Investigating the Performance of Iraqi EFL University Students in Using Collocations

Dr. Rusul Assim Abbood
University of Kufa, College of Education, English Department
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ABSTRACT
This study deals with collocations in English as well as in Arabic. There are several types of collocations, such as open, restricted and bound, some times idioms have the same aspects of collocations but there should be no confusion between them. The aims of the study are: 1. Identifying the aspects of collocations in both English and Arabic language as well; 2. Discussing the general usage of collocation in English and Arabic; 3. Investigating the Iraqi EFL university students' performance in using collocations. The study consists of five sections. Section one is devoted to the aims, hypotheses, procedures and limits, of the study. Section two is definitions and types of collocations. Section three is dedicated to the description of meanings, section four the results and finally section five is the conclusions.
الخلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة موضوع المتلازمات اللفظية في كلتا اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية ونال ذلك عدة أنواع من هذه المتلازمات منها المقيدة والمجيدة، وفي بعض الأحيان تكون لهذه المتلازمات خصائص معينة ولكن تختلف هذه الخصائص عن غيرها من المصطلحات التعبيرية إذ يجب تمييزها عنها وعدم الدمج بين خصائص المتلازمات اللفظية والمصطلحات من خلال الاختلاف في المعاني المستخدمة. تعتبر معاني المصطلحات غير إنشائية ولكن تعد المتلازمات اللفظية ذات معنى في تركيب الإنشاء لذا تكون شمولية في استعمال الكلمات مع بعضها البعض.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى: 1 - تحديد خصائص المتلازمات اللفظية في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية ، 2 - مناقشة الاستخدامات العامة لهذه المتلازمات في اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية ، 3 - تحليل أداء طلبة الجامعة العراقية في استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية.

تحتوي هذه الدراسة على خمسة فصول. يشمل الفصل الأول الأهداف والفرضيات وحدود الدراسة، الفصل الثاني عبارة عن تعريف المتلازمات اللفظية وخصائصها، الفصل الثالث يحتوي على وصف المعاني، الفصل الرابع النتائج، وأخيرا الفصل الخامس الاستنتاجات.

Section One
Introduction

This study is about collocations. This study deals with collocations in English as well as in Arabic. There are several types of collocations, such as open, restricted and bound, some times idioms have the same aspects of collocations but there should be no confusion between them. 1.1 The Problem

This study was designed to diagnose the use of collocations in English and Arabic languages. Since we have collocations in both languages but the students face more difficulties in using Arabic collocations than English.
1.2 Aims
1. Identifying the aspects of collocations in both English and Arabic language as well.
2. Discussing the general usage of collocation in English and Arabic.

1.3 Hypotheses
1. It is hypnotized that collocations are more complicated in Arabic and wider than collocations in English according to their meanings.

1.4 Procedures
1. Presenting theoretical details of English and Arabic collocations.
2. Identifying the results of the test.

1.5 Limits
This study limited itself to evaluation the use of collocations in both English and Arabic languages. The researcher chooses third grade / English department / College of Education. The study practically conducted as a test for Iraqi EFL 3rd grade learners, specially for this grade, because they have studied implicature.

Section Two
2.1 Definitions
The term collocation is used by different linguists as follows:

According to Gramley & Patzold. (1992: 61) collocation refers to combinations of two lexical items in order to organize an isolable semantic which belong to different word classes and show a restricted range.

Collocations are words which lexicalized as subsequent shortening as (holiday= holy day). (Gorlach,1997: 79).

Swan (2003 :257) defines collocations as idioms that express the idea correctly, e.g. "a heavy smoker" English speakers
have chosen to use "heavy" instead of (big, strong, hard, fierce, mad, devoted) in order to express it in a right way, in sum a learner who uses the wrong words for an idea like this may be understood, but he will not sound natural. These conventional combinations are called collocations.

All languages have numbers of collocations. Some more English examples:
burning desire
blazing row
crashing bore
golden opportunity
change one's mind
thanks a lot (not thank you a lot)
slightly annoyed (not slightly interesting)

Yule (2003: 122-123) states that collocations are terms used to organize our knowledge of words which are occurring frequently and together. Such as (fresh air or husband and wife).

Collocation is a type of lexical cohesion, it includes all those items in a text that are semantically related, therefore it can cause major problems for discourse analysis (Nunan, 2001: 123).

They are a "form of lexical cohesion in which two or more words are related by virtue of their belonging to particular semantic field." e.g.

1. The bulbs should be planted in winter.
2. The flowers will appear in spring. (ibid: 303)

Collocation refers to the act of putting items together, in this case combination of words obtain Collocation = note+collocate (Katrin Jänecke & Christian Lindner, 2006: 3).
2.2 Types of Collocations are as follows

2.2.1 Grammatical collocations

frequently occurring combination of a dominant word (noun, adjective or verb) and a function word (often a preposition) typical verb collocations: abstain from, approve of (phrasal verbs) noun collocations: admiration for, amazement at adjective collocations: absent from, afraid of, angry with this type of collocation often an alternative to other constructions.

2.2.2 Semantical & lexical Collocations

also consist of a groups of words with a certain meaning which occur together but they consist of words which have an approximately equal status set of collocates for a given word can form nearly unlimited classes e.g. Run with object: a business, a company, also a gym, a pizza parlour but if you look at other verbs with similar meanings the group of collocates is more restricted e.g. Manage. (Katrin Jänecke & Christian Lindner, 2006: 4)

Section Three

3.1 Analysis

Collocations reflect a semantic relation between words which includes the factors of others items meaning. A close analysis should be started of all the collocations in order to find out less obvious contrasts in meaning. (Gorhach, 1997:121- 126).

Collocational words can also influence each other semantically for example: To turn fast= quickly. (ibid: 132)

All in all, many collocations consist of two words that stand in a more flexible relationship to one another. Consider the verb
knock and one of its most frequent arguments, door. Here are some examples of knocking on or at a door:

a. she knocked on his door
b. they knocked at the door
c. 100 women knocked on Donaldson’s door
d. a man knocked on the metal front door

The words that appear between knocked and door vary and the distance between the two words is not constant so a fixed phrase approach would not work here. But there is enough regularity in the patterns to allow us to determine that knock is the right verb to use in English for this situation, not hit, beat or rap. (wikipedia.2011, 3)

3.2 Meanings

(Gramley & Patzold p.61-62) states that collocational meaning refers to each word makes an independent contribution to the meaning of the whole collocation, just like (river- rise, agree- entirely or fine- heavy), these are indeed collocations from the semantic point of view because each one of them has independent meaning.

3.3 Usage

Mostly, collocation is determined by meaning but sometimes it cannot be predicated in terms of the meaning of associated words for example blond with hair we should not talk about *a blond door or *blond dress, even if the colour were exactly to the blond hair. Another relevant example that we should not normally say *pretty boy or *buxom man, though pretty girl and buxom woman are quite normal. This characteristic of language is found in an extreme form in the collective words: flock of sheep
herd of cows
school of whales
pride of lions
dog / bark
cat / mew
sheep / bleat
horse / neigh
(Palmer, 1971: 76-77).

Sometimes the user is misleading the correct use of collocations to produce a correct linguists term such as the word (gap) tends to occur close to (teeth, mountain, narrow, widen, fill, close, and reduce) (Mitton, 1996: 169).

Collocations are some times different in pronunciation and similar in meanings such as:

لَوْ عَانِيَ بِكَ لَقَالَ بَهْجَةَ جَذْلَا
law aynak lekala behjete jathela
أَبْرَحَتِ أَيْسَرْ مَا فِي الْعَرَاقَ أَن يَشْخَأ
abreht aysar ma fy al Iraq an yeshja
behjete and jathela (بهجة جذلًا (بهجة جذلًا) are close in the meaning in which both refer to (happiness) so they are used together because the pronunciation is different. (Al Asafy, 2009:277)

Again when Al Mutanaby said

نَبِذَاكُوَ يُوسُى كُل خَرْج يعْتَلُى
نبذاك يوسي كل خرج يعتلى
Raab alasat bederdaebes kantar
Bendak yuasa kul kerge yuatala
thus here we have bederdaebes and kantar (بدرديب قنطر (الداهية (aldahia) both are related to the same meaning. (ibid)

The necessary usage of collocations in Arabic

According to (Al-Maatuk, 2008:42) collocations mean a various ways to express what the one want to say.
Ama lehathe al aama almulhad almushanaf men yaktulah lawla an algeeletah min sajaya algaliah , lebeathtu ilayh men yabaaj batnah ala madjaah.

This speech said by Wasel bin Ataa Algazaly against Basher bin Bard in which Wasel has a defect of pronoun the letter ® so he used a talent collocations to substituted the words that cry the letter ® with other words in order to express his ideas and the words are as follows;

المشنف بدل من بشار almulhad instead of alkafer
الملحد بدل من الكافر almushanaf instead of Basher
الغيلة سجية من سجايا الغالية بدل من المنصورية والمغيرية algeeletah min sajaya algaliah instead of almansuria and almagiria
لبعثت بدل من لأرسلت lebeathtu instead of lerseltu
مضجعه بدل من فراشه madjaah instead of firasheh

(Al-Maatuk, 2008:42-43)

There are a lot of words can give meanings in a suitable place and use than others because these words are more accurate, for instance:

أفضل من سرق katafa better than seraq
جمال أفضل من بهاء jemal better than bahaa
توافي أفضل من مات tuwufy better than mat
شاهق أفضل من مشخر shahiq better than mushmeker

(Al-Maatuk, 2008: 22-23)

Collocation means also two words give the same meaning and both can use in the same situation as the words below:

المليح والحسن almeli and alhesin
القبيح والسمج alkabih and alsemij
المتشدق والمتفيق almutashadiq and almutfaihiq
الثرثار والمكثر altharthar and almekthar

(Al-Maatuk, 2008: 53)
Some words are close in meaning with other words to make a collocation in unconscious way in which we used them together as a habit because they are fit to be together for example:

محاكاة النماذج   Muhakat alnemathej
تقليد المثل      Tqleed almethal
يقوم عليه الفنان  Ykum alyah alfen
ينهض به فنان      Yanhad bih alfanan
طبيعة القلم      Tyat alkalam
لينة اللسان      Lyanat allisan

(Kamal Bisher ,1965: 94-95)

Kamal Bisher translated the book of Stephen Ullmann which is called 'Words and Their Use' into Arabic to focus on some useful collocations such as the collaboration and double use of words called 'homonymy' or the words which have more than one meaning with the same pronunciation called 'polysemy'. For instance:

 البحر و يرى    بحر و يرى
الطحين و زهرة   طحين و زهرة

Therefore the word (see) in this phrase 'the bishop's see' which means 'عرش الأسقف' not like the separate word (see) and the word (page) in the phrase 'page boy' which means 'الساعي أو البواب' not similar to the normal separate word (page), to sum up we can notice when the words come together they can give different meaning from those that come separately. (Kamal Bishr ,1965: 94-95)

More Arabic examples of collocations

"عبر النهر و السهل"   "عبر النهر و السهل"   Abara alnahar wa alsahal
"القوات المسلحة"      "القوات المسلحة"   Alquwat almusalaha
"تهبط الطريق"      "تهبط الطريق"   Tahbit altareek
"نشب القتال"     "نشب القتال"    Nashaba alqeetal
"حقوق انتصارا"     "حقوق انتصارا"    Haqaqa intasara

(1) (مجالس الفصحي لعلوم اللغة العربية 2011)
Collocations noun and verb  

أقام الصلاة (أدى الزكاة) و (خاض المعركة)  

noun and noun  

حقن الدماء و (أداء الدين)  

verb and verb  

(آقبل ينادي)، (طقق يخصص)  

الجريمة) (طويل الباع) ، (عابس الوجه)  

adjective and noun  

(الوفاء بالوعد) (تخرج جامعة)  

noun or verb with letter and noun  

لبن الفصحى لعلوم اللغة العربية (2011)  

3.4 Aspects of Collocations

Here there is a mention of some different collocations. One might say there is a core word (the word that comes to the mind first) and a collocator that combines with that core-word. One has for example in mind the noun 'crime' in English, and looks for the verb which combines with it, and which denotes the action of 'doing it' (the crime). This has to be either the verb 'commit' or 'perpetrate'. This applies for Arabic as well. When having the noun جريمة in mind, only the verbs ارتكب or اقترف can be used. While still having the same noun in mind and seeking for an adjective that expresses the bad, violent and harmful nature of the crime one can in English choose from a limited number of adjectives like 'atrocious', 'vicious' and some others. The same in Arabic; with جريمة one can combine a limited number of adjectives like نكراء.

Collocations (also called recurrent combinations or fixed combinations) are specific combinations of for example a noun and an adjective, or a noun and a verb. (Peter Emery, 1991: 1)
Section Four

4.1 The Sample

The researcher chooses third grade / English department / College of Education. They have been chosen because they have a background Knowledge about collocations in English.

4.2 The Population

A sample of students from the third grade in department of English, College of Education, University of Kufa, during the academic year (2017). It consisted of thirty students they are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic who have similar EFL background.

4.3 Test Design

It consisted of two questions. The first question was designed to assess students responses in English collocations. This question included six items, the students were required to match the right answer.

The second question was designed to measure the students responses in Arabic collocations. This question also included six items, the students were required to match the right answer.

4.4 The Results of the Test

The tables below show the results of the test
As shown in the results of table (1) which were the responses of the first question that the students faced less difficulties in using English collocations than in using Arabic collocations according to the results of the correct and wrong responses in which the correct responses were more than the wrong responses.

### Table (1)
**Students Responses in English Collocations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>No. of Correct Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Wrong Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td><strong>343</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>257</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table (2)
**Students Responses in Arabic Collocations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>No. of Correct Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Wrong Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>234</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>366</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In table (2) above the results shown the responses of the second question that the students faced more difficulties in using Arabic collocations than in using English collocations according to the results of the correct and wrong responses in which the wrong responses were more than the correct responses.

Section Five
Conclusions

5.1 Theoretical Conclusion
What was concluded in this study that there were certain words which more specific in usage and limit in use with other words whether in English and Arabic languages but some times Arabic collocations are more confused to choose a specific word to each other because Arabic language has very large dictionaries of words in which some the writers consider it misleading vocabularies to use.

Collocation is considered one of the major `trouble spots' for translators. This may be ascribed to the relative difficulty in predicting the constituent elements of a collocation, the considerable variation in collocability across languages and the lack of adequate resources on collocation. In sum we cannot easily translate collocation from one language into other.

5.2 Practical Conclusion
It has been demonstrated that Arabic learners have very little material to consult in order to find collocations in Arabic. Ar-FL(Arabic foreign learners) dictionaries, even though not the first category to consult when the learners want to produce Arabic, they do not have an enough amount of collocations.

As shown in the results of table (1) which were the responses of the first question that the students faced less difficulties in using English collocations than in using Arabic collocations according to the results of the correct and wrong responses in which the correct responses were more than the wrong responses.
In table (2) the results shown the responses of the second question that the students faced more difficulties in using Arabic collocations than in using English collocations according to the results of the correct and wrong responses in which the wrong responses were more than the correct responses.

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Appendix (1)
The Test
Q1. Match the words (1-6) and (a-f).

1. blond  a. opportunity
2. repeal  b. with hair
3. appreciate  c. annoyed
4. reverse  d. sincerely
5. golden  e. a law
6. slightly f. a decision
decision

Q2. Match the words (1-6) and (a-f).

النماذج
1. بدردبيس  a.
2. بهجة  b.
3. طيعة  c.
4. محاكاة  d.
5. طفق  e.
6. جريمة  f.
Appendix (2)
The Answers

Q1.
blond with hair
repeal a law
appreciate sincerely
reverse a decision
golden opportunity
slightly annoyed

Q2.
بدردبيس قنطر
بهجة جذلا
طبيعة القلم
محاكاة النماذج
طفق يخصف
جريمة نكراء