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## The Interference of Second Language Learning in the Understanding of Collocations

LARISHA JASMINE.H

Ph.D. Research Scholar Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science , Coimbatore

**Dr. D. Franklin Vasekaran**

Assistant Professor , Department of English Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

### 1. Introduction:

Choosing how wide to cast the net in the search for pertinent papers presents perhaps the biggest problem in developing a research timeline on teaching and learning collocation. For one issue, not all (applied) linguists and practitioners agree on what is meant by the term "collocation." Another example is that things that are classified as collocations in one study could be given a different name in another. The term "collocation" refers to the method in which words in the English language are naturally combined. Knowing which words collide is crucial (commonly go together). This method focuses mostly on the co-occurrence of words, or how words "partner" with one another. But can taking into account their semantic characteristics improve our comprehension of collocations? Since there appear to be three forms of collocation from a meaning-focused standpoint, we think teachers should pay attention to more than simply the literal pairing of words (Macis and Schmitt, 1).

Collocation is the term used to describe the above-chance co-occurrence of two words in the field of corpus linguistics. One of the existing measures of collocational strength, such as the mutual information (MI) score, can be used to quantify the likelihood that two words would co-occur in a corpus within a specific period of dialogue. The stronger the word relationship or collocation, the higher the score. Word substitutions that cause cooccurrences to deviate from the norm (e.g., using very religious instead of deeply religious) will typically stand out as unusual or "non-idiomatic" (idiomatic in the sense of "combining words like a native speaker") (Boers et al., 1). Regardless of how they are understood, collocations are a subclass of set phrases. Set phrases are extremely important because people speak in set phrases rather than in isolated words. However, fixed phrases, or phrasemes, pose one of the main challenges in theoretical linguistics as well as in the creation of

dictionaries. Collocations are described by Nesselhauf as "a type of word combination in a certain grammatical pattern" and are used to refer to "an abstract unit of language and its instantiations in texts" (Akinci et al., 2)

## 2. Objectives:

The main objectives of this research will be:

- To study the evolutions of second language learning with modern insights
- To understand the current standing and usage of collocations
- To study and analyse the various interferences that a non-native speaker might face while leaning collocations
- To notice the differences in the usage and understanding of collocations between native speakers and non-native speakers

## 3. A Theoretical Understanding of Second Language Learning:

People from various parts of the world come from various cultural backgrounds and speak various languages. Although language and culture initially seem to be two separate subjects, they actually have a close connection and mutually influence one another. According to Gleason, languages are not just the byproducts of cultures; they are also their emblems. Cultural patterns of cognition and tradition are frequently clearly coded in the language, which frequently affects how a language develops in relation to its related culture. Additionally, language is a social institution that both influences and are influenced by society. Language is a set of rules and symbols used to create meaningful communication. The way our thoughts process the world is often reflected in the structure of language. Douglas claims that language has four distinct aspects. There are universal grammar, aptitude and performance, production and comprehension, nature and nurture, and competence and performance. Grammatical proficiency, communicative proficiency, language proficiency, and cultural awareness are some of the several aspects of learning a second language. Cultural components should be included in second language instruction, rather than just lectures on new vocabulary or syntactic structures. The following six suggestions can be viewed as instructional strategies for teaching a second language within a cultural framework: providing culturally relevant materials; using common proverbs as a transferable tool; applying the role-play as a sociocultural approach; encouraging students to search for and present through the culture capsules; viewing

students as cultural resources; and using computer technology to assist students in gaining cultural information (Kuo et al., 3-8).

It is beneficial to look at how single-word items and multi-word combinations are learned in connection to one another because this should show how interrelated and dependent these two categories of knowledge are on one another. The ability to use single-word items and collocations together is related. Depth of knowledge encompasses other vocabulary knowledge, such as word parts, association, and collocation, which may receive less direct instruction. A word's potential knowledge cannot be completely assessed by a vocabulary test that just looks at its form and meaning. Therefore, assessing collocation, a separate aspect of depth of knowledge, can serve to give a more comprehensive view of learners' vocabulary understanding. Numerous studies have revealed that collocational knowledge tends to develop slowly and that L2 learners' knowledge of collocation is restricted. Altenberg, Granger, and Laufer and Waldman discovered that even learners at an advanced level frequently make collocation mistakes using a corpus-based technique that involves comparing texts written by learners with norms for native speakers. The use of verb-noun collocations in corpora from native speakers and learners was compared by Laufer and Waldman. The findings showed that compared to native speakers, L2 learners created significantly fewer collocations and a higher number of aberrant collocations. The use of collocations with the common verb 'make' by learners was examined by Altenberg and Granger. Their data suggested that students have trouble employing collocations. Learners have particular difficulty with delexical and causative meanings of the verb make, such as when they mean to "make something possible" or "make someone realise something" (Nguyen et al., 3).

Previous studies and theories on the process of learning a second language have given motivation a significant role. One of the earliest theoretical comments on the subject was made by Gardner and Lambert (1959), who suggested that a person's motivation to learn is influenced by their attitudes toward the other group in particular, foreigners in general, and the learning activity itself. Gardner and Lambert found two approaches to the learning problem, which they assumed to be the two ends of a continuum. At one extreme, those who acquire a second language to become members of the second language community and identify with it are characterised by an integrative attitude (Clément et al., 2).

Data-driven learning (DDL), which was first proposed by Johns (1991) and is based on corpus consultation, has been hailed as a new approach to teaching the English language (ELT). Despite the fact that research favours

using DDL to teach collocations, it is recommended that explicit emphasis be given to collocations because of the influence of L1 transfer and limitations on collocations unique to the target language. The meaning of corpus has changed significantly throughout time, starting with its use in the Middle Ages in the collection of the Bible and Shakespeare's plays. It can be described as a principled computerised collection of organically occurring written material or speech transcribed from a variety of sources in today's society. When teaching vocabulary, DDL based on corpus consultation and implicit learning can be helpful. However, it is not clear how well corpus can be used to teach lexical things like collocations, and since these items are extremely difficult to learn because of L1 transfer and ongoing linguistic limitations, additional instruction may be necessary (Akinci et al., 4).

#### **4. Locating and Learning Collocations:**

Studies using a significant amount of data involving freely produced language, a wide diversity of language samples, and cross-corpus comparisons were made possible by the advent of language corpora and corpus analytic tools within L2 research. Tools are available for determining the frequency of words specified by the researchers in a corpus in software programmes like WordSmith Tools. The software's concordance capability extracts all the lines from the corpus where the targeted terms appear. This function helps the researcher to look for repeating usage patterns in the context of the words under investigation. The software displays all of the take phrases in context in order to extract collocations, as in the case of collocations with the verb take (such as a look, a bath, or a photograph). By comparing learner data with native speaker norms, these tools enable the collection of information on accurate and incorrect collocations, as well as on the under- and overuse of particular collocations or each of the collocation components (Laufer et al., 5).

One technique to distinguish between native speakers and students of second languages is through the use of collocations. A native speaker will say, "Can I offer you a hand?" as opposed to a non-native speaker who will ask, "Can I help you?" Collocations are frequent word pairings that co-occur more frequently than would be predicted by chance in the English language. Why not say "last hour" instead of "last year"? And why do we travel by rail or vehicle but not by foot? Collocation is the cause. In addition to understanding a word's definition from a dictionary, one needs also to be aware of the kinds of words that the word is frequently used in conjunction with. Collocations are the product of many years of habitual use by proficient English speakers, whether they are fixed or more flexible. Collocation automation is thought to aid native speakers in speaking English fluently by providing "chunks" of the language that are ready to use. However, due to the lack of this automation, second

and foreign-language learners may make non-native mistakes when making utterances. Learners of second and foreign languages should be aware that producing and understanding collocations as a whole, unanalyzed sentences is a crucial component of language acquisition in order to become as competent and fluent as native speakers. English language students and teachers are both aware of how difficult the collocational language is (Farrokh, 2).

There has been a discernible revival of vocabulary study with the introduction of online corpora like the British National Corpus or the Corpus of Contemporary English decades ago. Collocations are one of the many vocabulary-focused research subjects that have drawn the interest of lexicographers, educators, and researchers. Language acquisition depends on personal preferences. Many scholars have proposed that collocations should be a required component of English training due to their perceived importance in the fluency and competency of English. Learners who have a strong grasp of collocations are able to speak fluently and effectively, just like native speakers (Bui, 2).

Idiomobile is the first open-source mobile software programme that focuses on idiomatic phrases and collocations, filling a need that has long been felt and opening up untapped potential. The importance of teaching collocations in second language acquisition, its acknowledged difficulty for L2 learners, and its potential integration in computer applications make it a good fit for this type of learning environment. Therefore, implementing educational software that focuses on collocations has the potential to help students learn. Nesselhauf and Tschichold claim that- “Vocabulary is one of the fields that can relatively easily be practised outside the classroom. All the possibilities offered by multimedia CALL can be put to a useful purpose: pictures can illustrate vocabulary items; sounds can accompany the written words and expressions and give a model pronunciation for the examples; and sound can also be used to give acoustic feedback to the learner. (p. 251)”. The Idiomobile application includes about 3,000 of the most well-known and regularly used idiomatic idioms and collocations. According to the context in which they are employed, these idiomatic idioms and collocations are divided into several groups. The application also includes a game that instructs users on how to use idiomatic terms and collocations in a variety of fictitious scenarios. Users of the application can test their understanding of idiomatic idioms and collocations by taking self-designed quizzes that can be customised. The application was created using the 800 million devices globally Flash-Lite Player (Amer, 15).

## 5. Second Language Learning and Collocations:

The semantic properties of collocations and the ensuing instructional implications have received little attention to date, notably in ELT textbooks. As a result, many educators fail to recognise collocations as linguistic constructions whose meanings might go beyond the literal. The majority of definitions of collocation that are common to teachers, however, place more emphasis on the pattern of co-occurrence in language than the potential meanings that they may communicate. Due to the fact that most instructional materials approach collocations as word partners that co-occur together, there is no guidance on how to teach distinct meaning senses of collocations. However, if we look at the meaning, collocations can be divided into three groups. Literal collocations are pairings in which the terms' literal meanings are just added up. The idiomatic meanings of figurative collocations cannot be inferred from the component terms alone. The meanings of duplex collocations can be both literal and figurative, making them polysemous. Despite the fact that most of the collocations looked to have literal meanings, many also had figurative connotations, whereas just a small number appeared to have figurative connotations alone (Macis and Schmitt, 1).

It is evident that each language has a natural sequence in which words appear or are combined in sentences or utterances. English vocabulary terms for this are collocations. For native speakers, collocations come naturally and easily, but they can be challenging for language learners. This issue's origins are comprehensible. Language of this nature is well-known for being difficult for learners, according to Swan. Although English language students spend years acquiring a broad array of vocabulary and grammar norms, their speech and writing still do not fit the so-called native-like selection. It has been noted that Vietnamese learners frequently use phrases like "feel headache" or "feel stomachache," "drink some medicine," "a fast meal," "issues happen," "She has yellow hair," "We are meeting many challenges," "She smiled with me," "I very like music," and so on. These would undoubtedly be understood, but they are not how English would be naturally expressed. Most collocation errors are caused by a lack of collocation knowledge and interference from the mother tongue (Bui, 2).

The term "collocation" has a broad variety of interpretations, some of which are fairly ambiguous. It is defined from two primary angles: one leads to a frequency-based approach and the other to a phraseological approach. The frequency-based approach, first proposed by Firth (1957), was improved by Sinclair (1991). It is based on the frequency of words occurring at a given distance, with a distinction made between those that occur frequently and those that do not, regardless of whether there is a syntactic relationship between the elements. It has been



challenging to evaluate claims about learners' knowledge beyond the specific collocations examined because tests of second language learners' collocation knowledge have lacked a coherent item selection technique. If Sinclair and Hoey's suggested linguistic patterns and psychological mechanisms were solely applicable to collocation, they would be an intriguing but maybe somewhat unimportant feature of language. Many researchers think that collocation's underlying principles go far further than this, though. The significance of what is now being referred to as "formulaic language" has been emphasised over the course of recent decades by researchers working in a variety of different fields, including computational linguists, lexicographers, discourse analysts, cognitive grammarians, psycholinguists, and language teachers. Their work is producing fresh approaches to language description, fresh conceptualizations of language learning, and fresh approaches to language instruction (Durrant, 20). If a solid correlation between frequency and learner knowledge can be shown, corpus frequency may provide a solid foundation for item selection. Given the few test items and limited test-takers included in each study, it is challenging to establish such a relationship satisfactorily. It has been demonstrated that frequency and knowledge are moderately correlated, but the degree of this link differs significantly between corpora. Measures of the strength of association, such mutual information, don't correspond with learner knowledge (Durrant, 2).

Not only for L2 learners but also for language academics, collocation has grown to be a difficult problem. Learners must be knowledgeable of feasible and plausible word combinations, known as collocations, in order to successfully acquire vocabulary in a target language (TL). This includes acquiring a significant number of relevant terms and their primary meanings. Collocation is described as "things that physically occur together or have a higher likelihood of being referenced together" (Sinclair, p. 170). Lewis defines collocation in a similar spirit as "the easily observed phenomenon whereby specific words co-occur in natural language with greater than random frequency" (p.8). In other words, collocation occurs in ways that are statistically significant. Additionally, Hill notes that collocation deals with predictable word pairings. For instance, when the verb foot is employed, the noun bill, as in foot the bill, is very likely to follow it as a collocate, or a word that has a strong propensity to appear with another. Furthermore, Hill argued that certain collocations, referred to as strong collocations, are fixed or not particularly generative in that they only permit a very small number of collocates. The word rancid, which only co-selects a very narrow range of collocates, such as butter or oil, is a clear example of a strong collocation. On the other hand, some word combinations stand out as poor collocations because so many other words can act as their word partners (Phoocharoensil, 1).

## 6. Conclusion:

In order to investigate how acquiring a second language affects the comprehension of collocations, the development of second language acquisition in light of contemporary knowledge was examined. The purpose of the study was to comprehend the current status and application of collocations. The numerous interferences that a non-native speaker could encounter when learning collocations are also examined. Additionally, take note of how native speakers and non-native speakers use and comprehend collocations differently. It can be concluded that the meaning of collocation is ambiguous. It is well-accepted that learning and using a language requires the usage of collocations. A sizable portion of them has symbolic connotations. This shows that collocations are more complex than just words occurring together. Meaning matters when using collocations, just as it does when using single words. Due to their apparent significance in the fluency and competency of English, many academics have suggested that collocations should be a necessary part of English teaching. Collocational proficiency allows learners to talk freely and effectively, on par with native speakers. Instead of only giving lectures on new vocabulary or grammatical structures, cultural components should be covered in second language training.

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