

The Effect of Lexical Collocations in Developing EFL Sudanese Learners' Oral Ability A Case Study of Pre-intermediate EFL Learners at SNCL/SELTI.)

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ABSTRACT

Words do not co-occur in organized way and in fact lexical patterns are different. This difference in the lexical patterning causes potential problems in speaking. The purpose of the present study is to probe to what extent the use of lexical collocations affects the pre-intermediate EFL students' oral ability. So from the purpose the main question of the study was driven as: To what extent does the use of lexical collocations affect the pre-intermediate EFL students' oral ability? . To achieve this aim, 40 pre-intermediate students of SNCL, were chosen and their English proficiency was confirmed by a placement test used in SNCL/SELTI and accordingly they were assigned into two groups. Both groups took the same test before and after the treatment of a period of 70 hours teaching, two hours for each session during which the experimental group has been exposed to different types of collocations to measure their knowledge of collocation patterning. They also participated in a speaking task to assess their use of lexical collocations and overall oral ability. After analyzing the test, the results revealed that lexical collocation had a positive effect on the learners speaking ability and a moderate effect on their use of lexical collocations. This suggests that receiving instruction on the use of lexical collocation patterning can be effective in the enhancement of EFL students' language skills, specifically, their oral ability.

Key Words—lexical collocation, oral ability, vocabulary learning

المستخلص :

لا تتاتي الكلمات بطريقة منتظمة ولكن في حالة أنماط المفردة تكون بطريقة مغايرة. هذا الاختلاف في تنوع المفردة يمثل مشكلات مستقبلية في التخاطب. هدفت هذه الدراسة لتقصي أثر أنماط المفردة علي المقدرة التخاطبية لدي طلاب المستوي الثالث كدارسي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية . حيث صيغ السؤال الأساسي وفقا لهدف الدراسة كما يلي : إلي أي مدي يؤثر إستخدام انماط المفردة علي المقدرة التخاطبية لدي طلاب المستوي الثالث كدارسي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؟ لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة قام الباحث بإختيار أربعين طالبا من مركز السودان القومي للغات وتم تصنيف الطلاب الي مجموعتين حيث تم إخضاع كلتا المجموعتين الي إختبار قبلي ثم أتبع بفترة زمنية من الدراسة بلغت 70 ساعة بواقع ساعتين يوميا والتي من خلالها تم تعريض الطلاب لأنواع مختلفة من أنماط المفردة من أجل قياس معرفة أنماط المفردة. أيضاً تم إشراك الطلاب في مهام تخاطبية لتقييم أنماط المفردة والمقدرة العامة للتحدث. بعد تحليل الإختبار أشارت النتائج بان هنالك أثر إيجابي لأنظمة المفردة علي مقدرة الطلاب علي التحدث وأثر معقول ومعتدل في إستخدامهم لأنماط المفردة. هذا يفيد بأن تلقي معرفة في إستخدام أنماط المفردة يمكن أن يكون مؤثر في تقوية القدرة علي التخاطب لدي طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وكذلك مهارتهم اللغوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إرتصاف مفردات اللغة - المقدرة التخاطبية - تعلم المفردة اللغوية

INTRODUCTION:

Vocabulary as a tool is a very important element in learning and acquiring a language. Allen (1983) stated that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; communications breakdown when people do not use the right words.

Krashen (1989) emphasized that gaining language proficiency demands widening one's vocabulary stock. Since vocabulary is very important in learning language.

Great attention should be regarded on this issue in terms of teaching and learning; because without the enhancement of vocabulary it is difficult to communicate. By looking back on EFL reviewed literature, it is obvious that grammar learning was touched and received much attention than vocabulary improvement in language classes. For (Coady, 1993; Rott, William and Cammeron 1999) the necessity of acquiring adequate and appropriate vocabulary and its effectiveness exceeds the need for language grammar rules. But the way vocabulary is dealt with reveals problems; knowledge of lexical collocations seems to be ignored in EFL syllable design hence it is regarded fundamental in acquiring vocabulary.

Zohrech ,(2013) stated that a collocation can be defined briefly as "a pair or group of words that are used together". Some collocations are fixed or very strong; others are more open and some are not likely occur. Therefore, knowing which words are used together is an important way of understanding the meaning of a text.

The present study focuses on the importance of lexical collocation in achieving progress in EFL learners' oral ability. It tries to look into the reasons for EFL learners' inability to communicate effectively. Many researches stated clearly that the lack of vocabulary competence

affects EFL learners' ability which is very important in achieving language proficiency. As well teachers should be made aware towards this sensitive area by following the suitable strategies of teaching which help learners learn effectively and successfully.

Statement of the Problem:

From the researcher experience , he noticed that learners feel awkward and hesitant with no knowledge of lexical collocations that hinders their oral communication to go smoothly.

The Significance of the Study:

The study examines Sudanese EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and

Further explores the relationship between lexical collocations and students' oral proficiency. The present study contributes directly to teachers' as well as students' understanding of the nature of lexical collocations in relation to oral proficiency.

Objectives of this Study: The present study can be useful for material designer and material selection and preparation, which might be a paradigm shift in curriculum innovation.

Question of the Research:

In order to tackle the problem of the research in a very consolidated way, the following research question has been risen as: what effect do lexical collocations have on developing EFL Sudanese learners' oral ability?

METHODOLOGY:

Participants

The researcher carried out this study at SNCL (Sudan National Centre for Language) headquarters in 2019. Forty pre-intermediate students with different background knowledge on lexical collocations were chosen to take part in the study.

They were randomly assigned into two groups experimental and control group; each including 20 students

Instrument:

The researcher used a lexical collocation test (see Appendix I) as one of the essential parts of the study. The test included two parts. The first part was about the use of lexical collocation where the second part dealt with the oral test.

Procedure

To conduct the study, the researcher ensued a set of procedures were as follows: firstly, a lexical test was designed and been judged for its validity .After that the researcher piloted the test and some suggestions were given concerning the font, the blank spaces for the answer, the pace of the exam was considered to be 2 hours to allow the students do it in a relaxed way which had its effect on their performance and the results that had been obtained .The students were asked to sit for a pre-test into two groups. One of the groups had been treated as an experimental group and they had been taught for about 70 hours teaching. Again they were asked to sit for a post test. The data had been collected and analyzed through SSPS. The result that had been obtained.

Literature Review:

Vocabulary Acquisition:

Acquiring vocabulary is very important for second language learners because learners feel awkward with a limited vocabulary and hinders communication to go smoothly. According to Schmitt (2000, p.55) he states that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language”. While Nation (2001)

sees the mutual relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as a complementary one.

Many researchers such as Laufer and Nation (1999), Maximo (2000), Read (2000) and others have viewed the acquisition of vocabulary as essential tool for successful second language use and acts as an important factor in the information of complete spoken and written texts.

In English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning vocabulary items constitutes an important factor in all language skills (ie. Listening, speaking, reading and writing (Nation, 2001).

Rivers and Nuan (1991), believe that acquiring an appropriate vocabulary is necessary for successful second language use because without extensive vocabulary, we will not have the ability to validate the learned structured and functions for comprehensible communication. Huckin, (1995) stresses that without vocabulary knowledge students may face obstacle in l2 as well as in its production. When we extend a meaning or concept we are actually in need for a stock of words. “When students travel, they do not carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries” Krashen, as cited in (Lewis, 1993, p.35).

While for Wilken (1972) he argues that “there is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentence; if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say...while without grammar very little can be conveyed , without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”(p.97).

As it appears Wilken shows the privilege that vocabulary has over the element of grammar and how far it serves the learner in extending his message so as to be understood. Although they are vital in comprehending each other.

Lexical Collocations:

Researchers on EFL learners' vocabulary development focused on the knowledge and production of individual lexical items. However, one main component involved in vocabulary learning, i.e. the problem of word combinability (lexical collocation).

Various studies have been carried to investigate the impact of collocation use on enhancing language proficiency in different skills. Among which two studies had been carried internationally giving special attention to the speaking skill and its relationship with lexical collocations. Sung (2003) traced the relationship between the knowledge and the use of the lexical collocations in relation to speaking proficiency of international students enrolled in a university in Pittsburg area. Participants included 72 non-native English speakers. They completed two tests. The first test assessed the subjects' knowledge of lexical collections; the second one

measured the learners' use of lexical collocations and their proficiency. The result revealed a significant correlation between the knowledge revealed a significant correlation between the knowledge of lexical collocations and the students speaking ability (Hsu,J.Y.&Chiu.Y..2008,1185)

Hsu and Chiu (2008) investigated the impact of familiarity with English collocation use on the speaking ability of Taiwanese EFL university learners. The data of the study was collected from 56 junior, majors' performance on word combinability. These students were required to go through three tests 1. Lexical collocation test 2.an English speaking test 3.phone pass spoken English test. The result showed a significant correlation between Taiwanese EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocation and their speaking proficiency. However, no significant correlation was found between the subjects' use of lexical collocations. Moreover, it was suggested the familiarity with lexical collocations appears to be a better predictor of the learners speaking proficiency than their ability to use lexical collocations.

Experimental Table (1) Pre test

q1=12	6	10	11	10	11	7	7	8	10	6	7	2	5	8	7	7	11	11	6	7
q2=5	1	1	2	3	4	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	4	1	3
q3=5	0	3	0	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	0	5	3	4	3	3	2	3
q4=10	3	4	8	5	10	5	7	0	7	6	6	0	3	10	6	6	9	8	6	5
q5=5	0	0	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0
q6=10	6	5	8	8	9	4	9	1	8	7	7	4	6	6	9	7	7	6	6	6
sp=15	9	6	11	11	12	8	9	5	10	7	11	8	6	10	3	9	14	4	11	6
total=62	25	29	43	43	53	27	36	16	39	28	34	17	21	42	30	35	48	35	32	30

Table (2) Post-test

q1	6	8	10	10	12	9	8	6	10	4	5	4	1	9	10	10	11	11	11	10
q2	1	2	3	2	5	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	5	3	4
q3	2	4	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4
q4	6	6	10	10	10	10	10	5	7	10	6	8	5	7	9	8	10	9	9	7
q5	3	4	3	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	5	3	4	4	3	3	3
q6	5	8	8	10	9	9	10	2	8	7	9	4	7	10	9	8	10	9	8	8
speaking	12	10	12	10	15	10	12	4	10	9	9	7	9	9	9	8	14	6	8	8
total	35	42	50	50	60	49	49	27	46	38	40	32	33	48	47	46	55	47	45	44

Control group

q1	4	10	6	7	3	4	7	9	4	3	9	7	7	5	10	10	4	7	4	3
q2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	1
q3	0	2	1	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	3	2	3	3	3	4	1	3	2
q4	2	8	0	4	2	1	8	5	0	3	7	2	5	6	7	10	3	0	6	2
q5	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0
q6	3	5	7	9	6	7	9	6	3	6	6	6	8	10	8	6	5	4	4	5
speaking	9	6	11	11	12	8	9	5	10	7	11	8	6	10	3	9	14	4	11	6
total	19	32	25	33	24	21	40	28	17	20	35	26	30	36	35	39	30	17	29	19

Table (3) Pre-test

q1	6	10	4	9	6	4	9	8	6	5	10	4	5	6	10	10	4	7	4	3
q2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1
q3	1	3	0	3	4	0	3	2	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	1	3	3
q4	1	10	2	9	5	0	10	8	3	6	10	3	6	6	10	10	3	0	6	2
q5	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0
q6	5	8	4	9	4	3	8	7	6	7	7	7	8	10	8	6	5	4	2	5
speaking	12	10	12	10	15	10	12	4	10	9	9	7	9	9	9	8	14	6	8	8
total	25	42	24	43	34	17	45	30	26	28	42	24	31	36	44	38	30	19	24	22

The analysis of the data

Table (5) t-test result showing group means of the experiment group

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Pre-test	33.20	9.769	-11.595	19	0.00	significant
Post-test	44.10	8.019				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (-11.595) with signify value (0.000)

which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the Post-test.

Table (6) t-test result showing group means of the control group

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Pre-test	27.75	7.333	-2.559	19	0.01	significant
Post-test	30.85	8.952				

From table (6)The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the Hypothesis was (-2.559)

with signify value (0.01) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the Post-test.

Table (7) t-test result showing group means of the pre-test

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
experiment	33.20	9.769	2.118	19	0.04	significant
control	27.75	7.333				

From table (7)The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (2.118) with

signify value (0.04) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the experiment group.

Table (8) t-test result showing group means of the post-test

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
experiment	44.10	8.019	5.629	19	0.00	significant
control	30.85	8.952				

From table 8 The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (5.629) with

signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the experiment group.

Cranach's alpha method: -

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach's alpha equation shown below:

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{n}{N-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation college grades}}$$

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\frac{n}{N-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation college grades}}}$$

Cranach alpha coefficient = (0.73), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study

Validity coefficient is the square of the islands so reliability coefficient is (0.85), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that ensures the benefit of the study

DISCUSSION

The present study, as stated before, intended to find out if the instruction on lexical collocations affects the students' knowledge of these constructions and their speaking proficiency. According to the overall results of data analysis, a positive relationship was detected.

The results in the previous section showed that the teaching of lexical collocations, at the pre-intermediate level, helped the students improve their familiarity with lexical word combinations and used them in their oral practice.

The findings of this study seems to match those drawn from the previous studies on lexical collocation instruction which have shown the positive effect of

such instruction on the improvement of students' language skills, like reading (Hsu2010), listening (Hsu, 2005) and writing (Liu, 1999, Ghonsooli, Pishgaman & Mahjoobi, 2008)

CONCLUSION

In the present study, the analysis of the data revealed that the instruction of lexical collocations affected the EFL learners' proficiency positively and the findings further reflected that the treatment had been effective on the use of lexical collocations, which might be justified in terms of native language influence, learning collocations in isolation, cultural interference, and avoidance strategies.

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Appendix (1)

Part One 1. Lexis in context

A. Put the phrases in the box that collocate with the verbs in columns in the table below

Married - children dancing – money on clothes - time off work -
 The bus – time with some one – on well - a barbecue- on holiday – to the cinema

get	go	have	spend
married			

B. There is a missing word in each sentence. Complete the sentences; you have the first letter of the missing word in each sentence:

1. Did you a----- to meet friends? If you didn't we can meet later.
2. She called me because she wanted to h----- a chat.
3. Please b----- a table for us at the Blue Fin Restaurant tonight.
4. There's been a problem and I can't attend, so I'm calling to c----- my reservation.
5. I'd like to come to the 4.30 performance , not to the 6.30 one, and I'm calling to c-----my ticket

C. Cross out the word which is not possible in each sentence

1. I went to a (*jazz/rock/band*) concert.
2. He is one of the greatest (*pointers/sculptures/songwriters*) of the twentieth century.
3. We went to the theatre and saw a (*great performance/ concert hall/play*.)
4. We saw a wonderful (*exhibition/performance/art gallery*) of her work.
5. I love (*concert/pop/ classical*) music.
6. I spent some time talking to the (*audience/play/artist*) afterwards.

D. Complete the conversation with the lexical collocation in the box.

don't look getting on back together welcome can't stand seeing her
to her started known you month ago thinks

A: Hi, Jim. You ¹ don't look very happy. What's wrong?

B: Oh, hi, Marcia. Nothing.

A: Come on, Jim. I've ² _____ since we were six. I can see there's something wrong.

B: Yeah, well ... it's Lindsay. I'm not ³ _____ anymore.

A: What? I thought you two were ⁴ _____ so well.

B: We were. But then we ⁵ _____ arguing about a ⁶ _____.

A: About what?

B: I don't know – little things really. And my rugby. She ⁷ _____ it.

A: How often do you play?

B: Every Saturday – and we train three nights a week.

A: Ah, now I understand! She ⁸ _____ that rugby's more important than she is.

B: I suppose so.

A: Do you want to get ⁹ _____?

B: Yes! I really miss her. What should I do?

A: You should talk ¹⁰ _____. Tell her that rugby is very important to you – but that she's more important.

B: You're right, Marcia. Thanks.

A: You're ¹¹ _____, Jim. Good luck

Part two : Oral test

A. follow the teacher's instructions to answer the questions below:

1. What small things make you happy?
2. Where do you feel happiest?
3. What things in your house make you happy?
4. What made you smile today?

B. Talk about three things that have changed in your life in the last ten years:

- a. Think about your appearance / home / work studies / free time ?
- b. How have your lives changed ?

C. Tourism and Holidays

1. Is there anything that you really love doing when you are on holiday ?



2. look at the questions for 2 minties to describe something happned to you on a trip or journey
 - a. Where and when did you go?
 - b. Who were you with? what was the form of transport ?
 - c. How long did the trip take?
 - d. What places did you see during the journey ?
 - e. Did anthing do wrong during the journey ?
 - f. What happned while you were tralleaving how did you feel?