

A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF COLLOCATION IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: In the field of ELT, a growing awareness has been paid to the use of correct and appropriate word combinations. Of methods and techniques existed in the literature, the issue of lexical collocation gets a great deal of attention. However, one of the main obstacles, particularly for non-native writers (NNW), is indeterminate knowledge of word combinations. Through the acquisition of collocation, it may be possible for NNW to increase their lexical competence. The present study attempted to investigate the use of English lexical collocations in the texts written by native writers of English (NW) and non-native writers of English (NNW), and to examine whether there are any statistically significant differences between NW and NNW in terms of employing collocations in their written productions.

Keywords: collocation, grammatics, translation, language, structure.

Аннотация: В области ELT все большее внимание уделяется использованию правильных и подходящих словосочетаний. Из существующих в литературе методов и приемов вопросу лексической словосочетания уделяется большое внимание. Однако одним из главных препятствий, особенно для писателей-неносителей языка, является неопределенное знание словосочетаний. Благодаря приобретению словосочетаний NNW может повысить свою лексическую компетентность. В настоящем исследовании предпринята попытка изучить использование английских лексических словосочетаний в текстах, написанных носителями английского языка и авторами, не являющимися носителями английского языка, а также проверить, существуют ли какие-либо статистически значимые различия между NW и NNW с точки зрения использования словосочетаний. в их письменные произведения.

Ключевые слова: словосочетание, грамматика, перевод, язык, структура.

Introduction

Writing proficiency is an essential component of language competency as well as an aspiration of NNW. In addition to the fact that writing proficiency has an important place in every sphere of life, it is a leading ability particularly in scholarly writing. On the other hand, linguistic literature shows that there are some basic requirements in order to have writing fluency, one of which is the knowledge of collocations. There are some definite evidences that establish a link between native-like writing fluency and collocation knowledge of the author. One reason of foreignness in the scientific texts of NNW is shown as the lack of collocation knowledge, which NW could easily and intuitively acquire.

Materials and methods

Collocations are crucial in a variety of ways, one of which is the lexical contribution that it provides to the authors. To be more precise, there exist some studies that create a strong establish a link between lexical diversity and collocation knowledge, which further enables and make an

opportunity for authors to have more academic writings strived for (for example, Hyland). That important link between lexical diversity and collocation has led to many studies to investigate collocations which are used in academic texts by authors consciously or unconsciously [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023]. The common results indicated that collocations have been widely employed from the most basic English courses to the extreme English proficiency levels. There is nearly no way of using a language without referring to collocations because they are intricately interwoven with the language itself. That is why; you absolutely have a high chance of encountering collocations whether you are a reader, speaker, or writer.

Results and discussion

The frequency of occurrence of collocations does not make it an apparent issue for the language producers. In contrast, it is a convoluted issue requiring a huge amount of attention. The very first reason that makes collocations so indispensable for academic scholars lies behind the absolute power of collocation that allows a potential native-like written production. Because native speakers of English use “ready-made chunks” [Robins, 1967, p. 21], it is sure that a large many of non-native writers aspire to have native-like written productions, which would be impossible or at least too arduous with insufficient collocational knowledge in the process of composing a text. In order for that, not to create a scientific paper crammed with odd expressions, the author must be aware of collocations that native writers of English use in their texts. But for that, there may be no point of mentioning an academic paper which is free of inappropriate lexical bundles. The authentic detrimental effect of that would be language inappropriateness, stylistic infelicities, and foreignness to native readers. That highly possible case for non-native writers is the key problem as Fox reported. Further, Fox indicated that the fundamental trouble regarding an academic writing with full of odd expressions is of collocations but nothing else. What is more, it is a rigour issue for even very proficient non-native writers.

The literature provides insight about that errors concerning inappropriate use of collocations, among all error types, have been experienced as the most commonly by non-native speakers. Undoubtedly, these troublesome errors disrupt the transmission of knowledge to the reader, which is a situation that mars the persuasion or convincing power of the author [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023]. On account of that key fact, they must be studied if writing fluency is demanded. Nation, pertaining to low proficiency learners, stated that they have a tendency to “encode words in memory on the basis of sound and spelling rather than by association meaning” (p.3). The situation is not different for non-native writers. A paucity of collocational proficiency is associated with lexical proficiency of the writer. Similarly, collocations tie in with lexical development, says Ellis. For this, the reason why non-native writers are not able to use collocations as proficient as native writers may be because non-native writers fail to correlate words on the basis of true and specific word partnership [Sung, 2003]. Despite the obvious significance of collocations for scholarly writing and covetable need from the aspects of non-native scholars of English, it was not studied in a way that would show the differences and similarities between native and non-native academics, hence would provide valuable suggestions on how to use collocations in order for more native-like written products [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023].

Collocations are a single title but instead they are divided into four different subcategories which are as follows:

- 1) Lexical collocations: As indicated by Bahns lexical collocations do not contain clauses, infinitives, or prepositions; instead, various combinations of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Again, if you compare lexical collocations to closed class structure of grammatical collocations, it can be easily seen that lexical collocations include no subordinate element, and are composed of two equal open-class lexical items [Barhudarov, 2015, 2].
- 2) Grammatical collocations: Grammatical collocations, different from lexical ones, include a verb, a noun, and an adjective, plus a preposition, an infinitive, or a clause. The patterns of a phrasal grammatical collocations form from a lexical unit and a pattern that specifies the sub-categorization property of the head (Bentivogli & Pianta).
- 3) Solid lexical collocations: When they are compared to lexical collocations, the occurrence possibility of two words is much more rigid in solid lexical collocations while constructing a lexical word combination. In here, the lexical items have a strong bound to one another [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023]. There is such a powerful interconnection between lexical items that the native speaker hardly regards them as free combinations or separate items. *Acute pain, high winds, light drizzle* can be considered as common examples of solid lexical collocations.

It can be clearly said that there are robust differences between native and non-native writers in terms of using lexical collocations. In all categories, considerable differences existed in favour of native writers who used much more collocations than Turkish authors. However, the situation was different in the category of *noun + verb* in which Turkish authors used more collocations than their counterparts. In other words, Turkish authors used *noun + verb* collocations like “the table shows...; the study reveals...; the data indicate...etc.”, more than native authors [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023]. Meanwhile, the results put forth that native writers have a tendency of using *adjective + noun* collocations like “prefer to use *booster* (assertive words) adjectives for nouns and adverbs for verbs like “effective ways, key research, intense criticism”. As seen from the examples, native authors preferred to increase their force of statements by using boosters such as “effective, key, and intense” [Walter LaFeber, 2011, 4].

The other thing that the present study revealed is the close relation between nativity of the authors and the number of collocation which were used. It is highly apparent that native authors used much more collocations than Turkish authors, which may be refer to a sign of strong correlation between being a native speaker and non-native speaker of English [Abdurakhmonova, N.2021,2022,2023]. Prodromou, who saw collocations as a potential difficulty that non-native writers encounter, claims that a close relationship existed between collocations and native fluency. Some other researchers made experimental and/or theoretical investigations so that the relationship might be proven. One of them belongs to Martynska who carried out a study aiming to reveal collocational competence of non-native English speakers and the role of it in the process of L2 learning.

Conclusion

As last, the present study provided valuable insight for non-native writers who desire to have native-like academic writing. However, a study with larger data could provide more accurate results. Furthermore, the present study only investigated ELT in terms of detecting lexical collocations, however; because the use of word combinations may be unique to the discipline itself,

each discipline needs to be studied in terms of collocations usage in order to give detailed insight about the use of collocations.

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