

Collocations Mastery of the University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study is about students' collocation mastery of the English Department students of IAIN Padangsidimpuan. The students' ability in mastering vocabulary is still low; it makes the students' ability also low ability in mastering collocation. This research is in quantitative types, to find out the students' ability in collocation mastery, 25 subjects were involved in this study. A test was administered to them to analyze the collocation selected. The result of the analysis indicated that the sixth semester students of English Department IAIN Padangsidimpuan were in low categories, and it is needed to deliberate learning and teaching. The students felt difficult to understand collocation because they need to remember it more.

Keywords: Collocation, mastery, teaching, and learning.

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INTRODUCTION

In English, one of elements that have to be mastered by students to improve their English is by learning which words go with which word-also called collocations. A good mastery of collocations (typical word combinations) is important for students. By mastering collocations will improve students' skill whether in speaking, writing, reading and listening. English has many collocations. Why do we say „last year“ and not „last hour“? and why do we go somewhere „by car“ or „by train“ but „on foot“? The reason is „collocation“. Knowing the meaning of a word not only requires knowing its dictionary definition; it also need to know the type of words with which it is often associated. Sometimes, students do not realize that the word such as “have a dream” includes to collocate. They do not know much about collocations, and their mother tongue influence them in using collocations. For instance, in Bahasa we say “drink the medicine,” but the true one English is “take the medicine.” The sentence “drink the medicine” comes because they make it as in Bahasa. They also feel difficult to memorize the collocations. Even though, there are many collocations, but if students want to be better in English; like or dislike, they have to memorize and mastery it. So, it is really important to learn much about vocabulary, specifically collocations.

Actually, collocation ability does not only deal with knowing the meaning of words but also the combinability of multi-word units. Students in Indonesia were still lack sufficient of vocabulary, include for collocation ability. In order to know further about it, the researcher tries to do the research to analyze students' mastery on collocations. The

purpose of this research is to know how far the students' mastery on collocations at sixth semester students of English department of IAIN Padangsidempuan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. The Concept of Collocations

Collocation is the combining words to develop vocabulary. Collocation is the way of words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing (Lea, 2002:8). For example, in English, you say "strong wind" but "heavy rain". It would not be normal to say "heavy wind" or "strong rain". Meanwhile, Felicity O'Dell and Michael McCarthy (1999:7) stated that collocation means a natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other. For example, a non native speaker when want help some one, will say "Can I help you?", while the native speakers will ask for helping by saying "Can I give you a hand?". It means that the native speakers collocated with their languages.

Actually, every language has collocation, and English is full of collocations in which recurrent combinations of words that co-occur more often than expected by chance. It is one way of differentiate native and non native speakers (Parisa Farrokh, 2012). It is a way of the speakers to say their languages which is used by fluent speakers. Based on the quotation above, it is known that collocation is a group of words that usually go together. Collocations are combinations of words which frequently appear together, it is to make speaking more comprehensive, interesting, and fluently.

b. The Importances of Collocations

Collocation runs through the whole of the English language. No piece of natural spoken or written English is totally free of collocation. For student, choosing the right collocation will make his speech and writing sound much more natural, more native-speaker-like, even when basic intelligibility does not seem to be at issue. A student who talks about "strong rain" may make himself understood, but possibly not without provoking a smile or a correction, which may or may not matter.

Furthermore, why do students have to learn collocations is explained by as follows:

- Students need to learn collocations because they will help them to speak and write English in a more natural and accurate way, People will probably understand what you mean if you talk about making a crime or say there was very hard rain this morning, but your language will sound unnatural and might perhaps confuse. Did you mean that there a lot of rain or perhaps that there was a hailstorm?
- Learning collocations will also help students to increase their range of English vocabulary. For example, you'll find it easier to avoid words like very or nice or beautiful or get by choosing a word that fits in the context better and has a more precise meaning. This is particularly useful if you are taking a written exam in English and want to make a good impression on the examiners.
- At an advanced learners and appreciation of collocation can be also helpful in terms of appreciating other writers, use of language.

(O'Dell & McCarthy, 2008)

In addition, Collocation competence is important because enabling the learners 1) to make idiomatic choices and come across as native-like; 2) to process language fluently under real-time conditions, 3) to establish „islands of reliability which enable the language user to channel cognitive energy into more creative, production; 4) to disambiguate meaning of polysemous words, and 5) to understand connocational meaning. (Henriksen, 2012). Actually, collocation is important for the learners in order to broad the vocabularies learning.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that collocation learning is important because: 1) using collocation proved that the language used naturally, 2) collocation will help students to increase their range of vocabulary, and 3) collocation is used to appreciate the used of languages.

c. The Categorization of Collocations

According to Benson et al in Farrokh (Parisa Farrokh, 2012)., collocation can be sorted systematically into two major groups-lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. A lexical collocation could be made up of nouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs, like “warmest regards”, “strictly accurate”, and etc. There are seven types of lexical collocations, labeled from a to g, whose structures and examples are given below.

- a. Verb (donating creation or activation)+ noun (pronoun or prep. Phrase) e.g. compose music; make an impression;
- b. Verb (meaning eradication or nullification)+noun e.g. revoke a license; demolish a house
- c. Adjective+noun, e.g: strong tea; a rough estimate
- d. noun + verb, e.g: bees buzz; bombs explode
- e. noun 1 of noun 2, e.g: a pack of dogs; a herd of buffalo
- f. adjective + adverb/ adverb + Adjective, e.g sound asleep; hopelessly addicted
- g. verb + adverb, e.g achor firmly; argue heatedly

Moreover, there are 27 (twenty seven) kinds of grammatical collocations (Indayani, 2016). The collocation are:

- 1) noun + preposition combination (ex. blockade against, apathy towards),
- 2) noun + to + infinitive (ex. the foresight instructions, anobligation, a permission),
- 3) noun + that – clause (an agreement that would go into effect in a month),
- 4) preposition + noun combinations (ex. by accident),
- 5) adjectives + preposition (ex. angry at the children),
- 6) predicate adjective + to + infinitive (ex. necessary to work),
- 7) adjectives + that – clause (ex. afraid that she would fail her examination), and
- 8) 19 collocation verb patterns (ex. He sent him the book, He described the book to her, She bought her husband a shirt, and so on).

From the kinds and the examples of collocations above, it is seen that the vocabularies become wide, so the students’ vocabulary will be broader and increased.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was done in IAIN Padangsidempuan in TBI-1 class at the sixth semester students of English Department. The location institute at Jl. H.T. Rizal Nurdin KM. 45 Sihitang. South East Padangsidempuan. Method of this research is qualitative research by using descriptive method in which based on the collection and analysis of nonnumeric data such as: observations, interviews, and other more discursive sources of information. By using descriptive method, the researcher try to analyze students' mastery on collocations and describe the result. The subjects of this research are students of TBI-1 at the sixth semester. The researcher took twenty students as the source of the data. For the instruments of the data, the researcher only used test and interview. In this research, the researcher used multiple-choice test. Interview was given for sixth semester students of IAIN Padangsidempuan, the questions were appropriated with list of interview. Interview was done for getting data about the difficulties that usually faced by sixth semester students of IAIN Padangsidempuan in mastering collocations.

After collecting data, the researcher analyzes the data by scoring as the technique of analyzing data. The test i.e multiple choice consists of ten items and each item has one score. In scoring the test, the researcher used the scale 10 - 100. After knowing the result, the researcher tried to find the percentage of the variable. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the test for collecting data of students' mastery on collocations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. Students' Result in Collocation

The result of this study showed that the students' collocation mastery is still low, they do not understand well about the collocations. Based on the result of the test given to students, it can be seen that highest score of students is only 70 (seventy). The lowest score is 30 (thirty). The result of the test which is given to the students has shown that among twenty five students which is given multiple choice test about collocations; only five (5) students who are in good and enough qualification, they got 70 and 60 points.

There are 10 (ten) students who are in poor qualifications, with the score between 30 – 49, and 5 (five) students in the score of 50 (fifty five), it means that the students are in fair qualification. There are 5 (five) students got the score higher than 50. The result can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 The Percentage and Qualification Score of students' mastery on collocations

No	Category	Total Students	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Poor (0% - 49%)	10	10	40 %
2.	Fair (50% - 59%)	5	5	20 %
3.	Good (60% - 70%)	9	9	36 %
4.	Excellent (80% – 100%)	1	1	4 %
Total		25	25	100%

The calculation and qualification of score is from David in Ratna (Ratna Sari, 2012) said that there are four levels of mastery:
800% - 100% : Excellent

60% - 70% : Good
50% - 59% : Fair
0% - 49% : Poor

To find the percentage of the students' score, the researcher used the formula as below:

P : Percentage
F : Frequency
N : Number of subject

1. The percentage of the students' mastery on collocations that have poor qualification, there are ten students. The percentage is as follow:

$$P = \frac{10}{25} \times 100\% = 40\%$$

2. The percentage of students' mastery on collocations that have fair qualification. There are two students. The percentage is as follow:

$$P = \frac{5}{25} \times 100\% = 20\%$$

3. The percentage of the students' mastery on collocations that have good qualification. There are thirteen students. The percentage is as follow:

$$P = \frac{2}{25} \times 100\% = 36\%$$

4. The percentage of the students' mastery on collocations that have excellent qualification. There are 1 student. The percentage is 4 %, as follow:

$$P = \frac{1}{25} \times 100\% = 4\%$$

Based on the percentage above, the highest qualification is 40% in poor qualification. It means that the students are still in fair or enough qualification in mastering collocations. There are only 1 (one) student got the score more than 8, it is on excellent criteria. Where as based on the mean-score of the students in mastering collocations, it is known that their ability is = 50.4 Based on the mean-score, it is 50.4; the category of the students in mastering collocation is the poor qualification. It means that the students still need to improve their ability in mastering vocabularies. Furthermore, from the interview of the students for mastering collocations; the students stated that it is difficult to recognize whether it is in a dictionary meanings, or in collocation cases. Many students realized that learning vocabularies, especially collocations need to be serious in order to make them being able to master it. From interviews, it is known that vocabulary is needed to be remembered, many things need to improve in their learning vocabularies. Unfortunately, remembering vocabularies is difficult for them. By this information, the students and learners need to pay attention to learn vocabulary, especially to know more about collocations. It needs to understand that the learners and students must learn more about collocation, it is to imcrease and enlarge their vocabularies.

The findings showed that the students' ability in comprehending collocation is still low, because the mean-score of the students are only 50.4. What has been found in this study is related to what has been found before (Kweldju, 2015), where the students'

English Department collocation mastery is in the level low. These two studies are in line to the students' mastery in mastering collocation. Moreover, collocations are important for learning, include for reading comprehension. Better comprehending in collocation has made the students be better in reading comprehension (Indayani, 2016). It is proved that vocabulary is needed for mastering English skills. Moreover, learning vocabulary needs strategy and techniques, appropriate techniques or strategies will make the students be better in learning. To support the findings above, it is really needs to state that mastering vocabulary needs some techniques or strategies, as in some findings (Harida, 2013) & (Harida, 2015). They stated that learning vocabulary needs strategy and techniques in order to make the mastering of vocabulary, especially for collocation studies.

From this finding, it is known that collocation mastery and collocation learning are good for learning vocabularies. Then, the teachers must give support and motivation to the students to learn well.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the test which students done in students' mastery on collocations at sixth semester of TBI-1 of IAIN Padangsidimpuan, the researcher can conclude as follows: (1) The students who have good qualification in mastering collocations are 36%; (2) The students who have fair qualification in mastering collocation are 20%; (3) The students who have poor qualification in mastering collocations are 40%; (4) The students who have excellent qualification in mastering collocation are in 4%.

From the result above, the researcher can conclude that the students' mastery on collocations at sixth semester of TBI-1 of IAIN Padangsidimpuan is in enough qualification. It happened because of so many collocations that have to be memorized by students, and they do not memorize it much, and even sometimes they do not realize that the combination words that they use is included to collocation. So, the students and the lecturers or teachers must make the intensity of learning vocabulary, especially giving special explanation about collocation.

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