SOME APPROACHES TO TEACHING LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS

(illustrated by everyday and sport collocations)

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Abstract

The present article deals with the word combinability and the importance of word co-occurrence while learning the English language. The importance of a word comprehension not as a separate lexical unit but as a part of a phrasal item is recognized in many scientific articles written by Richards, J. and Schmidt, R., Willis D., Mackin, R., the latter being broadly cited in a great number of modern student books focused on the methods of English language teaching. While designing Students' English Books and the authors, those who are not English native speakers, pay little attention to such an important point as word collocations. This leads to poor results when learners are to take the examination in English as a foreign language or write a test to obtain a certificate of a corresponding level. The authors have analyzed the available Pupil's books designed for pupils of Ukrainian secondary schools and recommended by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine. Among them there are books issued by both national publishers and foreign ones. Some samples of tests were analyzed as well as the authentic texts taken from the Internet resources, newspapers and journals. The article contains some useful tips for teachers of English as a foreign language. For those who are going to study English independently, we offer some approaches to mastering the vocabulary using the available printed and e-dictionaries.

Key words: English learners, exercises and drills, vocabulary, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, novel approaches.

Introduction

The necessity of learning words in word combinations is recognized by teachers who have been teaching English as a foreign language all over the world. The importance of a word comprehension not as a separate lexical unit but as a part of a phrasal item is recognized in articles and scientific papers written by Lewis Michel, Richards, J. and Schmidt, R., Willis, D., Mackin, R. (Lewis, 1993; O'Dell, McCarthy, 2008; Richards, & Schmidt, 1983; Mackin, 1997), the latter being broadly cited in a great number of modern students books focused on the methods of English language teaching. It has become the obvious fact that learning a separate word especially polysemous one doesn't ensure the ability to use it properly in one's

speech. The available monolingual English dictionaries, like Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, are very useful but they are not suitable for beginners. The dictionaries like Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English are meant for advanced learners, teachers or interpreters. While designing Pupil or Students' English Books and Manuals the authors, those who are not English native speakers, pay little attention to such an important point as word collocations. This leads to poor results when learners are to take the examination in English as a foreign language or write a test to obtain a certificate of any level. To solve this problem, the most common collocations should be included in Pupil's Books as a part of essential vocabulary.

The aim of the paper is to show some approaches to mastering the vocabulary, using the available printed and e-dictionaries and to offer some useful tips for teachers of English as a foreign language for those who are going to study English independently.

General overview of collocations and the proper word combination

There is nearly no way of using a language without referring to collocations because they are intricately interwoven with the language itself. That is why; you absolutely have a high chance of encountering collocations whether you are a reader, speaker, or writer (Demir, 2017).

The standard view divides the language into grammar (structure) and vocabulary (words). The category of words is familiar; it is old-fashioned vocabulary, and is found listed and explained in even the most unsatisfactory dictionaries. Words which can stand alone are lexical units, as are words where a single substitution produces a completely new meaning. Unsurprisingly, this category is by far the largest of the four categories in lexicon. The most fundamental linguistic insight is that much of the lexicon consists of complex lexical units of different kinds such as phrasal units, idioms, word expressions, etc. Words are the largest and most familiar category but it is the other categories which provide the novelty and pedagogic challenge which is the subject to the article. There is a relatively small group of lexical units which is located somewhere between words and the major complex word categories. *Teamwork* is conventionally written as one word, while *team success* is written as two; the sport term *firing point* (shooting) cannot be changed into *firing dot / mark / location / spot / position / place,* etc., the expression *to make one's mind* has no similar expressions *to make one's opinion / thought / sentiment / brain / head,* etc. Sport slogan combinations such as *Fast and Furious, Team First, Alive and Kicking, Grit and Grind, Fearless and True* are, despite logical considerations, not normally reversible: *Furious and Fast, First Team, Kicking and Alive, Grind and Grid, True and Fearless*. These complex word units are polywords, arbitrary combinations, a sort of mini-idiom.

A collocation is one of the two central specifically linguistic ideas of the article. Collocations are the readily observable phenomenon where by certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency. They range from fully fixed, e.g.: *an open goal* (*goal* – 1 wooden frame into which a ball is kicked / hit), *an own goal,*

a decisive goal, a wining goal, an equalizing goal (*goal* – 2 point scored in a game) through relatively fixed, e.g.: 1 *a wooden / opposite goal*, 2 *a brilliant / excellent / good / great / spectacular / stunning / superb / well-taken / scrappy / soft / important / useful / vital goal* to a completely new ones. It is by no means the case when two words co-occur, they collocate.

Many of the most interesting collocations, however, are not fully fixed, but are partnerships with as many as which can be filled by a restricted number of partner-words.

Another major category of lexical units is expressions. Fixed expressions have a special status in any language. The category is sometimes divided into those expressions which are fully fixed, and others which are the semi-fixed "frames" with "slots" which may be filled in a limited number of ways.

Language teaching has always recognized some types of fixed expressions. Those which have featured most in teaching materials are: everyday greetings: *How do you do?, How are you?, See you tomorrow!, Nice to meet you!, Best wishes!*; phrases of politeness: *Thank you very much indeed., Make yourself at home., Bless you!, Can I help you?, Help yourself!, Not at all. Don't mention it.*; commands and orders: *At my command!, As you were!, By twos number!, Ready, steady, go!, Line up!, Fall in!, Fall out!*; idioms – especially of picturesque kind: *a path strewn with roses, to give the palm to, to carry off the palm, a dirty game, a fair play, to win on points, a winning game, to have the game in one's hands, game set and match, Olympic spirit, to play fast and loose*.

The English language has, however, been seen as relatively marginal to learners' needs – the first three categories have only been considered important for learners in a native speaker environment such as private language schools in Britain or students in the US, while the last category is usually seen as the icing on the cake for learners who can already "say what they mean". It has also been frequently easy to criticize the actual language taught in these categories as dated, not what people really say, inappropriate for non-native users, ethnocentric and for a host of other, often valid reasons.

Fully fixed expressions are comparatively rare, and usually they are not long, often without verbs in the spoken language for managing everyday situations. The following is a perfectly believable response, made up of the fully fixed expressions: *Not to bad, thanks.; Good luck!, Many happy returns*. In contrast, there is a great number of semi-fixed expressions and these can be found widely in both spoken and written language. Many different types desert attention (Lewis, 1993), for example:

1. Practically fixed expressions, where you can do some minor variations: *Pleased to meet you / him / her / them. Make yourself / yourselves / ourselves at home! It's / that's great!*

2. Everyday spoken sentences with a simple gap: *Good luck in ..., Thank you for a ...evening. Have a ... journey. Nothing's going right in my ..., I am pleased to ... it, It is worth the ..., Somebody is good / bad at …, Somebody is fed up with… .*

3. The beginning of a sentence which can be finished in many ways: *It's really easy / difficult / impossible / annoying / dangerous / safe / stupid / cheap / expensive / nice / good / wonderful / terrible / surprising /* etc., *somebody feels well / exited / tired / worried / depressed / miserable etc.*

4. Writing a formal letter or opening a paragraph in an academic paper, more extended frames are used, such as: *Over the past few years…, Apart from the negative /*

positive impact …, The three graphs provide an overview of …, The diagrams below show …, An online resource provides …, I am writing with reference to…, Last but not least …, It is important to point out that …, To sum up ….

Traditional linguistics has concerned itself with possible sentences, but, as we shall see, not all possible have the same status.

Like Stephen D. Krashen's Natural Approach (Demir, 2017), and in the tradition of D. A. Wilkins' Communicative Approach (Willis, 1990), the Lexical Approach developed by Michel Lewis (Lewis, 1993) places communication of meaning at the heart of language learning. This leads to the emphasis on the main carrier of meaning, i.e. vocabulary. The concept of a large vocabulary is extended from words to lexis, but the essential idea is that fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed and semi-fixed prefabricated items, which are available as the foundation for any linguistic novelty or creativity. Grammatical knowledge permits the creative re-combination of lexis in new and imaginative ways, but it cannot begin to be useful in that role until the learner has a sufficiently large mental lexicon to which grammatical knowledge can be applied.

It may be helpful to provide a checklist of some of the changes in both content and methodology of teaching English lexical collocations.

Michael Lewis listed areas where the lexical approach pays more attention and areas that are not as much concerned in the following table:

More attention will be paid to: lexis – different kinds of multi-word chunks; specific language areas not previously standard in many EFL texts; listening and reading; activities based on L1 / L2 comparisons and translation; the use of the dictionary as a source for active learning; probable rather than possible English; organizing learners' notebooks to reveal patterns and aid retrieval; the language which learners may meet outside the classroom; preparing learners to get maximum benefit from the text.

Less attention will be paid to: sentence grammar – single sentence gap-fill and transformation practices; uncollocated nouns; indiscriminate recording of "new words"; talking in L2 for the sake of it because you claim to use "a communicative approach" (Lewis, 2006).

Vocabulary is more than words

There is empirical evidence to support the fact that making use of concordances to gain access to the pattern and use of the most frequent words in the language in conjunction with their pattern of uses, can improve their language competence and learners" command of collocation can influence their performance on different language skills and components (Belz, 2008)

The understanding that language does not consist of grammar and words, and that much of our mental lexicon is stored as prefabricated multi-word "chunks" is far from a trivial observation. It requires a revision of some cherished beliefs. Nation I. S. P. (Nation, 1990: 12), writing as late as 1990 in *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*, suggests:

"...evidence from the few frequency count of spoken English indicates that in spoken English a small number of words accounts for a very large proportion of spoken language .... The first 2000 words covered almost 99 per cent of the material. About 5 per cent of these very frequent words in spoken English were not among the most frequent words in written English. Clearly, to speak English it is not necessary to have a large vocabulary. In developing learners' spoken English vocabulary it is best to give learners practice in being able to say a lot using a small number of words".

This passage deserves comment, for it contains a spectacular misjudgment, and raises an important question. Mainly speech consists of certain highly-frequent words – true. Clearly, to speak English, it is not necessary to have a large vocabulary – false! Nation I. S. P. equates "*a large vocabulary*" with "*knowing a lot of words*" (Nation, 1990: 12). But this cannot be true; educated speakers can talk fluently and effectively about most things, including highly complex topics. If the spoken lexicon was so small, there would be great areas of experience about which one could write but not speak. Although this may be true for emotional reasons, we do not meet people who say: "*For linguistic reasons I can write about it, but I can't talk about it*". To speak English well a large lexicon is needed. That lexicon is different from the comparable lexicon of the written language, which consists largely of rare words. The spoken lexicon consists of many prefabricated, but arbitrary chunks, apparently made of the most frequent words of the language.

English is not the sounds, but the myriad of combinations which can be made from those sounds, but the actual combinations which exist. The sounds are the possible way of breaking the language down, not building it up. We can break language into sounds, morphemes, words, sentences; but words are no more the basic units out of which English is "built" than sounds, letters or morphemes. Words are simply one possible analytic tool, admittedly one which proves exceptionally useful for many purposes. But words are in no sense the basic components.

Nation I. S. P. urges: "*In developing learners' spoken English vocabulary it is best to give learners practice in being able to say a lot using a small number of words*" (Nation, 1990: 9).

While we can endorse the suggestion, it inevitably poses the question: how? Two implications are:

1. It's possible to learn to speak English well from exclusively written input materials, nor to write well from spoken input materials. The languages of speech and writing are simply too different from each other for this to be possible. This endorses the view expressed by Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. in *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (Carter & McCarthy, 1988):

"There is little point of agonizing over interactive features of informal spoken British English grammar if such features simply do not occur in the target variety. This goes alongside our view that there is equally little point in basing grammar teaching exclusively on written models if the goal is to encourage speaking skills."

2. It's impossible to learn to speak well by practicing the words, as Nation I. S. P. (Nation, 1990: 12) seems to suggest; learners need input rich in the prefabricated chunks, which they notice as items deserving special attention. Some combinations of words have a different status in the language in other superficially

similar combinations. This is not obvious for learners, and is frequently not remarked upon by teachers.

Verbal collocation patterns

Collocations are those combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency. Collocations co-occur, but not all words which co-occur are collocations. We need to explore the idea of collocation more precisely. The observation about restrictions on possible substitution for synonyms leads to a new definition of a two-word collocation: a pair of words is considered a collocation if one of the words significantly prefers a particular lexical realization of the concept the other represents (Pearce, 2006).

In spite of some divergence in approaches to mastering the vocabulary and its proper using in speech, we are convinced that to speak English fluently, especially the colloquial language, a learner should be acquainted with main word combination patterns inherent to the studied language. We paid special attention to verbal collocations in Modern English. The studied patterns present in general the word combination structure containing Modern English verbs. Since the main aim is practical mastering of proper idiomatic English we suggest two following criteria: 1) conditionality of a verb notion by the collocation structure and 2) frequency of a verb using considering a given notion in a collocation of a definite structure. Across the dictionaries and authentic texts we were able to find as many as 22 verb patterns varying in the usage. Some of them, the most common are presented below.

A. **Verb + 0, verb + adverb**. This pattern presents the cases where a verb is used without any word or with an adverb. Let's have a look at the collocation with the verb to **pass**: 1 [move past, go by]; *pass in some manner (quickly, slowly, once, again and again, always, etc.)*; 2 [come to an end, die]; *the pain, anger, crisis, etc. passes*; 3 [be examined and accepted or approved]; *the bill, measure, law, etc. passed*; 4 [let go without notice]; let the remark, answer, question, etc. pass.

B. **Verb + preposition + noun**. 1 [move past, go by]; *pass somewhere (between, in front of, behind, over, through, to, from ... to, into)*; 2 [undergo, live through]; *pass through sth. (hard times, terrible experience, hardships, changes)*; 3 [come to an end, disappear]; *pass (from memory, into disuse, out of sight)*.

C. **Verb + noun, verb + noun + adverb**. This pattern corresponds to the cases where a verb reveals its notion while being used alongside with the following noun. Here the word combinations like **noun + noun** are taken as a single unit as well as **adjective + noun**. 1 [move past, go by]; *pass somebody / something (an opposite, a goal, a post)*; 2 [transfer, convey from one person, hand to another]; *pass the ball, red stick, hockey puck*; 3 [spend, live during a portion of time]; *pass some time (evening, tough times, a year abroad)*; [achieve the required standard]; *pass something (a test, resolution, law)*.

D. **Verb + noun + preposition + noun**. This pattern can be changed to **preposition + noun**. 1 [cause to go, move over, through]; *pass the ball somewhere (from hand to hand, out of the goal, over the net)*.

E. **Link + participle past**. The pattern can be used with the infinitive: *the ball was passed to reach the goal*. Usually you can find the pattern in passive structures.

F. **Verb + noun + preposition + verb_{ing}** or **verb + preposition + noun + preposition + verb_{ing}**: *pass long time in performing dribbling; pass hours in kicking the ball*.

G. **Verb + noun + verb_{ing}**. This word combination can be followed by a noun: *pass (free, spare) time playing soccer, pass long hours practicing kicks*.

H. **Verb + participle past.** The word studied is usually followed by the negative meaning [go unchallenged]; *pass in some manner (unnoticed, unobserved, unseen, unmentioned, unheard, etc.)*.

I. **Verb + noun + noun**. As the first noun or a pronoun is often used: *pass me the ball, puck, stick, bat, etc*.

The verb collocation patterns mentioned above are not even in their frequency in spoken English. The patterns of plain word combinations can be two-, three-, and four-component, though, as we studied only the patterns containing essential components, the number of them do not go beyond three as the forth one is not essential but possible.

If you compare the following word combinations: *pass* + **noun** + **prep** + **noun**: pass sth. to sb. – *pass the ball to the goalkeeper*; *pass* + **noun** + **prep** + **prep** + **noun**: pass sth. back to sb. – *pass the ball back to the goalkeeper*; *pass* + **adv** + **prep** + **noun**: pass slowly along sth. - *pass slowly along the lane*; - pass the time of day (with somebody); - pass into something; - pass somebody / something / yourself off as somebody / something, you could notice different meanings of the same verb to *pass* in different word combination patterns.

Partnership and relationships

The parallel between word partnership and human relationships provides a powerful and revealing metaphor. Our human relationships differ, and differ in different ways; the same applies to word partnerships. Individual words are very similar to people. Some words are frequently found in the same textual environment. Such co-occurrences may be frequent or rare, strongly or more loosely bound. The parallel between words and people is close, and the corresponding range of collocation types surprisingly, and revealingly, similar.

Individual learning strategy of the future teacher of foreign languages assumes that while learning a topic, a student can choose one of the approaches: creative or logical knowledge, depth or encyclopedic study, selective or extended topic learning. Keeping the logic of the subject, its structure and semantic foundations the cooperative solving the complex problems on the basis of the analysis of the fixed amount of basic educational facilities, presupposed alternative opinions and taking smart decisions in discussions, individual learning strategy that may ensure students achievement at the normative educational level (Bazyliak & Cherkhava, 2017).

Basing conclusions on frequency of meeting alone – in linguistic terms, collocation – gives a fully false picture. Frequency alone does not reveal the quality. Raw frequency of collocation reveals the typical patterns of a word. But typically is not necessarily the same as strength or importance. For language teaching, frequency

is undoubtedly of interest, but strength may provide a more powerful organizing principle. Collocation strength relates closely to the general rule that nouns tend to call the shots. Intuitively, the noun is usually "what the sentence is about", the verb tells us "what happens" to the noun, and the other elements are optional, adding some details. We shall see the power of the sequence: noun + verb + adjective + adverbial when we consider translation. In general, it is the noun which dominates in collocations, but this is by no means always the case. We recognize strong collocations as partnerships which are so tightly linked that they behave almost as single words. Strong collocations may be frequent or comparatively rare; it is far from true that those words which co-occur most frequently are the strongest collocations. Weak collocations (a nice day, a good chance) occur between two common words, each of which may co-occur with many other words. Collocations may be any combination of strong and frequent, strong and infrequent, weak and frequent, or weak and infrequent, though this last category is of little interest.

Frequency alone is only a poor guide to the strength, and corresponding pedagogical usefulness. Teachers need to be aware of both strength and frequency when directing learners' attention to collocations.

The idea of collocation is a very powerful one in helping learners to maximize the value of the language to which they are exposed, but they need help in identifying the powerful and useful partnerships in a text. Some are much more useful to the language learner then others. A major problem is that the fact that two words are next to each other in text does not ensure that they are a collocation, and conversely many collocations do not occur in texts as immediately adjacent words.

The attention should be paid not only to the particular words in a collocation, but also, subconsciously perhaps, to the class of words which typically fill any variable slot.

Collocation exercise types

It can be difficult for English learners to know which words collocate, while natural collocations are not always logical or guessable. Without some special research nobody can say exactly why this or that word should be used together with another one. But learners need to know when and where specific collocations are appropriate. To avoid mistakes both in oral and written speech, no matter what style you have to use, from formal to colloquial, leaners at any level should comprehend the vocabulary studied in collocations. It will help them to use the words they know more accurately, sound more naturally when they speak and write, vary their speech and writing, understand when a native language speaker departs from standard patterns of collocations.

To our mind the following exercises aimed at learning the vocabulary in a proper way should be included in a Student's Books and Workbooks of any level. The most common of them are the following ones.

1. Match the two parts of these collocations.

a) indoor   *a) pool*
b) dead   *b) protectors*
c) penalty   *c) area*

d) dead   d) zone
e) ear   e) time

2. Correct the underlined collocation errors.

a) Substitutions may be <u>done</u> only during time-outs or dead time.

3. Look at these sentences from the authentic text. Improve the style by replacing the words in italics with the word in brackets that form the best collocation. (Use each word only once).

4. Write F (formal), I (informal) or N (neutral) in the brackets at the end of each sentence. In each pair of sentences, there is one neutral sentence and one formal or informal sentence. Underline the collocations that are noticeably formal or informal.

5. Find and correct the five collocation errors in this paragraph.

It was mentioned that collocations can be divided into three main groups: strong, fixed and weak collocations. The first group of strong collocations is the one in which the words are very closely associated with each other. Fixed collocations are called idioms. Proverbs and sayings can be considered as fixed collocations too. For example one can say "*Strong and sound*" and this collocation is understandable as a single unit. No other words can replace *strong* or *and* or *sound*. It is completely fixed. The meaning of some fixed collocations cannot be guessed from the individual words. Weak collocations consist of words that collocate with a great variety of other words. Strong collocations and weak collocations form a continuum, with stronger ones at one end and weaker ones at the other. Most collocations lie somewhere between the two.

To practice the usage of words in speech it is necessary to point out some grammatical categories of collocation. The most common collocation patterns are **noun + noun**, **adjective + noun**, **adverb + adjective**, **verb + adverb or prepositional phrase** and **more complex collocations**. The following exercises will help achieve the aim.

1. Match a word from each box to form collocations. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

2. Complete each sentence using a collocation from the previous exercise in the appropriate form.

3. Rewrite the underlined part of each sentence using a collocation.

4. Choose the correct collocation.

*The teammates rushed the diver to hospital, in the **idle / simple / vain** hope of saving his life.*

The special attention should be paid to developing skills of using dictionaries, records and internet resources. Quality modern dictionaries present entries including example sentences which make a point of illustrating each word's most frequent collocations. There are special dictionaries of collocations but they are mainly used by advanced learners or teachers. The dictionaries are not the only source nowadays. Learners can also use CD-ROM and online dictionaries. They can be very helpful while exploring collocations, as they make it quick and easy to search for items in different ways and to come from one entry to another. E-dictionaries give an easy access to an enormous amount of information relating to meaning, collocation, and register. So any good dictionary is a valuable tool for developing one's knowledge of collocation. As for the Internet, a search engine can be very useful. Though it is almost

impossible to come up with a word combination that a search engine will be unable to find examples of, the number of results can give a good idea of whether a combination is a true collocation or wrong. It is often useful to consult a corpus to find out how words are commonly used. We can suggest such exercises to develop skills of using dictionaries.

1. Use your dictionary (book, CD-ROM or online dictionary) to find five collocations for each of these words.

a) cast (as verb with main meaning of throw) …

2. Rewrite the underlined part of each sentence using the word in brackets. Use a dictionary to help you.

a) As soon as she got to the gym Ann <u>started training</u>. (SET)

3. Type these phrases into a search engine. Don't forget to use inverted commas. How many results do you get for each? What does this suggest about whether these phrases are collocations or not?

a) cast a play

4. Go to www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk. Type in the words given below. Not the number of times the words appear in the same collocations. Do they often collocate with any other words?

a) winning

5. Answer these questions.

a) Why do you enjoy playing soccer?

Now use a dictionary to find three collocations that relate to each of your answers then write example sentences using the collocations you have found.

The only warning to developing such skills is to be careful using corpora as they include different types of texts among which one can find technical ones.

To expand the collocation vocabulary learners should try to notice collocations whenever they read various texts. And don't forget that collocations are continuously heard in dialogues, songs, films, and even cartoons. It is useful to develop the habit of recording any interesting collocations either read or heard. The following exercises can be helpful there.

1. Complete each sentence using a collocation (from the materials studied earlier).

a) Try not to … having good friends.

2. Complete five collocations. The first letters are given to help you. Use a dictionary if necessary. The common word is **chance**.

a) to j_ _ _ a_t_ _

3. Check 5 expressions in a dictionary and using a search engine. Which three are collocations and which two are not?

4. Here is somebody's plan for work on collocations. Complete the gaps, using a dictionary if necessary. Then tick the ideas you can use yourself.

a) (1) ………….an effort to notice collocations in any English text I read.

b) (2) ………….hold of a good dictionary to check other collocations for words that I want to learn.

c) Write down at least three collocations for each new word to (3) ……..to memory.

d) Look back old homework to see where I have (4) …………..mistakes with collocations and (5) my best to (6) ……….those mistakes in future.

e) (7) …………a point of using good collocations when I have to write or speak in English.

f) Read and listen to as much English as (8) ………because that will expose me to natural collocations.

g) Every week revise the collocations I have (9) a note of in my vocabulary file.

The register of the language is the point that cannot be omitted while learning any foreign language in our case English. The register can be formal, informal, special for a professional field (human health, physical education, sport, etc.), official or neutral. The choice of register depends on what learners are talking about, who they are talking to or how they are talking. Formal language is most typical of official or academic writing or speech. Informal language is typical of conversation, personal letters, etc. To differentiate registers learners can practice some exercises.

1. Write F (formal) or N (neutral) in the brackets at the end of each sentence. Underline the collocations which indicate the register. Then rewrite the formal and informal sentences to make them neutral.

a) Tina felt dead tired after the four-hour vigorous workout.

2. Match the beginning of each sentence with its ending. Then label each sentence with the appropriate register from the list below. Underline the collocations which indicate the register.

Registers: informal conversation (IC), sport (S), outdoor activity (OA), human health (HH), sportswear advertisement (SA), coach's instruction (CI).

3. Complete the conversation between a coach and an athlete, using the verbs in the box in the appropriate form. A. The language is quite informal. B. The language is professional.

4. Look at the football match comments and rewrite them using more professional language. Choose the correct word from the choice provided. Use a dictionary to help if necessary.

The language is poor without metaphors but when people speak metaphorically, they use words in a non-literal sense. To master the metaphorical language the learners are advised to do such exercises.

1. Rewrite the underlined part of each sentence using a metaphor from the box.

2. Answer the questions about the metaphors from the box.

a) If you say that someone is hopping mad, do you mean that he or she is good at athletics or he or she is very angry?

3. Explain the difference in meaning between the sentences in each pair.

a) Fat chance I've got of winning!

b) I've got a slim chance of winning.

4. Choose the correct collocation.

*a) There is just a **thin / slim / skinny** chance that Andrew might pop in today.*

5. Explain what the play on words is based on in each of the following headlines and fans' slogans.

a) Athlete runs into trouble.

b) Look up, get up, but never give up!

c) No train, No gain.

d) Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!

e) Our blood, our sweat, your tears!

To color their speech, learners can use not only adjectives but adverbs as well. Adverbs are used before adjectives and verbs either to strengthen their meaning (intensifying adverbs) or to weaken it (softening adverbs). There are a variety of words that can be used as alternatives.

1. Match a word from each box to form collocations and than complete the sentences with them.

2. Add intensifying adverbs from the box to the sentences to make the words in bold stronger.

3. Are the adverb collocations correct or not? If they are incorrect, correct them using collocations from the box.

The verbs **do, make, get, have** are the most frequent in the English language, consequently the most frequent collocation errors made by the English language learners relate to the use of these verbs.

1. Replace **make** in each sentence with an alternative word. Then say whether you have made the sentence more or less formal.

*a) The team **made** several **attempts** to climb the mountain before they finally succeeded.*

2. Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets.

a) We changed the layout of the hall to make it more relaxed for the yoga class. (ATMOSPHERE)

Learners face the same problem when they use verbs meaning communication *say*, *speak*, *talk* and *tell*. These verbs have some alternatives: *give a reason, state aim, give an account of, ask for, get a message across, declare, pronounce, notify, protest, break the news*, etc.

1. Complete each sentence with the appropriate form of *say*, *speak*, *talk* or *tell*.

2. Rewrite the underlined part of each sentence to make it more formal.

a) The judges <u>said that John Johnson had won</u> *the competition*.

Collocations with phrasal verbs are difficult to use as a preposition may absolutely change the main meaning of the verb. That's why it is a good idea to learn them by heart but not as a separate unit. To understand the meaning of a phrasal verb collocation you should look at it in a sentence or even situation. As the starting exercises learners can do the following ones.

1. Complete the collocations using the prepositions from the box.

2. Complete each sentence using a collocation from the previous exercise in the appropriate form.

3. Correct the collocation errors in the sentences.

a) Jane quickly saw out her opponent in the semi-final and now goes on to the final.

4. Answer these questions. Write full sentences using the word in brackets in a collocation from the box.

a) What sport event have you been to that wasn't as good as you expected? (LIVE)

Advanced learners are recommended to read or listen to English texts as much as possible and single out various types of collocations then use them in their own speech or writing.

*The teams **took the field** to the applause of 5,000 spectators. Despite **putting up** a determined **performance**, the England team seemed unable to **break through** the formidable Australian **defence**. After some impressive tackles, Australia was **awarded***

*a penalty just before half time. The **penalty was missed**. The match was **full of excitement** with three players being **given yellow cards** and some controversial **free kicks**. The game was lost when the Blues **scored an own goal** in the last two minutes. The crowd **went wild**.*

1 went on the pitch; 2 scored a goal in error against their own team; 3 became crazy with excitement (can also be used for other emotions, such as rage).

Some activities on lexis in the form of games can be used. Playing with words is a very good way of enhancing language awareness. The activities have various levels of difficulty. You can choose the most suitable for the students or invent your own. They can easily be incorporated into much of the work that can be done in the class, such as pre-reading or text-based tasks. Otherwise, they can also be used as spare-minute activities.

Conclusion

One of the main developments in the field of ELT during the last decades has been a renewed interest in the problems of vocabulary teaching. After the decades, when questions of grammar and grammar teaching were predominant, this general reorientation from grammar to vocabulary is definitely a step in the right direction. There is, however, one particular aspect of vocabulary learning which deserves more attention than it has received up and now, and this is the problem of word combinability. One of the main difficulties students encounter in relation to new items of vocabulary is the comprehension of collocation properties. Unfortunately, for the foreign language learner, words do not occur freely; instead, there are co-occurrence restrictions which the learner has to adhere to.

Most teachers of English as a Foreign Language (particularly those who are native speakers of that language) will notice that their learners often have problems in choosing the correct combination of two (or more) words. Such errors show a lack of collocation competence in the learner.

Regrettably, collocation is a term which is used and understood in many different ways. It is, however, not possible to present and discuss the various understandings of the term within this paper. It gives us the way for future investigations.

Patterns of grammatical collocations consist of a noun, an adjective or a verb and a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause. Lexical collocations, on the other hand, do not contain prepositions, infinitives or clauses, but consist of various combinations of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Several structural types of lexical collocations are distinguished: verb + noun; adjective + noun; noun + verb; noun + noun, adverb + adjective; verb + adverb.

In the present paper we have neglected grammatical collocations with their specific problems, and concentrated, instead, on lexical collocations.

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