

Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Investigating English Language Learners' Usage and Understanding of Collocations; a case Study of Sudan University of Science and Technology.

تقصى فهم واستخدام متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية للمتلازمات اللفظية. دراسة حالة
طلاب جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا

A Thesis Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of
M.A degree in English language.

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Dedication

To the soul of my father, mother, wife and two beloved children.
And my friends and colleagues.

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate English language learners' usage and understanding of collocations. It is based upon two assumptions. Firstly, English language learners use collocation correctly to some extent. Secondly, English language learners' understand collocation perfectly. To examine these assumptions, the researcher adopted test for fourth year students at Sudan University of Science and Technology. The instruments were distributed to the respondents. They were 40 students chosen randomly. The data were gathered and analyzed. Then presented in form of tables and graphs. The data has obtained the necessary results that address the objectives of research. The test breaks down into two parts. Each part consists of 10 questions. In the first part the respondents answered the questions remarkably. While, in the second the respondents answered the questions unassumingly. Teaching collocations can help students to speak and write English in more accurate and natural way.

ملخص البحث

تهدف الدراسة الى تقصى استخدام وفهم متعلمى اللغة الانجليزية للتلازم اللفظى. ارتكزت الدراسة على فرضيتين. اولا, يستخدم متعلمو اللغة الانجليزية التلازم اللفظى بشكل صحيح الى حد ما. اما الفرضيه الثانيه, يفهم متعلمى اللغة الانجليزية التلازم اللفظى فهما كاملا. ولاختبار هذه الفرضيات, قام الباحث باجراء اختبار لطلاب السنه الرابعه قسم اللغة اللغه الانجليزية بجامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا. وقد وزع الاختبار على الطلبة الذين يبلغ عددهم اربعين طالبا كما تم اختيارهم عشوائيا. جمعت البيانات وتم تحليلها فى شكل جداول ومخططات بيانيه. وقد لوحظ ان البيانات التى تم الحصول عليها توصلت الى نتائج مهمه لمخاطبه اهداف البحث. يتكون الاختبار من جزئين, كل جزء يشمل على عشره اسئله. فى الجزء الاول من الاختبار اجاب الطلاب اجابات لافته للنظر. بينما فى الجزء الثانى من الاختبار اجاب الطلاب بشكل متواضع. تدريس التلازم اللفظى يمكن الطلاب من اجادة الكتابه والخطابه بشكل طبيعى واكثر دقه.

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Definition of Terms

1) **chunking** (*n.*) In psycholinguistics, the breaking up of an utterance into units (**chunks**) so that it can be more efficiently processed. For example, the use of prosody to chunk a sequence of digits enables the digits to be remembered more easily (cf. /3, 7, 4, 1, 9, 8, 5, 7, 6, 2/ v. /3, 7, 4, 1, 9 / 8, 5, 7, 6,/). The notion has come to be particularly used in relation to the storage and production of syntactic constructions, especially in relation to the emergentist approach in first-language acquisition. Chunking is also used as a teaching technique in speech pathology and foreign language teaching.

2) **colligation** (*n.*) A term in Firthian linguistics for the process or result of grouping a set of words on the basis of their similarity in entering into syntagmatic grammatical relations. For example, a set of verbs which take a certain kind of complement construction would be said to be 'in colligation with' that construction; e.g. *agree, choose, decline, manage*, etc.

colligate with *to*-infinitive constructions, as opposed to *-ing* forms, as *I agree to go* v. **I agree going*. Colligation is usually contrasted with collocation.

3) **etymology** An area within historical linguistics which is concerned with the origin and development of the form and

meaning of words and the relationship of both these aspects to each other.

4) **feature** (*n.*) A term used in linguistics and phonetics to refer to any typical or noticeable property of spoken or written language. Features are classified in terms of the various levels of linguistic analysis, e.g. 'phonetic/phonological/ grammatical/syntactic features' or in terms of dimensions of description, e.g. 'acoustic/articulatory/auditory features'. At the most general level, features may be classified as linguistic (or 'intralinguistic') as opposed to 'nonlinguistic' (extralinguistic or metalinguistic). At the most specific level, certain types of feature may be set up as the minimal units of a theory, as in **distinctive feature** theories of phonology. The term is sometimes abbreviated as **F**, as in some models of non-linear phonology.

5) **formulaic language** A term used in some theoretical and descriptive studies of grammar to refer to utterances which lack normal syntactic or morphological characteristics. (It may also be used, literally, to mean 'language containing formulae', or special symbols, as in scientific writing.) Sentences such as *God save the Queen, The more the merrier, How do you do?* and *Many happy*

returns do not contrast in the usual way with other sentences in the language, e.g. *Few happy returns, How will you do?* Such fossilized structures, often used in limited social situations, have also been called 'bound', 'fixed', 'frozen',

'set', 'prefabricated', 'routine' or 'stereotyped expressions'. The notion can be broadened from individual utterances to larger spoken or written events.

6) **lexicon** (*n.*) In its most general sense, the term is synonymous with vocabulary. A dictionary can be seen as a set of lexical entries. The lexicon has a special status in generative grammar, where it refers to the component containing all the information about the structural properties of the lexical items in a language, i.e. their specification semantically, syntactically and phonologically. In later models (see aspects model), these properties are formalized as features, and put in square brackets; e.g., word-class assignments include noun [N], etc. Given this component, the terminal symbols in phrase-markers can then be related directly to the lexicon through the use of lexical transformations; e.g. any item in the lexicon specified by [D] can be attached to the node D, and so on. The role of the lexicon became central in lexical-functional grammar and head-driven phrase-structure grammar. 278 lexical retrieval grammar. The **mental lexicon** is the stored mental representation of what we know about the lexical items in our language.

7) **patient** (*n.*) (**P**) A term used by some linguists as part of the grammatical analysis of a sentence: it refers to the entity which is affected by the action of the verb, e.g. *The dog bit **the man***. goal and recipient have been used as alternative terms. See semantic role.

8) **pragmatics** The study of language in use in interpersonal communication. Apart from the purely linguistic approach there is a philosophical type of pragmatics, as developed in the late 19th century by American philosophers such as William James and Charles Peirce.

9) **synchronic** A reference to one point of time in a language. This may be the present but need not be. Forms a dichotomy with *diachronic*. Structural studies of language are usually synchronic and the Indo-Europeanists of the 19th century were diachronic in their approach