...? \_ I make that ... \_ I owe you... \_ you know/realize that ... is against the rules, don't you? \_ ... is one of ... \_ ...is **well worth** a visit. \_ these two pictures show ... \_ in the first picture, there are ... \_ it's hard to see, but I don't think there are ... \_ it **looks like**..., but I'm not sure. \_ by contrast, in this picture, there's ... \_ maybe it's ... \_ this could be a ... because ... \_ what sort of ... is it? \_ I need a voice in -ing \_ it is (not) worth (spending a lot of money on) ... \_ if money was no object, I'd ... \_ my one luxury is ... \_ .... is/are really in at the moment. \_ I can/can't afford ... \_ I'd like to talk to you about ...



\_ let me start by showing you ... \_ first of all, it's ... \_ as you can see ... \_ another advantage is that ... \_ it's also worth mentioning that ... \_ finally, one big advantage of ... \_ I think you all agree that ... \_ it's better to ... than to ... \_ -ing a ... would be an amazing experience. \_ I want to ... and start to ... \_ I'd like ... to ... \_ I sometimes dream of -ing \_ in the future, I aim to ... \_ I really enjoy -ing. \_ I'm more of a ... \_ to be honest, I'm a bit of a ... \_ I **tend to** ... \_ it's not the end of the world. You just have to ... \_ it's logical because ... \_ it might be ... because ... \_ I recognize part of the word, it means ... \_ the word ... is similar in my language. \_ those in favour said that ..., those against commented that ... \_ people who said yes/no think that ... \_ all in all, the results indicate that... \_ most people/the majority of people ... \_ an equal number of people thought that ... \_ let's think ... \_ the good thing about ... is that ... \_ I believe/don't believe that ... \_ in my opinion ... \_ I doubt that ... \_there's no doubt (in my mind) that ... \_ it's true/it isn't true that ... \_ I can/can't see why people think that ... \_ as far as I can see... \_ if/when you think about it... \_ I bet/I reckon that... \_ I am about to ... \_ it is about to ... \_ I am sort of leaning towards ... \_ have you thought of speaking to ... \_ I never ... \_ I (don't) usually ... \_ I (don't) often ... \_ I (nearly) always ... \_ Two/three... times a week \_ every day/week...

124 / 0 / 4..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## 2. List of lexical phrases – Project 5

### Collocations and Compounds

overweight \_ well-built \_ ask for money \_ call names \_ pull hair \_ **send text messages** \_ **new** at **school** \_ not part of a group \_ **good-looking** \_ fashion leaders \_ wear glasses \_ ride a horse \_ lorry driver \_ flight attendant \_ fashion designer \_ work abroad \_ join the air force \_ take a year out – go to college \_ time limit \_ look for places \_ music shop \_ bedroom wall \_ body clock \_ wallpaper \_ school uniform \_ bungee jump \_ **skydiving** \_ **haunted house** \_ climate change \_ go back to sleep \_ drinking water \_ medical attention \_ fire risk \_ external use \_ high voltage electricity \_ camp fire \_ radioactive hazard \_ authorized personnel \_ strong currents \_ emergency exit \_ hit the ground \_ reserve parachute \_ **backpack** \_ evening activities \_ outdoor activities \_ water activities \_ tropical forests \_ unique animals \_ become famous \_ favourite sports \_ mobile phone \_ in the middle of the night \_ roller skates \_ grizzly bear \_ computer game \_ Facebook profile \_ **radio station** \_ hard-working \_ easy-going \_ film extras \_ dance school \_ hairdresser's salon \_ wildlife centre \_ ice cream parlour \_ sailing trip \_ **give a lift** \_ part-time job \_ save money \_ pocket money \_ summer holidays \_ couch potatoes \_ magazine reporter \_ fashion buyer \_ personal assistant \_ party organizer \_ make-up artist \_ clothes designer \_ shopping list \_ earn money \_ bus fare \_ food miles \_ tropical birds \_ **single ticket** \_ return ticket \_ **timetable** \_ direct train \_ slow train \_ fast train \_ con man \_ social networking websites \_ bank card \_ fake money \_ paper money \_ **credit card** \_ double room \_ take poison \_ get married \_ take a drug \_ go into a coma \_ fall in love \_ take a message \_ light blue \_ dark blue \_ prime minister \_ the Nobel Prize \_ mixed colleges \_ drinking laws \_ tennis racket \_ remote control \_ fire a gun\_ **clap hands** \_ restaurant car \_ yesterday morning/afternoon/ evening \_ this morning/afternoon/evening \_ tomorrow morning/afternoon/evening/night \_ last night/Monday/week/weekend/month/year \_ next Monday/week/weekend/month/year \_ this Monday/week/weekend/month/year

139 / 9 / 3 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## Phrasal verbs

fall off \_ come off \_ get up \_ look for \_ run over \_ slow down \_ switch on \_ pick up  
\_ knock over \_ throw out \_ put away \_ take off \_ try on \_ fill in the form \_ turn down  
\_ give back \_ stay over \_ wake up

18 / 0 / 1 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

## Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés

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## Binomials

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## Gambits, Discourse markers

for a variety of reasons \_ as a result of several things \_ because of a number of things  
\_ on the other hand \_ however \_ finally

6 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

## Exclamations

Look out!

1 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

## Other phrases

Pardon? \_ How do you spell that word? \_ I'm sorry. I don't understand. \_ Can you  
repeat that please? \_ How long have you been here? \_ Did you fly? \_ How long are  
you going to stay? \_ Is this your first visit to...? \_ Did you have a good journey? \_  
Whereabouts are you from? \_ Nice to meet you. \_ It's bent. \_ It's the wrong size. \_ It  
isn't switched on. \_ It's scratched. \_ It's torn. \_ It's jammed/stuck. \_ It's broken. \_

It's burnt. \_ The battery's dead. \_ It's flat. \_ It's missing. \_ It's cracked. \_ It's making a funny noise. \_ It isn't plugged in. \_ Can I help you? \_ Would you like to exchange them? \_ Just a moment. \_ There's something wrong with it. \_ Can I take a look at it? \_ I see what you mean. \_ Could I have a refund, please? \_ Have you got the receipt? \_ Let me see. \_ Just a minute. \_ Yes, that will be fine. \_ I'm sorry, but that's no good for me. \_ Be careful. \_ I wouldn't do that if I were you. \_ You shouldn't do that. \_ I don't think it's a good idea to do that. \_ Don't do that! It's dangerous. \_ I suppose you're right. \_ Yes, OK then. \_ Don't fuss. \_ We'll be all right. \_ Don't worry. \_ Why not?

49 / 2 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Sentence builders**

be good enough to ... \_ What do you think of ...? \_ What does ... mean? \_ I love -ing ... \_ I enjoy ... \_ I'm not interested in ... \_ I'm really into ... \_ I like to ... \_ I can't stand... \_ I hate -ing ... \_ I adore -ing ... \_ I don't mind ... \_ I'm not very good at ... \_ I prefer ... \_ I want to be ... \_ When I leave school, I'm going to ... \_ After that, I'll probably ... \_ I'm afraid I can't make it at ... \_ What about ...? \_ ...so ... that ... \_ Is it all right if ...?

21 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### 3. List of lexice phrases – English File Intermediate

#### Collocations and Compounds

fresh vegetables \_ **fresh fruit** \_ fresh water \_ frozen pizza \_ frozen peas \_ frozen vegetables \_ low-fat yogurt \_ low-fat cottage cheese \_ low-fat milk \_ raw meat \_ raw fish \_ raw pork \_ spicy pepper \_ spicy dressing \_ spicy food \_ takeaway food \_ takeaway soup \_ takeaway Chinese \_ **tinned tomatoes** \_ tinned mushrooms \_ tinned beetroot \_ ready-made food \_ **evening meal** \_ feel stressed \_ **good food** \_ food expert \_ people on diets \_ restaurant dish \_ **run a restaurant** \_ eating habits \_ difficult customer \_ fizzy drinks \_ food supplements \_ night out \_ **green beans** \_ red pepper \_ family members \_ to charge rent \_ **social networking sites** \_ elderly parents \_ get married \_ family get-together \_ get divorced \_ birth rate \_ only child \_ boarding school \_ outgoing \_ hard-working \_ self-confident \_ **false friends** \_ material world \_ **for free** \_ **paper or plastic** \_ shopping sprees \_ with money \_ service a car \_ save money \_ waste money \_ invest money \_ raise money \_ earn money \_ inherit money \_ borrow money \_ lend money \_ **make money** \_ put money aside \_ cash machine \_ **well-dressed** \_ take vitamins \_ takeaway pizza \_ second-hand \_ **credit card** \_ electricity bill \_ go on sale \_ charity events \_ drive mad \_ in a hurry \_ **car crash** \_ cycle lane \_ parking fine \_ pedestrian zone \_ petrol station \_ road works \_ rush hour \_ seat belt \_ speed limit \_ speed camera \_ taxi rank \_ traffic jam \_ traffic lights \_ zebra crossing \_ bank account \_ sports hall \_ **tend to** \_ stay-at-home dad \_ interested in \_ better at \_ looking forward to \_ keen on \_ afraid of \_ **famous for** \_ cell phone \_ mobile phone \_ schoolchildren \_ nightclub \_ seafood \_ pay in cash \_ **get into debt** \_ **language barrier** \_ basic phrases \_ teach-yourself books \_ leave / send a message \_ ringtone \_ **screensaver** \_ silent / vibrate mode \_ quiet zones \_ instant messaging \_ **social situations** \_ mealtimes \_ face-to-face \_ take-off \_ petrol station \_ **lack of manners** \_ thank-you note / letter \_ hand-written \_ stepmother \_ good / bad manners \_ frightening experience \_ **bounce the ball** \_ well-paid \_ **big business** \_ right decision \_ short cut \_ get lost \_ sports event \_ sports injury \_ tollbooth \_ traffic cone \_ working hours \_ phone number \_ good-looking \_ night shifts \_ find the courage \_ keep your phone

on \_ take a call \_ personal information \_ get fit \_ get injured \_ classmate \_ close friend \_ flatmate \_ become friends \_ get in touch \_ get to know \_ have in common \_ lose touch \_ fancy a girl \_ dump a boyfriend \_ have a crush on \_ get engaged \_ fortnight \_ **give a lift** \_ come with a fee \_ set up a new business \_ **double-decker** bus \_ black taxi \_ turn red \_ get stuck \_ getting worse

173 / 8 / 17 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Phrasal verbs**

eat out \_ cut down on something \_ cut out \_ feel a bit down \_ pay back \_ take out \_ live off \_ live on \_ give up \_ set off \_ pick up \_ end up \_ run out of \_ worry about \_ turn round \_ be ahead of \_ crash into \_ come from \_ believe in \_ talk about \_ hang up \_ call back \_ switch off \_ turn off \_ take notice of \_ turn out \_ warm up \_ work out \_ send off \_ knock out \_ break up \_ split up \_ get on \_ go out \_ fall out with \_ look after

36 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés**

foot the bill \_ couldn't live without \_ more exceptions than rules \_ their eyes met \_ exchange a few words \_ It is like putting a candle in a window.

6 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Binomials**

**spender** or **saver**

1 / 0 / 1 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## Gambits, Discourse markers

Sorry for not writing earlier, but... \_ That's all for now. \_ ...whereas... \_ Personally, I think... \_ But in my opinion... \_ In fact, ... \_ Generally speaking, ... \_ For example, ... \_ For instance, ... \_ To be honest... \_ In my opinion \_ In general, ... \_ Don't you agree? \_ What do you think? \_ But if you ask me...

15 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## Exclamations

**Oh no!** \_ That's great news! \_ What a great idea! \_ Really? \_ You're kidding! \_ Watch out! \_ Look out! \_ How fantastic! \_ How interesting! \_ How awful! \_ How amazing! \_ How incredible! \_ What a pity! \_ What a good idea! \_ What terrible news!

15 / 1 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## Other phrases

No wonder. \_ I agree. \_ I don't agree. \_ I'm not sure. \_ (I think) it depends. \_ I am aware of that. \_ He's good with children. \_ He's good at making new friends. \_ I don't believe it. \_ Never mind. \_ What's that? \_ How do you see your career? \_ Well, he's a really **nice guy**. \_ I'm going to miss you. \_ Don't worry. \_ I'm already behind. \_ I haven't been feeling very well. \_ Thank you. \_ Thanks so much for... \_ It was great to hear from you... \_ Hope to hear from you soon. \_ Looking forward to hearing from you soon. \_ (Give my) regards to... \_ (Give my) love to... \_ Best wishes from... \_ Love from... \_ I completely agree/disagree. \_ I totally agree/disagree. \_ I don't think that's right. \_ Oh, hang on a minute. \_ That was so kind of him. \_ How long have you known him/her? \_ Where did you meet? \_ Why do you get on well? \_ What do you have in common? \_ Do you ever argue? What about? \_ How often do

you see each other? \_ How do you keep in touch? \_ Have you ever lost touch? \_ Do you think you'll stay friends? \_ How long does it take? \_ Do you mind if I join you? \_ Of course not. \_ Is it OK if... \_ Er...sure. \_ Can you pass the sugar? \_ Could you do me a big favour? \_ Would you mind -ing... \_ Not at all. \_ And do you think you could... \_ No problem. \_ Hey man! \_ It's great to see you, mate. \_ How come... \_ No way, man! \_ ...if you don't mind. \_ Just like the old days! \_ We have got a lot to talk about! \_ I'm going to **tell** you about a **time** when... \_ This happened a few years ago... \_ When I was younger... \_ Go ahead, son!

62 / 1 / 1 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Sentence builders**

I think/don't think ... should have/be ... \_ He's quite/very + positive adjective \_ She's a bit + negative adjective \_ He likes/loves/doesn't mind + verb + -ing \_ She is happy to + infinitive. \_ Not really. I'm more of a .... \_ Oh, you know, ..., things like that. \_ I mean, .... \_ That's because... \_ I can't afford to... \_ ...is worth about... \_ Have you ever...? \_ How long does it take to... \_ It takes about... \_ It took (me)...to get to... \_ Did you mean what you said....? \_ It's just that... \_ They tend to ... \_ Oh sure....

22 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**



## 4. List of lexical phrases – English File Advanced

### Collocations and Compounds

maternal grandparents \_ paternal grandparents \_ blood relatives \_ close friends \_ intellectually demanding \_ cat food \_ face-to-face \_ easy-going \_ online quizzes \_ personality tests \_ handwriting \_ **star sign** \_ **satnav** \_ check prices \_ compare products \_ face something head-on \_ find a solution \_ keep everyone happy \_ hurt people's feelings \_ gut feeling \_ think hard \_ **go-getter** \_ peacemaker \_ **big thinker** \_ give feedback \_ taxi driver \_ risk-taker \_ **tend to** \_ take risks \_ refuse to compromise \_ take advantage of \_ driving instructor \_ come to mind \_ delivery man \_ support worker \_ intellectually demanding \_ time-waster \_ quit a job \_ work unpaid \_ academic qualifications \_ work experience \_ career ladder \_ events management \_ permanent contract \_ job-hunting \_ full-time occupation \_ apply for position \_ maternity leave \_ paternity leave \_ sick leave \_ compassionate leave \_ unpaid leave \_ freelance contract \_ temporary contract \_ fixed-term contract \_ full-time contract \_ part-time contract \_ workforce \_ be out of work \_ be off work \_ be sacked \_ be fired \_ get promoted \_ get a rise \_ well-being \_ personal growth \_ travel-focused \_ become the norm \_ workload \_ tackle an issue \_ content words \_ function words \_ relevant experience \_ high level \_ deal with clients \_ high-profile \_ **public performance** \_ touring musician \_ family tree \_ distant relatives \_ speak a language \_ **tell the truth** \_ terrible loss \_ serious relationship \_ strong possibility \_ immediate danger \_ huge disappointment \_ vivid imagination \_ **self-sufficient** \_ change mind \_ verbal fluency \_ raise questions \_ **private pain** \_ get an e-mail \_ according to \_ instead of \_ because of \_ get the impression \_ get a shock \_ get the chance \_ get the joke \_ get to know \_ get hold of \_ get (my/your...) own back on \_ get into trouble with \_ get out of the way \_ first impression \_ get your hair done \_ get a bit tired \_ against odds \_ prisoner-of-war camp \_ machine gun \_ civil war \_ ceasefire \_ grossly irresponsible \_ an awful lot of \_ one classic example \_ terrorist plot \_ facing a problem \_ civil rights \_ the **big picture** \_ deadly serious \_ celebrity culture \_ social climber \_ cocky person \_ a big name \_ breaks screeched \_ tremendous crash – **crunching** of **crisps** \_ with ease \_ in proximity \_ fast-moving \_ heavy-going \_ thought-provoking \_ a fact of life \_ business as

usual \_ plunged into darkness \_ a tinge of disappointment \_ blind date \_ waste time \_  
 save time \_ kill time \_ **take** your **time** \_ make up for lost time \_ take a long time \_  
 give a hard time \_ spare the time \_ take up all my time \_ have the time of your life \_  
 run out of time \_ on time \_ before my time \_ **by the time** \_ at the time \_ time off \_ in  
 time \_ from time to time \_ at times \_ **behind** the **times** \_ the whole time \_ time-  
 consuming \_ work-life balance \_ have a limited budget \_ give/receive a grant \_ take  
 out a loan \_ charge/pay a fee \_ pay a fare \_ have a savings account \_ make a donation  
 \_ pay a fine \_ pay an instalment \_ make/pay a deposit \_ make a will \_ pay a lumpsum  
 \_ **consumer society** \_ standard of living \_ cost of living \_ can't afford \_ manage ac-  
 counts \_ make transfers \_ **make payments** \_ interest rates \_ in debt \_ stock market \_  
**exchange rates** \_ go bankrupt \_ well-off \_ hard up \_ tight fisted \_ the immune system  
 \_ punching bag \_ salad bar \_ subway car \_ back rub \_ wellness resources \_ **text mes-**  
**sages** \_ lifesaver \_ blood pressure \_ heart problems \_ stress levels \_ stress manage-  
 ment \_ breathing exercise \_ college students \_ support network \_ child mode \_ **be-**  
**yond believe** \_ on an empty stomach \_ lose your cool \_ **non-profit** \_ sleep-deprived \_  
 air-conditioned \_ home-made \_ long-distance \_ narrow-minded \_ second-hand \_ self-  
 conscious \_ well-behaved \_ worn-out \_ high-risk \_ last-minute \_ hands-free phone \_  
 high-pitched voice \_ **high-heeled** shoes \_ low-cost airline \_ eco-friendly detergent \_  
 life-changing experience \_ **dead-end** job \_ feel-good movie \_ ground-breaking re-  
 search \_ charge the phone \_ give a call \_ make a call \_ **landline** \_ missed call \_ **posh**  
**pies** \_ brisk walk \_ firm arrangement \_ basis for negotiation \_ withdrawal symptoms  
 \_ touch screen \_ keypad \_ keyboard \_ password \_ passcode \_ **broadband** \_ **Wi-fi** \_  
 pop-up \_ download \_ life-threatening condition \_ nicotine patches \_ absolutely fanat-  
 ical \_ antisocial behaviour \_ stay focused \_ installation art \_ reed pen \_ use of colour  
 \_ side-effects \_ food poisoning \_ heart attack \_ low-carb diet \_ anti-malaria pills \_  
 sleeping tablets \_ vitamin supplements \_ alternative medicine \_ childhood illnesses \_  
**pampered princess** \_ action addict \_ **hippie** at **heart** \_ **culture vulture** – lazy cruiser \_  
**beach bum** \_ **happy camper** \_ **city slicker** \_ set off on a journey \_ extend a trip/a visit  
 \_ go camping/backpacking/sightseeing/for a stroll \_ go on holiday/an outing/a trip/a  
 safari/a trek/a cruise/a journey \_ cancel a trip/a flight/a visit \_ postpone a trip/a visit \_  
 wander **round** the old **town** \_ chill out after a tiring day \_ soak up the atmosphere/the

culture \_ sample the local cuisine \_ breathtaking \_ gale-force winds \_ gain height \_ pitfall \_ mint sauce \_ litter tray \_ animal charities \_ animal rights activists \_ treat cruelly \_ live in the wild \_ endangered species \_ hunt for sport \_ bred in captivity \_ inhumane conditions \_ pork ribs \_ deep-fried \_ onion rings \_ **fillet of fish** \_ mashed potatoes \_ minced beef \_ poached egg \_ roast lamb \_ scrambled eggs \_ sliced bread \_ chicken breast \_ whipped cream \_ baking tray \_ chopping board \_ frying pan \_ food processor \_ recipe book \_ tuna salad \_ children's portions \_ a **cup of coffee** \_ a chef's hat \_ a tin opener \_ flower pot \_ garden centre \_ company director \_ history teacher \_ car door \_ seat belt \_ story book \_ road sign \_ bottle of wine \_ wine glass \_ stuff like that \_ top of my list \_ consumer detox \_ foul play \_ custom-made

349 / 14 / 21 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Phrasal verbs**

bring up \_ take care of \_ look after \_ put things off \_ get stuck \_ put together \_ go round \_ build up (a queue) \_ look down on \_ keep up with \_ go blank \_ be laid off \_ be made redundant \_ **clock off** \_ apply for \_ give something back \_ pick up \_ brush up \_ get by \_ pass for \_ take in \_ turn out \_ turn off \_ turn up \_ get back \_ get over \_ get rid of \_ get together with \_ get on with \_ get through to \_ get into \_ get round \_ get away with \_ get by \_ get behind \_ get down \_ get out of \_ get back to \_ win somebody over \_ follow through \_ rule someone out \_ miss out on \_ blow up \_ break up \_ break through \_ get away \_ be around \_ deal with \_ freak out \_ marry up \_ marry down \_ drown out \_ squirrel away (money) \_ stress out \_ hand in \_ cut off \_ free up \_ get through \_ hang up \_ log in \_ put through \_ run out \_ scroll down \_ speak up \_ top up \_ wean off \_ turn into \_ turn up \_ pass through \_ going on about \_ run into \_ stand off from \_ look on \_ shoot back up \_ be off to \_ dine off \_ rip off \_ fall down \_ stumble on \_ rule out

80 / 1 / 0..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### **Idioms, Proverbs, Metaphors, Clichés**

follow something to the letter \_ catch your eye \_ tell a **white lie** \_ **read between** the lines \_ It does my head in. \_ It breaks my heart. \_ at cross purposes \_ on the **tip** of my **tongue** \_ I got the wrong end of the stick. \_ I can't get my tongue round this word. \_ I can't get my head round this definition. \_ down to earth \_ a heart of gold \_ a cold fish \_ a real pain in the neck \_ a soft touch \_ a very quick temper \_ I'm not getting anywhere with... \_ ...gets on my nerves. \_ get her act together \_ get on like a house on fire \_ get a move on \_ He must be getting on a bit. \_ **get** the **message** \_ She gets her own way. \_ foot the bill \_ dress up the truth \_ **make** up (my/our...) **mind** \_ to play fast and loose with \_ a person to be counted \_ **juggling** a full-time job and all the domestic responsibility \_ sick children and deadline **collide** \_ **a high-flying** career \_ the divorce courts are **littered with...** \_ **the sourest** face \_ **shoulder** the mortgage \_ Money doesn't grow on trees. \_ He's really tight-fisted. \_ It must have cost an arm and a leg. \_ make ends meet \_ We're in the red/in the black. \_ It's daylight robbery! \_ We're going to have to tighten our belts. \_ Those two are definitely living beyond their means. \_ to go cold turkey \_ out of the blue \_ the black market \_ red tape \_ see everything in black and white \_ white elephant \_ a grey area \_ **red herring** \_ as stubborn as a mule \_ as white as a sheet \_ eat like a horse \_ **drink** like a **fish** \_ as quick as a flash \_ as **blind** as a **bat** \_ sleep like a log \_ work like a dream \_ as deaf as a post \_ as **good** as **gold** \_ as thin as a rake \_ as light as a feather \_ hit the shops \_ get away from it all \_ recharge your batteries \_ off the beaten track \_ put incident down to experience \_ I did all the donkey work. \_ It's like water of a duck's back. \_ He was like a fish out of water. \_ Don't count your chickens before they hatch. \_ a dark horse \_ the lion's share \_ smell a rat \_ kill two birds with one stone \_ Her bark is worse than her bite. \_ ...with his tail between his legs \_ a **flash** in the **pan** \_ next to nothing \_ We were having a ball... \_ I always **had a hankering**... \_ bigger hurdle \_ turn your back on \_ wolfing the contents of the fridge \_ We're at very different points in our lives now. \_ I've got time on my hands. \_ beyond the realms of plausibility \_ your heart might be racing \_ It makes the doctor's heart sink.

92 / 7 / 5..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

## **Binomials**

head or heart \_ pros and cons \_ life or death \_ short and sweet \_ rights and wrongs

5 / 0 / 2 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

### **Gambits, Discourse markers**

I see your point, but... \_ I see what you mean, but... \_ I agree up to a point, but... \_  
as a result \_ therefore \_ because of \_ due to \_ owing to \_ in order to \_ so as to \_ in  
case \_ however \_ nevertheless \_ in spite of \_ even though \_ basically \_ really \_ I  
mean, ... apparently \_ in a way \_ of course \_ as to ... anyway \_ obviously \_ in fact \_  
at least \_ I mean \_ Talking of... \_ By the way, ... \_ Incidentally, ... \_ Actually... \_ **As  
a matter of fact...** \_ In any case... \_ Anyway... \_ At least... \_ As I was saying... \_ on  
the whole \_ all in all \_ after all \_ besides \_ obviously \_ in other words \_ otherwise \_  
as far as ... is concerned \_ as regards/regarding \_ That is to say... \_ On the one hand  
... on the other hand... \_ Personally, I think that... \_ Personally speaking... \_ In my  
opinion,... \_ In my view,... \_ I feel that... \_ My feeling is that... \_ As far as I'm con-  
cerned... \_ I'd say that... \_ If you ask me,...

54 / 1 / 0 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

### **Exclamations**

What a great idea! \_ What an amazing coincidence! \_ What a terrible experience! \_  
How annoying! \_ How embarrassing! \_ How weird! \_ Get real! \_ Get a life! \_ Abso-  
lutely!

9 / 0 / 0 ..... total number / assonance / alliteration

### **Other phrases**

I totally agree. \_ That's just what I think, too. \_ I'm not sure I agree with you. \_ I'm  
afraid I don't really agree. \_ I don't really think you're right. \_ It gets wearing. \_  
Have you turned it off and on again? \_ I am not entirely sure. \_ We need to talk. \_  
What did you say? \_ Sorry, I can't speak now. \_ I think we'd be better off as friends.

\_ I think we rushed into this relationship too fast. \_ to be avoided at all costs. \_ re-  
 ceived version of the truth \_ the notion of freedom of individual choice \_ a resonance  
 in the modern era \_ pushing the limits of what history could stand \_ a matter of **pure-**  
**ly personal** taste \_ ...**got going** for it. \_ with time to spare \_ Time's up. \_ I'm short of  
 time. \_ for the time being \_ a matter of time \_ me time \_ There isn't much time left. \_  
 This time next week... \_ It's **about time**... \_ walk around the block \_ I'm up against a  
 deadline. \_ That's stressing me out a bit. \_ or so \_ Do your share. \_ **Do** the **decent**  
 thing. \_ donning my PE kit \_ The situation becomes untenable. \_ She goes on and  
 on... \_ I've got a bit of an obsession. \_ She keeps checking it. \_ I just can't help it. \_  
 ...has a thing about... \_ I can handle it. \_ in a couple of hours \_ within days \_ about a  
 year later \_ in just a few minutes \_ by the end of the year \_ we got it published \_ I  
 got to 30 \_ getting it to work better \_ to get into the mood \_ getting in the way \_ get a  
 different kind \_ I'm very fond of \_ at the same time \_ It must have really stuck with  
 me. \_ the advantages outweigh the disadvantages \_ People underestimate the risk. \_  
 Don't take my word for it. \_ Nothing to do with... \_ have a full health check \_ have  
 cosmetic surgery \_ see a counselor \_ I was skeptical. \_ I am positively averse. \_ care  
 very little about \_ I am content \_ I can live with that. \_ It's something I feel very  
 strongly about. \_ I don't feel particularly strongly about it either way. \_ I have to say  
 I am completely against... \_ I don't entirely agree with you. \_ Well, I'm absolutely  
 convinced that... \_ I'm quite sure that... \_ The chances were very slim. \_ Could I  
 speak to...

77 / 1 / 3..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

### Sentence builders

I am looking forward to.... \_ He is quite into... \_ I know a little bit ... \_ guess what...  
 \_ It doesn't go much further **than that**... \_...let's say... \_ To my complete amazement,  
 ... \_ Contrary to popular believe, ... \_ On the surface..., but deep down...

10 / 0 / 1 ..... total number / **assonance** / **alliteration**

Notes:

I am really sorry/sad/surprised/amazed to hear that. - **In the case of more content word options, I counted all options.**

I can/can't afford – **In the case of the positive/negative version, I counted only as one phrase.**

...is/are at the top of my list. - **In the case of the singular/plural version, I counted as only one phrase.**