

Original Paper

Collocation Teaching in Second Language

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1. What is a Collocation?

In vocabulary learning, collocation is very important and there are many definitions about it. From the definition of Oxford dictionary (2009), collocation is the fact of two or more words always been used together in a way that happens more frequently than by chance. In the work of Nesselhauf (2004), a collocation is the co-occurrence of words, and there is a distinction between co-occurrence that are frequent and those are not. Then, Sinclair (as cited in Nesselhauf, 2004) indicated collocation is the occurrence of two or more words within a distance which around four words to the left and the right of each other in a text. Finally, as Howard (1988) emphasized collocations are words often keep company with certain other words.

The definitions above help us to get the general meaning about collocations, some specific examples enable us to get more information about them. In the work of Nesselhauf (2004), the word “house” is analyzed, in sentence *when he opened the door, the dog barked*. All the words in this sentences are called collocates and the word “dog” and “barked” can constitute a collocation, because when the word “barked” appears in a sentence, the word “dog” will be found near it. According to Howard (1988), let me ask people to find a noun which might follow false in the sentence “he had a false___”, the nouns may include eye, nose, passport and so on, this combination is not a fixed expression, this is called “collocations”. Furthermore, the classification of collocations also may facilitate us to know them. According to Nesselhauf (as cited in Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008), collocations can be divided into three classes, the first is free combinations, which means both the verb and the noun can be combined freely, such as want a car. The second type is collocations, that means the noun is unrestricted but the verb is restricted, for example, take a picture. The final one is idioms, such as run out of steam (the noun and verb are used in restricted sense).

2. The Importance of Collocations

In terms of the importance of collocations, Deogratias and Kris (2014) suggested collocations is very important for overall language proficiency. According to Peacock (2012), the knowledge of

collocations will be an important aspect of language competence, and collocations are common in academic course and it is an essential organizing principle of language, so writers should know them as a whole. Then, some scholars think the learning of collocation will pose positive effect on the development of meaning. In the work of Peacock (2012), the meaning develops through words clusters but not across single word. Finally, as Hill (as cited in Nesselhauf, 2004)) emphasized collocation enables us to communicate and think more efficiently. The prefabricated units will process in brain better.

3. How to Teach Collocations?

Because collocations are common in academic course, many scholars shows their opinion about teaching collocations. In the work of Nesselhauf (2004), at the beginning of teaching collocations, the teachers should make learners more aware of the phenomenon, which means learners ought to distinguish combinations, idioms and so on. Furthermore, Nesselhauf (2004) indicate there are four principles of collocation teaching. Firstly, some repetition must be involved in collocations learning, secondly, the teaching of collocations ought to be systematically, thirdly, the present study's finding is contrasting of L1 collocations with L2 collocations, finally, different types of collocation should be treat in different ways.

One traditional way is using dictionary and selecting collocations from the dictionary to teach. According to Nesselhauf, it is important for learners to use all kinds of dictionaries including collocation dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries to learn. In the appendix 1, the material is about using a dictionary to learn collocations, it asks students to find the other words which could use with nouns which already given in the question, after that, students are required to lists all the verbs which can go with the nouns. Obviously, this will give students chances to find almost collocations even all the collocations which are related to these nouns, so they can collect more data. Therefore, this material is useful. Compared with this material, there are some limitations about the material in appendix 2, in this task, students need read a text first. Then, they will finish the fill-in-the-blank exercises. In this task, students just encounter with limited numbers of collocations because there are limited collocations in the text. In the work of Nesselhauf (2004), in an elicitation tasks, for example, fill-in-the-blank task or judgment task, students can only investigate limited number of collocations.

The three tasks in appendix 3 are focus on different types of collocations, as Nesselhauf (2004) emphasized the phraseological approach requires the elements of collocations should be in syntactic relations, for example, adjective+noun, adverb+verb, verb+noun, noun+noun. From this point of view, we know the phraseological approach as been adapted in these tasks. Task 3 in appendix 3 is related to verb-noun combinations, students are required to use the dictionary and check the verbs are often used before the nouns in the question. The advantage of this task is students will collect many collocations which related to the 10 nouns in the question, but students just practice their investigation of production

skills rather than comprehension skills., then, task 4 is focus on verb+noun+preposition, students are not required to use dictionary in this task, they need finish this all the question based on the knowledge about this kind of collocations, compared with the last task, this task enable students to practical their comprehension skills. At the end of appendix, there is a task which related to adjective+noun, question 2 in this task seems to be a corpus analysis. According to Nesselhauf (2004), a learner corpus approach enable students to discover new phenomena, and students can analysis all of collocations which present in the corpora. To sum up, the teaching materials in appendix 3 are useful and appropriate for intermediate students of EFL.

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Appendix 1

Task 2: Using a dictionary to learn collocations

By studying the text in Exercise 1.1 you can be fairly confident that the following phrase good collocations.

- design ingenious procedures
- observe someone's responses
- introduce a change
- young infants

However, you may not know what other words you could use with the nouns above. For what other verbs could you use with *procedures*? One way of finding out is by using your monolingual dictionary. Some dictionaries give you specific information about collocations.

Example:

Word	Adjectives used with the word	Verbs used with the word
problem (noun)	fundamental, major, real, serious, etc.	face, solve, create, pose, etc.

With this information you can be fairly confident that the following phrases would be correct.

- pose a serious problem
- face a major problem

In other cases the information may not be given explicitly in your dictionary, but by looking at example sentences in the dictionary you can identify collocations.

Study tip:

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Appendix 2

1.1 Look at the following text and answer the questions that follow.

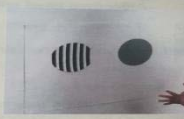
Because babies cannot explain what they are doing or tell us what they are thinking, developmental psychologists have had to design some very ingenious procedures to study the capacities of young infants. The basic method is to introduce some change in the baby's environment and observe his or her responses. For example, an investigator might present a tone or a flashing light and then see if there is a change in heart rate or if the baby turns its head or sucks more vigorously on a nipple. In some instances, the researcher will present two stimuli at the same time to determine if infants look longer at one than the other. If they do, it indicates that they can tell the stimuli apart and may indicate that they prefer one to the other.

Source: Atkinson, R.L. et al. Interaction between nature and nurture. Hildegard's Introduction to Psychology, 13 quoted in Slaght, J., Harben, P., Pallant, A. (2006). English for Academic Study: Reading and Writing Source Book Reading: Garnet Education.

1 What verbs are used before the following nouns?

Example:

a) _____	design	procedures
b) _____	change	change
c) _____	responses	responses
d) _____	stimuli	stimuli



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Appendix 3

Task 3

Task 3: Verb + noun combinations

3.1 Look in a good monolingual dictionary and check which verbs are often used before these nouns.

Example: make, have, cause

a) _____	trouble
b) _____	(a) business
c) _____	an effort
d) _____	an impact
e) _____	a connection
f) _____	an effect
g) _____	proof
h) _____	a gap
i) _____	standards
j) _____	concern

Example: require, have, provide

Example: improve, raise, meet, comply with

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Task 4


Task 4: Verb + noun + preposition

4.1 Look again at the "verb + noun" combinations from Exercise 3.1. If they were followed by a noun phrase they would need a preposition as well. What prepositions would you need after the nouns in these sentences?

Example: We're having a lot of trouble _____ the new software.

a) There is a widening gap _____ rich and poor countries.

b) Tariffs on agricultural products have a major impact _____ farmers in the developing world.



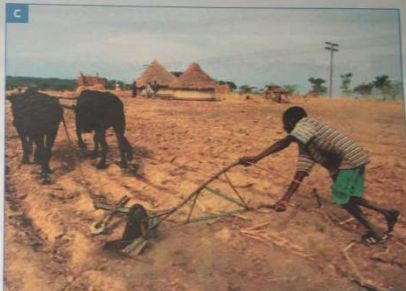
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c) There is a great deal of concern _____ the continuing drought in parts of Africa.

d) Another dry winter could have a serious effect _____ this year's harvest.

e) Some people fail to see a connection _____ subsidies to farmers in the West and poverty in the developing world.

f) We need to do business _____ the people directly producing the goods.



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Task 5

Task 5: Adjective + noun

5.1 Look in your dictionary and check which adjectives are often used before these nouns.
 Example: *slight, dramatic, significant* increase
 a) _____ problem
 b) _____ supply
 c) _____ standards

5.2 Look at these example sentences and underline the adjectives that are used with the highlighted nouns.

a) The main **purpose** of this meeting is to set sales targets for next year.

b) His sole **purpose** in attending the meeting was to gather information.

c) Everyone was there for a particular **purpose**.

d) There is a growing **demand** for organic food.

e) In the past five years there has been a huge **demand** for exotic fruit in the UK.

f) Recent **studies** show that the costs of importing food over long distances far outweigh the benefits.

g) The advice she gave was entirely of a practical **nature**.

h) It is human **nature** to want to be successful.

i) There is growing public **concern** about the high cost of public transport.

j) This issue will be discussed in greater **detail** in the next section.

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