

Collocations and Concordances for resourceful English language teaching and learning

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Abstract: As teachers and learners all of us require different collocations (Co-occurrence of parts of speech) target language expressions for effective and efficient teaching and learning to take place. Confident written and spoken communication is determined by natural and crispier set of combination of words. This would result in fluent and clear communication. The objective of this research paper is to expose the flaws committed in using collocations by the language users and suggest some of the remedial measures to overcome those errors. For instance, *notorious* is misinterpreted and misused for a positive context such as *notorious gentleman*.

Common wrong co-occurrence of parts of speech used in connected speech are:

The performance is *too good*.

He *don't*, She *don't* etc., we *doesn't* know They *doesn't* know etc.,

He is *dieting*,

I cannot *cope up*,

I came *by walk*,

Our classroom is *in the 2nd floor*,

Myself, I am Suresh babu,

I am *having* four brothers and three sisters,

Does she has a car?,

Today, *Officer is there?* No, *Office is not there*. No, *is there* (Indianized, grammatically wrong collocations),

That only, She is very arrogant,

Last before year, she got very good marks,

He did not wrote the test last week,

Time in your watch,

He has many white hairs,

I prefer coffee than tea etc., Age is coming.

You only told me know

If you do like this means I will tell to my father

(Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/grammar-vocabulary/story/16-common-errors-in-everyday-english-1097590-2017-11-30>)

Introduction: Collocations are co-occurrence of parts of speech. They are Target language expressions learnt and used according to the situation and needs/demands/requirements. Learning and acquiring the knowledge of collocations is the need of the hour in this knowledge and information technology explosion world. Every day, fresh and new collocations are popping up in terms of loaned words or neo-logism. They are read and learnt through newspapers most importantly, since journalists and article writers use fresh and state of the art phrases and expressions. Recall those collocations contextually, retain the text and reproduce it in the test (when the situation demands) Dedication, determination, discipline, duty-mindedness and devotion in updating and equipping ourselves with the latest spoken and written expressions will decide the destiny of the English language learner/user. The crux of this paper is how to recall the collocations contextually/situationally, how to retain the text and how to reproduce/exploit the phrases and expressions to the maximum possible benefit of the user and beneficiary in the test. The six language guiding factors would enable us to understand this process of systematic and strategic collocations learning/acquisition. They are Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

Key-terms: Language learning/acquisition, collocations, phrases and expressions, Recall the context, retain the text and reproduce it in the test. Dedication, determination, discipline, duty-mindedness and devotion. Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

Why Collocations?

Collocations used in terms of politics and administration: Press reporters when they write columns on different politicians of ruling and opposition parties use very interesting and informative phrases and expressions newspapers. We see and listen to the political leaders in their assembly and parliament sessions, the decorum and formalities that are followed during the leaders' addressing, criticisms and debates and discussions. However, it is very unfortunate that the legislative assemblies and parliaments at times are turning into hubs of unparliamentarily target language expressions which should be refined keeping in mind the decency and decorum of the houses. But the advantage of reading the news items in newspapers is that we do not have such distractions and deviations. Appropriate language expressions can be learnt by focused and happy reading.

Some of the target language expressions: Political campaign, Swearing-in-ceremony, oath taking ceremony, blatantly flayed, vehemently opposed, condemned the allegations/accusations, debate and decide,

Rainy season: Torrential rain, incessant rain, rains lashed the city, potholes on the roads, sporadic rains, thunderstorm, cloud burst, inundated low lying areas, down pour, drizzle and hail stones. Cities such as Hyderabad would turn into streams and lakes during rainy season giving the pedestrians and commuters a harrowing time. These expressions will be immensely/richly beneficial for narration by teachers and for learners for fluent and crispier description.

Read them and hone them: *Incessant rain/torrential rain, commuters stranded, waterlogged roads, inundated traffic, massive downpour, intensive rain, traffic stalled, brief let ups, sporadic rains, copious rains, traffic came to a grinding halt, inclement weather, traffic moving at a snail's pace, bumper to bumper, rains lashed the residents, flooded roads, two wheelers/four wheelers break down, chronic floods, cloud burst, streets turned streams, On a rainy evening, lazing in the veranda, sipping a hot cup of tea, starrng into nothingness. Come rain or shine.*

Summer season: *Scorching, blistering, blazing summer, heat wave, dehydration and rehydration, deserted/isolated/secluded roads.*

Winter season: *Cold wave, freezing temperature, a thick blanket of fog, chilly wintry morning, fire place,*

Accident prone phrases and expressions: *collides with truck, moved down by the four-wheeler, mangled remains, succumbed to injuries, and suffered critical injuries, fatal ride/drive, casualties, on a joy ride, car/chopper crash, fatal hit, deceased, bumpy ride/drive, crushed behind the wheel.*

Suicidal tendencies: *Chronic anxiety, low self-esteem, uncontrollable anger, extend unconditional love and support, keep the lines of communication open, show empathy and compassion, feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness, excessive guilt, suicidal thoughts, withdrawing or feeling isolated, displaying extreme mood swings, talking about wanting to die etc., Don't promise anything when you are extremely happy; don't take any decision when you are extremely angry.*

Crime time: *strangled to death, autopsy, sexual abuse/assault/harassment/bludgeoned his brother/smashed the head/fired at a point-blank range, life imprisonment, sent to gallows etc., inebriated/intoxicated/under the influence of alcohol*

General advertisements:

An eggs-celent road to better health (On the occasion of world egg day)

"Eat your egg today and everyday"

Brightens bridal hopes

Types of collocations in general:

- 1- Verb + Noun (*Drive a Car*)
- 2- Verb + Adverb/Adjective (*to sing melodiously*)
- 3- Noun + Verb (*roads damaged*)
- 4- Noun + Noun (*a ceasefire agreement*)
- 5- 5- Adjective + Noun (*handsome salary*)
- 6- Adverb + Adjective (*fully automatic*)
- 7- 7- Adverb + verb (*mutually support*)

Newspapers for resourceful collocations/target language phrases and expressions:

Standard newspapers such as The Hindu are the best sources of TLEs (Target Language Expressions) learning/acquisition. According to Fillmore (1979), the proficiency of collocations is a source of fluency. A language user with the knowledge of how to combine words in association with one another gains advantage over others who are with indeterminate knowledge.

Literature Review:

Regular co-occurrence of specific word units as per Crystal (2008). Word combinations display a syntagmatic word combination. Some of the word combinations co-occur in natural text in terms of greater than non-coincidental regularity according to Lewis (2000). Thorburry (2002), describes that word combinations are output of a spectrum of word links. Oxford Dictionary defines that collocation is the process of putting words collectively. It is debated that the word combination is adopted from Latin word which means arranging words together and Firth (1957) is known as the initiator of the term of collocation. We can re-hypothesise the word selections with the aid of some word patterns according to Hill (2000). Jamsaid (2018) explains that the native learner has chunks of words in one's word bank and one can effortlessly apply those lexical items to combine with others. They possess the calibre and potential to use words and to come up with unlimited sentences which they never used before in their life. For the purpose of communication, they are addictive to use up chunks of words. She postulates that customer sometimes uses combinations of words or sometimes use co-occurrence of words to link up the relationship between them. Ariffin and Abdi (2020) highlights that within the field of word power, investigators emphasize the importance of word patterns, also known as chunks or formulaic language. These lexical sequences have been described in varied experiments. While the classifications are different, they come together to some extent. Some of these chunks are predominantly put together to form a complicated word altogether.

Collocations are differently used by different faculty and students. Some are confident, natural and use combination of words with ease. *Informal interviews with the faculty members and the students is the research methodology of this article.* Some of the teachers and learners find it very difficult to use the right collocation in the right place. They keep searching for the

appropriate/relevant/apt collocation based on the context. They are observed using fillers such as um... ah... to express themselves confidently and successfully during spoken communication (connected speech) specifically. Some of them use collocations wrongly or sub-standard language phrases and expressions. Sung (2003) expresses those collocations are word combinations which take place in a native speaker's mind intuitively. The crucial reason the language users they say for the lack of fluency in using the collocations unsuccessfully is the lack of reading habit and most of the chats which takes place on social media in local (or) vernacular language. All said and done, most importantly but for a few colleges, the daily chats, pep talks and general communication is done in vernacular language. This has been an observation that is emphasized in most of the researches. However, very less ground has been broken in terms of solutions and bridge programmes that are the need of the hour/day.

Suggestions to learn/acquire the knowledge of collocations:

Collocation is the most powerful force in the creation and comprehension of all naturally occurring text.

Teach the learners to cull out collocations:

For instance, while reading a newspaper what are the combination of words that require the reader's/focused attention.

1. The readers/listeners must underline the important co-occurrence of different parts of speech.
2. Maintain a pocket note pad to record the collocations
3. They should be recorded in such a way that when the learner sees the combination of words, he should be able to remember/recall the context, retain the text and reproduce it in the test.
4. Exploit the collocations as much as possible in pep-talks, debates, discussions writing in social media, elocutions, letters, essays, reports and précis writing
5. Pronunciation aspects and spelling coordination with the help of latest applications in the language labs, fresh co-occurrence of word combinations can be/should be acquired/learnt through latest internet assisted applications.
6. ***Passion for Collocations:*** A passion for collocation should be inculcated among the learners/teachers. When a *duty* becomes a *desire*, it will ultimately become a *delight*.
7. ***Use it or lose it:***
The concept of use the combination (or) collocation or lose it should be strongly motivated/inspired among the learners/users.
8. We have two kinds of memory. Short term memory and long-term memory just like a CPU works in a computer system. By extensive usage of the collocation, it gets saved in the long term memory.
9. The longer/stronger we use a collocation/combination in spoken and written communication the longer and permanent the collocation becomes our property (own/hone the collocation/combination)

10. Native speakers' collocations need to be observed/listened to be /imitated/practiced and reproduced
11. The habit of reading should be ignited and initiated among the teachers and learners. The more the practice of reading, the better, stronger and sharper is the knowledge of collocations/combination of words
12. JAM sessions, writing taglines/punch lines/pick up lines/clinchers, appropriate self-introduction are some of the activities/language development programmes that should be planned, prepared, practiced and presented.
13. SQ3R techniques: Practice Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review in reading, listening, speaking and writing.
14. VGP: Vocabulary, Grammar Pronunciation/Punctuation the foundation/essentials/basics of building the language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing should be showcased for result-oriented collocation acquisition.
15. VAVPLSS: Teach them to learn collocations (Howard Gardner's learning styles, 1983) based on their individual learning styles. The users/learners should recognize their specific learning style.
Verbal: Learning through spoken words
Audio: Learning by listening
Visual: Learning by watching
Physical: Learning in terms of physical activities
Logical: Learning through logic
Societal: Learning in groups
Solitary: Learning by studying alone
The interest, dedication, determination and passion of the learner's/user's Concentration/Interest/Dedication (C.I.D.,) would determine the collocation acquisition/learning.

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