بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

مجلة جامعة حلب في المناطق المحررة

مجلّة علميّة محكّمة فصـــليّة، تصـــدر باللغة العربية، تختص بنشـــر البحوث العلمية والدراسـات الأكاديمية في مختلف التخصصـات، تتوفر فيها شـروط البحث العلمي في الإحاطة والاسـتقصـــاء ومنهج البحث العلمي وخطواته، وذلك على صـــعيدي العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية والعلوم الأساسية والتطبيقية.

رؤية المجلة:

تتطلع المجلة إلى الريادة والتميز في نشر الأبحاث العلميّة.

رسالة المجلة:

الإســـهام الفعّال في خدمة المجتمع من خلال نشـــر البحوث العلميّة المحكّمة وفق المعايير العلمية العالمية.

أهداف المجلة:

– نشر العلم والمعرفة في مختلف التخصصات العلميّة.

– توطيد الشـراكات العلمية والفكرية بين جامعة حلب في المناطق المحررة ومؤسـسـات المجتمع المحلي والدولي.

– أن تكون المجلة مرجعاً علمياً للباحثين في مختلف العلوم.

معايير النشر في المجلة:

1- تنشر المجلة الأبحاث والدراسات الأكاديمية في مختلف التخصصات العلميّة باللغة العربية.

2- تنشر المجلة البحوث التي تتوفر فيها الأصـالة والابتكار، واتباع المنهجية السليمة، والتوثيق العلمي مع سلامة الفكر واللغة والأسلوب.

3- أن يكون البحث أصيلاً وغير منشور أو مقدم لأي مجلة أخرى أو أي موقع آخر.

4- أن يرفق بالبحث ملخص عنه باللغات الثلاث العربية والإنكليزية والتركية على ألا يتجاوز 200-250 كلمة، وبخمس كلمات مفتاحية.

5- ترسل البحوث المقدمة لمحكمين متخصصـين، ممن يشـهد لهم بالنزاهة والكفاءة العلمية في تقييم الأبحاث، ويتم هذا بطريقة سـرية، ويعرض البحث على محكّم ثالث في حال رفضـه أحد المحكّمين.

6- يلتزم الباحث بإجراء التعديلات المطلوبة خلال 15 يوماً.

7- يبلغ الباحث بقبول النشر أو الاعتذار عنه، ولا يعاد البحث إلى صاحبه إذا لم يقبل، ولا تقدم أسباب رفضه إلى الباحث.

8- ألا يزيد البحث على 20 صفحة.

9- تعبّر الأبحاث المنشـورة في المجلة عن آراء أصـحابها، لا عن رأي المجلة، ولا تكون هيئة تحرير المجلة مسؤولة عنها.

10- يلتزم البـاحث بتوثيق المراجع والمصــــادر وفقاً لنظـام جمعيـة علم النفس الأمريكيـة (APA7).

11- يحصل الباحث على وثيقة نشر تؤكد قبول بحثه للنشر بعد موافقة المحكمين عليه.

جدول المحتوى:

أهمية المتلازمات في تقديم المفردات

إعداد:

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ملخص:

يؤكد هذا البحث على دور المجموعات، وكيف تثبت فعاليتها فيما يتعلق بإدخال مفردات جديدة.

في الواقع إن اللغة الإنجليزية تزخر بالمتلازمات (استخدام حروف جر محددة مع كلمات محددة) هل هناك أي سبب مقنع لاستخدام "العام الماضي" Last year وليس "آخر ساعة" last hour على الرغم من أن كلا الظرفين يشيران إلى الوقت؟، ولماذا يقول الناطقون الأصليون للغة الإنجليزية أنهم يذهبون إلى مكان ما "بالحافلة" ويستخدمون (by bus) أو "بالقطار" (by train)، بينما في عبارة "سيرًا على الأقدام" on foot لم نستخدم (by)؟

الجواب هو أن بعض الكلمات تتزامن مع بعضها البعض، في حين أن البعض الآخر لا تترابط مع بعضها، وإن معرفة الكلمة لا تقتصر على معناها الحرفي، بل يلزم معرفة ارتباطها بكلمات أخرى (فاروخ 2012)، والترابطات، سواء كانت ثابتة مثل التعابير أو مرنة فهي نتيجة سنوات عديدة من الممارسة اللغوية، (Prodromou 2004). يعتقد الباحث أن الترابطات تساعد الناطقين الأصليين على التعبير عن أنفسهم بطلاقة لأنهم يستخدمون "أجزاء" جاهزة من اللغة الإنجليزية. في المقابل، فإن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الذين يفتقرون إلى هذه الكفاءة قد يرتكبون أخطاء عند إنتاج المتلازمات، قد يقولون على سبيل المثال: "الوصول إلى مكان" (arrive to) بدلاً من (arrive in). ومن أجل تعزيز كفاءتهم وطلاقتهم، يحتاج متعلموا اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إلى أن يكونوا مدركين تمامًا لأهمية القدرة على فهم وتشكيل عمليات المتلازمات، لذلك تم تقسيم المشاركين في هذا البحث إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية (EXPgr) والمجموعة الضابطة (CONgr). وتم تعريف متعلمي EXPgr بمفهوم المجموعات من خلال أخذ خمسة وعشرين درسًا على مدار فترة خمسة أسابيع.

أجرت كلتا المجموعتين اختبارًا أوليًا وكانت درجاتهما متقاربة وبعد فترة خمسة أسابيع حيث تعرض متعلموا EXPgr للتناظرات وتلقوا عدداً كبيراً من الكلمات التي تتوافق معًا، تمكنوا من توسيع الفجوة بينهم وبين المجموعة الأخرى وكان من الواضح أن استخدام المجموعات كطريقة لإدخال مفردات جديدة في الفصل الدراسي كان أكثر فائدة في تدريس المفردات التقليدية.

كلمات مفتاحية: المتلازمات، مصطلحات، كفاءة.

The Importance of Introducing New Vocabulary Through Collocations

Prepared by**:**

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Abstract

This research stresses the role of collocations and how they prove effective as far as introducing new vocabulary is concerned. In fact, English abounds with collocations. Is there any cogent reason behind using 'last year' and not 'last hour' though both adverbs refer to time? And why do English native speakers say that they go somewhere 'by bus' or 'by train' but 'on foot'? The answer is that certain words co-occur with each other, whereas others do not. Knowing a word is not limited to its literal meaning, but rather it is required to know its association with other words (Farrokh 2012). Collocations, whether fixed like idioms or flexible, are the outcome of many years of language practice. (Prodromou 2004). The researcher believes that collocations help native speakers to fluently express themselves since they use ready-made 'chunks' of English. In contrast, EFL learners who lack this proficiency may make non-native errors when producing collocations. They may say, for example, 'arrive to a place' instead of saying 'arrive in or at a place'. In order to enhance their competence and fluency, EFL learners need to be fully aware of the importance of the ability to understand and produce collocations. Therefore, the participants included in this research were divided into two groups: experimental (EXPgr) and control (CONgr). The EXPgr learners were familiarised with the concept of collocations by taking twenty-five lessons over a five-week period. Both groups took a pre-test and their scores were close. After a period of five weeks, where the EXPgr learners, who were exposed to the notion of collocations and received huge chunks of words that go together, were able to widen than the gap between them and the CONgr learners. It was clear that using collocations as a way of introducing new vocabulary in a classroom was more fruitful the traditional vocabulary teaching.

Keyword: collocations, idioms, proficiency.

Eşdizimler Yoluyla Yeni Sözcük Bilgilerini Tanıtmanın Önemi

Hazırlayan:

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Özet:

Bu araştırma, eşdizimlerin rolünü ve yeni sözcükleri tanıtma açısından nasıl etkili olduklarını vurgulamaktadır. Aslında, İngilizce eşdizimlerle doludur. Her iki zarf da zamana atıfta bulunsa da, 'last hour' yerine 'last year' kullanmanın arkasında ikna edici bir neden var mı? Ve neden anadili İngilizce olan kişiler bir yere "by bus" veya "by train" ama "'on foot" gittiklerini söylüyor? Cevap, bazı kelimelerin birbiriyle uyuşması, diğerlerinin ise uyuşmamasıdır. Bir sözcüğü bilmek, onun gerçek anlamıyla sınırlı olmayıp, onun diğer sözcüklerle olan ilişkisini de bilmek gerekir (Farrokh 2012). Eşdizimler, deyimler gibi sabit veya esnek olsun, uzun yıllar süren dil pratiğinin sonucudur. (Prodromou 2004). Araştırmacı, eşdizimliliklerin anadili İngilizce olan kişilerin kendilerini akıcı bir şekilde ifade etmelerine yardımcı olduğuna inanıyor, çünkü bunlar hazır İngilizce "parçalar" kullanıyor. Buna karşılık, bu yeterliliğe sahip olmayan İngilizce öğrenenler, eşdizimler üretirken yerel olmayan hatalar yapabilirler. Örneğin, 'arrive in or at a place' yerine 'arrive to a place' diyebilirler. Yetkinliklerini ve akıcılıklarını geliştirmek için, İngilizce öğrenenlerin eşdizimleri anlama ve üretme yeteneğinin öneminin tam olarak farkında olmaları gerekir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırmaya dahil edilen katılımcılar iki gruba ayrıldı: deneysel (EXPgr) ve kontrol (CONgr). EXPgr öğrencileri, beş haftalık bir süre boyunca yirmi beş ders alarak eşdizim kavramına aşina oldular. Her iki grup da ön test yaptı ve puanları birbirine yakındı. EXPgr öğrencilerinin eşdizim kavramına maruz kaldıkları ve bir araya gelen büyük miktarda kelime aldığı beş haftalık bir sürenin ardından, CONgr öğrencileri ile aralarındaki boşluğu genişletmeyi başardılar. Sınıfta yeni kelimeleri tanıtmanın bir yolu olarak eşdizimleri kullanmanın geleneksel kelime öğretiminden daha verimli olduğu açıktı.

Anahtar kelime: eşdizimler.

1. Introduction

Collocations have come under the spotlight as one particular area of vocabulary research. Collocations are naturally acquired on the basis of the native intuition. That is why non-native speakers of English find difficulty understanding and producing them. Non-native speakers' own languages may not have direct equivalents to many English collocations. Therefore, non-native speakers of English should be taught collocations explicitly to improve their proficiency in English. Collocations have been recognised as one of the ways that differentiates between native speakers and EFL2 learners. For example, if a non-native speaker wants to help someone, they say, 'Can I help you?' while a native speaker will say, 'Can I give you a hand?' (Salkauskiene, 2002: 56). Likewise, in English one can say 'She has a beige car', but not 'She has beige hair.' In the same context, one can say 'She has blonde hair', but not 'She has a blonde car.' It is the binding force between the words of a language which is distinguished from the fixed syntax of idioms or other phrases.

1.1 Significance of the study

This study is intended to point out the importance of collocations in expanding learners' repertoire of vocabulary and how they can be reflected positively on their performance in both speaking and writing. It is of a high theoretical and pedagogical value. Building on the theoretical part, this research will add to the literature of vocabulary presentation. Since vocabulary can be introduced through different methods: realia, explanations, synonyms, antonyms, contexts, drawings, translations and others, collocations, to the researcher's best knowledge, are considered one of the most effective methods through which new words are introduced (McCarthy, 1990: 112). Pedagogically, such research is of great benefit to both language researchers and learners. This study will enable teachers to help EFL learners overcome the difficulties which may impede their progress in learning new vocabulary. This could be done by a textual enhancement format such as underlining, emboldening, shadowing, enlarging, colouring and italics (Labrozzi 2016 and Simard 2009; cited in El-Dakh 2019: 130). With the use of

collocations, as a pedagogic tool, it is expected that EFL learners will benefit from this method of vocabulary presentation to expand their knowledge of words.

The above-mentioned ideas lead the researcher to think about a way to help EFL learners overcome the obstacles they may face by learning words that go together. When they learn words that collocate, they expand their vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, they attain fluency and accuracy in using the target language. It is hoped that this study will have a positive effect on the performance of both learners and teachers. The researcher believes that learning vocabulary through collocations enhances the learners' knowledge and widens their horizons. Furthermore, it could enrich the teachers' competence in varying their methods in introducing new vocabulary in class.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

a.   Familiarising teachers with the importance of collocations as one of the most effective methods of introducing new vocabulary in class.

b.   Raising the EFL learners' awareness of the profit that can be reaped from learning words in chunks to enlarge their vocabulary input. Consequently, this will enable learners to communicate effectively with their peers.

1.3 Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How far can collocations help EFL learners increase their vocabulary input?

2. What role do collocations play in retaining vocabulary?

3. What are the difficulties that learners may face in producing correct collocations?

2. Literature Review

This section is a review on the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and collocations and attention will be drawn to some experiments conducted by

researchers in this domain. The importance of collocations in expanding vocabulary knowledge will also be highlighted.

The study of collocations is an integral part of studying vocabulary. Collocation is "an important organising principle in the vocabulary of any language" (McCarthy, 1990: 12).

Learning collocation can play a major role in acquiring language because the meaning of a word is determined by the words with which it usually associates. According to Nattinger (1988) "[n]ot only do these associations assist the learner in committing these words to memory, they also aid in defining the semantic area of a word" and also "permit people to know what kind of words they can expect to find together." (pp. 69-70). Collocation is the meaning relation between individual lexical items and the ones that habitually co-occur with them in the language. To McCarthy (1990) the relationship of collocation is essential in the study of vocabulary; Firth (1957) stated that a word is known by the company it keeps. Therefore, collocations deserve to be a central part of vocabulary learning. It seems that collocations cut long sentences short. In other words, learners who lack collocational competence sometimes make longer sentences because they do not know the collocations which express precisely their thoughts. Here are a few examples:

- They have sex the wrong way (sex abuse)
- People have the ability to say what they need (freedom of expression)
- The situation whereby people vote for their rulers to rule them (democratic rule) (McCarthy 1999).

EFL learners find difficulty combining words together correctly. For example, it is correct to say 'to make the bed' but not 'to do the bed', 'to turn/switch on the light' but not 'to open the light', 'sales volume' but not 'sales amount', 'bread and butter' but not 'butter and bread', 'to shrug one's shoulders' but not 'to shrug one's arms'. That is why collocations improve EFL learners' competence and give them an advantage over other users of the language. Ying and Hendricks (2004) point out in their research that EFL learners have poor mastery of collocations for two reasons. First, collocations, in general, do not cause comprehension problems. A

collocation consists of word partners. Each "lexical constituent is also a semantic constituent" (Cruse, 1987: 40). Therefore, it is possible for learners to guess the meaning such as 'a quick glance' and 'it rains heavily'. The second reason is that some collocations are very difficult for learners, especially unique collocations or idiomatic expressions. The mother-tongue interference influences the learners' understanding and production of collocations. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to raise their learners' awareness and teach collocations to enable EFL learners to have a good command of the language. Since the concept of collocation has been newly introduced in the domain of teaching vocabulary, a number of teachers have little or no knowledge about it. When teachers introduce new vocabulary, they do not realise the necessity of introducing it as a chunk, not a single word (Conzett, 2000). For example, when a teacher wishes to introduce the word 'homework', they should introduce 'to do homework' as a chunk to avoid the confusion between 'to do homework' and 'to make homework'.

Hill (2000) suggests that teachers should teach what they categorise as medium-strength collocations such as 'strong tea', 'to attend a course' and 'highly appreciate'. Meanwhile, teachers are recommended to stop including idiom exercises in their teaching. Farghal and Obeidat (1995: 3) support this idea by saying that "common collocations like 'fast colours', 'rough sea' and 'to make tea' are communicatively more useful to L2 learners than idioms like 'to pull one's socks up', 'to kick the bucket' and 'to bury the hatchet'

In an experiment conducted by El-Dakhs et al (2018) they drew a comparison between the effect of explicit instruction and incidental learning on collocation learning among EFL learners who were at the same Saudi university.
They took a sample of 114 participants and divided it into three groups: an explicit learning group, an incidental learning group and a control group. The results of the research showed a considerable advantage for explicit learning in recognising words and recalling them for short-term and long- term learning gains. In contrast, incidental learning was rather useful in short-term form recognition.

During the previous three decades, certain studies have been conducted to probe into the problem of collocation acquisition by foreign language learners. For example, Farghal and Obeidat (1995) selected 22 common collocations related to specific topics such as food, colour and weather to examine Jordanian EFL students' knowledge of English collocations by using a cloze test and a translation test. They found that participants did well in tasks involving collocations with equivalents in Arabic but had problems when they faced English collocations that do not exist in their native language. In other words, the incongruence of the structure of collocations between their native language on the one hand and the target language on the other created great difficulty to learners. This can be closely related the researcher's third question which tackles the difficulties that EFL learners may face when learning vocabulary. The researchers attributed the result to the fact that learners were not "made aware of collocations as a fundamental genre of multi-word units" (Farghal and Obeidat 1995: 3) because vocabulary was taught as single lexical items, viz. words introduced in isolation.

Nesselhauf (2005) studied the use of collocations involving verbs in a learner corpus of native speakers of German learning English as a second language. He examined more than 2,000 verb-noun collocations, a quarter of which were found to be wrong, a third deviant (i.e., wrong or questionable). Factors affecting the acquisition of verb-noun collocations included non-congruence of the structures between L1 and L2, restriction of collocations, exposure to the target language, among others. Learners' ignorance of collocations led them to the wrong use of language.

3. Research Method

Vocabulary forms the nucleus around which other features of language such as grammar, style, cohesion, coherence and others revolve. In other words, learners can communicate without correct grammar and pronunciation, but it is impossible to have a conversation without vocabulary.

3.1 Participants

This study included 102 Syrian students (60 males and 42 females), two groups of 10th grade secondary school EFL learners at two secondary schools in Hureitan, a town ten kms to the north of Aleppo. They were divided into an experimental group (EXPgr) consisting of 42 participants and a control group (CONgr) which was composed of 60 participants. The Schools from which the participants were chosen are a boys' secondary school and a girls' secondary school. They ranged in age between fifteen and seventeen years old and shared more or less the same linguistic background. Both groups of learners had reached the same language level; furthermore, the two groups were, to some extent, homogeneous with each other since they were taken from the same background and reached similar interlanguage development. They are 10**th** grade secondary school learners who were nearly exposed to the same input as far as vocabulary is concerned. They were expected to have reached a language level where they were slightly exposed to fairly long expressions and chunks though they might not have been able to reproduce and use them correctly. They are usually given three English lessons a week by non-native English teachers where English grammar is mostly explained in Arabic. They had difficulty writing and communicating in English. Their interlanguage had not yet developed to produce chunks such as 'heavy rain', 'strong tea', take a decision' and 'make steady progress'. This was clear in their responding to the pre-test. The EXPgr received, throughout a five-week period, twenty-five sessions where each one of them lasted for 45 minutes. In fact, they were sufficient to instruct the EXPgr's participants the material about the target vocabulary. It consisted of a theoretical part and a practical one. Two sessions were allotted to the theoretical part (an hour and a half) to raise the participants' awareness of the importance of collocations in vocabulary building. By so doing, they were introduced to the concept of collocations. However, the practical part, which took 25 sessions, was allocated to the concentration on and practice of collocational chunks which existed in their syllabus together with some other similar ones. English was mostly used as a medium of instruction during the treatment.

3.2 Materials

The material used in this research is taken from *English for Starters 8, a textbook taught to 10th grade* Syrian learners at secondary schools. It is divided into four units. Unit 1-contains reading a history book extract, a brochure, a website and a story review; Unit 2-involves listening to talks, dialogues and a story; Unit 3 is composed of talking about history, travel and giving a presentation; Unit 4 is made up of writing a review of a story book; Unit 5 encompasses learning how to use future tenses. Module 3 from *English for Starters 8* includes some structures about collocations. They have been presented to the students during their school classes. The method used in this study consisted of two parts: pre/post-tests and a treatment.

3.3 Pre-test

Instructions were given to the participants before starting the test**.** A test sheet was distributed to each participant of both groups: the experimental group (EXPgr) consisting of 42 female participants and the control group (CONgr) comprising 60 male participants. They were given 40 minutes to finish the test "Appendix A". The first task was made up of 20 multiple-choice sentences in which the participants were required to choose the correct alternative out of four options. The main purpose of this task was to measure the participants' ability to choose the alternative that collocates with the meaning of the sentence. The second task was composed of 10 multiple-choice sentences in which the participants were required to choose the incorrect alternative out of four options. They should be able to rule out the strange word which does not go with the general meaning of the sentence. This task is similar to odd man out exercises. The first two tasks measure the participants' ability of vocabulary recognition. The third task was made up of 10 gap-filling sentences. The words were not, of course, listed above the sentences, but rather the participants were required to recall the needed vocabulary to be used in the gaps. This task measured the participants' ability of vocabulary production.

The pre-test enabled the researcher to determine three important points:

1) identifying the participants' level of vocabulary by taking the mean score before the treatment; 2) getting two groups: the EXPgr and the CONgr; 3) juxtaposing the

scores of both groups in the pre-test with those of the post-test after the treatment to see the effect of the treatment on the EXPgr's input of vocabulary.

3.4 Post-test

The post-test was neither different from the pre-test in form nor in content. In fact, I gave the EXPgr a delayed test which is totally different in content from the pre-, post-test but they were exposed to the structures included in the test to check how far they were able to retain chunks they encountered during the treatment stage.

In other words, the participants were asked to take the same test that they had already sat in the pretest. The participants took this test after they spent a five-week period, five sessions a week in which the participants in the EXPgr received chunks of collocational expressions. During the treatment period, they were trained to do matching, gap-filling, cloze and multiple-choice exercises about collocations. The main purpose of the posttest was to show the difference in the mean score of the EXPgr before and after the treatment on the one hand and between the EXPgr and the CONgr after the treatment on the other.

3. 5 Research procedures

During the research period, it was ensured that the learners were not being exposed to the target structures because they were not included in the previous modules of *English for Starters 8*. In this way it was guaranteed that other effects were excluded and the learners' language development in their production of collocations was only due to the effect of the instructional treatment sessions.

Two teachers participated in this study to instruct the two groups the chosen target structures; one of whom was the researcher himself. Both teachers had at least a fifteen-year experience in teaching English to Syrian EFL learners when the study began. The researcher taught the EXPgr while the other teacher taught the CONgr. This research was divided into three stages:

3.5.1 The preliminary stage

First, the targeted sample for this research was 10th grade Syrian secondary students. The researcher chose 42 female students to be the experimental group

and asked one of his colleagues to have another group consisting of 60 male students who were called the control group. Both groups were taught the same section of the textbook *English for Starters 8*. The difference was in the mechanism of dealing with the concept of collocations. The EXPgr's awareness was raised to the idea of collocations and a lot of emphasis was laid on it, while the CONgr did not receive any special focus on collocations. Second, both groups took the pre-test whose maximum score was out of 100 marks at the same time. The EXPgr's mean score was 33.66 while the CONgr's mean score was 28.53. It was clear that the achievement difference between the two groups is non-significant. It can actually be seen that the level of significance is sig.= 0.103 and this means that there are no significant differences between the mean of the EXPgr and that of the CONgr in learning English vocabulary before the treatment. Most students were under the impression that the pre-test scores would be part of their term scores; therefore, they were nervous. In an attempt to defuse their tension, the researcher interviewed them and got their consent to do the experiment to assure that the scores would not be included in their school reports.

3.5.2 The treatment stage

Before the treatment began, a pre-test was given to both groups to measure their language proficiency in the target vocabulary. This test relied heavily on *English for Starters 8* with some modifications by the researcher. The purpose of this test was to check whether the EXPgr would surpass the CONgr in the vocabulary gain or not. In other words, it was expected that the EXPgr would expand their lexical knowledge through collocations in comparison with the CONgr.

The instructional treatment began in the first session directly after the pre-test. The EXPgr's attention was attracted to the concept of collocations. They were taught the part chosen from Module 3 by the researcher himself. The learners were not told about the purpose of instructing them the material. The researcher only informed them that those tasks would help them get more information about the target vocabulary since EXPgr learners had not been exposed to such knowledge about collocations before. It is worth noting that the learners themselves were able

to elicit, throughout the treatment, what the focus of the sessions was. They also noticed how efficient the vocabulary introduction through collocations was. The CONgr, whose attention was not drawn to the concept of collocations, was taught by one of the researcher's colleagues.

This stage was carried out over a five-week period, five sessions a week, and the duration of each was 45 minutes, which was enough to instruct the EXPgr's participants the material about the target vocabulary. It consisted of a theoretical part and a practical one. Two sessions were allotted to the theoretical part (an hour and a half) to raise the participants' awareness to the importance of collocations in vocabulary building. By so doing, they were introduced to the concept of collocations. However, the practical part, which took 25 sessions, was allocated to the concentration on and practice of collocational chunks which existed in their syllabus together with some other similar ones.

3.5.3 The data analysis stage

This subsection briefly reviews the steps through which data was analysed. In fact, both pre-test and post-test were marked. The first multiple choice set sentences were marked out of 50; the second multiple choice set sentences were marked out of 25 and finally the missing-word sentences were marked out of 25. These marks were determined by the kind and number of sentences in the pre-test, post-test. Thus, the scores of pre-test and post-test of each participant in both groups determined interlanguage development of the target vocabulary they were exposed to before and after the treatment. In order to test the differential effects of collocations on the participants' acquisition of vocabulary, the scores of the pre-test and the post-test of both groups were also under statistical analysis; they were submitted to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to compare the means. The analysis was first used to compare the means of the pre-test and the post-test within the EXPgr to see the results before and after the treatment. Second, it was used to compare the means between the EXPgr and the CONgr to check how far the treatment was successful.

After the EXPgr had completed the treatment period, both groups took the post-test simultaneously. First, the test sheets were distributed to the participants. Next, they were given tips about how to tackle the test and it was also pointed out the duration of the test to tailor the time to the number of questions they were required to answer. After marking the post-test, the mean scores of both groups were compared with those of the pre-test to see the effect of collocations on the EXPgr's vocabulary gain when juxtaposed with that of the CONgr's. The participants in the posttest were given the same test as the pretest. A comparison was drawn between the data of both tests to see if there is any development in the EXPgr's achievement after the treatment.

4. Discussion of data

This chapter tackles the results achieved by both groups. The post-test which was conducted immediately after the end of the treatment stage revealed a significant difference between both groups as far as the score was concerned. The EXPgr's score was 70.41, whereas the CONgr's score was 42.37 which was irrefutable evidence that the EXPgr was more competent in dealing with the posttest than the CONgr and achieved better results. This leads us to familiarise readers with the findings which have been dealt with in this study in relation to some other similar studies.

 - Results of the first question

1. How far can collocations help EFL learners increase their vocabulary input?

Vocabulary can be introduced through many different ways: realia, explanations, synonyms, antonyms, drawings, contexts, gestures and others. To the researcher's best knowledge, collocation will help learners expand their vocabulary. Lewis (1993: 95) argues that a learner can produce chunks of language if he/she is able to acquire a certain language and these chunks form the foundations through which learners can perceive patterns of grammar. The idea of chunking was introduced by Miller (1956) to explain that a learner can store up to seven pieces of information in his/her short-term memory irrespective of the quantity. Table 4.1 demonstrates that the level of both groups on the pre-test was

similarly low. This proves that the two groups have received more or less the same linguistic input.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for the EXPgr and CONgr on the pre-test:

Pretest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
EXPgr	42	33.66	17.89
CONgr	60	28.53	10.95

The following table shows t-test results for equality of means. It can be noticed that the level of significance is sig.= 0.103 and this means that there are no significant differences between the mean of the EXPgr and that of the CONgr in learning English vocabulary before the treatment. It can be deduced that both groups had more or less the same repertoire of English vocabulary. The researcher has given learners this test to make sure that there is no difference between the two groups before the treatment

Table 4.2 *T*-test for equality of means

T	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
1.654	62.360	0.103	5.13	3.10

Participants of the CONgr were 60 tenth-grade learners who were taught in a traditional way. Then the researcher has found the mean and the standard deviation for the CONgr before and after the treatment. This table contains the descriptive statistics before and after the treatment.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics for the control group on the pre-test and the post-test.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre control	28.53	60	10.95	1.41
	Post control	42.37	60	16.70	2.15

The researcher used a *t*-test for the paired samples (T= 5.33) with a degree of freedom (d.f = 59) and a significance difference of (0.001). The EXPgr's mean was (33. 66) before the treatment and improved up to (70.416) after it. This clearly shows that the difference was-large between the two groups as far as learning is concerned. This means that concentrating on collocation is an effective way in teaching vocabulary.

Table 4.4 Paired samples statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std.Error Mean	t	d.f	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre experimental	33.66	42	17.89	2.76			
	Post experimental	70.41	42	18.46	2.84	10.28	41	.000

To check whether there are differences between the EXPgr and the CONgr after the treatment or not, the researcher has come up with the descriptive statistics for these groups as shown in the table.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics for both groups on the post-test

	Sample	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	Experimental	42	70.41	18.46	2.84
	Control	60	42.37	16.70	2.15

Since the mean of the CONgr's students in the posttest is (42. 37) and the mean of the EXPgr's students in the posttest is (70. 41), this reflects that the differences are in favour of the EXPgr. It denotes that focusing on collocations is more effective in teaching English vocabulary than the traditional method which achieved a less significant improvement. The method in which collocations are used in introducing English vocabulary helps students to learn more vocabulary.

- Results of the second question:

2. *What role do collocations play in retrieving English vocabulary?*

It seems retrieving words which are learned in chunks when needed is much easier than bringing back words learned in isolation to memory, viz. each item leads to the other. Siyanova and Schmitt (2008) advise that the use of collocations will play a vital part in retrieving words which are learned in chunks because as soon as the learner sees or hears part of a chunk, the remaining words will soon come to the surface. Such chunks will be available whenever the need arises.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics for the EXPgr and CONgr pretest samples

	Sample	N	M	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	EXPgr	42	12.85	9.24	1.42
	CONgr	60	11.26	7.81	1.00

To check the differences between the two samples, the researcher used a *t*-test for the independent samples and the results are shown in the following table:

Table 4.7 Independent samples *t*-test for equality of means

t	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference Mean	Std. Error Difference
0.938	100	0.351	1.59	1.69

The table above shows that T= (0.938) which means that it is statistically insignificant at the level of (0. 05). This means that there are no differences between the means of the two samples before the treatment. This denotes that the two samples are equal and any change in the results will be attributed to the adopted method of teaching. After conducting the experiment, results of the second task, whose score was out of 25 marks, showed that the EXPgr's mean was (18.51), whereas the CONgr's score was (7.45), so the difference is in favour of the EXPgr.

Table 4.8 The Descriptive statistics for both groups after the treatment

	Sample	N	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	EXPgr	42	18.51	6.02	.92
	CONgr	60	7.45	7.07	.91

The table (4.8) shows that T= (8.241) and this value is statistically significant at the level of (0.001). This means that there are differences between the EXPgr and the CONgr in retrieving English vocabulary after the treatment. As long as the two groups were comparable, the differences are attributed to the adopted method of teaching. This proves that teaching English vocabulary through collocations is effective and it is better than traditional ways.

Table 4.9 Independent samples *t*-test for the equality of means

	T	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Post -test	8.241	100	.000	11.05	1.34

- **Results of the third question:**

The test was divided in two parts: the first part consisted of 30 multiple choice sentences - the participants were required to choose the correct alternative in the first 20 sentences, whose score was out of 50 marks, and the other 10 sentences were provided for them to choose the incorrect alternative and their score was out of 25 marks. Both sections targeted the recognition of collocations. The second part was composed of 10 cloze sentences, whose score was out of 25 marks, where the candidates were required to provide words that were omitted from sentences, which targeted the learners' ability to produce collocations.

3. What are the difficulties that may face learners in producing correct collocations?

"Native speakers of a language can deal with a plethora of collocations which contribute to idiomaticity and fluency of their expressions while foreign learners do not seem to perceive collocations as chunks and often produce them

by combining separate words that do not go together in a given language" (Laufer 2011: 29). In other words, before the treatment both groups had the same linguistic knowledge as far as collocations are concerned. After introducing the notion of collocations to the leaners in the experimental group by focusing on the chunks that exist in their book and providing them with similar ones, they were able to surmount most difficulties which may impede their way to achieve their purpose.

To check whether the two samples were equally able to correctly use English words which go together or not before the treatment, the researcher used a t-test and the results are shown in the following table:

Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics for the EXPgr and the CONgr samples pre-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-sample EXPgr	42	20.80	12.17	1.87
CONgr	60	17.26	6.09	.78

The following table shows how far the EXPgr learners developed their vocabulary repertoire after the treatment:

Table 4.11 Descriptive statistics of the pre-test and the post-test for the EXPgr sample

EXPgr		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Pre-experimental	20.80	42	12.17	1.87
	Post- experimental	51.90	42	13.94	2.15

This shows that the two samples are equal before teaching collocations. The differences after the treatment are attributed to the method of teaching. After carrying out the treatment, results showed that the EXPgr scored higher in the posttest after the treatment.

The following table shows that the EXPgr's score is higher than that of the CONgr's which proves that using collocations in introducing new vocabulary is effective.

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics of the post-test for the EXPgr and the CONgr

	Sample	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test	EXPgr	42	51.90	13.94	2.15
	CONgr	60	34.91	11.66	1.50

The table below shows that t = (6.676) and this value is statistically significant at the level of (0.01). This means that there are differences in the post-test between the EXPgr and the CONgr samples. Since the mean of the experimental sample (51.904) is bigger than that of the control sample (34.916), the differences are in favour of the experimental sample. It is noticed that the traditional method of teaching English vocabulary plays a minor role in comparison with collocations which proved more effective.

Table 4.13 *t*-test for equality of means for the EXPgr and the CONgr samples in   the post-test

	t	d.f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	6.676	100	.000	16.98	2.54

The achieved results may act as convincing proof that teaching vocabulary through collocations is fruitful. In spite of the fact that the idea of presenting vocabulary through collocations was rather new for the learners who had never been taught via a vocabulary learning technique, the EXPgr's scores were superior to the CONgr's scores in every vocabulary test. It can even be claimed that they could get higher scores providing that they had some more time to become accustomed to the new technique. It is supposed that if they had more time, they would get used to learning the new words through their co-occurrences and score even higher. This can persuade junior teachers to employ

such a technique in their classrooms to change the status quo and get more confidence by applying scientific findings to their teaching.

5. Conclusion

It is very necessary that when teaching new vocabulary, EFL teachers should introduce the words that collocate with the new vocabulary in an attempt to expand the learners' repertoire of vocabulary. Teachers are also advised to focus only on active collocations. According to O'Dell and McCarthy (2008), collocation is defined as a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. Learning collocations will help learners speak and write English in a more natural and formal way, simply because their horizons will be widened through collocations. According to McCarthy (1990) the relationship between words that go together is very important in the study of vocabulary "It is a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others. He stresses the importance of collocations as follows:

> Collocational knowledge is part of native speaker's competence, and can make trouble for learners in cases where collocability is language- specific and is not solely determined by universal semantic restrictions. (ibid p. 47)

This means that collocation is like a bridge on which learners cross to the safe side. In other words, collocations help learners get a better command of speaking and writing the target language in a more natural and precise way. In addition, learning collocations will help learners increase their vocabulary of the target language and also enable them to understand and express themselves at a much faster pace.

Lexis has been given little attention in comparison with other linguistic areas like grammar, phonology and orthography. L2 learners usually depend on their L1 when they communicate with others. The problem they face is that they think there is always an L2 equivalent for each vocabulary in their L1. Even if there is an equivalent lexical item in L2, it does not always convey the

same sense in both languages for a number of reasons including cultural differences. Consequently, learning collocations help EFL learners improve their language so that they can easily figure out what native speakers say and overcome any obstacle that may cause a breakdown in their conversations. Therefore, teachers should be well aware of the concept of collocations when introducing vocabulary in an attempt to expand their learners' words. It is recommended to focus on collocations at the early stages of learning a language to become an integral part of the large repertoire of vocabulary. Learning collocations will widen learners' horizons and give them more confidence in themselves to have the language vocabulary readily available. Moreover, they will be more precise in language use than those who have not learnt collocations.

6. Limitations of the study

The study has a number of limitations. First, the sample of learners used in this study was selected from two schools. Therefore, the study will under no circumstances attempt to generalise the current findings beyond the local context. In other words, the conclusions derived from this study are not applicable to all Syrian or Arab learners of English or any other group of learners whose language backgrounds are different. Second, the results of the current study were obtained from a pre/posttest. Consequently, different results may be obtained if different instruments were used. This research was limited to a sample of 102 male and female tenth grade students studying English at secondary schools. The experimental group was composed of 40 female learners only and it did not include any male learners. This point should be taken into consideration in further research. Therefore, the results are not generalisable to other larger populations due to the quite limited number and scope of participants taking part in this study. The classes lasted only for 25 periods, so the researcher was confined to do the study only through this limited time. Nevertheless, this can be considered a starting point for further and more focused research.

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Appendix A

Pre/Posttest

I. Circle the word that collocates with the meaning of the sentence:

1. She was born ------------ 7 August 1988.

a. of   b. in   c. at   d. on

2. They decided to go ------------ a pilgrimage to Mecca.

a. to   b. on   c. from   d. with

3. He knows how to ------------ a ship.

a. drive   b. fly   c. sail   d. ride

4. The doctor has advised him to ------------ more exercise.

a. do   b. work   c. make   d. play

5. I ------------ a test at school.

a. lost   b. missed   c. succeeded   d. won

6. My parents don't let me ------------ loud music late at night.

a. play   b. listen   c. do   d. sing

7. The library is equipped ------------ the latest technology.

a. of   b. in   c. with   d. under

8. Don't forget to ------------ the washing up before you leave for school.

a. make   b. work   c. do   d. clean

9. You should ------------ the mistakes in your essay before handing it in to the teacher.

a. correct   b. make   c. do   d. write

10. Samer has ------------ his driving test and he's going to celebrate with a few friends tomorrow.

a. failed   b. succeeded   c. passed   d. missed

11. When I finish this exercise, I'm going to ------------ television.

a. watch   b. see   c. look   d. listen

12. My parents are going to cancel the trip because it ------------ a lot of money.

a. gives   b. makes   c. spends   d. costs

13. It often ------------ in the winter in Syria.

a. shines   b. rains   c. gets hotter   d. becomes warmer

14. I'm very grateful ------------ your help.

a. of   b. to   c. for   d. on

15. Most of us ------------ to CDs.

a. hear   b. play   c. listen   d. record

16. Don't climb too high! It's ------------.

a. ungrateful   b. safe   c. blind   d. dangerous

17. Her good exam results show that she is very ------------.

a. foolish   b. intelligent   c. attractive   d. stupid

18. He made a sensible ------------ last week.

a. game   b. mistake   c. meal   d. decision

19. He ------------ a lot of talks to people every year.

a. takes   b. speaks   c. gives   d. listens

20. She has ------------ 16 books so far.

a. worked   b. written   c. lain   d. watched

II. Circle the word that does not collocate with the meaning of the sentence:

21. We will ------------ tea when the guests arrive.

a. prepare   b. have   c. do   d. make

22. We will ------------ a party when he comes back home.

a. give   b. hold   c. have   d. go

23. When he ------------ a lot of money, he will get married.

a. earns   b. does   c. makes   d. has

24. They ------------ dinner at 8 o'clock.

a. do   b. have   c. eat   d. make

25. She usually ------------ her homework at the weekend.

a. hands in   b. does   c. makes   d. gives in

26. He was ------------ by robbers in India.

a. captured   b. arrested   c. spent   d. caught

27. She ------------ the dishes every night.

a. makes   b. does   c. cleans   d. washes

28. Mount Qassioun ------------ (the) north-west of Damascus.

a. is located to   b. is situated   c. lies to   d. falls

29. We met the French team ------------ lunchtime.

a. during   b. at   c. through   d. After

30. The film was so ------------ that I almost fell asleep in the cinema.

a. uninteresting   b. dull   c. exciting   d. boring

III. Supply the missing words*:*

31. A ----------------------- is a leader of a country.

32. A ----------------------- is very well-educated.

33. A ------------------------ lives completely alone and sees nobody.

34. An --------------------- represents his/her government in another country.

35. A ----------------------- decides if someone is guilty.

36. Every Muslim should be a ----------------------- and travel to Mecca.

37. A ----------------------- is kept in jail.

38. Sami exchanges letters with his pen-----------------------.

39. There are a lot of interesting web----------------------- on the Internet.

40. They gave us a friendly ----------------------- when we arrive.

جامعة حلب في المناطق المحرّرة

Aleppo university in the liberated areas