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ENHANCING ESL LEARNERS' COLLOCATION AWARENESS THROUGH CONCORDANCE TOOLS: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Article history:</i> Received: 2025-05-07 Received in revised form: 2025-06-12 Accepted: 2025-07-11 Available online <i>Keywords:</i> corpus-based approach concordance tools data-driven learning ESL learners language acquisition	<i>This study examines the role of collocation awareness of corpus-based collocation tools to enable individuals (ESL students) who learn English as a foreign language to more effectively learn idiomatic expressions and natural syntax in the language. Given that traditional language teaching methods may be inadequate in teaching vocabulary, particularly vocabulary often used in natural contexts, this study aims to assess the impact of activities performed through collation on student achievement. Course content supported by corpus-based collation tools within the study was applied over a period of time and students' pre- and post-test results were analyzed. Studies have shown that students have significant improvements in their ability to choose more appropriate and accurate vocabulary, particularly in academic writing and natural colloquia. These results suggest that language learning is an effective method of integrating corpus-based approaches and technological tools.</i>

KORPUS ƏSASLI YANAŞMA: İNGİLİS DİLİ ÖYRƏNƏNLƏRİN KOLLOKASIYA MƏLUMATLIĞININ KONKORDANS VASİTƏLƏRİ İLƏ ARTIRILMASI

XÜLASƏ

Bu tədqiqat ingilis dilini xarici dil kimi öyrənən şəxslərin (ESL tələbələr) dildə idiomatik ifadələri və təbii sintaksisi daha effektiv şəkildə öyrənməsinə imkan yaratmaq üçün korpus əsaslı kollokasiya vasitələrinin kollokasiya haqqında məlumatlılığının artırılmasında rolunu araşdırır. Ənənəvi dil tədrisi metodlarının xüsusilə təbii kontekstdə tez-tez istifadə olunan lüğət dərnəklərinin tədrisində qeyri-adekvat ola biləcəyini nəzərə alaraq, bu tədqiqat kollokasiya vasitələri ilə yerinə yetirilən fəaliyyətlərin şagird nailiyyətlərinə təsirini qiymətləndirmək məqsədi daşıyır. Tədqiqat çərçivəsində korpus əsaslı kollokasiya vasitələrinin dəstəklədiyi kurs məzmunu müəyyən müddət ərzində tətbiq edilib və tələbələrin imtahan öncəsi və sonrası nəticələri təhlil edilib. Tədqiqatlar göstərir ki, tələbələrin xüsusilə akademik yazı və təbii kollokviumda daha uyğun və dəqiq söz birləşmələrini seçmək bacarığında əhəmiyyətli irəliləyişlər var. Bu nəticələr dil tədrisində korpusa əsaslanan yanaşmaların və texnoloji vasitələrin inteqrasiyasının effektiv metod olduğunu göstərir.

Açar sözlər: korpus əsaslı yanaşma, konkordans alətləri, məlumat yönümlü öyrənmə, ingilis dili ikinci dil kimi öyrənənlər, dil qazanımı

Introduction

Language skill advancement for foreign English learners heavily depends on correctly and appropriately using idiomatic phrases. The natural patterns in a language that combine words specifically are known as collocations. In every language, specific words naturally form

particular word combinations. English phrases frequently include the pattern shown by expressions such as “make a decision,” “heavy rain,” or “strong coffee.” Naturally flowing communication depends heavily on the proper use of such vocabulary patterns. ESL students must study these phrases because they help them both grasp language structure and develop their language production expertise. The legitimate English expression “make a decision” creates a superior impression than the formula “do a decision.” The accurate learning of these phrases leads to improved skills for understanding and generating language by students.

Students who learn collocations achieve correctness in their grammar along with naturally flowing expression. English speakers handle word groups naturally without effort, while student English learners frequently use incorrect associations due to their vocabulary familiarity. When this condition takes effect, learners resort to unusual and unnatural ways of expression. Learning collocation maintains central importance for students who want to succeed in academic writing, as well as speaking examinations and everyday conversation. The conventional language instructional techniques generally fail to deliver an effective approach to colloquial language education. The memorization of word lists, along with phrase contextual uses, represents a challenge for most students. Tools showing all word uses in a text provide substantial learning benefits to students at present. Special tools enable students to see natural language usage, which results in enduring knowledge acquisition of idiomatic expressions.

English as a second language (ESL) students encounter the most difficult area in their learning journey because of correct and effective word association use, referred to as colloquialism. Two main factors create these learning challenges, which involve native language conflicts (L1) and insufficient exposure to the target language with variations.

Most ESL students come across English solely in their classroom studies and through artificial language materials. Students who learn outside authentic language patterns remain unable to engage with genuine, real-life conversations, which hinders their language development. Students have trouble acquiring appropriate word combinations when taught by this method. Traditional textbooks normally present limited uses of colloquies alongside inadequate contextual teaching.

Literature review

Learning English as a second language (ESL) requires effective and correct usage of vocabulary and colloquialisms since they represent an essential aspect for developing linguistic competence. The natural occurrence of word pairings or groupings in language constitutes collocations as per Lewis (Lewis, 2000). These structures determine how fluent students become and what level of semantic accuracy they achieve. The standard instructional approaches face challenges when trying to build colloquialism knowledge. Corpus-based and fixed tools emerged as data-driven methods when information technology became prominent in language instruction in recent years.

The natural occurrence of colloquial expressions means ESL holds essential value during the learning process for both production skills and comprehension skills of students (Nation, 2001). Academic writing, together with conversational skills and exam success, depends directly on the utilization of colloquialisms as a natural language marker (Boers, et al., 2008). ESL learners experience difficulties in meaning comprehension and transformation due to their mistakes in transferring words between the native and English language (Nesselhauf, 2005).

The teaching method provides students with genuine language information that displays native usage patterns. Students participating in this approach independently discover language patterns while encouraging their language understanding according to Johns (Johns, 1991). Learning with corpus information helps students recognize common word combinations during colloquial teaching (Boulton, 2010).

The particular tools organize all instances related to a selected word or set of words within an extensive text collection. These programs enable students to form rules based on how individual words pair with specific words (Bernardini, 2002). The compact analysis tools used by students and instructors most frequently include both WordSmith Tools and AntConc (Anthony, 2019).

Compact tools used in language education from the 2000s onward prove successful in boosting English Second Language students' knowledge of collocations. Taiwanese university students achieved better performance in their studies according to Chan and Liou when using short collaborative tools (Chan, et al., 2005). The tools offer strong performance in identifying rare collocations when students complete their written statements.

According to O'Sullivan, the implementation of limited data-driven instructional approaches unlocks better meaningful student learning than conventional teaching practices (O'Sullivan, 2007). The way students follow real uses for natural language acquisition leads them to develop structural knowledge instead of only memorizing rules.

According to Boulton, core teaching produces learning environments that primarily benefit students while accelerating their acquisition of advanced mental skills (Boulton, 2010). The examination of brief results helps students master language proficiency at multiple levels: grammatical, semantical, and pragmatic.

The research employed original language examples from the DDL (Data-Based Learning) corpus data as its analytical source. The language student functions as a research investigator in this methodology instead of simply downloading facts (Johns, 2002). The main strength of DDL comes during collocation teaching because student involvement leads to error production and long-lasting knowledge acquisition (Reppen, 2010), (Cobb, 2003).

The combination of compact software assisted English language learners according to Sun and Wang in using collocations with accuracy and effectiveness (Sun, et al., 2003). According to research results, the strength-based approach delivers superior effects on productive skill acquisition in comparison to traditional memorization methods.

Building-based teaching provides numerous benefits, although it introduces some difficulties for educators to handle. Students require digital fluency as a first requirement to work properly with short tools (Yoon, et al., 2004). Several students experience challenges utilizing these tools because they find them complicated while simultaneously needing teacher supervision to perform tasks independently, according to Chambers (Chambers, 2005). Teachers should learn relevant techniques to help their students use corpus-based tools within their educational framework.

Research conducted in Turkey supports that ESL students benefit from using concise tools in their education. Achikgoz discovered that students in university preparatory programs advanced their written communication capabilities and their ability to perform collation after using the AntConc program (Açıkgöz, 2019). According to Yilmaz & Ozcan, short-based writing

instruction produces better writing quality and vocabulary development among students (Yilmaz, et al., 2021).

The field of English language teaching development in Azerbaijan has shown growing research interest in corpus-based methods in recent times. The research about collocation awareness, along with compact tool impact, creates valuable developments for teaching purposes.

Research since the 2000s reveals that concise and corpus-based tools are effective in improving the collation of ESL learners. These tools allow students to analyze language and structure their learning. However, teacher instruction, digital competence, and pedagogical integration are essential for effective outcomes. Future studies can be designed to integrate these tools with mobile apps and adapt to different learning styles.

Methodology

To evaluate different teaching approaches for enhancing the colloquial English proficiency of foreign language learners, this research adopted comparative and participatory methodologies. Research tools enable us to examine how a corpus-based learning strategy affects educational results, together with conventional instruction that uses compact teaching tools.

Comparative-analysis

The comparative approach enables researchers to administer two distinct teaching procedures to identical student populations and determine their relative outcomes simultaneously. The study established two research groups, which served as experimental as well as control groups. The experimental group received teaching through a data-driven learning process that employed quick tools, particularly AntConc, to support their studies. Students in this group engaged in research of real language data to explore and understand, and then apply collocations in their language production tasks.

The subjects in the control group followed the conventional educational practices for their training program. The teacher served as the sole source of information about colloquies by providing case sentences combined with classroom exercises and pedagogical explanations to these students. Teachers did not employ casing methods or compact tools for this instructional group.

Students from both groups learned identical target collocations while the training lasted an equal duration and involved equivalent educational content. Only the teaching methods were used as comparative variables, while all other conditions remained equal between the two groups. The same collocation awareness tests were administered to the students, and writing assignments underwent evaluation after the application period. Statistical methods evaluated the application results between different groups to identify success variations.

As per the comparative method, we evaluated short-based teaching effectiveness against traditional teaching through final results and process observations of student participation. Student diaries, along with interview data collected qualitatively, confirmed these findings while examining both the method itself and student perspectives of it.

The method enabled researchers to assess the study with quantitative and qualitative data, resulting in the discovery that concise tools substantially aided ESL students in creating their assignments.

Participants

A total of 20 students from the preparatory class at Baku Engineering University took part in this research since their second language was English. Both the preparatory program and the age range from 17 to 20 belong to participants who attend the mandatory university classes. The study selected its participants through random procedures from participants who achieved level B1 outcomes in the English placement exam administered by the university. The researchers conducted the selection step to maintain consistent characteristics among the participants and boost the accuracy of the research practice.

Data collection

The purpose of research requires students to join either experimental or control groups, with ten students in each group. The grouping process aims to achieve demographic and pedagogical equality through variables that include gender composition, together with age distribution, language abilities, and educational backgrounds. This strategy functioned to reduce influences on the study that were not controlled by the main research variable. The applied teaching method remains the sole factor to assess the comparison results between these two groups reliably. The study began once participants received detailed information about research goals, along with timeline information, instructions, and ethical insights, followed by individual consent. The participants received complete information about volunteering in the research while retaining the freedom to leave the study whenever they chose. All identity details collected from students remained private while researchers used data strictly for scientific research.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed with a comparative approach. Students from the experimental group participated in an eight-week special curriculum that received support from concise tools and original corpus materials, including AntConc. The students of this group studied weekly target collocations from short speech assignments before moving on to written and spoken production assignments. Standard classes with teacher-led instruction provided the control group students with the same vocabulary groups while they also participated in regular classroom activities and tutorial sessions. The developed participant profile establishes a high internal validity for the study and creates sound conditions for comparing method effectiveness in target language acquisition.

Results and discussion

The research revealed that foreign language English learners possess a colloquial understanding, with corpus-based tools helping them improve their use of speech patterns in creative language skills. The data indicate that teaching based on corpus materials significantly strengthens the language learning process over conventional methods during the final stage of the education program.

The research demonstrates that students enhance their skills in identifying word group usage in natural contexts, which leads to improved production abilities. Students utilized specific tools which provided them insight about their target language colloquies while exposing them to direct real language data from words and structural elements embedded in contextual situations. The learning approach granted students greater independence in their studies as well as enhanced learning autonomy.

Studies let students practice their learned collocations beyond recognition while they produce written content and oral language. Traditional teaching approaches reveal that students cannot use teacher-provided, ready-made examples for new situations or contexts. The current scenario demonstrates how discovery-based learning separates itself from rote memorization techniques.

The notable discoveries from this educational approach were the development of student motivation while simultaneously improving attitudes towards teaching and deepening their language structure. Students assessed their target collocations as meaningful real-life examples during a corpus-based study instead of grammatical elements in the traditional sense.

The research results indicate that data-driven strategies serve effectively to enhance the cultural awareness of ESL students within educational designs. Corporate research tools contribute valuable support to language learning by allowing students to identify linguistic patterns through self-discovery of vocabulary usage. The study uses modern teaching approaches to prove the effectiveness of combining technological systems with data analytics for improving language learning efficiency.

The research results demonstrated that teaching methods that integrate corpus-based tools effectively enhance foreign language students' identification of informal linguistic usage and promote their utilization of these language patterns. Research confirms that learner-based discovery methods, which bring authentic speech into instruction, lead to better functional and sustained learning results than traditional teaching methods.

The greatest advantage of housing tools enable students to acquire language knowledge through established definitions and rules instead of contextual requirements. The present condition matches data-driven learning theoretical frameworks. Instead of being mere information providers, students become researchers of language under Johns' recommendation (Johns, 1991). The research findings demonstrate the outstanding effectiveness of this method for teaching the meaningful language structures that include collocations.

The present research supports the outcomes of various investigations that were performed previously. The study confirms previous research by Cobb, Boulton, and Yilmaz & Abdullayeva (Yilmaz, et al., 2018). Corpus-assisted learning enhances students' ability to keep reading within context and recognize and use phrases better than traditional methods, while providing longer-lasting learning outcomes. Students participating in this research started demonstrating abilities to identify colloquies and effectively employ them when creating production outputs.

Data-driven strategy implementation produces effective outcomes for enhancing the collection awareness of ESL students enrolled in educational planning. Research tools developed by corporate entities help students in language acquisition by letting them detect linguistic patterns as they find different vocabulary applications on their own. A contemporary learning approach demonstrates that language learning efficiency increases when analyzing data through technological systems.

Conclusion

Students who receive corpus-assisted learning maintain context reading skills and improve their ability to use phrases better than traditional methods while retaining knowledge for extended periods. Students who took part in these investigations developed their proficiency in recognizing idioms alongside their application in generating production materials.

Students demonstrated enhanced ability to employ collation structures during their learning process, which manifested itself both in recognition and production scenarios. Through writing tasks, students achieve superior levels of awareness beyond traditional educational methods. Students showed improved writing skills in their assignments because they learned insights beyond traditional teaching methods.

The research provides new directions for English as a second language education by developing suitable methods for use in any foreign language classroom. Teachers require training in beneficial housing tools and access to digital resources for these tools to receive effective professional development programs.

The study provides a crucial recommendation that teachers should implement data-driven activities throughout their language instruction. Corpus-based learning enables students to actively engage in all language-related processes, including grammar transmission, while participating in detection and analysis tasks. Students need dedicated assistance for understanding how to effectively utilize these tools.

Students improve their language competence by using analytical tasks alongside generative assignments for interpretation tasks and generation of linguistic assignments. Research data provides step-by-step instructions for academic institutions to establish interactive learning techniques for language acquisition.

As a result, systematic collation in ESL instruction substantially increases students' linguistic competence and self-confidence. Modern teaching methods that combine technology capabilities with compact teaching tools represent effective, innovative solutions for the instruction of idiomatic expressions.

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