

詞語搭配教學之選擇：教學與研究之回顧

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摘要

研究顯示出搭配詞對語言發展的教學效果有大興之勢，特別是對閱讀、寫作及口語能力，本文探討近年來對於搭配詞的幾個重要研究面向：搭配詞能力與英語能力之間的相關性及搭配詞的教學效果。不過此類研究結果對語言教學之影響卻鮮少提及，所以本文進一步探究並提出搭配詞教學研究焦點可分為三種類型：輸入、明示教學和輸出練習，建議在教學上，教學者應逐漸傾向於以自然語言為根本，調整教材編撰與課程設計之方向與內容，本文並提出許多搭配詞的教學活動，作為國內英語教師搭配詞語教學選擇之參考。

關鍵詞：詞語搭配、詞語搭配教學、語料庫、資料驅動學習、明示教學、輸入、輸出練習

Options in Collocation Instruction: An Overview of Teaching and Research

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Abstract

A substantial body of research has investigated how collocation instruction contributes to language development, particularly in reading, writing, and speaking. However, there has been very little discussion of how the knowledge provided by this research can inform language teaching. This article reviews studies that address how collocations can best be taught in terms of different theoretically motivated instructional options: (a) input, (b) explicit instruction, and (c) production practice. Furthermore, we consider a number of possibilities for the pedagogic utilization of the information it makes available, and provide an account of instructional options. The need for research that investigates how teachers integrate their professional knowledge into their personal pedagogical system is also recognized.

Keywords: collocations, collocation instruction, corpus, data-driven learning, explicit instruction, input, production practice

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I. Introduction

The global consensus that has emerged from decades of research is that the acquisition of collocations plays a crucial role in language fluency, but the knowledge of collocations is insufficient for L2 language learners (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Hill, 2003; Liu, 2006; Nation, 1990; Nesselhauf, 2003). However, in terms of defining collocations, researchers have divergent opinions about the definitions of collocations. A widely-used scheme proposed by Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1997) represents such a model that is sound theoretically, and useful pedagogically. They have divided collocations into two groups: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations. The former refers to a phrase that includes a content word and a grammatical word (e.g., *concern about*). By contrast, the latter does not consist of preposition, infinitives, or clauses, but include different combination of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs (e.g., *wind a clock*).

Subsequently, researchers have turned their attention to another question: What kind of collocation instruction works best? Several approaches have been proposed, and these approaches include *The Lexical Syllabus* (Willis, 1990), *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching* (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992), and *The Lexical Approach* (Lewis, 1993). This is also reflected in the ever-growing set of technical terms used to label — for instance, *collocations* (Palmer, 1933), *lexical collocations* and *grammatical collocations* (Benson, Benson, & Ilson, 1997), *lexical set* (Halliday, 1966), *collocation errors* (Zhang, 1993), *invalid collocations* (Al-Zahrani, 1998), and *misused collocations* (Hsu, 2002). Therefore, research has provided a substantial body of knowledge about how instructors can teach collocations. It is this question that motivates the following survey of research. Much as with any language skill, the teaching of collocations is a complex matter. Obvious variables such as proficiency, age, L1/L2 relations, motivation, learner factors, and teacher factors all affect the degree of success of collocation instruction (Chang, 2010).

One could easily conclude that the acquisition of collocations is too complex a process for straightforward connections between research and instructional practices. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for optimism in writing an overview of research on teaching collocations. One reason for optimism is that research on collocation instruction has made remarkable advances in the past decade, and it is possible to synthesize this research in ways that generate major implications for collocation instruction. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that instruction will need to vary in important ways for L2 learners depending on context, learner needs, and language proficiency levels. In this article, to maintain the focus on collocation instruction, this review will not directly address research for purposes of theory building. Thus, we examine research that has specifically addressed the effects of collocation instruction on L2 acquisition. We have chosen this area as our research focus because it is potentially relevant to language teaching. This article therefore suggests some practical ways that teachers can apply to help learners to enhance their students' collocational competence.

II. Theoretical Assumption

Because of two reasons, we have chosen three instructional options (i.e., input, explicit instruction, and production practice) and the information-processing theory, the dominant theoretical paradigm for second language acquisition (SLA) research (Lantolf, 1996), to discuss options in collocation instruction. First, researchers are primarily concerned with finding out what kind of collocation instruction works best, so they distinguish different kinds of collocation instruction. We think that the three chosen instructional options are paramount, and an account of instructional options could serve as a basis for proposing how SLA research and teaching might best inform each other. Second, the information-processing theory indicates a number of points



where collocation instruction can intervene in interlanguage development. Such discussion is of value to teachers since it provides a more systematic means by which teachers can conduct their own investigations.

Despite this general agreement on the importance of collocations notwithstanding, disagreement exists as to types of instructions needed for learning. The information-processing theory serves as a basis for classifying differences in collocation instruction in terms of options. According to the theory, the computational metaphor views L2 learners as intelligent machines that process input in a mental black box. Due to their built-in language acquisition device, learners can internalize new knowledge for use in output tasks. Thus, three positions have been put forth in the SLA literature: the input option, explicit instruction, and production practice. According to the computational model, the choice of the macro-options can be theoretically motivated by the kind of computational model discussed above.

The input option refers to pedagogical attempts to direct learners' attention to problematic aspects in the input to promote their acquisition. From VanPattern's (1993) view, this option can be referred to as structured input, whereas explicit instruction consists of any attempt to enhance learners' explicit understanding of L2 rules. Furthermore, production practice can be referred to as any attempts to create opportunities for learners to practice producing a specific target structure. These three options consist of macro-options, and each one can be further divided into more delicate micro-options. As examples, production options can require learners to make sentences or write essays by using target words. Below the macro-options are illustrated, and recent research regarding to each options is reviewed selectively, for reasons of space. One of the purposes of this review is to demonstrate several difficulties that teachers may encounter in making use of the technical knowledge provided by the recent studies.

1. The input option

This option requires learners to process input that has been specially contrived to induce comprehension of the collocational patterns. Moreover, learners who respond to the input stimuli generally are nonverbal or minimally verbal; they do not involve actually producing the structure. Acquisition occurs, as specified in the Input Hypothesis (IH), when learners attend to the new pattern or structure in input, rather than when they try to produce it (Krashen 1982, 1985). A number of recent studies have investigated the effects of input on the acquisition of collocations. No studies discussed below have incorporated any test of the learners' ability to use the target structure in communicative speech.

Several researchers have reported the necessity to incorporate collocation instruction into the L2 classroom. Thus, there are also some experimental studies in a classroom setting to investigate how the learning of collocations can benefit EFL students in Taiwan. For instance, Lin (2002) divided 89 third-year high school participants into high-achievers and low-achievers. All of them took two lessons on collocation activities, each of which lasted for about 15-20 minutes. These activities included brainstorming for collocates of a word, underlining verb-noun collocations, and matching game. Before collocation instruction, the participants were required to take a collocation test. After treatment, questionnaire results showed that both groups held positive attitudes toward collocation teaching activities. The results of two collocation tests also revealed that collocation instruction was effective in expanding collocation competence, particularly the increase in the low-achiever group's receptive collocation competence.

Tseng (2002) used two intact classes, each with 47 senior high school students in Taiwan. They were required to fill out a questionnaire about vocabulary learning, a fill-in-the-blank collocation test, and a composition before the experiment began. The experimental groups received 10-minute mini-lesson on collocation in their every English class for twelve weeks. The teaching activities included the introduction of six



major lexical collocation patterns, and collocations without L1 equivalents. She also used collocation dictionaries, and asked her students to identify collocations in the textbook. By contrast, the control group did not receive any instruction in collocations. After the collocation instruction, both groups of the participants were required to write a composition and a fill-in-the-blank collocation test. Two 50-item collocation tests contained six types of lexical collocations. The items of the tests were selected from the participants' textbook they were using, and the initial letter was provided. Although the experimental group did not exhibit obvious improvement in their performance on the composition, their vocabulary development was improved.

Similarly, Lien (2003) compared the relative effects of collocation instruction, traditional instruction, and no instruction on the reading comprehension by eighty-five university students in Taiwan. Two reading comprehension tests were administered before the treatment, and three reading comprehension tests were used at the end of one semester. She found that there was a significant positive correlation between the collocation test and the reading comprehension test. The collocation instruction group outperformed the other two groups on the mean score of the reading comprehension tests. As for the participants' preferences to the three types of instruction, eighty-eight percent of participants liked collocation instruction. Most of them held positive attitudes toward collocation instruction and affirmed the benefits of collocation instruction in enhancing their reading comprehension, and in helping them learn the usage of words. Some researchers are also concerned about whether learners consulting corpus-based input lead to better understanding and use of formulaic sequences. For instance, Chen (2007) explored the acquisition of formulaic expressions by 182 EFL students in Taiwan through applying a web-based EFL language-learning platform (IWILL), with corpus-based data used as input. She found that exposure to corpus-based input treatment, both randomly-arranged and arranged ones, had significant impacts on learners' acquisition compared to those of the control group, immediately after the treatment and last for two months for cloze test. She further indicated that another variable good control of computer literacy had small but positive effects on the acquisition of formulaic sequences through corpus-based input.

Additionally, Myers and Chang (2009) have applied multiple strategies to teaching vocabulary, with an emphasis on collocations. They conducted an experiment with 115 Taiwanese high school students. They interviewed teachers, and were engaged in classroom observations. The experiment involved a no-strategy control condition and two experimental conditions, which utilized seven different pedagogical activities. Interviews with teachers indicated increased student oral, listening, and reading proficiency. Moreover, observation data revealed that multiple strategies led to learners' active participation and animated vocabulary teaching. The post-test mean scores of the experimental group participants surpassed those of the control group in word knowledge. The findings led the researchers to suggest that multiple-strategy approaches to word and collocation learning tasks appears to be beneficial in the acquisition of L2 words and collocations.

The beneficial effects of collocation instruction are also obtained by Koosha and Jafarpour (2006). They were interested in the role of data-driven learning (DDL) in teaching collocations. To this end, 200 Iranian EFL learners who majored in English at three different universities were randomly divided into 2 groups. The control group underwent the conventional treatment on prepositions and their collocational patterns. The experimental group received treatment through the DDL instruction that was based on concordancing lines. The focus of this study was English prepositions, and the participants were tested by means of a completion test and a translation task. The mean scores of the experimental group participants ranked higher than those of the control group in collocation knowledge. The results also indicated that learners' performance on collocation of prepositions was positively related to their level of proficiency. An analysis of errors of collocations further revealed that Iranian EFL learners tended to carry over their L1 collocational patterns to their L2 production.

It is not easy to reach firm conclusion based on these studies because there are obvious design differences in



the studies. For example, the collocational patterns were different, and participant backgrounds were different. Most studies discussed in this section are limited in several ways. The size of the participants is small, and collocational patterns under study are limited. However, to date the research has not shown that structured input has any effect on unplanned language use. Perhaps the most that can be said is that it suggests that input practice may provide a useful alternative to production practice.

2. Explicit instruction

The principal choice dealing with explicit instruction is whether to explicitly teach collocations or develop activities that enable learners to discover collocations themselves. Direct explicit instruction takes the form of oral or written explanation of collocational patterns. However, in indirect instruction learners complete consciousness-raising tasks in which they analyze data illustrating the word combinations. According to DeCarrico (2001), the beginning learners need more explicit /direct vocabulary instruction before reaching a threshold level. Beyond the threshold level, students' learning of new words is taken care of by extensive reading (Coady, 1993). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the focuses of collocation instruction differ at different proficiency levels.

Studies on the application of online concordancers have proliferated in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, motivated quite explicitly by technology innovation and corpus linguistics. Several researchers are concerned with the use of computer-aided language learning (CALL) facilities, particularly web-based concordancers. For instance, some researchers have explored the possibility of utilizing online monolingual concordancers (Sun & Wang, 2003) or bilingual concordancers (Chan, 2004; Chan & Liou, 2005; Li, 2005b) to assist Taiwanese students in learning collocations. The study of Sun and Wang (2003) investigated the effectiveness of inductive and deductive teaching approaches in learning collocations at different difficulty levels. Eighty-one senior high school students in Taiwan were randomly assigned to two groups: A deductive group and an inductive group. The former was given the rule explanations and example sentences while the latter group had to induce the patterns independently from a concordancer. Results showed that the inductive group outperformed the deductive group. Sun and Wang also discovered that easy collocations were likely to be more suitable for the inductive approach with the assistance of concordancing. There was no significant difference between the two methods regarding difficult collocations. As noted by Chan and Liou (2005), however, the design of the study had several weaknesses, including the small sample size of collocations.

With gradual maturity of bilingual concordancers, Chan (2004), Chan and Liou (2005), and Li (2005) further explored to what extent a bilingual concordancer could facilitate second language vocabulary learning. Chan (2004) designed five online units centering on verb-noun collocations, and 32 non-English-major freshmen were required to take a collocation pretest prior to the experimental study. Right after a 5-week web-based collocation instruction, the students took a collocation posttest and a delayed posttest with a time lapse of two and a half months. To elicit participants' data and perception about the effectiveness of the CALL approaches, they also filled out a background questionnaire and an evaluation questionnaire. Results revealed that students progressed significantly as demonstrated in the posttest scores. Students at lower collocation levels benefited more from this instruction. Although students regressed significantly after two and a half months, in comparison with their performance in the pretest, they performed better in the delayed posttest. With regard to different approaches, students gained more with the inductive method, incorporating the use of the online concordancer, than with the deductive method. This finding reconfirms the results of Sun and Wang's (2003) study. Moreover, students' responses in the evaluation questionnaire endorsed the usefulness and convenience of a web-based collocation instruction. Chan suggested that it is crucial to equip students with appropriate concordancing skills



to smooth the pattern-inducing process.

In a follow-up study, Chan and Liou (2005) also examined the effectiveness of inductive and deductive teaching approaches in learning collocations with the help of two web-based bilingual concordancers. Seventy-four third-year senior high students participated in the study with the measurements of a pretest and a collocation posttest. Then on the basis of students' performance on the pretest, Chan and Liou further divided the students into high-achievers and low-achievers. At the end of the online learning, an evaluation questionnaire was given to the students. The results showed that learners of different vocabulary levels performed significantly differently both before and after the treatment period with mostly satisfaction about the online materials.

There are obvious problems in applying the results of these studies to language pedagogy. It is not clear, for example, if these studies included tests of communicative behavior. Another problem is that the studies often did not consist of a delayed test. Thus, it is unclear whether the advantage will be maintained over time. However, several researchers have shown that there are a number of reasons for favoring direct or indirect consciousness-raising tasks (Chan, 2004; Li, 2005; Sun & Wang, 2003).

3. Production practice

Swain (1985) argued that comprehensible input may not be sufficient for successful second language acquisition, but that opportunities for nonnative speakers to produce comprehensible output are also necessary. Swain based her conclusions on findings from studies she conducted in immersion contexts in Canada. From Swain's view, output promotes language acquisition by allowing learners to seek out relevant input with more focused attention and stretch their interlanguage capabilities. She proposed a hypothesis relating to the second language learner's production comparable to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis termed as the comprehensible Output Hypothesis for SLA.

The main choice regarding production practice is to ask learners to produce output. Devices for eliciting production of target collocations range on a continuum from highly controlled text-manipulation exercises (e.g., a rewrite English sentence task) to much freer text-creation tasks, in which learners are guided into producing their own sentences by using the target collocations. By doing so, researchers or teachers hope to push learners from controlled to automatic use of the target structure. An interesting question is whether production practice based on text manipulation or on text creation is best suited to enhance learners' control over collocational patterns.

There is still a place for production practice because it may help learner use partially acquired structures more fluently and more accurately. Indeed, the results of the Hsu (2002) study emphasized that the knowledge of collocations are critical for specific language discourses, particularly in business discourses of collocations in business discourse. He explored the effects of collocation instruction on Taiwanese EFL college students' development of language fluency. The EFL learners participated in a 48-hour intensive business English workshop that focused on the teaching of collocations. He collected data, using a language profile, students' writing, the teacher's reflective journals, pre-and post-workshop tests, student interviews, and videotapes recorded during the workshop. Hsu identified possible factors affecting students' collocation learnability. These factors consisted of L1/L2 differences, learning experience outside classrooms, teacher's instruction, degree of idiomaticity of chosen collocations, and frequency of collocations. The results showed that explicit collocation teaching could help the students learn new collocations and that there is a positive connection between the students' use of lexical collocations and their proficiency. Furthermore, he concluded that direct collocation instruction helps EFL learners acquire new collocations in the written and spoken discourses that in turn enhance their proficiency in the four language skills. The results also revealed that raising learners' awareness of



collocations and the reference of collocations were possible alternatives for future business English courses.

Lee (2003) investigated the effects of multiple strategy-based vocabulary instruction on vocabulary use in the writing of 65 ESL students. The results of a vocabulary recognition test (a fill-in-the-blank test containing 30 single words and six lexical phrases) indicated that grades 8-11 ESL students' vocabulary recognition significantly lags behind that of 79 grade 8 native English speakers at the same school. After a reading activity on bull fighting, the ESL students were required to write a composition related to this reading, and the researcher discovered that 13.19% of recognized vocabulary words were productive. The results also indicate that learners do not automatically put their recognition words and newly learned words to productive use.

However, after explicit vocabulary instruction, 63.62% of recognized words became productive, compared with 13.19% in pre-instruction writing. Furthermore, delayed writing showed no significant loss in recognized and productive words, but newly learned productive target words were significantly reduced, with 62.10% retention. Moreover, the students' post-instruction writing and delayed writing were judged by a native English-speaking teacher to be better in content than pre-instruction writing due to having richer high-level vocabulary and better sentence grammar. These findings led Lee to conclude that explicit vocabulary instruction with a focus on defining and contextualizing a target word meaning helps to convert recognition vocabulary into productive vocabulary in immediate writing and helps retention, and teachers are encouraged to give opportunities for their students to use recognition and new words in a contextually related writing task.

Chu (2006) examined the effects of output activities on EFL learners' control over target collocation. She confirmed that collocations could be easily learned provided that they are explicitly taught. Forty-six participants in her study were exposed to written input (i.e., a list of 50 English sentences together with their Chinese translations). They also had to underline words or phrases that they felt would be helpful to their subsequent tasks. Then the experimental group was required to rewrite the 50 English sentences, while the control group was given a 50-item multiple-choice test. After a second exposure to the input as well as the underlying activities, both groups received answer keys, checked their answers, and made corrections. Immediately after the treatment, the participants were given the post-test, the same as the pre-test. She found that output activities actually triggered the noticing of the collocations and further conversion of input into intake. The results led Chu to suggest that teachers should try different output activities, such as translation, and essay writing to elicit targeted collocations.

To sum up, it is uncertain that whether production practice based on text manipulation or on text creation is best suited to enhancing learners' control over collocational patterns. However, the results of the studies reviewed in this section suggest that teachers should decide when production practice can assist their students, and when it is not likely to succeed. Moreover, they may consider what kind of production practice to provide. To date, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that one kind of practice (sentence writing) works better than another (e.g., essay writing). Techniques for eliciting production of target collocational patterns range on a continuum from high controlled text-manipulation exercises (e.g., a substitution drill) to much less controlled text-creation activities (e.g., guided writing). A well-established methodological principle in current collocation instruction is to begin with text-manipulation and then move to text-creation activities. In this way teachers hope to push the learner from controlled to automatic use of the target collocations.

III. In what ways can teachers help their students learn collocations?

The preceding brief discussion of three macro-options for delivering collocation instruction together with examples of recent research has provided a basis for developing several instructional implications. There has



been abundant research in this area to support the beneficial effect of collocation instruction because such instruction can be effective in sharpening learners' collocation competence (Chan, 2004; Chan & Liou, 2005; Chu, 2006; Hsu, 2002; Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006; Lin, 2002).

The following implications for collocation instruction and curriculum design are reasonably well supported. It should be noted that any instructional setting and any group of curriculum developers must determine priorities according to learner needs, and resource constraints. Furthermore, several researchers have argued that collocation competence can serve as a major criterion to distinguish students' levels of English proficiency. Thus, teachers may put collocation as one of components on the tests when they design any language proficiency test (Chang, 2010). Therefore, the goal of the sections below is to show that these implications are all potentially important components of a language curriculum.

The review draws upon both L1 and L2 research to demonstrate support for instructional approaches that (1) emphasize the learning of collocations; (2) raise learners' awareness of collocations; (3) promote strategic learners rather than teach individual strategies; (4) convert input into intake via output activities; and (5) show collocations along with grammar. Teachers may incorporate collocation instruction into reading or writing classes to aid their students to develop higher collocation competence.

1. Emphasize the learning of collocations through the use of authentic materials

The positive correlation between learners' collocational knowledge and their writing skills (Hsu, 2007), and speaking skills (Sung, 2003), and reading comprehension (Lien, 2003), and overall English proficiency (Al-Zahrani, 1998; Bonk, 2000) has been powerfully demonstrated in both L1 and L2 context. Zhang (1993) examined the use of English collocations and their relation to the writing of native and nonnative college freshmen. He has indicated that the students' collocation knowledge correlates positively with the quality of their writing. In L1 setting, Ha (1998) has demonstrated a robust correlation between collocation test scores and general proficiency with ESL learners. Additionally, Chang (2010) reported that reading score and listening score of TOEIC have a predictive power of students' knowledge of collocations for 300 EFL university students. For the purposes of this review, it is safe to claim that there is a strong and reliable relationship between knowledge of collocation and language proficiency. McCarthy (1995) further indicates that the acquisition of collocations is fundamental in the study of vocabulary. Knowledge of appropriate collocations is part of the native speaker's competence. Adequate acquisition of collocations makes learners competent socially at the level of personal and technical communication. Therefore, teachers should encourage learners' creativity by some aids to vocabulary learning, such as extensive reading of literature, effective use of English dictionaries, and concordancing materials.

The question of course content is probably the first issue in course design. Previous studies (Chi, Wong & Wong, 1994; Hsueh, 2003; Liu, 2006; Twaddell, 1973) suggest that teachers select collocations to be taught according to certain criteria: the semantic distance between L1 and L2, need, usefulness, ease, and frequency. Studies of collocational errors reveal that collocations in the mother tongue are often translated directly into English. Teachers may emphasize areas of differences in the collocational patterns of the mother tongue and the target language. For instance, teachers should pay attention to those collocations that are linguistically distinct from the students' L1 languages (Al-Zahrani, 1998; Liu, 1999; Taiwo, 2004), and restricted collocations (Howarth, 1998). The Educator's Frequency Guide, the most comprehensive word frequency study, is a useful source to select some words that are common but may be problematic for students. Several researchers also claim that it is crucial to recycle previously learned lexical items (Conzett, 2000; Lewis, 1997, 2000; Hsu, 2005), and a minimum of perhaps ten encounters with a newly-learned word is essential ensuring its acquisition (Webb,



2007). Thus, the content may also allow the repetition of learned lexical items.

Many researchers have been well aware of the potential advantages of using authentic materials in foreign language. For example, researchers (Freeman & Holden, 1986; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Little & Singleton, 1991) have claimed that authentic materials are a motivating force for learners because they are inherently more interesting than contrived ones because of their intent to communicate a message rather than highlight target language. Authentic materials applied by teachers may consist of menus, maps, newspapers, store advertisements, travel brochures, phone books, and various pamphlets of sightseeing and tourist information -- all of which are immersing the student in a multidimensional English experience. When teachers give their students a copy of the authentic material, teachers should give their students handout including a set of questions about the contents. Moreover, a certain amount of adjustment should be made depending on students' language proficiency and the type and level of questions used in the accompanying question handout. Using a concordancer is another way of using authentic materials, and it could be used as a supplement to the question handout, or on its own, for variety. With the use of concordancers, students can explore word combinations by entering the word they want to investigate and its part of speech. Alternately, to encourage student autonomy, teachers may have students do dictionary work to find certain collocations (Chang, 2010; Huang, 2001). Dictionaries of collocations on the market such as the LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations and the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations can be of great help in drawing students' attention to collocations. Additionally, small extracts from the concordances published by Cobuild could be used to help students effectively explore the possible environments of a word.

2. Raise learners' awareness of collocations

Schmidt (1990) focused on the role of the learner's consciousness as one of the important factors of target language acquisition. He argued that the frequency and salience of target language input might be essential conditions for extracting meaning from that input. Thus, to facilitate the acquisition of collocations, teachers should include a series of classroom activities that raise their students' awareness of collocations. For instance, some exercises designed by Lewis (1997), such as Match List and "Odd Man Out" can be used to raise students' awareness of collocations. McKay (1980) also offers an inductive strategy for teaching the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic restrictions of verbs with the use of a computer corpus. Teachers who apply the strategy can present students with verbs that share the same semantic field, along with several corpus sentences that contain the verbs. By analyzing the corpus sentences that contain synonyms, students can reach generalizations about the use of a particular verb.

As suggested by Johns (1991), teachers who apply DDL approach, can abandon the role of expert and take on that of research organizer, so that students can develop inductive strategies that will assist them to learn language outside the classroom. Chen (2007) further adds that a carefully designed DDL task can lead EFL learners to restructure their interlanguage systems and to promote implicit awareness. There are other activities for building students' awareness of how words work in combination with one another: Textual analysis activities, and dictionary and matching activities. Here are examples of textual analysis tasks, and dictionary and matching activities directed at helping learners to heighten their awareness of collocations.

Examples of Textual Analysis, Dictionary and Matching Activities

- (1) Teacher could give students a list of words or phrases and ask them to find what collocates with them in the text. Teachers could also ask them to find further possible collocations with certain items in the text using a collocation dictionary and then underline the word combination (Taiwo, 2004).
- (2) Teachers may ask students to induce the patterns of collocations from concordancer lines. For instance, use



the word evidence with verbs, such as find, gather, and present. Sun and Wang (2003) and Chan (2004) have discovered that an invitation to discover rules for learners may be more motivating and effective to learners than simply giving them the rules.

- (3) Teachers could ask the students to use collocation dictionaries to find the 'odd verb out'. For example,

a. Which verb does not go with 'shame'?

acknowledge, feel, express, make, hide, overcome, admit (Answer: make)

b. Spot the odd verb

Can you find the verb which does not collocate with the noun in bold?

(a) apply for, catch, create, get, hold, hunt for, lose, take up **job** (answer: catch)

(b) acquire, brush up, enrich, learn, pick up, tell, use **language** (answer: tell)

- (4) Teachers may give the students a number of words which collocate with the same core word; the students have to guess this word. The following example illustrates the matching activities. This could be made into a game by awarding points.

Which word collocates with all the words given?

a. fried, poached, fresh, raw, frozen, grilled, smoked _____ Answer: fish

3. Promote strategic learners rather than teach individual strategies

There is now considerable research to show that the acquisition of L2 words and collocations is strongly influenced by vocabulary instruction that emphasizes the coordinated use of multiple strategies (Myers, & Chang, 2009; Lee, 2003). Such instruction combines direct teaching of several strategies while students are reading a text. The students are learning to use key strategies in effective combinations. Recent research in SLA has argued that use of specific strategies plays an important role in learning the target language (Oxford, 1996). There is general agreement among researchers that successful language learners appear to use learning strategies more frequently and in qualitatively various ways than unsuccessful learners (Ellis, 1994; Schmitt, 2000). Many approaches involving multiple strategies tend to focus on four to eight major strategies. The following six approaches are commonly referenced as effective combined-strategies instruction that enhanced vocabulary learning:

- a. Use more memory strategies that direct their attention to chunks rather than to individual words (Mangubhai, 1991)
- b. Guess from context (Liao, 2004; Wu, 2005).
- c. Focus on a word's form, the most used consolidating strategy (Wu, 2005).
- d. Raise awareness of word combinations (Chen, 2008).
- e. Memorize phrases or chunks (Chen, 2008).
- f. Use mnemonic association (Cohen & Aphek, 1981)

These approaches draw their support from research on effective strategies used by successful learners. To summarize the current research on strategic reading instruction, most contemporary discussions among vocabulary learning strategies instruction center on the use of and training in multiple strategies to enhance L2 vocabulary learning. As the multiple strategies research suggests, most researchers now see the real value in teaching strategies as combined-strategies instruction rather than as independent processes or as processes taught independently.

4. Convert input into intake via output activities



Hill (2003) asserts that teachers should present collocations as we would present individual words. He adds that learners need to know how to use new vocabulary items, which makes it necessary to know about their collocational field and contexts in which they are used. As pointed out by Nesselahuf (2003), it is production rather than comprehension of collocations that are problematic with L2 learners. Moreover, according to Swain (1985), output promotes language acquisition by allowing learners to seek out relevant input with more focused attention and stretch their interlanguage (IL) capabilities. Evidence from research also supports some of the functions of the output hypothesis. For example, Chu (2006) reported in her study that with five-year junior college students, receiving output activities led to the acquisition of collocations.

The results of the studies reviewed in this article suggest that teachers should also impart the knowledge of how the words are used (in terms of colligations, collocations, and mean senses). Learners do not automatically put their recognition vocabulary and newly learned vocabulary to productive use. Once students are explicitly taught about the possible words combinations, they should be given more opportunities to use them. Teachers should provide their students with the opportunity to utilize the rules in productive tasks, such as sentence-writing and essay writing (Wei, 1999; Woolard, 2000) to ensure maximal beneficial effects, especially in composition classes for student writers at elementary level.

The task of writing original sentences, particularly for beginning writers, encourages or guide learners to use newly learned vocabulary, which can in turn further consolidate what they have learned. Teachers may have their students started by trying the first three steps of the RDRR approach in class (Wei, 1999). First, ask your students to read or study the collocations and examples of the target words (READ); second, ask them to make one sentence with each word without looking at the examples (DON'T READ); and third, have students look at the book again carefully, and check each sentence against the collocations and examples to make necessary correction or revision (REREAD and REUSE). Other output activities can also be designed not only to raise student awareness of collocations but also to consolidate their learning.

5. Show collocations along with grammar

Grammatical rules may be useless if students do not possess patterns of lexical co-occurrence for the rules to operate on. Several researchers have argued that pedagogical treatment of collocations should be included alongside grammatical patterning (Cater, 1987; Willis, 1993). From Willis point of view, teachers might need to take more account of grammatical classes. For instance, they make statements about the ways in which words collocate with other words when they group words according to their behavior. Thus, while teaching collocations, teachers need to introduce them along with grammar (Chang, 2010). It may also be valuable to encourage students to use concordancers and good dictionaries rich in collocational examples. Collocations are being recognized increasingly by examining boards as a vital element in assessing language learners' overall proficiency (Hargreaves, 2000). Thus, teachers should design test items aiming to elicit syntactic relations between words rather than individual words when they evaluate their students' vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the multiple-choice test and collocation translation test applied in the Chang's study (2010) may be used as a measure of receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary or collocations in the classroom.

Truscott (2001) argues that errors associated with words are appealing targets for correction because independent of the context in which words appear they can be most consistently identified and understood by the teachers and can be generalized by learners. Instructors can therefore provide their students with feedback on their most frequent errors in specific combinations of words. Alternatively, it has been shown to be effective for EFL teachers to combine reading with vocabulary enhancement activities (Lien, 2003), so that teachers can draw their students' attention to specific target words for more effective vocabulary learning. Wei (1999) adds that



peer correction can be applied in helping learners to minimize collocational errors. From his view, peer correction is a student-centered procedure that provides instant feedback and reinforcement. Additionally, it lends itself to the learning of collocations because learners take the responsibility of marking exercises or quizzes and have multiple chances to reinforce what they have learned from the classes. Keeping lexical notebooks may be a good starting point because several researchers have gained convincing evidence that notebook keepers outperformed non-keepers within the class (Hoey, 2000; Hsu, 2002).

IV. Conclusion

This article addresses the relationship between language teaching and research. It also encapsulates current research on significances of collocation in ESL/EFL language acquisition and different ways of teaching collocations. We have identified a basis for both researching and conducting collocation instruction. We trace collocation errors to the neglect of conscious teaching of collocations in L2 classrooms, and other factors, such as negative first language transfer, unawareness of the semantic range and selectional restrictions of the English lexicon, and adopting the strategies of avoidance and analogy. What seems important is the fact that it is impossible for teachers to show every collocation which is used in the real context. However, teachers can raise students' consciousness on the necessity of collocation in learning English, which will facilitate students to build up abilities to use English naturally in the future. We also stress that the lexical component of language is as important as the grammatical aspect, since we cannot use structures correctly if we do not have enough vocabulary knowledge.

Furthermore, although many techniques and approaches could be employed in teaching collocations, teachers should make decision about which technique is more appropriate than the others. It is also necessary to consider what kind of research is most likely to lead to interdependence. Surprisingly, very little research has explored how teachers arrive at decisions about what collocations of words to teach, and when, and how to teach it. Such studies can also illuminate in what ways teachers interpret and personalize research findings in their finding. As indicated by Eraut (1994), teachers not only act on technical knowledge, but also transfer it through action. Very little is known about how this takes place in the classroom.

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