Teaching for life, teaching for exam. On teaching multi-word lexical units in grades 4-6.

Karolina Kotorowicz-Jasińska

Lexical chunks (after Bogarts 2011)

→ groups of two or more words that tend to occur together and that are often, though not always, non-compositional (that is, the meaning of the chunk as a whole is not fully determinable from the meanings of its individual words and any meanings conveyed by the syntactic operations combining them)
→ other terms: formulaic expressions, prefabricated patterns, conventionalized language forms, multiword units.
→ Language is NOT a collection of solitary words joined together by morphological or syntactical procedures, but rather of groupings of words which tend to occur together.

Multi-word chunks are useful:

for processing
→ chunks are retrieved faster than individual words
→ the smaller the processing load, the easier comprehension

for production
→ the usefulness of communicative functions

for grammar development
→ grammar as a process
→ students learn to ‘grammar’ (get engaged in the process of ‘grammering’)
→ students need to accumulate a large number of messages in their memory before they can start analysing them – the messages come in the form of chunks

for exams
→ ‘środki językowe’ as opposed to grammar and vocabulary in isolation
→ Use of English, not ‘Grammar and Vocabulary’
→ lexicogrammatical features used to achieve communicative goals
→ appear in context
→ convey meaning

for life
→ fin real-life communication speakers do not think much about the choice of lexical or grammatical item, they just use the language to communicate meaning

REFERENCES:

Bogart, 2011. Don’t Let’s Try to Break this Down: Teasing Apart Lexical Chunks. University of Malta
Woolard, G. 2013. Messaging: Beyond a Lexical Approach in ELT. The Round