Using Collocations to Enhance Communicative Competence

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Abstract

The current paper aims at exploring the relationship between collocations and communicative competence and how collocations enhance communicative competence. The researcher uses the descriptive analytical method to find the dimensions in using collocations in speaking. The researcher draws extracts from some collocations phrases to analyze them. The researcher finds out that the learners find difficulties in understanding these phrases but they can know the meaning of the words individually. The researcher recommends that other researchers in this field to dig deep in this area and to raise the awareness of the importance of the language phenomenon and to know grammatical, lexical, and stylistic constraints of the use of words in the linguistic context.

Keywords: collocations, communicative competence, linguistics

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary and its appropriate use play a crucial in second language learning and teaching. Learning a language without vocabulary acquisition is impossible; moreover, vocabulary learning is one of the most important aspects of language learning therefore, more attention should be paid to it. According to Widdowson (1989), vocabulary is an essential component of successful Communication. However the

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importance of vocabulary has been long ignored in EFL education traditionally many researchers thought that the focus of language teaching should be in grammatical competence, and language has been defined as lexical grammar.

Grammar was represented just as structures, for example the present simple, passive and active voice, direct and indirect speech, etc .., where as vocabulary was viewed as being secondary in value serving to explain the meaning and scope of grammar (Sidair &Renouf1988,P140) Structuralism believed that by acquiring the grammatical system of a language , learners would be able to make correct sentences.

By the late 1970 and early 1980, some researchers began to acknowledge the importance of EFL vocabulary acquision naturally, and they accentuated in the instruction of vocabulary in second language teaching (Lewis 1993, Nation 1990: MacCarthy1984: Channell1981: Nattinger1980) among them: Lewis (1993) who proposed the lexical approach to second language teaching put emphasis on developing the learners proficiency with lexis, and strongly claimed   lexis the bases of language (Lewis 1993,p95).

And believed language consists of grammatical zed Lexis, not Lexicalized grammar (p6).Lexical approach believed , an important part of language mastery is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes , or chunk and that theses clunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought that as grammar (Lewis1993,p95) in other words this approach differentiates between vocabulary that was in fact previously defined as collection of single word with a constant meaning and lexis that important both individual words and word combination that has been stored in our middle .

The most important type of lexical chunk is collection , which has been introduced by Firth (1968) the origin of the team collection is in the Latin verb collocar that means to set in order to arrange (Morrty nask,2004,p.2) collection have a significant role in EFL teaching and learning 0that is why lexis approach gives special attention to teaching and learning collocation According to Firth (1968) collocation of given word are statements of the habitual or cost many places of that word (p:181).collocation has been considered at the way in which words typically occur with each other I .e combination of words in natural speech with a certain frequency furthermore ,Lewis (2002) believes ,

although collocation is not determined by logic or frequency , but it is arbitrary decided only by linguistic convention (p29) some collocation are fixed it means that it allow no variation at all, such as to catch a cold rancid butter and ((drug addict)) while others are free combinations and can be completed in a relatively small number of ways .According to Lewis (1997) (collocations co-occur, but not all words which co-occur are collocations) (P.44) Lewis (1997) maintained .instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions Rather than trying to break things into ever Smaller pieces there is a conscious effort to see things in a larger – more holistic ways). (P.204). she encourages teacher : (to raise students' awareness of collocations and to initiate their own action research to make sure the changes they make are of benefit to students).

(Lewis,2000, sited in Farroth, 2012, P.56). Woolard, (2000), claimed (collocation has emerged as an important category of lexical patterning and it is fast becoming an established unit of description in language teaching courses and materials),(P.28).Furthermore, Bolinger (1976),argued (we learn and memorize words in chunks and that most of our manipulative grasp of words is by way of collocations), (P.8).

A number of linguists and language teachers who recommended the teaching and learning of collocations in the L2 classroom have underscored the importance of collocations of development of L2 vocabulary and communicative competence. Many researchers acknowledged that acquisition of collocation would lead to attain fluency in language production and accuracy in language use. (Nattinger, 1980&Lewis, 2000). According to Hill (2001), 80% of a written text could contain collocation. Therefore, a crucial part of native speakers comprises collocation. Collocational knowledge could help learner to turn passive words into active ones, thus, learners can acquire a creative language system. (Durrant, 2008). In addition, knowledge of collocation can assist learners' memory and develop second language learners' mental lexicon (Forquara, 2006). Jaen (2007) proposed that in order to write and speak fluently and accurately, non –native speakers of English have to acquire a vast knowledge of collocation. Knowledge of collocation differentiate native speakers and non- native speakers (Shei &Pain 2002).

Statement of the problem:

One of the problem that adult second of foreign language learners have to come up is learning collocation thus collocation are undeniably an important part language knowledge that can lead learner to their communicative competence. Most of the studies, conducted so far have shown strong relationship between knowledge of collocation and language proficiency, but little empirical researchers has been taken to determine of which of the four main skill.

Knowledge of collocation has the greatest – important moreover, all other studies have focused only on one language skill, but the current study has focused on main four language skills .

The present study attempts to determine the relationship between learners' knowledge of collocation and their language skills performances. Moreover it is going to find out if students' knowledge of collocation predicts their four language skills performance.

Objective of the study:

The aims of this study

a. To investigate if there is a Significant relationship between collocation and communicative competence .
b. To identify the contribution of collocation knowledge to the learners' communicative competences proficiency study questions.
c. There are tow study questions supporting the objectives of the present study.
    1. to what extent is significant relationship between collocation and communicative competence ?
    2. to what extent is collocation knowledge proficiency ?

Significance of the study:

Collocation is on of the most important overlooked aspects of language learning and teaching. it is the combination and co-occurrence of single words . many linguistics have acknowledge the importance in the improvement of communication competence and vocabulary Hill (2001) claimed learning collocation facilitate learners thinking leading to more fluidity when communicating in spoken and written language (P.P 54-5) Nation (2001) noted, by having chunk of language in long-term memory , language reception and language productions are mad more effective (p.32)

Knowing the importance of collocation in learning four language skills is advantageous in finding new ways and strategies to improve the students ability. Therefore, the finding of the present study may help learners to be aware of the role and significant of collocation to improve their reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Also the results of the study will direct teachers attention to focus on collocations and it will present useful ways for teachers" to implicate abetter understanding of the nature of English collocations and their effect on four language skills. In addition, by investigating the dominant parts of problems in applying collocations the researcher can decide on how to incorporiate collocations into EFL curriculum in language institutes

Literature Review

Despite different definitions of collocation provided by different scholars, it seems to be still some disagreement over its definition. One of the regular definitions of collocation is the strong propensity of one word to co-occur with another word in aparticular context (Aghbar 1990; Al-Zahrani 1980; Gitsaki 1999; nation 2001; Nesselhauf; 2003). According to Sinclair (1991), a collocation is "either a recurring combination of words that is often arbitrary, or just a reccuring combination of a few words without emphasizing its arbitrariness" (P. 123). Jacquemin (2001) argued that collocation is "recurrent combination of words that co-occur more frequently than it would be expected just by chance and that correspond to arbitrary word usage" (P. 58). Cruse (1986) defines collocation as "sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur" (P.40). According to Aghbar 91990), " a collocation refers to two words or more that recurrently co-occur together in the memory of native speakers and are used together with some frequency in both written and spoken discourse, for example in the sentence "His album come out in the spring". Noun "album" recurrently co-occurs with the verb "comes out". Crystal (1997) stated "they are a type of syntagmatic relation that is predictable to a greater or lesser extent. (e,g., the bond between spick and span is stronger that that between letter and pill-box)".

The communicative competence refers to both the tacit knowledge of language and the ability to use it effectively. It is also called communication competence and it is the key to social acceptance. The term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1986 reacting against the perceived in adequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between

linguistic competence and performance. To address Chomsky's abstract notion of competence, Hymes undertook ethnographic exploration of communicative competence that include communicative form and function in integral relation to echo their. The approach pioneered by Hymes is known as ethnography of communication. The notion of communicative competence is one of the theories that underlines the communicative approach to foreign language teaching. At least there are models exist. The first and most widely used in Canale and Swain model and the later interaction by Canale. In a second model, sociocultural content is more precisely specified by Celce-murcia, dornyei, and thurrell in (1995). For their part, they saw communicative competence as including linguistic competence actional competence and discourse competence. A third model widely is used in federal language training in Canada is Bachman and Palmer's model.

The understanding of communicative competence has been influenced by the field of pragmatics and the philosophy of language including word on speech acts.

A collocation is two words which are used together as a set phrase for example "tall building" rather than a " high building" some collocation examples are: "pay attention", "fast food", "make an effort" and "powerful engine".

Collocations make it easier to avoid over used or ambiguous words like "very" "nice" "beautiful" by using a pair of words that fits the context better and has more precise meaning. Using collocations will help your English sound naturally like a native speaker.

Examples of collocations with take, get, do, make, go:
- He has intended to take a holiday in New York.
- He wanted to see if he could get a job with us.
- I might take a lesson from you.
- My goals were to go back to school and get a degree.
- I'll take a look at the website and let you know what I think.
- He was beginning to get angry.
- Couldn't you do a favour and leave me alone?
- I like to do homework.
- -we need to make a deal for the project.
- The company is about to go bankrupt.

Methodology

The researcher used descriptive analytical approach in this paper and makes some extract from some collocations examples, to find that whether the learners know the meaning of words individually or in collocations.

Findings

- Communicative competence is needed in order to develop cultural awareness to use computer mediate and to think critically, and it involves knowledge, motivation, and skills.
- Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances' appropriately.

Recommendations

- The researcher recommends other researchers in this field to dig deep in this area and make accurate research in using collocations to enhance communicative competence.
- To raise the awareness to the importance of the language phenomenon and to know the grammatical, lexical and syntactic constructions on the use of words in the linguistic context.
- Raising awareness of the importance of significant dimension of vocabulary knowledge.

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