The relationship between language proficiency and use of collocation by Iranian EFL students

FIROOZ NAMVAR
University Kebangsaan Malaysia
School of Languages and Linguistics
firooznamvar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

An increased knowledge of collocation not only allows learners to improve levels of accuracy, but it also aids fluency (Webb & Kagimoto 2011). Collocations improve the learner's ability in oral communication, listening, and reading skills. From the perspective of pedagogy collocations help learners to be aware of language chunks used by native speakers in writing and speaking. This study investigated learners' use of collocations by analyzing the learners' written work based on multiple choice tests and a writing task. Fifteen Iranian postgraduate students participated in this study to determine the collocational errors they made and to identify the basis for their difficulty with collocations. The results showed that learners had problem with both lexical and grammatical collocations in their writing because the language transfer appeared to have a strong effect on the participants' production of collocation. In addition, the findings indicated that the use of collocations is related to proficiency in English and there is a strong relationship between knowledge of collocations and the overall proficiency.

Keywords: Lexical collocations; grammatical collocations; language proficiency; correlation; language transfer

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the relationship between Iranian EFL students' knowledge of collocations and their general proficiency in English. In addition, this paper intends to determine the collocational errors they make and to identify the basis for their difficulty with collocations. Collocations are two or more words, which have a strong tendency to co-occur in a language as a prefabricated combination of two or more words in a particular context. When it comes to the production of collocations, it is problematic for the second language learners, in particular, adult second language learners. The problem, depending on a variety of variables such as students' native language (L1), background, age, and personality, vary in their intensity and nature.

English language native speakers have thousands of words at their disposal. Theoretically, by using their knowledge of grammar, they are able to use the words to produce and understand an unlimited number of sentences that they have never heard or said before. They use a large number of ready-made chunks of words by putting them together in different ways according to their communication needs. Words become bound, as it were, to each other pursuant to repeated use in the same chunks by members of the language community. Sometimes, the dramatic effect of a single use of a group of words together or the prestige of the user may be enough to link the words into one chunk in the memory of language users. Words have the ability to predict each other's occurrence when they are combined in a chunk. Conversely, because English words are not linked in ready-made chunks in the memory of non-native speakers, inappropriate and odd word combinations are often produced as a result.

The majority of Iranian EFL learners have knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary to some extent; however, they seem to have serious problems with the use of collocations. For instance; 'make a mistake' is an acceptable collocation in the English language. Iranian learners who speak Persian say *"Eshtebah Kardan"* which literally means *"do a mistake"* and when it comes to English they think in their first language and instead of *"make a mistake"* they write or say *"do a mistake."* Literally, Iranians say "*Do a mistake*" while English speakers say "*Make a mistake*".

Producing collocations in writing raises particular problems. English teachers have been making significant efforts to enhance EFL learners' writing by spending a lot of time correcting students' writing and trying to identify the areas of difficulty. In spite of this effort, the same errors continue to occur. Bahn and Eldaw (1993) declare, in fact it is usually the case that the majority of EFL learners have different problems in their oral and written productions. According to Hill, "Students with good ideas often lose marks because they don't know the four or five most important collocations of a key word that is central to what they are writing about" (Hill 2000, p. 5). Accordingly, longer, verbose ways of explaining or discussing the issue raise the chance for more errors. These problems are the consequence of insufficient knowledge about the "companies that words keep." The use of phrases in written text is plentiful and often contributes to better communication than the actual form of a sentence. L2 non-native speakers do appear to experience a difficulty in this area often by choosing to overuse some often used phrase(s) showing their limited range or repertoire. Lewis (2001) points out, "within the mental lexicon, collocation is the most powerful force in the creation and comprehension of all naturally occurring text" (p.49). In using collocation in their writing learners will develop the ability to create more native-like sentences. That is to say, to enhance learners' writing ability, they need to use collocation in their writing.

CLASSIFICATION OF COLLOCATIONS IN THIS STUDY

Based on Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1986), collocations fall into two categories: Grammatical collocations and Lexical collocations. Following Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1986), a grammatical collocation generally is a dominant open class word (noun, adjective or verb) and a preposition or particular structural pattern such as an infinitive or a clause. The type of grammatical collocations used in this study is: Noun + Preposition. A lexical collocation, on the other hand, normally does not contain infinitive or clauses. It typically consists of open class words (Noun, Adjective, verb or adverb). The types of lexical collocations for this study are: Adjective + Noun (*strong tea, major problem, key issue*), Verb + Noun (*make an impression, set an alarm*), and Noun + Verb (companies *merged, pose a problem*). The types of collocations for this study were selected based on the study by Namvar & Nor Fariza (2012).

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONS

The significance and value of collocations for the evolution of L2 vocabulary and communicative competence has been emphasized by a number of researchers (Benson 1985, Cowie 1981, Lewis 1997). They all commented on teaching non-native speakers collocations as it afforded them readymade set chunks of the language and hence an overall improvement in their performance. Hashemi (2012) in his study concluded that EFL College students (English majors and non-English majors), high school students, and professors lack collocational knowledge because collocation has been neglected in EFL classrooms. Brown

(1974) shows that knowledge of collocations positively makes an impact upon learners listening comprehension, reading speed, and oral communication. He adds that teaching collocations makes learners capable of being aware of language chunks used by native speakers in speech and writing. Nattinger (1980) postulated that the production of language involved in part, "the piecing together the readymade units appropriate for particular situations and that comprehension relies on knowing which of these patterns to select in these situations" (p.341). Cowie (1988) refers to lexical phrases and collocations as institutionalized units stating how they form an integral part of communication.

The importance of collocations in language, and the lack of knowledge about them by non-native speakers, resulted in poor performance, which is highlighted in research done by Aghbar (1990). In tests using short formulaic expressions the poor performance could not be because of lack of vocabulary per se but was more due to lack of complete chunks or expressions. He refers to formulaic expressions, consisting of sayings, proverbs, idioms, and collocations, and how a knowledge and use of them are what separates native and non-native speakers of a language.

Nattinger and DeCarrio (1992) postulate that formulaic expressions including collocations are at the very centre of language acquisition and provide teaching aides to speech, listening, comprehension, reading and writing. In more recent years researchers and teachers have raised the importance of collocations in language development and teaching particularly with non-native speakers (Ellis 1996). Leffa (1998) held that collocation was superior to encyclopaedic knowledge based on his research. Ellis (2001) postulated that collocational knowledge is the essence of language knowledge. Nation (2001) stressed that some degree of correct use of collocation is important in regard to achieving fluency, "all fluent and appropriate language requires collocational knowledge" (p.318). Collocations are therefore significant and unique, and it is clear that the use of collocations is important in improving a learner's fluency in language and helps learners approach native fluency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Robins (1976), studies on collocations started 2300 years ago in Greece. The Greek Stoics related collocations to semantics and used the concept of collocation to study the meaning relationships between words. According to these ancient scholars, words "do not exist in isolation, and they may differ according to the collocation in which they are used" (Robins 1967, p.21). The British linguist J. R. Firth, who is the father of collocational studies in modern times, is in the tradition of the Greek Stoics. Many of his statements about collocations are similar to the ancient Greek scholars; for example "words are mutually expectant and mutually comprehended" (Firth 1957, p.12) or "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (p. 11). Although, it is widely accepted that Firth is the first linguist in modern times to explicitly introduce the notion of collocation into a theory of meaning, Mitchell (1971) believes that Firth in the selection of the term collocation may have been influenced by Palmer's monograph on collocations.

After Palmer's work in 1930s, second language teachers have looked at collocations as both an opportunity and a problem. There have been some factors in recent years, which helped collocations in particular and 'formulaic language' in general to come into focus for second language learners: The expansion of computerized texts and works of Sinclair (1987) showed the quick spreading of the use of collocation. For Pawley and Syder (1983) multi-word 'lexicalized' phrases have the important role in producing fluent and idiomatic language; regular and odd chunks are at the heart of those usage-based models in both language description and first language acquisition (Tomasello 2003). Based on Smith's

(2005) statement including collocation in the curriculum is very important. The first reason is when non-native speakers encounter extensive difficulty in selecting the accurate combination of words, even in cases where the learner knows the individual words; collocations are still likely to be problematic. According to Lewis (1993), the second reason is the need for learners to go beyond the 'intermediate plateau'. These students can cope in most situations, but they tend to 'avoid' or 'talk around' the more challenging tasks of advanced language learning. Collocation instruction is especially motivating for upper level students (Williams, 2002). The third reason is that possessing knowledge of frequently occurring collocations increases vocabulary knowledge and improves fluency and helps stress and intention (Williams, 2002). The final reason is that collocation errors are more damaging to the communication process than most grammatical errors. The result is unnatural sounding expressions or odd or possibly out of date phrasing. While the need for research on collocations has been identified a long time ago, academic investigations have only been conducted recently. Among the small number of recent studies on collocation there is a study by Aghbar (1990) that shows the first attempts to measure collocational competence. His study examined 97 ESL and 44 American students to measure the difference in collocational competence between them by using a blank-filling test which included 50 verb-noun collocations. The results showed that ESL students did well where 'get' was the key word. In a study conducted by Aghbar and Tang (1991), they gave ESL students a cloze-test, which consisted of 30 verb-noun collocations. The result revealed that collocations including 'take' and 'find' are early-acquired verbs and are comparatively easy for low proficiency students. Alsakran (2011) investigated the productive and receptive knowledge of Arabic-speaking learners of English regarding the use of collocation in ESL and EFL contexts. His findings showed that English language learners have problems in learning the collocations. In another study which is a case study, Seesink (2007) investigated intermediate students with Arabic, Chinese, Japans, and Korean background to see if teaching vocabulary and collocations in particular improves the writing of the students or not. She used an online program to teach the collocations to students. In the end she concluded that attention to collocations had a positive impact on the students' results. But she did not clarify that what type of collocations she used. In her study, she did not also show what types of collocations are difficult for the learners. Due to the huge number of collocations, it is not possible to teach students all types of collocations, therefore, those collocations which are more problematic to the students should be recognized and taught first.

In sum, there have been many studies conducted on collocations. For example, experimental studies have been conducted to measure language learners' knowledge of collocations, to detect the development of collocational knowledge at different levels, and to find the common collocational errors that language learners make. Some other studies concentrated on the relationship between collocations and language production, especially writing. Language educators also studied the importance and methods of teaching collocations. As a result the literature shows that collocations surely deserve the attention of linguists and language educators.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The participants in this study are 15 Iranian male and female postgraduate students at UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) whose ages range from twenty four to thirty five. English is their foreign language while their first language is Persian. Their English proficiency level

is intermediate and above as it is compulsory for students to have a minimum IELTS of 5.5 to be able to enroll at the university. Those students who do not have IELTS are required to take a placement test and they are required to get a score of at least 80%. The university has an intensive English program to accommodate those who score less than 80% in the placement test. The Placement test consists of speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills. Students remain in this program until they manage to meet the university's admission requirement. The participants of this study have an IELTS or have passed the University placement exam.

INSTRUMENTS

The data collection instruments used in this study were a writing test and a collocation test. The quantitative analysis was subjected to SPSS (statistical Package for the Social Sciences) V19 analysis.

WRITING TEST

Students were asked to write about an unforgettable experience they have had. In order to make it easier for students, a number of things were considered in the selection of the title. Writing about an unforgettable experience is a personal matter and therefore it is assumed to be motivating and thought-provoking. This test was a 35- minute writing task. The holistic measure of writing proficiency was used to mark the papers. The rating scale for writing test was 1-6. Two expert raters, who are doctors in Linguistics and Education experienced in writing, marked the papers.

COLLOCATION TEST

A multiple-choice test of collocation was used in this study. It included 50 items selected from the *Oxford Collocation Dictionary*. This test, which was made up of both lexical and grammatical collocation, was divided into 4 parts. The parts offered the following types of collocations:
1. noun+verb
2. verb+noun
3. adjective+noun
4. noun+preposition

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

There was a coding procedure after data collection. All the materials were placed into folders with an identifying number on each. To assure participants' anonymity, identifying numbers were used instead of names.

PROCEDURE FOR SCORING THE DATA FROM THE TEST

The test of collocation consists of 50 sentences or items in a multiple-choice format. The scores on the collocation test show the participants' knowledge of collocations. The maximum score for answering 50 questions correctly was 50 points. The researcher scored the test with the help of the BBI Dictionary, Mr. Stockdale's Dictionary of collocations (2000), and Oxford Dictionary of Collocations (2009).

PROCEDURE FOR SCORING WRITING TEST

In the scoring of the Writing Test, a holistic approach was followed. This approach to writing assessment has been advocated by several researchers in writing assessment (e.g., Williamson 1993), and in EFL writing assessment (Janopoulos 1993). These researcher have placed a

special emphasis on the issue of validity of holistic scoring.The validity as well as the reliability of the Writing Test in this study have been accounted for through the following procedures: (1) Writing samples were scored on a scale of 1-6, with 1 being the least competent and 6 the most competent. According to Williamson (1993, p. 16), the larger the scale, the more variance among the scores, thus enhancing the scores' statistical reliability, (2) Each writing sample was scored by two raters. The two scores for each writing sample were averaged out to produce a single score.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

The subjects' scores on the Collocations test, their scores on the writing proficiency, and the frequency of Collocations analyzed to show the correlation between the language proficiency and knowledge of collocation. To analyze the data quantitatively, Statistical Package for the Social Science version 19 was used for the computing sections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical measures carried out clearly indicate that there is a relationship between students' knowledge of collocations and their language proficiency.

TABLE 1. Correlation coefficient between proficiency and collocations

		Collocations score	Writing Score
Collocations score	Pearson Correlation	1	.982[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	15	15
Writing Score	Pearson Correlation	.982[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	15	15

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The research findings of the current study clearly support that there is a relationship between subjects' language proficiency as measured by their writing test scores and their knowledge of collocations as measured by their performance on the test of collocation. This result indicates that collocations are a good indicator of language proficiency. The findings support Zhang (1993) who found a moderate-to-strong correlation between collocational knowledge and language proficiency among non-native speakers. Thus, it would imply that good collocational knowledge is an important indicator of language proficiency. From the results of the study, collocational knowledge is a source of fluency in written communication among students.

TABLE 2. Mean scores by collocations types

		Correct_Noun_verb	correct_Verb_noun	correct_Adj_Noun	correct_Noun_preposition
N	Valid	15	15	15	15

Continued

Continued	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.0000	10.1333	6.5333	9.6667
Std. Deviation		2.72554	1.45733	2.16685	2.52605
Minimum		4.00	8.00	4.00	6.00
Maximum		11.00	12.00	10.00	14.00

Table 2 shows that some types of collocations have broader differences in the level of difficulty. To be more accurate, there is a statistically significant difference between the performance of the subjects on *adjective+noun* collocations and other types of collocations. The mean for adjective+noun collocations is 6.5, whereas the mean for verb+noun is 10.13, the mean for noun+preposition is 9.6, and the mean for noun+verb is 7. In addition it illustrates that *adjective+noun* collocations and *noun+verb* collocations are the most difficult ones for the students while, on the other hand *verb+noun* collocations are the easiest category for the subjects.

DISCUSSION

With the lack of awareness of collocations and without knowledge of collocations, as Pawly & Syder (1983) mention, which has been later supported by Lewis (2004), it is difficult to see ESL/EFL learners' English as ordinary, natural or fluent. Their expressions can be judged to be unnatural, odd, and foreign even though they are grammatically correct. EFL learners usually focus on the individual words and neglect other important information, that is to say, what these individual words co-occur with. They learn collocations as separate words rather than in chunks. As a result, when they want to produce collocation, they refer to their first language to find a suitable word for producing collocation in target language. When such case happens, it seems that L1 has had impact on L2. This phenomenon is referred to by linguists as *transfer*. Transfer can be positive or negative. Positive transfer occurs when the patterns of L1 and L2 are the same. Negative transfer occurs when the patterns of students' L1 and L2 are different, in which case problems may arise.

POSITIVE TRANSFER

It was clear that in responding to certain test items, participants were helped by positive transfer from Persian. In other words, some collocations had equivalents in Persian, and thus were easy for students to respond to. The following items are among the positively-transferred items listed by their number in the Test of Collocations:
1. **album** comes out
13. **ball** rolling
16. do **housework**
33. blank **tape**
36. golden **opportunities**
39. **preference** to
43. **success** in

Predictably, the collocations in the list above can be classified as high-frequency collocations, which were answered by the largest number of students. Learners' reliance on their first language (L1) in learning English was examined by various SLA researchers. Biskup (1992), Bahns and Eldaw (1993), and Gitsaki (1999) found that, in ESL, collocations that had equivalents in students' L1 were easier, and thus were more likely to be elicited than the ones having no equivalents in students' L1. For this reason, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) and Biskup (1992) suggested that, since the number of collocations is too large to cover, the deliberate teaching of collocations should be limited to collocations that have no equivalent in students' first language. The researcher, who is a native speaker of Persian, arrived at the above conclusions in consultation with one other educated Persian scholar.

NEGATIVE TRANSFER

Based on the results, negative transfer like positive transfer is a common phenomenon among second language learners. The data showed that students had problems with collocations that had no equivalents in Persian. As a result, when students did not know a certain collocation, they relied on their first language and negatively transferred collocations from their L1. The following items are some of the errors the participants made because there are no equivalents for these collocations in Persian language.

3. blame **falls on**
4. business **booming**
6. appendix **rupture**
8. colour **runs**
9. common sense **prevail**
12. convention **dictates**
16. **heavy** smoker
18. **poor** administration
28. authority **over**

The collocation *blame falls on*, for instance, was one of the problematic collocations. In addition to the fact that such a collocation does not have a Persian equivalent and thus cause a difficulty to students. As such, the problem students had with *blame falls on* may be explained by either the nature of the collocation or negative transfer factors. The grammatical collocation *authority over* is another example of negative transfer that causes the participants to choose the wrong option. In Persian language *authority* collocates with prepositions *dar* (at/in) and *bar* (on/upon) but it doesn't collocate with preposition *over*.

Another source of difficulty can be the cultural factor. For example, the collocation '*common sense*' (kherad/sho'oor) is connected to culture and the society in Persian language. In Persian language '*common sense*' collocates with '*increase*' (afzayesh yaftan) and not with the verb 'prevail'. Culture and language are not separable. Culture is passed from one generation to another through the use of words. This shows that in any language both culture and vocabulary are very closely related aspects. Therefore, there is a close relationship between culture and the choice of words used to accomplish this cultural transmission. While, in practice, in the teaching of foreign language extensive effort is spent on acquiring vocabulary and learning grammar, the culture of the language is often rarely addressed.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL students' knowledge of collocations and their general proficiency in English. In addition, this paper intended to determine the collocational errors they made and to identify the basis for their difficulties with collocations. The results of Pearson correlations showed that there was a strong correlation between students' knowledge of collocations and their general proficiency, as measured by the Writing Test. This study illustrated that *adjective+noun* collocations and *noun+verb* collocations were the most difficult ones for the students while on the other hand *verb+noun* collocations were the easiest category for the subjects. When there was a confluence between the English collocations and Persian equivalents, the students tended to provide the correct collocation but in an opposite manner, when there was a deviation between the collocations in the two languages, students faced difficulty with the items.

To sum up, while Iranian EFL students' knowledge of collocations develops alongside their general language proficiency, they would still benefit from a curriculum that includes a variety of collocations and one that emphasizes collocations that are linguistically and culturally distinct from those in Persian.

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that:

1. Considering difficulty of the production in collocations, learners are in need of more practice to produce collocations. Also, they should receive as much collocation input as possible.
2. Non-congruent collocations should receive more attention in language teaching without neglecting congruent collocations as some researchers suggested (Bahns, 1993).
3. Teachers need to incorporate collocations in their syllabuses. They need to enhance the students' consciousness about the importance of collocations. It is desirable to give the students a diagnostic test on their knowledge and use of collocations in the beginning of the course to assess the student needs. When selecting sample readings and texts, besides considering his or her course objectives, needs also to take into account the student needs with respect to collocational knowledge and effective and appropriate use of collocations. The teacher should guide the students to recognize the effectiveness and appropriateness of collocations. Gradually, the students' knowledge of collocations is likely to develop both in size and in scope. In the meantime, the writing teacher needs to make conscious efforts to encourage effective and appropriate use of collocations in students' writing

Collocations are very important in writing and using them properly enhances the writing skill. Acquisition of specialized collocations will enable learners to communicate in a professionally acceptable way. Additionally, when time is limited to formulate a message and get it across in writing, writers would feel a more pressing need to use prefabricated expressions to save processing time and energy. Including collocations in curriculum and preparing the students to use collocations effectively and appropriately in writing will contribute to efficient communication. Particularly, with adult ESL/EFL learners, who are uncomfortable about their limited structural and lexical knowledge, the teaching of collocations can have additional advantages. This is because collocations can decrease their affective filter by providing them with ready-made chunks and prepackaged building blocks so that their worry about structure and lack of words can be reduced.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study examined only 4 types of lexical and grammatical collocations. While such collocations are among the most common collocations, as stated by Benson et al (1986), they

may not necessarily reflect students' overall collocational knowledge. This study revealed findings about collocations produced by Iranian postgraduate students at UKM University. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalized beyond the participants of the study.

REFERENCES

Aghbar, A. 1990. Fixed Expressions in Written Texts: Implications for Assessing Writing Sophistication. Paper presented at the Meeting of English Association of Pennsylvania State System Universities. Paper presented at a Meeting of the English Association of Pennsylvania State System Universities, USA.

Alsakran, R. A. 2011. The productive and receptive knowledge of collocations by advanced Arabic-speaking ESL/EFL learners, Colorado State University.

Bahns, J. & Eldaw, M. 1993. Should We Teach EFL Students Collocations? *System* 21(1): 101-114.

Benson, M., Benson, E. & Ilson, R. 1986. *Lexicographic description of English*: John Benjamins Publication Company.

Biskup, D. 1992. L1 influence on learners' renderings of English collocations: a Polish/German empirical study'in PJL Arnaud and H. BeÂjoint (eds.): Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics. *Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics*. 85-93.

Brown, D. 1974. Advanced vocabulary teaching: The problem of collocation. *RELC Journal* **5**(2): 1-11.

Channel!, J. 1981. Applying semantic theory to vocabulary teaching. *ELTJournal* **35**(2): 115-122.

Conzett, J. 2000. Integrating collocation into a reading and writing course. *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach*. M. Lewis**:** 70-86.

Cowie, A. 1981. The treatment of collocations and idioms in learners' dictionaries. *Applied Linguistics* **2**(3): 223-235.

Cowie, A. 1988. Stable and creative aspects of vocabulary use. In R. Carter and M. McCarthy (eds.): Vocabulary and Language Teaching, London: Longman**:** 126-139.

Ellis, N. 1996. Sequencing in SLA: Phonological memory, chunking, and points of order. *Studies in second language acquisition.* 18(1), 91-126.

Firth, J. R. 1957. Papers in linguistics, 1934-1951. London, Oxford University Press.

Gitsaki, C. 1999. *Second language lexical acquisition: a study of the development of collocational knowledge*. San Francisco: International Scholars Publications.

Hashemi, M., Azizinezhad, M. & Dravishi, S. 2012. Collocation a neglected aspect in teaching and learning EFL. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 31: 522-525.

Hill, J. 2000. Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation*, *47–70.*

Howarth, P. 1996. *Phraseology in English academic writing: Some implications for language learning and dictionary making*. Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

Janopoulos, M. 1993. Comprehension, communicative competence, and construct validity: holistic scoring from an ESL perspective. *Validating holistic scoring for writing assessment*: 303-325.

Leffa, V. 1998. "Textual constraints in L2 lexical disambiguation." System 26(2): 183-194.

Lewis, M. 1993. *The lexical approach*. Hove, Language Teaching Publications.

Lewis, M., & Conzett, J. 2000. *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications.

Lewis, M., & Gough, C. 1997. *Implementing the lexical approach: Putting theory into practice*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications.

Mitchell, T. 1971. Linguistic 'goings-on': Collocations and other lexical matters arising on the syntagmatic record. *Archivum Linguisticum.* 2(1), 35-69.

Firooz Namvar, Nor Fariza Mohd. Noraini Ibrahim, Jamilah Mustafa. 2012. Analysis of collocations in the Iranian postgraduate students' writings. *3L; Language, Linguistics and Literature, The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies.* 18(1): 11-22.

Nation, I. S. P. 2001. *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nattinger, J. 1980. A lexical phrase grammar for ESL. *Tesol Quarterly* 14(3): 337-344.

Nattinger, J. 1988. Some current trends in vocabulary teaching. *Vocabulary and language teaching*: 60-82.

Nattinger, J. R. & DeCarrico, J. S. 1992. *Lexical phrases and language teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, H. 1933. *Second interim report on English collocations*. Tokyo, Kaitakusha.

Robins, R. 1967. *A short history of linguistics*. London: Longman.

Seesink, MT. 2007. Using blended instruction to teach academic vocabulary collocations: A case study. Unpublished PhD thesis, West Virginia University, USA.

Sinclair, J. M. 1987. Collocation: a progress report. In R. S. a. T. Threadgold (Ed.), *Language Topics: Essays in Honour of Michael Halliday. Vol. 2*, (pp. 319-331). Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Skehan, P. 1996. A framework for the implementation of task-based learning. *Applied Linguistics* 17(1): 38-62.

Smith, C. 2005. *The lexical approach: Collocation in high school English language learners.* George Fox University.

Tomasello, M. 2003. *Constructing a language: a usage-based theory of language acquisition*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press.

Webb, S. & Kagimoto, E. 2011. Learning Collocations: Do the Number of Collocates, Position of the Node Word, and Synonymy Affect Learning? *Applied Linguistics* 32(3): 259-276.

Williams, B. 2002. Collocation with advanced levels. Retrieved October, 23, 2010 from www.Teachingenglish.org.uk/think/vocabulary/collocation1.html

Williamson, M. M. 1993. An introduction to holistic scoring: The social, historical, and theoretical context for writing assessment. *Validating holistic scoring for writing assessment: Theoretical and empirical foundations*: 1-43.

Woolard, G. 2000. Collocation–encourage learners independence. *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach*. M. Lewis**:** 28-46.

Zhang, X. 1993. English collocations and their effect on the writing of native and non-native college freshmen, Unpublished PhD thesis Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Appendix

Noun +Verb
Choose the **verbs** that can best collocate with the **bold nouns**.
1. His latest **album** ………… in the spring.
a) emerges   b) comes forth   c) appears   d) comes out
2. The **anniversary** of the founding of the charity……….. on the 12th of November.
a) falls   b) turns up   c) happens   d) takes place
3. The **blame** ………… the police, who failed to act quickly enough.
a) lies on   b) sits on   c) lies with   d) falls on
4. **Business** is……….. for estate agents in the south as the property market hots up.
a) booming   b) expanding   c) growing   d) prospering
5. After the bomb, an uneasy **calm** ……….. on the city.
a) settled   b) reposed   c) rested   d) resided
6. If the condition is not treated, the **appendix** can ……… .
a) tear   b) rend   c) fracture   d) rupture
7. The **clock** on the mantelpiece ……..….. twelve o'clock.
a) said   b) pronounced   c) told   d) suggested
8. This **color** ……….. so wash the shirt separately.
a) stretches   b) spreads   c) runs   d) extends
9. I hope that **common sense** will ………..
a) prevail   b) increase   c) abound   d) widespread
10. **Communication** between the two sides has …………
a) broken down   b) collapsed   c) seized up   d) failed
11. **Complications** ……….. if the drug is not used properly.
a) advance   b) happen   c) spread   d) develop
13. He fell down the steps like a **ball** ……….. on the ground.
a) wheeling   b) rotating   c) rolling   d) revolving
14. His **horizons** didn't ………… beyond his next night out.
a) stretch   b) extend   c) expand   d) spread

Adjective +Noun Choose the **adjectives** that can best collocate with the **bold nouns**.
1. I don't know him very well. It is just a ……….. **acquaintance**.
a) casual   b) spontaneous   c) accidental   d) unanticipated
2. She is a ………… **smoker**. That's why she always stinks of smoke.

a) hard   b) heavy   c) big   d) strong

3. Brenda doesn't like olives, capers or anything with a ………… **flavor**

a) heavy   b) hard   c) strong   d) powerful

4. The college loses a lot of money through ………… **administration**

a) weak   b) low   c) short   d) poor

5. There is a ………… **network of roads** connecting Glasgow and English

a) complex   b) composite   c) compound   d) complicated

6. They must have a ………… **dislike** for the job.

a) sever   b) strong   c) acute   d) intense

7. We need a/ an ……….. **tape** so that we can record the film.

a) empty   b) clear   c) blank   d) clean

8. The results of the research should be used for the ………… **good** rather for individual profit.

a) public   b) popular   c) common   d) collective

9. My ……….. **intention** was to study all morning, but this turned to be impractical.

a) original   b) beginning   c) first   d) primitive

10. Polytechnics present ……….. **opportunities** to a bright young lecturer.a) prosperous   b) precious   c) flourishing   d) golden

Noun +Preposition

1. I had great **admiration** ……….. her as a writer.

a) of   b) on   c) for   d) towards

2. Many scientists believe that there is a need for greater **concentration** ……….. environmental issues.

a) over   b) on   c) at   d) about

3. She was chosen in **preference** ……….. her sister.

a) to   b) over   c) for   d) upon

4. She now has **authority** ……….. the people who used to be her boss.

a) on   b) at   c) over   d) upon

5. I've always a certain **fondness** ……….. her.

a) towards   b) of   c) for   d) in

6. She had little **success** ……….. getting new customers.

a) with   b) in   c)on   d) at

7. The main **objection** ……….. the plan was that it would cost much.

a) at   b) over   c) on   d) to

8. The high walls give the garden **protection** ……….. the wind.

a) from   b) to   c) against   d) of

9. The stereo phonic earphones can be used **in connection** ……….. the new sound system.

a) to   b) of   c) with   d) by

10. One should have **confidence** ……….. his own ability.

a) on   b) at   c) over   d) in

11. Obviously there wasn't any **point** ……….. waiting longer.

a) for   b) in   c) at   d) on