



LANGUAGES
INTERNATIONAL

Lexical chunks and
what to do with them.

- 1) What are they?
- 2) What's the difference between a 'lexical chunk' and 'collocation'?

Timmis (2008):

‘chunk’ = “two or more words commonly found together”

e.g.

‘by the way’,

‘to be fair’,

‘to a certain extent’

‘collocation’ = “two lexical words commonly found together”

e.g.

‘firmly believe’,

‘strenuous exercise’

‘We’ve got to solve this problem’

“...multi-word phenomena are a fundamental feature of language use...”

common to all languages, not just “a quirky phenomenon of English”

From Corpus to Classroom

O’Keefe, McCarthy & Carter

3 word chunks from the
Cambridge and Nottingham
Corpus of discourse in English
(CANCODE)
- 5 million words of spoken
English (UK)

	Item	Frequency
1	I don't know	5,308
2	a lot of	2,872
3	I mean I	2,186
4	I don't think	2,174
5	do you think	1,511
6	do you want	1,426
7	one of the	1,332
8	you have to	1,300
9	it was a	1,273
10	you know I	1,231

	Item	Frequency
1	do you know what I mean	236
2	at the end of the day	222
3	and all the rest of it	64
4	and all that sort of thing	41
5	I don't know what it is	38
6	but at the end of the	35

Where do we get them from?

Well, I was in a rush that morning and I suppose I set off a bit late. It was raining when I left the house and there was a lot of traffic on the roads.

Empower Pre-Intermediate
Doff, Thaine et al.
CUP 2015

I was in a rush

it was raining

there was a lot of traffic on the roads

Key features of connected speech:

- stress
- weak forms
- contraction
- word linking
- intrusion
- elision
- assimilation

I was in a rush

it was raining

there was a lot of traffic on the roads

If you have any questions, just ask her and she'll be happy to answer.

- 1) the same goes for Susan
- 2) before I forget
- 3) Don't be put off by their jokes.
- 4) They come in once or twice a week.
- 5) with every day that passes
- 6) on the contrary
- 7) are worth considering
- 8) due to the fact that



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