Adjective + Noun Collocational Competence of L1 Thai Learners: A Comparative Study of a Regular Program and an English Program

Paitoon Suwitchanphan[1] & Supakorn Phoocharoensil[1]

[1] Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand

Correspondence: Paitoon Suwitchanphan & Supakorn Phoocharoensil, Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand. E-mail: pasubi_bird@hotmail.com

Abstract

The main purpose of the current research was to determine how Thai EFL students studying in the regular and English programs use adjective + noun collocations. The second purpose was to find out the relationship between school curricula and collocational competence of adjective + noun in three tests. The participants were 30 regular program students and another 30 English program students from a private secondary school in Bangkok, Thailand. The data collection instruments included the Gap-Filling Test (Test 1), the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2), and the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3). The main findings have shown that, in Test 1, the regular program participants (69.33%) scored higher than the English program participants (57.67%). According to the findings from Test 2, there was no significant difference between the curricula and the Collocation Selection Test. For Test 3, the regular program participants used more adjective + noun collocations (279 tokens) than did the English program ones (211 tokens). The pedagogical implications were also proposed to enhance learners' collocational competence, especially adjective + noun collocations.

Keywords: adjective + noun collocations, English program, lexical collocations, regular program

1. Introduction

Some English language teachers are likely to overemphasize the importance of grammatical structures instead of vocabulary in their lesson plans. According to Lewis (1993, p. 133), this might result from their strong confidence in teaching something that they know best, instead of things of which they are unsure. Nevertheless, though they incorporate vocabulary in lesson plans, only individual words are typically taught rather than collocations (Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005, p. 14). It is a commonly held belief that vocabulary is far more important than grammar. According to Wilkin (1972, p. 111), it is said that "*while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*". Grammar, however, is acting as a bridge between lexis (Leech, Cruickshank, & Ivanic, 2001, p. 84; Lewis, 1993, vii). General knowledge of individual words is not regarded as sufficient to achieve native-like commands of English; consequently, the knowledge of collocation is of paramount importance to every English learner to produce a group of chunks that makes his/her language sound more natural (Bahns, 1993; Brashi, 1999; Brown, 1974; Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Fontenelle, 1994; Ganji, 2012; Hedge, 2000; Hill, 2000; Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Karoly, 2005; Klerk, 2006; Leech, Cruickshank & Ivanic, 2001; Lewis, 1993; Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005; McCarthy, 1990; Wallace, 1982).

Despite their syntactic correctness, two or more words that co-occur might not sound natural to native speakers of English (Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005, p. 7). For example, although *strong rain* and *heavy rain* are both syntactically correct, *heavy* is an appropriate collocate to be used with *rain*. Furthermore, according to Phoocharoensil (2011) and Thornbury (2002), even though two or more words are regarded as synonymous to one another, they cannot always be used interchangeably in all contexts. As a result, this renders collocations difficult and problematic for English language learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Collocation

According to Palmer (1933), as cited in Nation (2001, p. 317), the concept of collocations was first invented as "a string of words that must or should be learned, or is best or most conveniently learnt as an integral whole or independent entity, rather than by the process of piecing together component parts". Later, Palmer (1968, p.180)

also stated that "[t]he habitual collocations in which words under study appear are quite simply the mere word accompaniment, the other word-material in which they are most commonly or most characteristically embedded". However, it was Firth (1957, p.181), who made the concept of collocation become widely known and remarked that "collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or customary places of that word". Despite the existence of collocations since the early twentieth century, their definition and classification are still widely varied (Fontenelle, 1994). A large number of noted scholars in the field have defined the concept of collocations and proposed its classifications in order to better comprehend what collocation really is. McCarthy (1990, p. 158) gave a broad definition of collocations as words that are likely to co-occur, for example *blond* likely to collocate with *hair*. One of well-known definitions is that "it is a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others" (ibid., p. 12). Moreover, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p. 36) defined collocations as "strings of specific lexical items, such as rancid butter and curry flavor, that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance".

Despite wide definitions of collocations, scholars mostly defined a collocate and a node in a similar fashion. For example, a node was defined as "the word that is being studied", while a collocate was referred to "any word that occurs in the specified environment of a node" (Sinclair, 1991). When one word is a node, the other becomes a collocate and vice versa (Sinclair, Jones & Daley, 2004, p. 10). Nattinger and DeCarrio (1992, pp. 20-21) suggested that after both a node and a collocate are identified, their surrounding functional words should be ignored so that emphasis can be put on the collocation being studied.

Not only definitions but also classifications of collocations have been proposed. Gairns and Redman (1986) categorized collocations into four main groups: subject noun + verb, verb + object noun, adjective + noun, and adverb + past participle used adjectively. Though they are simple and straightforward, those four categories might not best explain the entire concept of collocations. Accordingly, several eminent scholars subsequently emerged to provide more thorough classifications in order to better understand the concept. Hill (2000, p. 51) proposed seven categories: adjective + noun, noun + noun, verb + adjective + noun, verb + adverb, adverb + verb, adverb + adjective, and verb + preposition + noun. In addition, Hill (2000, p. 63) also suggested a broad classification, based on collocational strength: unique collocations, such as *foot the bill*, strong collocations, such as *rancid butter*, weak collocations, such as *good boy*, and medium-strength collocations, such as *hold a conversation*.

2.2 Relevant Past Studies

In prior research studies, a good number of researchers cast light on collocational competence of EFL learners and found that most English language learners in every proficiency level experienced collocational problems (Altenberg & Granger, 2001; Boonyasaquan, 2006; Brashi, 1999; Hsu, 2007; Hsu & Chiu, 2008; Jukneviciene, 2008; Lakshmi, 2012; Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005; Nesselhauf, 2003; Phoocharoensil, 2013; Rahimi & Momeni, 2011; Shih, 2000; Ying, 2009; Yumanee & Phoocharoensil, 2013). However, differences in collocational competence of adjective + noun between regular and English programs are still left to explore, especially in Thai context. Therefore, in this present study, the primary emphasis was on discovering the discrepancy in adjective + noun collocational competence between the regular and English program grade 11 students who were studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at one private school in Bangkok, Thailand.

A series of studies revealed that learners faced difficulty with lexical collocations more than grammatical collocations (Boonyasaquan, 2006; Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005; Phoocharoensil, 2013; Ying, 2009). For example, according to Phoocharoensil (2013), Thai high-proficiency participants at one of the well-know universities in Thailand produced lexical miscollocations of 51.72%, whereas their grammatical miscollocations were only 48.28%. Lexical collocations lexical collocations were even more problematic for low-proficiency participants with lexical miscollocations of 58.56%, and grammatical miscollocations of 41.44%. Similarly, Thai freshmen EFL participants from the oldest and most well-known university had the lowest scores on lexical collocations in the gap-filling task (Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005, pp. 10-11). Additionally, the significant findings from Boonyasaquan (2006) revealed that Thai participants, majoring in English at a government prestigious university in Thailand, produced the most frequent errors on adjective + noun collocations.

In addition to past research, one of crucial factors that plays an important role in collocational competence of learners is exposure (Brashi, 2009; Cowie, 1998; McCarthy, 1990; Wallace, 1982, p. 92). Therefore, participants in the English program tend to outperform those in the regular program regarding collocational competence in the Gap-Filling Test (Test 1), the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2), and the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3).

3. Research Questions

The research questions in this study are as follows:

3.1 How do Thai EFL students studying in the regular and English programs use adjective + noun collocations?

3.2 What is the relationship between school curricula and collocational competence of adjective + noun?

4. Hypotheses

As exposure is a key to students' collocational competence, and collocational competence depends on not only how long students are exposed to the target language, but also how frequently those collocations occur (McCarthy, 1990; Wallace, 1982, p. 92), two main research hypotheses of the current study can be proposed as follows:

4.1 Thai EFL students in the English program show a significantly higher level of adjective + noun collocational competence than those in the regular program.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Participants

Grade 11 Thai EFL learners in a regular program and an English program in private schools in Thailand are the total population of the current study. The participants in this study were 30 regular and 30 English program grade 11 students from a private secondary school in Bangkok, Thailand. A number of curriculum differences were highlighted. On the one hand, four English classes were offered weekly to the regular program students and taught by Thai teachers, including Grammar class for 1 period or 50 minutes, and the other three fundamental English classes for approximately 2.5 hours. Thus, the total number of hours that they were weekly exposed to English at school constituted around 3.3 hours. On the other hand, the English program participants had far more exposure to English and more opportunity to study with native speakers of English in most of the subjects (i.e. English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Computer, Grammar, Science, Chemistry, Physics and Biology). The total number of hours that they were exposed themselves to English with native speakers per week accounted for approximately 10 hours.

5.2 Sampling Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the head of English department and English language teachers, teaching grade 11 students in both programs in order to collect data between January, 2014 and March, 2014. In order to seek qualified applicants, 30 grade 11 regular program participants and another 30 English program participants, the Oxford Proficiency Test (OPT), one of the most acceptable standard placement tests, was distributed to all grade 11 students in each program at the school. The highest scores of OPT included in the study were 40 in the regular program and 45 in the English program out of 60, whereas the lowest scores of OPT included in the study were 23 out of 60 in both programs. The average mean scores of OPT in the regular and English programs were 28.47 and 30.23 respectively. This was to ensure that the participants in both programs had relatively similar English proficiency level. All in all, the English program participants slightly outperformed the regular program participants in OPT. Those qualified participants were later asked to voluntarily do Test 1, Test 2, and Test 3 respectively.

5.3 Research Instruments

After the 60 qualified participants had been recruited, they were asked to perform the Gap-Filling Test (Test 1), the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2), and the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3) respectively. A simple concept of adjective + noun collocations had been explained to all participants before Test 1 was distributed in order to make it fair and impartial between both groups. All head nouns that were used in Test 1 and Test 2 were selected from the 1,000 most common written words, according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009), including *ability*, *change*, *benefit*, *condition*, *customer*, *evidence*, *behavior*, *cause*, *difference*, *attitude*, *task*, *action*, *quality*, *competition*, *variety*, *food*, *argument*, *attention*, *demand* and *amount* respectively. Appropriate and inappropriate adjective + noun collocations in Test 1, Test 2 and Test 3 could be determined by these two dictionaries: the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009) and the Oxford Collocations Dictionary for students of English (2009), and two corpora: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the British National Corpus (BNC). Collocations used must not only appear in one of the aforementioned dictionaries or corpora, but also fit the given contexts in order to be regarded as appropriate. Spelling mistakes of adjective + noun collocations were acceptable.

The Gap-Filling Test (Test 1) contained 20 items, all of which measured the knowledge of adjective + noun collocations, and took approximately 30 minutes during their normal English class. Each item in Test 1 was written in a full sentence with a blank (Appendix A). The Collocation Selection Test (Test 2) was immediately carried out after all Test 1 papers had been collected and also took approximately 30 minutes. Like Test 1, Test 2

shared the same contexts, meaning that kinds and numbers of adjectives used to collocate with nodes were the same. In each item, four possible collocates or adjectives were provided with three appropriate and one unlikely collocation. The participants were informed that more than one collocate could be selected in Test 2. The Gap-Filling Test (Test 1) must precede the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2) since this could prevent the participants from using collocations found in Test 2 to fill in the blanks in Test 1. On the following week, the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3) was administered to the same groups of the participants. They were asked to write a 150-word descriptive paragraph of 'The appearance and personality of my best friend' during their normal English class within 50 minutes (Appendix C). All participants were informed that both their grammatical errors and misspellings would be ignored in order to allow them to produce language that could truly reflect their collocational competence of adjective + noun. After all of the three tests had fully been completed, demographic questionnaires were distributed to all the participants to gather such background information as their exposure to English and the number of hours that they studied English weekly (Appendix D).

In an attempt to ensure that all four tests, i.e. the Oxford Proficiency Test (OPT), Test 1, Test 2, and Test 3, were suitable for grade 11 students, and the time given was appropriate, a pilot study was previously conducted on five Thai EFL learners in grade 11 at the school. Furthermore, instructions of all tests should not cause any misunderstanding or confusion to participants during the data collocation stage. Afterwards, some slight adjustments had subsequently been made before the updated versions of the tests were distributed to all 60 participants.

6. Findings

6.1 Findings from the Gap-Filling Test (Test 1)

Table 1. The appropriate and inappropriate adjective + noun collocations in both programs in Test 1

Item	Regular program				English program			
	Appropriate	Percent	Inappropriate	Percent	Appropriate	Percent	Inappropriate	Percent
1	20	67%	10	33%	12	40%	18	60%
2	18	60%	12	40%	10	33%	20	67%
3	23	77%	7	23%	18	60%	12	40%
4	18	60%	12	40%	20	67%	10	33%
5	25	83%	5	17%	26	87%	4	13%
6	19	63%	11	37%	11	37%	19	63%
7	24	80%	6	20%	23	77%	7	23%
8	18	60%	12	40%	15	50%	15	50%
9	17	57%	13	43%	13	43%	17	57%
10	25	83%	5	17%	23	77%	7	23%
11	22	73%	8	27%	14	47%	16	53%
12	20	67%	10	33%	17	57%	13	43%
13	24	80%	6	20%	20	67%	10	33%
14	18	60%	12	40%	14	47%	16	53%
15	25	83%	5	17%	16	53%	14	47%
16	28	93%	2	7%	19	63%	11	37%
17	23	77%	7	23%	24	80%	6	20%
18	21	70%	9	30%	24	80%	6	20%
19	17	57%	13	43%	17	57%	13	43%
20	11	37%	19	63%	10	33%	20	67%
Total	**416**	**69%**	**184**	**31%**	**346**	**58%**	**254**	**42%**

From Table 1, it can be seen that the highest number of appropriate adjective + noun collocations in the regular and English program participants was on item 16 (93%) and item 5 (87%) respectively. On the other hand, questions that had the highest inappropriate adjective + noun collocations were on Item 20 (63%) in the regular program, and on Item 2 and 20 (67%) in the English program. All in all, the regular program participants with

416 correct adjective + noun collocations (58%). Moreover, the regular program participants also made smaller inappropriate collocations (31%) than did the English program participants (42%).

6.2 Findings from the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2)

Table 2. The appropriate and inappropriate adjective + noun collocations in both programs in Test 2

Item	Regular program				English program			
	Appropriate	Percent	Inappropriate	Percent	Appropriate	Percent	Inappropriate	Percent
1	38	62.30%	23	37.70%	46	67.65%	22	32.35%
2	35	68.63%	16	31.37%	44	83.02%	9	16.98%
3	28	57.14%	21	42.86%	33	62.26%	20	37.74%
4	58	85.29%	10	14.71%	65	87.84%	9	12.16%
5	44	72.13%	17	27.87%	46	70.77%	19	29.23%
6	55	83.33%	11	16.67%	55	85.94%	9	14.06%
7	37	64.91%	20	35.09%	50	78.13%	14	21.88%
8	43	72.88%	16	27.12%	48	72.73%	18	27.27%
9	37	64.91%	20	35.09%	40	71.43%	16	28.57%
10	47	74.60%	16	25.40%	50	86.21%	8	13.79%
11	49	79.03%	13	20.97%	58	85.29%	10	14.71%
12	43	78.18%	12	21.82%	46	92.00%	4	8.00%
13	58	84.06%	11	15.94%	51	73.91%	18	26.09%
14	48	87.27%	7	12.73%	47	85.45%	8	14.55%
15	51	86.44%	8	13.56%	50	89.29%	6	10.71%
16	51	85.00%	9	15.00%	57	85.07%	10	14.93%
17	46	79.31%	12	20.69%	46	77.97%	13	22.03%
18	47	87.04%	7	12.96%	48	82.76%	10	17.24%
19	48	77.42%	14	22.58%	54	85.71%	9	14.29%
20	45	78.95%	12	21.05%	50	81.97%	11	18.03%
Total	908		275		984		243	

Table 2 drew a close comparison of the appropriate and inappropriate adjective + noun collocations between the regular and English program participants in the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2). The total number of collocations selected was varied as the participants were informed that they could choose more than one answer. The total number of appropriate adjective + noun collocations in Test 2 was 1800 tokens, while that of inappropriate collocations was 600 tokens. In conclusion, the total appropriate adjective + noun collocations in the regular and English programs accounted for 908 tokens (50.44%) and 984 tokens (54.67%) respectively. In contrast, the regular program participants (275 tokens or 45.83%) chose more inappropriate collocations than did the English program participants (243 tokens or 40.5%).

6.3 Findings from the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3)

Table 3. The appropriate and inappropriate adjective + noun collocations in both programs in Test 3

	Appropriate collocational use	Inappropriate collocational use	Percent
Regular program	279	-	98.94%
	-	3	1.06%
English program	211	-	98.60%
	-	3	1.40%

Regarding Table 3, the total number of appropriate adjective + noun collocations used in the regular and English programs was 279 tokens (98.94%) and 211 tokens (98.60%) respectively. This simply means that the regular program participants produced more correct adjective + noun collocations than did the English program participants. There were only 3 incorrect collocations found in both programs.

6.4 The correlation between the curricula and the collocational competence of adjective + noun in Test 1

Table 4. The correlations between the curricula and the Gap-Filling Test (Test 1)

Correlations

		CURRICULA	TEST 1
CURRICULA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.332(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	60	60
TEST1	Pearson Correlation	-.332(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	60	60

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

From Table 4, the p-value (.01) is less than the significance level (.05), meaning that Ho has been rejected. Therefore, there was a relationship between school curricula and the collocational competence of adjective + noun in the Gap-Filling Test. Since the correlation shows a negative sign (-.332), this means there was an inverse relationship between the curricula and the Gap-Filling Test scores. Consequently, the higher performing group could be expected when students were in the regular program.

6.5 The Correlation between the Curricula and the Collocational Competence of Adjective + Noun in Test 2

Table 5. The correlations between the curricula and the Collocation Selection Test (Test2)

Correlations

		CURRICULA	TEST 2
CURRICULA	Pearson Correlation	1	.213
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.102
	N	60	60
TEST 2	Pearson Correlation	.213	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.102	
	N	60	60

Unlike Table 4, the p-value (.102) in Table 5 is greater than the significance level (.05), suggesting that Ho has not been rejected. Consequently, there was no correlation between the school curricula and the collocational competence of adjective + noun in the Collocation Selection Test (Test 2). Put differently, no matter which programs they were in, their collocational competence of adjective + noun was the same.

6.6 The Correlation between the Curricula and the Collocational Competence of Adjective + Noun in Test 3

Table 6. The correlations between the curricula and the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3)

Correlations

		CURRICULA	TEST 3
CURRICULA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.368*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	60	60
TEST 3	Pearson Correlation	-.368*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	60	60

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

As could be seen in Table 6, p-value (.004) is less than the significance level (.05), resulting in the rejection of the Ho. Consequently, there was a relationship between the curricula and the collocational competence of

adjective + noun in the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3). Similarly to Test 1, a negative sign (-.368) indicated an inverse relationship. That is to say, the regular program participants outperformed the English program participants in terms of the collocational competence of adjective + noun in the Descriptive Written Task (Test 3).

7. Discussion

The two hypotheses were formulated since differences of collocational competence between the regular and English program participants could be expected. Specifically, due to massive exposure that the English program students normally received in various subjects in school with native speakers of English, they were more likely to accurately use adjective + noun collocations than the regular program students. Nevertheless, from the analysis shown earlier, the hypothesis needed to be rejected. The main findings contradicted some previous notions that extensive listening and reading in different types of texts are likely for learners to broaden learners' collocational size (Brashi, 2009, p.29; Obilisteanu, 2009). The work of Cowie (1998) indicated that collocation is useful, especially for EFL learners who have limited exposure to the target language. Specifically, students who are in a regular program with limited exposure to the target language should learn words in chunks to produce language naturally and fluently. Collocations can later be retrieved quickly once required. The work of Hashemi, Azizinezhad and Dravishi (2011) indicated that speaking and writing proficiency would also be developed since the primary emphasis is on larger units. Nevertheless, receptive vocabulary size might not necessarily equal productive one, and the rate of moving receptive vocabulary to productive one is not consistent (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 76; Nation, 2001, p. 371). Karoly (2005, p. 63) made clear that although awareness of collocations can be promoted by developing receptive skills, English language learners also need an ample opportunity to practice using collocations in natural settings. As Nation (2001, p. 371) stated, when word frequency is rather low, the gap between receptive and productive vocabulary becomes increasingly wider. Accordingly, receptive and productive skills should be picked up and complement each other so as to promote collocational competence. Once learners' collocational competence is enhanced, their overall language competence tends to increase as well (Brown, 1974; Klerk, 2006). The justifications for the phenomenon that the regular program participants performed better than the English program participants in terms of adjective + noun collocations were also suggested. This could be explained by the fact that the opportunity of producing the language through speaking and writing might be limited in the classroom despite a massive exposure to English. Although their collocational competence of adjective + noun was slightly higher than 50%, especially in Test 1 and Test 2, a continuous improvement in collocational competence is still required in order for them to produce the language naturally and native-like.

8. Pedagogical Implications

Though many previous research studies emphasized the great importance of incorporating collocations in teachers' lesson plans, collocation has not yet been received adequate attention in the classroom. Pedagogical implications were still proposed for English language teachers to increase learners' collocational competence.

First, it is unlikely that collocations are taught without awareness of teachers themselves (Nation, 2001; Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Hill, 1992; McCarthy, 1990; O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007); that is, teachers should first realize the significance of teaching collocations. Second, benefits of learning collocations should be explicitly provided to learners. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p. 114) suggested that thanks to collocation, grammatical errors and unnatural language can be reduced since learners are advised to learn vocabulary as chunks. Third, such activities as information-gap, problem-solving and role-plays can be used to introduce the concept of collocation. Next, not only meanings of new words but also their collocates should be introduced (Lewis, 2000, p. 12; Nation, 2001, p. 336). For example, apart from a meaning of *ability*, its collocates (e.g. *exceptional*, *extraordinary*, *great* and *outstanding*) should also be provided. This is effective learning for learners to both increase new vocabulary repertoires and strengthen existing vocabulary (Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Hill, 1992; Nation, 2001, p. 395). The fifth pedagogical implication is that the most frequent collocations should be introduced first due to a limited number of hours in the classroom (Hinkel, 2009; Nation, 2001; McCarthy, 1990; Sinclair & Renouf, 1988). It is also suggested that lexical collocations should be put more emphasis than grammatical collocations since, according to the past research (e.g. Boonyasaquan, 2006; Hsu, 2007; Mallikamas & Pongpairoj, 2005; Phoocharoensil, 2013; Ying, 2009), learners made more lexical collocations than grammatical ones. Last but not least, according to Woolard (2000, pp. 40-41), to become autonomous learners, students should be taught how to make use of corpora; in addition, commercial dictionaries also enable learners to become independent from their teachers.

9. Conclusion

This research was primarily conducted to 1) investigate how Thai EFL students studying in the regular and English programs use adjective + noun collocations 2) determine if there is a relationship between school curricula and collocational competence with adjective + noun. It revealed that the English program participants did not perform better in terms of adjective + noun collocations than did the regular program participants. Therefore, it is useful to further closely investigate the curricula in order to improve students' competence using adjective + noun collocations. Moreover, miscollocations can also be used to find out strategies the participants employed to cope with unknown collocations.

Acknowledgments

References

Altenberg, B., & Granger, S. (2001). The grammatical and lexical patterning of make in native and non-native student writing. *Applied Linguistics*, *22*(2), 173-195. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/22.2.173

Bahns, J. (1993). Lexical collocations: A contrastive view. *ELT Journal*, *47*(1), 56-63. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/47.1.56

BNC. (2007). *British National Corpus*. Retrieved from http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/

Boonyasaquan, S. (2006). An analysis of collocational violations in translation. *Journal of Humanities*, *27*, 79-91. Bangkok: Faculty of Humanity, Srinakharinwirot University.

Brashi, A. (2009). Collocability as a problem in L2 Production. *Reflections on Eng. Lang. Teaching*, *8*(1), 21-34.

Brown, D. F. (1974). Advanced vocabulary teaching: The problem of collocation. *RELC Journal*, *5*(2), 1-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003368827400500201

Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (1988). *Vocabulary and language teaching*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

COCA. (2012). *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. Retrieved from http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/

Cowie, A. P. (1988). Stable and creative aspects of vocabulary. In R. Carter, & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary and language teaching* (pp. 126-139). London: Pearson Education Limited.

Firth, J. R. (1957). *Papers in linguistics*, *1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press.

Fontenelle, T. (1994). What on earth are collocations: An assessment of the ways in which certain words co-occur and others do not. *English Today*, *10*(4), 42-48. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0266078400007902

Ganji, M. (2012). On the effect of gender and years of instruction on Iranian EFL learners' collocational competence. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(2), 123-133. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n2p123

Gairns, R., & Redman, S. (1986). *Working with words: A guide to teaching and learning vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hashemi, M., Azizinezhad, M., & Dravishi, S. (2011).Collocation a neglected aspect in teaching and learning EFL. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *31*, 522-525. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.097

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach* (pp. 47-69). London: Commercial Colour Press Plc.

Hill, J., Lewis, M., & Lewis, M. (2000). Classroom strategies, activities and exercises. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach* (pp. 88-117). London: Commercial Colour Press Plc.

Hinkel, E. (2012). Online English-English learner dictionaries boost word learning. *Eng. Teach Forum*, *4*, 10-15.

Hsu, J. (2007). Lexical collocations and their relation to the online writing of Taiwanese college English majors and non-English majors. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *4*(2), 192-209.

Hsu, J., & Chiu, C. (2008). Lexical collocations and their relation to speaking proficiency of college EFL learners in Taiwan. *The Asian EFL Journal*, *10*(1), 181-204.

Jukneviciene, R. (2008). Collocations with high-frequency verbs in learner English: Lithuanian learners vs native speakers. *Kalbotyra*, *59*(3), 119-127.

Karoly, A. (2005). The importance of raising collocational awareness in the vocabulary development of intermediate level learners of English. *Eger Journal of English Studies*, *V*, 58-69.

Klerk, V. (2006). Corpus linguistics and world Englishes. London: Continuum.

Lakshmi, M. (2012). Teaching lexis through comics: An exploratory study. *Journal of Engineering*, *2*(9), 50-54.

Leech, G., Cruickshank, B., & Ivanic, R. (2001). *An A-Z of English grammar & usage*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Lewis, M. (2000). Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach. London: Commercial Colour Press Plc.

Lewis, M. (1993). *The lexical approach*. London: Commercial Colour Press Plc.

Lewis, M., & Hill, J. (1992). *Practical techniques for language teaching*. London: Commercial Colour Press.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. (2009). Essex: Pearson Educational Limited.

McCarthy, M. (1990). *Vocabulary*. New York: Oxford University Express.

Mallikamas, P., & Pongpairoj, N. (2005).Thai learners' knowledge of English collocations. *HKBU Papers in Applied Language Studies*, *5*, 1-28.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nattinger, J., & DeCarrico, J. (1992). *Lexical phrases and language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Nesselhauf, N. (2003). The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, *24*(2), 223-242. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/24.2.223

Obilisteanu, G. (2009). Improving receptive and productive skills. *Behavioural-Social Sciences and Foreign Languages*, *2*(54), 65-70.

O'Keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English. (2009). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, F. R. (1968). *Selected Papers of J.R. Firth 1952-59*. London and Harlow: Longman Linguistic Library.

Phoocharoensil, S. (2013). Cross-linguistic influence: Its impact on L2 English collocation production. *English Language Teaching*, *6*(1), 1-10.

Phoocharoensil, S. (2011). Collocational errors in EFL learners' interlanguage. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *2*(3), 103-120.

Rahimi, M., & Momeni, G. (2011). The effect of teaching collocations on English language proficiency. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *31*, 37-42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.013

Shih, R. H. H. (2000). *Collocation Deficiency in a Learner Corpus of English: From an overuse perspective.* In Pacific Asia Conference on Language.

Sinclair, J., & Renouf, A. (1988). A lexical syllabus for language learning. In R. Carter, & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary and language teaching* (pp. 140-160). London: Pearson Education Limited

Sinclair, J. M. (1991). *Corpus concordance collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sinclair, J., Jones, S., & Daley, R. (2004). *English collocation studies: The OSTI report*. New York: Continuum.

Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Wallace, M. (1982). *Teaching vocabulary*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Wilkins, D. A. (1972). *Linguistics in language teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.

Woolard, G. (2000). Collocation-encouraging learner independence. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach* (pp. 28-46). London: Language Teaching Publications.

Ying, S. (2009). Study on collocations in English writing by Chinese students. *Sino-US Eng. Teach*, *6*(3), 25-30.

Yumanee, C., & Phoocharoensil, S. (2013). Analysis of collocational errors of Thai EFL students. *Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *1*(1), 90-100.

Appendix A

Test 1: The Gap-Filling Test of Adjective + Noun Collocations

Instruction: Fill in each of the following blanks with a suitable adjective.

Time: 30 minutes

1. It takes hard work and ………….. ability to make it as a professional athlete.

2. No ………….. changes were made to the book.

3. We need to spend at least a week there to get the ………….. benefit.

4. The car has been well maintained and is in…………..condition.

5. We need to take care of Connor closely because he is one of our…………..customers.

6. There is now ………….. evidence that these chemicals are damaging the environment.

7. We are trying to understand the causes of…………..behavior.

8. Although the cost of the project was enormous, it was not the…………..cause of its failure.

9. There was a(n) ………….. difference in his behavior toward me.

10. My parents like people with a(n) ………….. attitude to life.

11. Monkeys can be taught to do ………….. tasks.

12. ………….. action is needed to keep the situation from getting out of control.

13. It is good that much of the land was of ………….. quality.

14. There is ………….. competition in the automobile industry because there are many players in the industry.

15. Café Artista offers a(n)………….. variety of sandwiches.

16. It is important to get plenty of exercises and to eat …………..food.

17. We need to provide a(n)………….. argument as to why the system should be changed.

18. They listened to their professor's speech with …………..attention.

19. There is a(n)   ………….. demand for new cars owing to the expansion of the middle class.

20. I need to save money for my tuition fees so I am planning to spend a(n)………….. amount of money each day.

Appendix B

Test 2: The Collocation Selection Test of Adjective + Noun Collocations

Instruction: Make a check (✓) in front of a possible word or words that can make each sentence meaningful. You can choose more than one answer for each question. Time: 30 minutes

1. He is one of the best writers and editors of ………….. ability in our company.

____ remarkable   ____ great

____ skillful   ____ outstanding

2. Her family life has undergone ………….. change in recent years due to the economic downturn.

____ enormous   ____ high

____ significant   ____ considerable

3. Their wholesale business offers would be to our ………….. benefit.

____ extreme   ____ immense

____ tremendous   ____ significant

4. The house was in a ………….. condition because of the great storm.

____ flawed   ____ bad

____ poor   ____ terrible

5. Mr. David has been our…………..customer since 2000. It seems he prefers our conveniently-located small store to a big department store in the city.

____ loyal   ____ faithful

____ regular   ____ lengthy

6. ………….. evidence shows that men are more likely to have heart attacks than women.

____ Medical   ____ Medicinal

____ Scientific   ____ Experimental

7.Can TV violence cause…………..behavior?

____ criminal   ____ powerful

____ disruptive   ____ aggressive

8. Breast cancer is the…………..cause of death in women.

____ leading   ____ major

____ principal   ____ noteworthy

9. Researchers found a number of ………….. differences in the way boys and girls learn.

____ top   ____ substantial

____ wide   ____ dramatic

10. Mr. Alex has just been promoted because he has a very ………….. attitude towards work.

____ healthy   ____ logical

____ positive   ____ right

11. Trying to bring up a small daughter on your own is no ………….. task.

____ basic   ____ easy

____ smooth   ____ simple

12. Environmental groups want ………….. action on pollution from cars.

____ tough   ____ decisive

____ firm   ____ iron

13. The restaurant uses only ………….. quality of ingredients to meet rich, fussy customers' needs.

____ qualified   ____ nutritious

____ healthy   ____ valuable

14. There is ………….. competition between the three leading soap manufacturers.

____ angry   ____ fierce

____ intense   ____ keen

15. Iphone 5s offers a(n) ………….. variety of applications to customers.

____ unlimited   ____ unending

____ bottomless   ____ endless

16. Lack of ………….. food led to much illness among seamen.

____ healthy   ____ nourished

____ proper   ____ healthful

17. Students at Thammasat University give a ………….. argument against smoking.

____ sound   ____ convincing

____ trustworthy   ____ persuasive

18. I think that you did not give them your ………….. attention.

____ special   ____ full

____ close   ____ firm

19. Thanks to the increasing population in the UK, there is a ………….. demand for pasta.

____ heavy   ____ long

____ high   ____ huge

20. This table does not need to get wiped because there is only a ………….. amount of dirt on the table.

____ narrow   ____ minimal

____ minute   ____ tiny

Appendix C

Test 3: The Descriptive Written Task

Instruction: Write a 150-word descriptive paragraph on the topic of 'The appearance and personality of my best friend'.

Appendix D

Demographic Information Questionnaire

Please read through each of the statements and provide an honest and accurate response using an ink pen. No part of the information will be used to identify you nor will it be used for commercial purposes. Your information will only be used for academic purposes and kept confidential.

1. Name: _____

2. Sex: Male   Female

3. Age: _____ years

4. Nationality: _____

5. What program are you in?

          Regular   English

6. Have you ever studied English in any English-speaking country? (e.g. America or England)

          Yes   No

If yes, for _____ months/years

7. How many years have you been studying English? _____ years

8. How many hours do you study English at school per week? _____ hours

9. What language do teachers use in the English class?

          Thai   English

10. What language do teachers use in other subjects? (e.g. Mathematics, social science)

          Thai   English

If English is used, please specific the subject(s)_____ and for_____ hours per week

11. Do you have any exposure to native speakers of English in the school?

          Yes   No

If yes, for _____ hours per week

12. Please explain how you learn new vocabulary. (e.g. methods, strategies)

_____
_____
_____

13. Please explain how new vocabulary is taught in the class. (e.g. methods, strategies)

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Copyrights