The Effect of Grouping and Presenting Collocations on Retention

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Abstract

The aim of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it attempts to determine the role of presenting collocations by organizing them based on (i) the keyword, (ii) topic related and (iii) grammatical aspect on retention of collocations. Secondly, it investigates the relationship between participants' general English proficiency and the presentation types on retention of collocations. Each collocation was presented in a single glossed sentence and distributed among 48 Turkish EFL learners, prospective English teachers, majoring in English at a Language Teaching department. Participants were upper-intermediate, lower-intermediate and advanced level learners. A pre- and two recall (immediate post and delayed post) collocation tests were administered to compare the effect of presentation types of collocations and their relationship between the participants' general English proficiency on retention. The results indicated a significant difference in grouping collocations based on grammatical aspect, especially for advanced and lower-intermediate learners. No significant difference was found in grouping collocations related to keyword and topic between the learners of any level on retention of collocations.

Keywords: collocation; EFL learners; grammatical aspect; keyword; retention; topic related

Introduction

Studies about English collocations have been generally developed in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, especially in the last two decades. These studies can further be divided into four subgroups according to their foci: (1) assessment of collocational knowledge (e.g., Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995 and Zughoul & Abdul-Fattah, 2003); (2) error analysis of collocations (e.g., Huang, 2001; Liu,

1999a; 1999b and Nesselhauf, 2003); (3) the correlation between collocational competence and language proficiency (e.g. Hsu, 2007; Keshavarz & Salimi, 2007; Sung, 2003, and Zhang, 1993); and (4) the effects of collocation instruction on language skills; e.g., 'listening' (Hsu & Hsu, 2007); 'reading' (Lien, 2003) and 'writing' (Seesink, 2007). However, the studies of Marton (1977), Arabski (1979) and Bahns and Eldaw (1993) mostly reveal that collocation errors of EFL learners constitute a high percentage of errors committed even by advanced learners. Researchers such as Lennon (1996), Ellis (2001), Nation (2001), Williams (2002) and Koya (2006) point out that there is a direct relationship between learners' overall language proficiency and their knowledge of collocations. For instance, Bonk (2000) studied the relationship between students' language proficiency and knowledge of lexical collocations from both receptive and productive aspects. He found out that there was a strong correlation with overall language proficiency and receptive and productive knowledge of lexical collocations.

However, inspired by the studies conducted on English collocations, it can be observed that most of them have been corpus-based and mainly descriptive. While some recent studies (McEnery & Xiao, 2006 and Nesselhauf, 2003) have focused on the important role of developing FL learners' collocational competence, others have generally dealt with theoretical issues of collocational competence and collocational violations in English (Howarth, 1998; Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006 and Matsuno & Sugiura, 2002). Another set of studies in the literature of collocations has paid attention to the importance and necessity of collocation learning (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Laufer, 1990; Lennon, 1996 and Smith, 2005) or use of collocations by foreign language (FL) learners (Fan, 2009 and Zughoul & Abdul-Fattah, 2003). Only a small minority of researchers have addressed the issue of how collocations can effectively be learned/taught in the language classroom (Oskuee, Pustchi & Salehpour, 2012 and Pirmoradian & Tabatabae, 2012). The common point of all these studies is the importance of acquiring a large number of collocations for a language learner to be able to produce and comprehend ideas accurately, fluently and naturally (Nakata, 2006).

In order to shed further light on effective learning of collocations in a FL setting, it is necessary to seek feasible ways to facilitate collocation teaching/learning. It is because of this need that the present study attempts to convey a potentially practicable classroom-based process by testing collocation awareness of FL learners. Rather than analyzing the production and use of collocations focusing on grammatical collocations (preposition + noun, verb + noun and verb + to-infinitive) and lexical collocations (noun+ verb and adjective + noun), (Farghal & Al-Hamly, 2007; Hsu, 2007) or learners' ability to produce collocation with high-frequency verbs, that is, "have, do, make, take, and give" (Juknevičiene, 2008) the present study examines three specific presentation types of collocations: (i) common keyword, (ii) topic related and (iii) grammatical aspect, inspired by the categorization of the book *English Collocation in Use* by O'Dell and McCarthy (2008). Therefore, it offers alternative and feasible ways of presenting collocations in FL classrooms.

Review of Literature

Significance of Collocation in Language Learning

The most commonly shared definitions of collocation are "the statistical tendency of words to co-occur" (Hunston, 2002, p. 12) and "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" (Sinclair, cited in Nesselhauf, 2005, p. 12). Collocations could be divided into two major groups (Benson, Evelyn & Ilson, 1986): lexical and grammatical. A lexical collocation could consist of adjectives, nouns, verbs, or adverbs, like "utterly stupid", "richly decorated", and etc. On the other hand, grammatical collocations combine a lexical word with a grammatical word; e.g., "good at" and "to be afraid that". Benson et al., (1986) further categorized grammatical collocations into eight minor groups. They are noun + preposition (*difficulty in*), noun + that clause (*reach an agreement that…*), noun + to + infinitive (*a problem to solve*), preposition + noun (*on purpose*), adjective + that clause (*delighted that*), adjective + to + infinitive (*easy to learn*), adjective + preposition (*proud of*), and verb + preposition (*consist of*).

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of collocations in FL teaching (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers & Demecheleer, 2006; Firth, 1957; Palmer, 1933; Xiao & McEnery, 2006). According to Moudraia (2001), multi-word lexical units are crucial not only in first language acquisition, but also in learning a second or foreign language. Similarly, Hill (2000) asserted that both in written and oral language "collocation is the significant key to fluency" (p. 55). Additionally, he pointed out the importance of learning words in chunks in terms of pronunciation, intonation and reading. Since collocational competence has been declared a vital element in the development of second/FL learning (Lewis, 2000; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), teaching and learning these multi-word expressions should be taken seriously.

Learners' Problems with Collocations

Foreign/second language learners' problems and errors in producing collocations have been emphasized particularly by researchers such as Hussein (1990); Gabrys-Biskup (1992) and Bahns and Eldaw (1993). Similar to the findings of the earlier studies, large-scale studies conducted to seek the use of collocation by L2 learners have also documented the difficulty non-native speakers face (Granger, 1998; Nesselhauf 2003) while producing collocations. In her study through a paper test, Granger (1998) found that non-native language learners use fewer collocations than their native-speaker counterparts do. Therefore, the related literature has proved that FL learners have difficulty in producing and using collocations. The main reason for this, as Wu, Franken and Witten (2010) asserted, is the disproportionate emphasis on grammar and neglect of vocabulary and collocation teaching. They maintained that grammar is the traditional focus of EFL curriculum since it is relatively easy to teach and assess whereas identifying a set of useful collocations is a challenging and demanding task particularly for non-native teachers of FL. Another reason for collocational errors committed by learners has been attributed (Fayez-Hossein, 1990 cited in Gitsaki & Taylor, 1997) to negative transfer from L1. FL learners are generally unfamiliar with the structure of

particular collocations, and they tend to use generic terms instead of specific ones. The collocations differ from language to language which is a concern of cross-language collocational differences. For example, English people "draw conclusions" while the Greeks "bga; zoun sumpera; smata" [take out conclusions]; and Turkish people "sonuç çıkarmak" [take out conclusions]. In English, people "go on a diet" but in Greek "ka; neiß di; aita" [do diet] and in Turkish "diyet yapmak" [do diet] are used for the same meaning (Gitsaki, 1996). Consequently, the real problem is the production of collocations rather than their comprehension (Cornelia, 1999).

Teaching/Learning Collocations

Several empirical studies, reconfirming the problems associated with the use of collocation for the non-native speakers, have turned our attention towards the acquisition process. In the past two decades, research on collocation has been focused on corpus studies, whereas a limited number of studies (Gabrys-Biskup, 1992; Hussein, 1990; Sun & Wang, 2003) have investigated the use and acquisition of collocation in EFL classroom setting. Specifically, the notion of how collocations can effectively be learnt in the EFL classroom has been analyzed in recent studies (Baleghizadeh & Ashoori, 2010; Laufer, 2011; Pirmoradian & Tabatabaei, 2012).

In the earlier studies, the collocational acquisition and comprehension processes of both native and non-native speakers of English have been identified by many linguists through empirical research. Aghbar and Tang (1991), for example, tested ESL students' comprehension of verb-noun collocations through a fill-in-the-blanks test. Their scores of semanticity (semantic/marginally semantic/not semantic), register (proper register/not proper register) and idiomaticity (idiomatic/non-idiomatic) were assessed. According to the findings, learners of low English proficiency used common verbs such as 'take', 'get', 'find' more than the collocations with other verbs.

In another study, Zhang (1993) compared native and non-native English speakers' use of collocations in their writings. According to the findings, lower level English proficiency learners used more grammatical collocations and fewer lexical collocations. Subsequently, Arnaud and Savignon (1997) designed a multiple-choice test to examine how advanced L2 learners acquire low-frequency words and multi-word lexical chunks. Their findings showed that students were more successful in producing low-frequency words than producing complex lexical units. Arnaud and Savignon (1997) claimed that this may be due to the complexity of lexical units, which some learners did not pay attention to learn. They also asserted that non-native students were unaware of the significance of collocations.

More recent studies have particularly focused on the instruction models of collocation. Sun and Wang (2003), for example, examined the relative effectiveness of inductive and deductive teaching on learning grammatical collocations at two levels of difficulty by using online concordancers. They classified collocations into two categories: easy and difficult (although no classification criteria were outlined). The results showed that learners made significant improvement on inductive collocation learning, particularly in the case of easy collocations. In another study, Chan and Liou (2005) investigated the effectiveness of explicit online instruction on improving collocational knowledge of the

learners. Through an evaluation questionnaire, they found out that learners were satisfied with the type of online instruction. Similarly, Webb and Kagimoto (2009) investigated the impact of learning collocations in a traditional classroom setting. The results of both receptive and productive post-tests revealed that contextual learning was an effective approach for learning collocations. Chan and Liou (2005) investigated the role of synonymy on learning collocation in a computer assisted language learning (CALL) setting. They classified verb–noun collocations into four categories based on the linguistic differences: (i) synonymy (*construct, build*); (ii) hypernymy (*create, compose*) and troponymy (*break, damage*); (iii) de-lexicalized verb pairs (*make, do*) and (iv) non-congruent verb pairs (*brew tea, pao cha* in Chinese). Learners' scores on de-lexicalized and non-congruent verb pairs were higher than that on synonymous, hypernymous and troponymous verb pairs.

Finally, Webb and Kagimoto (2011) studied the effects of the number of collocates per node word, the position of the node word and synonymy on learning collocations for Japanese students of English. The pre and post-tests revealed that more collocations were learned as the number of collocates per node word increased. There was no significant effect of the position of the node word, whereas synonymy had a negative effect on learning. The results of the limited number of classroom studies have indicated that explicit classroom instruction may be beneficial for language learners to achieve significant learning gains.

Although the previous studies have focused on various instruction models or different classification types, there is still a need to seek pedagogically feasible ways to promote EFL learners' collocation learning. It is this need that the current study aims to meet in designing and then applying a potentially applicable classroom-based process to raise the collocation awareness of learners. Therefore, to achieve this aim, target collocations were grouped based on O'Dell and McCarthy's (2008) categorization: common keyword, topic related, and grammatical aspect and then presented to the EFL learners.

Research Questions

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference among presenting collocations with a classification based on the (i) keyword, (ii) topic related and (iii) grammatical aspect on the retention of collocation of Turkish EFL learners?
2. Is there any relationship between the proficiency of Turkish EFL learners and their retention of collocations as a result of presenting them with a classification based on (i) the keyword, (ii) topic related and (iii) grammatical aspect?

Methodology

Participants

The population for this study included learners of EFL whose first language was Turkish. The study was conducted with 48 (18 male and 30 female) students studying English language teaching (ELT) at Gazi University, Turkey. Their ages ranged between 19 and

25. As the main criterion for the selection was to include EFL learners at various levels of proficiency, they were selected from sophomores and juniors through random sampling. Written consent forms were taken to ensure that they participated in this project voluntarily. In order to determine their proficiency level, a Standard English Proficiency test called the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), designed by Allen (1992), was run. The students were divided into three groups: lower-intermediate (LI), upper-intermediate (UI) and advanced (ADV), based on their scores on the OPT. The possible scores on this test ranged from zero to one hundred. Students scoring below 35 were assigned to the LI group (15 students), students scoring between 35 and 65 to the UI group (16 students) and the students scoring above 65 to the ADV group (17 students).

Instruments

The Oxford Placement Test

The OPT has proved to be a highly effective initial-placement instrument and a reliable means of grading students at all levels from elementary upwards, with a consistent record of predictive validity regarding examination entry (Allen, 1992). Moreover, it offers teachers the possibility of assessing a great quantity of students' English level in a quite short time (Gómez-López, Insa & Garcia-Pastor, 2010). Establishing comparable levels of proficiency is essential for comparing learners across groups. The reason why the OPT was used for determining proficiency levels is that OPT results are reported to correlate highly with the rank orders from much more elaborate and lengthy testing procedures (Edwards, 2007). Although the researchers were aware of the fact that the validity and reliability of the placement tests can be questionable, OPT was chosen among other placement tests such as IELTS and TOEFL. For instance TOEFL was not chosen because of its nature of having a strong American bias since Turkish EFL teaching is predominantly British English. The test consists of two sections, listening and grammar, which takes about an hour to complete. For the purpose of this study, the grammar section of the OPT 2 was used. It consisted of 100 multiple-choice items, in which the test takers were asked to read the stem with a blank, and then choose one of three options.

Collocation tests

Three tests of collocation as a pre- and two vocabulary recall tests (1-week delayed, and 2-weeks delayed) were used to determine the effect of grouping collocations on retention. Each test consisted of two parts which assessed the learners' both receptive and productive knowledge of collocation. The first part, designed to measure the productive knowledge of collocations, was in the form of gap-filling test. When the students finished the first part, and all the answer sheets were collected by the teacher, the second part was given to evaluate the participants' receptive knowledge of collocation through multiple-choice items. There were 300 collocations asked in the pre-test. Depending on the results of the pre-test, only the collocations that were unknown to the learners were selected. This eliminated 174 collocations out of 300. The study consisted of 126 collocations with 42 collocations in each group in seven sets.

In the two recall tests (immediate and delayed) the researchers measured the same 126 target collocations, but they were used in different contexts. The maximum possible score for each part of the test was 126.

In order to estimate the reliability of the receptive parts of the tests, they were piloted and Cronbach's α formula was used. Using the formula, the r-value for the pre-test was approximately 0.79, and for the immediate and delayed post-tests were 0.81 and 0.78. Thus, the receptive parts of the tests could be assumed reliable.

Target Collocation Selection

For the classification of collocations chosen for the study, the book *English Collocation in Use* by O'Dell and McCarthy (2008) was used. Each collocation was checked again in the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*. Target collocations were selected primarily based on presumptions made by researchers such as Jacobs, DuFon, and Fong (1994), and Watanabe (1997) (as cited in Goudarzi & Moini, 2012). According to their claim, if particular words have not been explained or given in the glossary part of a text book, they would be new to learners. The target collocations were grouped as follows (the complete list is in the Appendix):

Grammatical aspects of collocations: (42 collocations)
    a) Intensifying adverbs:
    (*utterly devastated, bitterly regret, etc.*)
    b) Everyday verbs
    (*do damage, go bald, become extinct etc.*)

Topic related collocations: (42 collocations)
(*appear in court, float the company, reach a verdict, ceased trading, etc.*)

Collocations based on keyword: (42 collocations)
(*feel shame, brush up language, etc.*)

Procedures

Based on students' scores on the OPT, they were divided into three proficiency levels: LI, UI and ADV groups and then they were pre-tested. The purpose of pre-testing was two-fold: to ascertain participants' prior knowledge of the target collocations to be introduced and to determine the homogeneity of the groups at the beginning of the experiment. For this reason, the collocations known by the learners were eliminated.

Classroom instruction was conducted within three sessions of treatment in 50-minute periods. Participants were presented the seven sets of collocations, followed by their translations and example sentences. All the participants were presented with the same sets of collocations by the same instructor. To prevent the possibility of an order effect, the sets of collocations were distributed in seven different orders. Table 1 sums up the presentation procedures.

Table 1. Presentation of collocations for advanced, upper intermediate and lower intermediate groups

Session 1 (Day 1): *grammatical aspect*: set 1 (intensifying adverbs) + set 2 (collocations with make) + set 3 (collocations with do) + set 4 (collocations with become) + set 5 (collocations with go) + set 6 (collocations with have) + set 7 (collocations with take)
Session 2 (Day 2): *topic related*: set 1 (law and punishment) + set 2 (business) + set 3 (travel) + set 4 (weather) + set 5 (relationships), set 6 (feelings and emotions), set 7 (study and learning.)
Session 3 (Day 3): *keyword*: set 1 (shame) + set 2 (language) + set 3 (damage) + set 4 (pleasure) + set 5 (silence) + set 6 (job) + set 7 (teeth)

Collocation sets were presented in a controlled manner in terms of time and order to provide equal study conditions for each level of learners. The rationale for presenting collocations in glossed sentences was to eliminate factors that may affect word difficulty arising from specificity and register constraints (Laufer, 1997). Giving the words in a context may also allow learners to notice differences in the usage of synonyms and may help with recall (Xiao & McEnery, 2006).

Glossed sentences for the collocations *gnash one's teeth* and *pick up a language* are given in the following example:

gnash one's teeth   *dişlerini gıcırdatmak*
When Jonah found out he was not going to be promoted, **he gnashed his teeth**.
pick up a language   *yabancı dili kapmak*
Toddlers can **pick up** foreign **languages** in 20 months.

After presenting the target collocations, all the groups took two vocabulary recall tests (1-week-delayed, and 2-week-delayed) to determine the retention of the collocations. Kruskal-Wallis, a non-parametric analysis of variance test, was used for each type of classification in order to determine the differences among the presentation types. In the case of finding significant differences among any types of grouping, Mann-Whitney U test was applied to determine for which proficiency levels the difference was found.

Results

Regarding the first research question, the data analysis of the Kruskal-Wallis test, as tabulated in Table 2, showed significant differences between immediate and delayed post-test scores in grouping collocations based on grammatical aspect among three proficiency levels (ADV, UI and LI) ($X^{2(2)}$=22.932, p<.05).

Table 2. Differences between immediate and delayed post-test scores in grouping collocations based on grammatical aspect among ADV, UI and LI students (Ranks)

	group	N	Mean Rank
g_ks	LI	15	37.53
	UI	16	13.94
	ADV	17	22.94
	Total	48	

Test Statistics[a,b]	
	g_ks
Chi-Square	22.932
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: group	

However, the results of Kruskal Wallis test ($X^{2(2)}=0.159, p>.05$) showed no statistically significant difference among three proficiency level students' immediate and delayed post-test scores in grouping collocations by keyword. In other words, grouping collocations based on keyword did not have any significant effect on the retention of collocations for any level of students. Similarly, no significant difference was found among LI, UI and ADV students' immediate and delayed post-test scores with a presentation of topic related collocations ($X^{\uparrow 2(2)}=3.938, p>.05$).

To address the second research question, a Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine whether there were significant differences among the students of ADV, UI and LI proficiency levels in terms of grouping collocations by grammatical aspect. The immediate post and delayed post-test scores of LI and UI proficiency level students indicated a statistically significant difference (U=9.000, p<.05). As is shown in Table 3, this difference was found in favor of LI proficiency level students. This means that LI proficiency level students were more successful in learning and storing collocations when they were presented with collocations based on the grammatical aspect.

Table 3. Analysis between LI and UI proficiency levels for grammatical aspect (Ranks)

	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
G_ks	LI	15	23.40	351.00
	UI	16	9.06	145.00
	Total	31		

Test Statistics[b]	
	G_ks
Mann-Whitney U	9.000
Wilcoxon W	145.000
Z	-4.449
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000[a]

To examine potential differences among the two groups (LI and UI), a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. When the LI and ADV proficiency level students' immediate and delayed post-test scores were analyzed, a significant difference was found between the two groups (Table 4). LI learners got higher scores when compared to ADV students with the significant value of U=43.000, p<.05.

Table 4. Analysis between LI-ADV proficiency levels for grammatical aspect (Ranks)

	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
G_ks	LI	15	22.13	332.00
	Adv	17	11.53	196.00
	Total	32		

Test Statistics[b]	
	G_ks
Mann-Whitney U	43.000
Wilcoxon W	196.000
Z	-3.250
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.001[a]

The Mann-Whitney U test scores (see Table 5) indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between UI and ADV proficiency level students' immediate and delayed post-test scores (U=78.000, p<.05). ADV proficiency level students' scores were higher than those of the UI level students when the collocations were presented through the grammatical aspect.

Table 5. Analysis between UI and ADV proficiency levels for grammatical aspect (Ranks)

	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks

G_ks	UI	16	13.38	214.00
	ADV	17	20.41	347.00
	Total	33		

Test Statistics[b]	
	G_ks
Mann-Whitney U	78.000
Wilcoxon W	214.000
Z	-.,129
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.033
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.037[a]

Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that presenting collocations with a classification based on the keyword, topic-related and grammatical aspect showed gains in terms of their retention for all the three levels of the learners who had difficulties particularly in producing them. Grouping collocations based on the grammatical aspect had a significant effect on retention of collocations in favor of ADV and LI learners. The collocations included in the grammatical type group were generally everyday verbs such as "have, take, do, make, go and become" (see the Appendix)). This finding partially matches with Aghbar and Tang's (1991) study, which indicates that low proficiency-level learners use common verbs such as 'take', 'get', 'find' more easily. However, in the present study, advanced-level learners also made significant gains in terms of remembering collocations based on the grammatical aspect. Similarly, Zhang (1993) found that lower-level English proficiency learners use more grammatical collocations and fewer lexical collocations, whereas intermediate-level learners produce more lexical collocations than grammatical ones. This finding of the present study can also be supported by Williams (2002) who claimed that collocation instruction is motivating especially for upper level learners.

The comparison of the two recall tests scores indicated that students had considerable gains when collocations were presented by grouping them both topically and by keyword during the recognition process, which was tested through the immediate post-test. However, the delayed post-test scores revealed that they were more successful when collocations were grouped by the grammatical aspect, particularly in the recognition process.

According to the results, the learners did not make significant gains when collocations were presented by grouping them based on topic. This finding may be in line with previous research on learning words in semantic sets if it is assumed that this claim is also true for collocation. The studies conducted by the scholars such as Nation (2000), Tinkham (1993), Waring (1997) and Schneider et al. (2002) revealed that learning words in sets with related meanings may have a negative effect on learning. Similarly, in the current study the collocations included in the topic related classification such as "enroll on a course", "receive education" and "withdraw from the course" under the topic of *education* (see the Appendix) were the lexical chunks that caused difficulty for the learners to remember.

Conclusion and Implications

The present study has reviewed previous researchers' suggestions of how to raise learners' awareness of the importance of collocations in foreign/second language learning. In line with previous research, this study also indicates that even advanced-level learners may have difficulty in producing collocations. Collocations usually "pose no specific perception problem" (Biskup, 1992, p. 87), and are therefore frequently unnoticed by learners. Consequently, they may be difficult for later recall. It is necessary to find clear and efficient ways that lead to internalizing and learning them. However, how to choose and present collocations in the classroom is not clearly known by language teachers. In order to offer an applicable suggestion for this problem, this study has attempted to investigate a presentation type by grouping collocations with different combinations such as topic related, based on key word and grammatical aspect. The results of the study draw an important conclusion that learners from different language proficiencies may get benefit from different presentation types. By categorizing or grouping collocations teacher-researchers can benefit to find new insights and directions while coping with a wide variety of collocations.

The findings can also serve as new guidelines for conducting future classroom-based research. First, FL teachers should be aware of the difficulties learners face in the development of their language competence. These problems are supposed to be the result of lack of collocational knowledge in ESL/EFL learning (Hoey, 2000; McEnery & Xiao, 2006; Nesselhauf, 2003; Partington, 1998). It should be known that "a language can neither be adequately understood nor fluently produced on a word-by-word or purely grammar-focused basis" (Farrokh, 2012). In other words, the necessity of collocational knowledge to language learning should be well established.

Second, teachers should integrate practice into theory while teaching word combinations to help language learners develop their vocabulary knowledge. However, there are plentiful collocations and it is impossible to teach them all in the classroom. While the number of collocations is considerable, we need to bear in mind that not all of the tens of thousands of collocations have to be learned. Special attention needs to be paid to raising students' awareness of how words combine with one another so that they can concentrate on developing their collocational competence in and outside the classroom. Clear and explicit presentation is needed to provide guidance in building students' awareness (Hill, 2000). This study was inspired by O'Dell & McCarthy's (2008) classification, but teachers can try different forms or presentation types in order to help the learners develop effective strategies of learning and storing collocations.

Obviously, the suggestions made in this section will not only have to be confirmed by further analysis (including research on other types of grouping or organizing such as grammatical and lexical collocation types and on other language pairs), but will also have to be tested as to their pedagogical effectiveness. Teachers should be open to new insights in organizing and presenting collocations supported by pedagogical implications. This study presented collocations in glossed sentences; however, they may also be presented in context or in isolated forms. The presentation of the collocations may be supported with different activities. These activities need to be interactive and student-centered to encourage students' initiative and maximize feedback. For example,

it might be helpful for lower-level learners to organize their collocation boxes by topic (in the same order as their coursebooks)–such as jobs, family and food. Intermediate learners may prefer to organize by keyword–work, holiday, etc.–-and advanced students by grammatical structure -verb + noun, noun + adjective, etc. With collocations organized by topic, learners can conduct a survey among their classmates and follow it up with a written or oral report. With collocations organized by keyword, learners can be given a set of cards with the collocations written on them that they have to put into some kind of chronological order. They can then use the cards to write a story. Additionally, various approaches and materials could be implemented such as using dictionaries, corpus and concordancers, input and output tasks through authentic texts, particularly to minimize the learners' collocational errors. Therefore, a foreign/second language teacher should have a decisive role on the planning of the process and active use of curriculum (Perry, 2003).

Trying to find better methodologies and to develop strategies for the foreign/second language learners to teach/learn collocations is an ongoing challenge for the teachers and researchers. The findings of the present study are supposed to help teachers to overcome EFL students' problems in acquiring collocations by giving some clues and procedures of organizing collocations. Considering the lack of comparable data, an effective strategy appears to be a closer analysis of different ways of organization and classification of collocations. Hence, further larger-scale research could investigate this particular issue.

Limitations

This study has also some limitations and suggestions for further studies. Firstly, this study was limited in scope and conducted with a limited number of learners of different proficiency levels who studied only a limited number of collocations. The findings need to be verified with different age groups and a larger repertoire of collocations.

Secondly, the study has focused only on the impact of presenting the collocations with three different classification modes. Single glossed sentences were used for this presentation. However, this study did not offer any teaching methods or activities. Various techniques and activities for presenting the collocations may give us a better understanding of these phenomena. In addition, the model adopted in this study involved a quasi-experimental approach. A future study could be conducted with a controlled and experimental group design.

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Appendix

TARGET COLLOCATIONS

I. Grammatical aspects of collocations		
A. Intensifying adverbs		
absolutely stupid		
utterly devastated		
bitterly regret		
highly competitive		
deeply concerned		
ridiculously cheap		
B. Everyday verbs with		
Make	**Do**	**Go**
make arrangements for	do your hair	go blind
make a change	do someone a favour	go dark
make an excuse	do an experiment	go yellow
make friends	do damage	go bald
make progress	do your best	go deaf
make a contribution to	do harm	go grey
Become	**Have**	**Take**
become pregnant	have a chat	take a risk
become involved	have an argument	take advantage of
become depressed	have a look	take action

become extinct	have a go	take a chance
become violent	have a feeling	take an interest
become homeless	have difficulty	take a liking to

II. Topic related collocations

Law and Punishment	Business
observe the law	set up a business
comply with the regulations	win a contract
appear in court	float the company
reach a verdict	ceased trading
bend the rules	sales figures
face a heavy fine	run a business

Travel	Weather
overnight journey	pouring with rain
in-flight entertainment	patches of fog
domestic flights	hard frost
boarded the plane	strong sun
budget accommodation	weather deteriorates
fully booked	thick fog

Relationships	Feelings and Emotions
strike up a friendship	blissfully happy
spoil a friendship	deeply depressed
keep in touch	bitterly disappointed
have an affair	loose temper
desperately in love	highly emotional

love at first sight	seething with anger

Study and learning

carry out a research project	
enroll on a course	
further education	
receive education	
give a lecture	
withdraw from the course	

III. Collocations based on keyword

Shame .	Language	Damage
acknowledge shame	acquire language	assess damage
feel shame	brush up language	cause damage
express shame	enrich language	mend damage
hide shame	learn language	repair damage
overcome shame	pick up language	suffer damage
admit shame	use language	sustain damage
Pleasure	**Silence**	**Job**
derive pleasure	disturb silence	apply for job
find pleasure	interrupt silence	create job
give pleasure	maintain silence	hold job
pursue pleasure	observe silence	hunt for job
enhance pleasure	pierce silence	lose job

savour pleasure	reduce to silence	take up job
Teeth		
brush teeth		
cap teeth		
drill teeth		
fill teeth		
gnash teeth		
grit teeth		