Integrating lexical Collocations instruction into EFL writing classes at the Preparatory stage
By
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Abstract: This research aimed to integrate lexical collocations instruction into EFL writing classes at preparatory stage. The descriptive design was adopted. Based on the related literature review as the main source of data collection, the research attempted to identify the paragraph writing skills which second year preparatory students lack, pinpoint the collocations suitable for those students and provide aframework illustrating how to integrate lexical collocations-based instruction into EFL writing instruction. The research is a concept paper adopting the descriptive analytical method. Findings of the related literature review revealed that the writing skills included(length, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and writing mechanics) Findings also showed how to integrate lexical collocations- based instruction into the three stages of writing: (1) The Pre-writing Stage, (2) The Writing Stage and The Post-writing Stage. In addition, various recommendations and suggestionsfor further research were offered.
Keywords: Lexical Collocations, Writing classes, Preparatory education, ELT, Egypt.

Introduction

writing is receiving great interest for its vital and significant role in foreign language teaching and learning. Writing in English is useful in two aspects: first, it motivates students' thinking, helps them organize ideas, and develops their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize. Second, it enhances students' learning, understanding, and reflection on the English language (Rao, 2007). Furthermore, writing skills are essential to academic success and a requirement for many occupations and careers. Mastery of writing skill is essential for EFL students since it allows them to express their feeling, thoughts, and knowledge efficiently. It also assists them in developing their confidence (Knoch et al., 2016; Jani & Mellinger, 2015).

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At the present time, a great deal of communication is in written forms. Hence, one of the abilities that language learners need to develop is how to write efficiently. However, Many EFL learners confront many troubles for writing a correct English composition as writing necessitates a basic knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to express ideas in an appropriate English language. Writing is considered as the most important and the most difficult of all the four skills of a language (Garcia &Isabel, 2018; Akhtar & Hussain, 2019). It is considered as a complex skill than other language skills since it requires comprehensive and systematic instructions (So & Lee, 2013). It requires writers to make compositions involving content, organization, structure, and mechanics appropriately to convey meaning through writing simultaneously (Brown, ٢٠٠٧).

Many researchers, for example; (Mousavi & Darani, 2018; Abdallah, 2015) figured out low performance of EFL students in writing because students are often dependent on their mother tongue thinking, and they use native language to
organize ideas, and then literally translate them into the target languages. This means that in writing in EFL, the mother tongue thinking and second language thinking are combined and this results in sentence errors, bad coherence, and vague expression.

Definition of collocations

The word 'collocation' comes from Latin from collocare which means 'to place together', or 'the action of placing things side by side. 'Commit a crime' is a common collocation in English.The term "collocation" has got different definitions by many researchers but it seems that linguists and teachers have not yet agreed upon a common description. For Lewis (2008), collocations refer to "the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency".

According to Bateni (2010) collocations are sets of words that are combined naturally rather than frequently. Collocations are the habitual co-occurrence of lexical collaborations with comparative clarity of meaning which assist in getting accuracy in foreign language (Laufer & Waldman 2011). Fellbaum (2015), definded collocations as combinations of words in which one word strongly depends on the other to the extent of blending in and losing its individual lexical meaning.Collocation is a term used to address the possibility of occurrence of largely two or more words in lexical or syntactic relations

(Demir, 2017). Attya, etal. (2019) describes that collocation shows a state where specific words have tendency to come together frequently.

In simple words, collocation is two or more words that frequently occur together to form common patterns or combinations in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing. That's why, some expressions are common and understood (e.g., strong tea) while others are not (e.g., powerful tea).

The Importance of Collocations

Collocations are combinations of words in which one word strongly depends on the other to the extent of blending in and losing its individual lexical meaning.

Collocations help learners speak and write the target language in a more naturally and accurately way. In addition, learning collocations will help learners increase target language vocabulary and also help them understand and express sentences at a much faster rate. These combinations, occurring together habitually, are so beneficial for the enrichment of learners' language knowledge. Collocations play a crucial role for foreign language learners (Fellbaum, 2015).

Many researchers emphasized the importance of learning collocations for L2 learners. (Shin & Nation 2007, p.2) asserted that collocations help learners develop performance in both spoken and written language. (Fahim & Vaezi 2011) stated that lack of collocational knowledge makes learners sound odd and not competent in using language. When learners do not know two or more words that collocate with each other, they use some long and complicated sentences instead to express their idea. Smith's (2005) declared that including collocation in the curriculum is very important

Due to the fact that knowledge of collocation is an essential component of communicative competence and a source of fluency, non-native writers should endeavour to gain the competence of collocation, which will contribute them to have nativeness as native writers do (Scarcella, &Matuchniak, 2013) .

Also, collocations represent an important aspect of EFL vocabulary development. Collocation is one of the most important overlooked aspects of language learning and teaching. Many linguists have acknowledged the importance of collocation in the improvement of L2 vocabulary and communicative competence. In Zinkgräf's view (2008), it is better to include collocations in learners' curriculum from the very beginning levels of language learning.

Moreover, Kim (2009) asserted that, "truly knowing a word means not only knowing the meaning of the word but also knowing the words with which it frequently co-occurs" (p. 1). According to (Demir, 2017) in learning English language, Collocations occupy a prominent place. Therefore, when students do not have ready-made chunks which express precisely what they want to say or write, they have to form sentences based on grammar rules, which sometimes lead to numerous grammatical mistakes. Collocation is crucial in that it allows learners to think more quickly and communicate more efficiently .

Accordingly, teaching collocations is beneficial for language learning as a whole not only for the writing skill. The knowledge and the use of collocations is a necessary component of every language that can be used in order to discriminate native speakers from non-native speakers.

The Lexical Approach

The lexical approach appeared primarily as a lexical way for teaching language. The lexical approach focuses on developing learners' use of lexis: words, word combinations, and particularly collocations. Lewis (1993) formulated the basic principles of this approach. It focuses on the idea that words receive their meanings from the words they co-occur with. The approach considers lexis is distinct from grammar. The lexical approach was advocated by many researchers (e.g. Eidian et al., 2014; Chun-guang, 2014; Chao, 2016; Abdulqader et al., 2017).

This approach is one of the communicative approaches that is being practiced these days. It has received great interest in recent years. In the lexical approach, lexis in its various types plays an important role in language teaching and learning. The lexical approach is based on enhancing learners' knowledge with collocations. It was proved to be effective in enhancing teaching and learning EFL skills. The basic concept on which this approach is based is that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce collocations as (commit a crime- shake hands – totally convinced). Some researchers believe that collocations are the most necessary element in learning a foreign language as it is this linguistic feature that differentiates native from nonnative speakers of a language (Durrant & Schmitt 2010).

Collocations as a Neglect Phenomenon

Collocations, despite their pedagogical importance and significance, they have been treated with considerable neglect. Hashemi

(2012) in his research stated that EFL College students, high school students, and professors have little knowledge of collocation because collocation has been neglected in EFL classrooms. He suggested that the best way to enhance the mastery of collocations would be to work on activities that raise learners' awareness of collocations .

Similarly, Chan and Liou (2005) stated that teaching collocations in English foreign language classes had not got enough attention; as a result, students learning English as a foreign language rarely use collocations. Instead of teaching vocabulary as single lexical items which makes the learners lack the lexical competence, so students should be aware of the importance of learning collocations. Pellicer&Sánchez (2017) stated that collocational competence is a domain of language knowledge that L2 learners most frequently lack, and while teachers often focus on correcting their grammar or sentence structure but their ignorance to collocations becomes the source of most language errors.

Teaching collocations has long been ignored as an effective way to enhance EFL learners' fluency. However, Lewis (2000: 27) predicted that collocations would become the basic element of teaching: "Collocation will be so central to everyday teaching that we will wonder why it does not take up so much of our time before". If this can be realized, learners' written productions would meet the qualities that could make them native-like.

Collocations do not mean mere habitual co-occurrences, but rather there is a limitation in the choice of adjectives that cope with certain nouns. Thus, the meaning of lexical collocations per the meaning of their constituents raises great problems for foreign language learners.

In other words, apart from grammar and lexical meaning, a right sentence must have the agreement between words; otherwise, it sounds unnatural or even makes no sense (Phương, 2012). For example; (have breakfast, do homework, armed forces) instead of (eat breakfast, make homework and armed powers) respectively. Kim (2009, p.1) argued that, "Truly knowing a word means not only knowing the meaning of the word but also knowing the words with which it frequently co-occurs". Nearly no one can speak or write naturally without using collocation In Zinkgräf's view (2008), it is better to include collocations in learners' curriculum from the very beginning levels of language learning.

The purpose of learning a word is to put it to its actual use. It is far from being able to know just the meaning of a word. With the expansion of the amount of vocabulary, many problems arise concerning the proper use of a word in writing. English learners are more concerned about how to expand their vocabulary to increase the number of words they can remember. They pay no attention to or ignore the understanding of the word components. Collocation is one of the most essential characteristics of knowing a word. So, to help second-grade preparatory students perform their writing tasks successfully they should exploit collocations while writing their compositions. That is to say, to reinforce their writing skills, English learners must be aware of collocations.

Consequently, students write wrong sentences as they depend on their mother tongue, literal translation or their colloquial language to write their ideas. Therefore, they form strange-sounding English sentences. Students may write sentences which are, if grammatically correct, still odd. For example, a student may write: (We went to Alex to "change weather"). Students can instead, use a collocation such as (to have fun).

Another example, when a student writes a sentence like "flu infection spreads by peace with hand" the student means here the flu infection is caused by greetings with shake hands. The word "greetings" in Arabic is the same word for peace (peace in English means no war) so the student just used it. In that sentence, the student should use the collocation (shake hands).

Also, they sometimes write long sentences as they ignore the right collocations that help them express what they mean. For example, the student may form a sentence like, "I have already decided what I should do" instead of" I have made a decision. Accordingly, the students are in need to learn lexical collocations to make their writings clearer, more precise, and easily understood.

Series of studies on the importance and the effectiveness of teaching collocations on language skills drew the attention of second language researchers and EFL/ESL practitioners.
Alfahadi (2014) carried out a study on beginners. The results revealed that exposing beginners to language collocations rather than individual words developed their performance in writing. Learners may know many individual words along with their grammatical knowledge, but they cannot use those words in a range of collocations that convey more meaning of what they say or write.

Mousavi & Heidari Darani (2018) investigated the effect of collocations as language chunks on Iranian female intermediate English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing skill. Moreover, the researchers intended to find out the attitude of learners towards writing skill after collocations were taught. Study sample comprises 30 females Iranian EFL learners, aged between 18 and 26 years old, who were studying English in a language institute in Isfahan. The instruments used for data collection included three tests (Oxford Placement Test, writing pretest and posttest) and an attitude questionnaire developed by Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that there was a significant effect of using collocations on the writing skill of Iranian female intermediate EFL learners. Furthermore, it can be claimed that the learners' attitude boosted in the course of this experiment, indicating that using collocations had a significantly positive impact on the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards writing skill.

Lin (2009) examined the effects of explicit and long-term collocation instruction on the development of reading proficiency of EFL vocational high school students in Taiwan. She designed an instructional program based on Lewis's lexical approach and implemented it with 40 EFL learners for six months. The results revealed that the experimental group surpassed the control class in their English reading proficiency.

In another study, Rahimi and Momeni (2012) examined the effectiveness of teaching collocations on English language proficiency. The results of the study showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group. Finally, it was concluded that teaching collocations developed students' language proficiency .

Abdi & Ariffin (2020) conducted study aimed to explore the effects of students' knowledge of collocation on their writing production. The participants were 20 Djiboutian postgraduate students undergoing their studies in one of the higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Using a multiple-choice test consisting of 60 items and a writing test. The results revealed a positive correlation between the collocational knowledge and writing production. These findings showed the need for EFL students to learn lexical collocations in order to develop their writing skills.

Allami &Attar (2013) studied how teaching collocations influence the speaking ability of EFL Iranian learners. Knowing collocation and using them was also studied as well as the participants' attitudes towards using collocations. A quick placement test (QPT) was

administered. Sample of the study was 40 intermediate Iranian learners who were chosen from 80 divided into an experimental group and a control one. Collocation test and collocation interview were used as pre-test in the study. Results revealed that using collocations "teaching improved the speaking ability in the experimental group and their performance in interview got increased". ping the speaking proficiency level for EFL pre-intermediate students or not. Participants of the study were 50 Iranian university students of Language Institute. The instrument was a lexical collocation. Results indicated that teaching vocabulary through lexical collocations improved the learners' speaking proficiency .

Furthermore, Hsu and Chiu (2010) conucted a study to probe the impact of direct collocation instruction on Taiwanese learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. The participants who joined in this study were assigned to three groups based on their academic level. Different collocation instructions, such as single-item vocabulary instruction, lexical collocation instruction and no instruction, vocabulary test and reading comprehension tests were received by each group. Consequently, after 9 weeks it showed that direct lexical collocation instruction improved the learners' performance on the three recall tests. Moreover, when Taiwanese learners received collocation instruction, their reading comprehension promoted.

Demir, (2018) carried out a study aimed at increasing the awareness towards the importance of collocations in order to have native fluency in academic writing; A hundred research articles written in English in the field of ELT by native speakers of English made up the data of the present study. The data were analysed and the collocations were identified and categorized. The categorized collocations were enhanced through collocations dictionaries to be able to create a comprehensive list of collocations. The findings showed that native speakers heavily rely on collocations while writing academic texts .

Mounya (2010) carried out a study to find out the role of teaching collocations in developing foreign language the learners' writing proficiency. The sample consisted of two groups that were chosen randomly. It included forty-eight students whose native language was Arabic and their second language was French. The experimental group had been taught the treatment while the control group did not. The researcher applied a pre-test to examine students' use of collocations. It showed that the participants had a little knowledge of collocations and alarge amount of "mis-collocations". The

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analysis that was carried out after the treatment revealed that the participants' writing proficiency was developed significantly through a clear instruction of collocation. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between teaching collocation and writing proficiency.

The studies mentioned above revealed the importance of teaching collocations for enhancing learning English as a foreign language and for developing the students' writing skills.

1.   Statement of the problem

The problem could be summarized as follows:

Second-grade preparatory students have a low level of writing skills. Hence this research sought to use a lexical collocations-based instruction to develop their EFL writing skills

3. Questions of the Research

The present research sought to answer the following questions:

1 -What are the writing skills needed by second -grade preparatory students?

2-What are the features of lexical collocations -based instruction for second-grade preparatory students?

4. Objectives of the Research

The main aim of this study was to integrate the lexical collocations instruction into EFL writing classes at preparatory stage. To attain the research aim, the following objectives were addressed:

1 .To identify the writing skills which second year preparatory students at Faqus preparatory school for girls need.

2 .To pinpoint the collocations suitable for those students.

3. To integrate the lexical collocations instruction into EFL writing classes for those students.

5. Importance of the Research

a. Providing EFL teachers with a framework illustrating how to integrate the lexical collocations instruction into EFL writing classes at preparatory stage.

b. Raising students' awareness of the importance of lexical collocations as an essential part of the language.

c. In the planning and preparation of the English language curriculum for the preparatory stage regarding the content of the

textbook, Teacher's Guide, and workbook by using   lexical collocations.

d. Attracting supervisors' attention to the importance of teaching lexical collocations to develop the writing skills of preparatory students.

Method and instruments of the research
Design
The design of the research is descriptive analytical in nature.
Instruments
Review of literature was conducted as the main source of data collection .

Findings
In this section, findings were discussed in the light of the research objectives, review and analysis of the literature related to the research.
Objective No.1. To identify the writing skills which second year preparatory students need .
Review and analysis of the literature related to the research context (Abdel-Haq, 2014; Bahgat, 2014;) revealed that the writing skills those students need can be classified into 7 writing categories (quantity, purpose, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics)

Table (1) shows t the writing skills as well as multi-level performance indicators for the writing skills.

Table (1): The Writing Skills and Multi-level Performance Indicators for the Writing Skills

writing skills	multi-level performance indicators	Level
Quantity	The student writes 6 sentences or more for a paragraph or a letter.	one
	The student writes 4- 5 sentences for a paragraph or a letter.	two
	The student writes 2-3 sentences for a paragraph or a letter.	three
	The student writes l sentence for a paragraph or a letter.	four
Purpose	The main idea is clear, supported, and enriched by all relevant details.	one
	The main idea is well-marked by details but could benefit from additional information. Support for topic is somewhat clear and relevant.	two

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	The topic or theme is identified as the main idea. Some details begin to define the main idea or the topic, yet are limited in number or clarity.	three
	No main idea, purpose, or central theme exists; the reader must infer this, based on missing details. Support for topic is not evident or there are no supporting details.	four
Content	The student has one clear main idea supported with many informative, interesting, and important supporting details that make ideas understandable.	one
	The student has one main idea but the supporting details are not interesting or informative, and it is somewhat possible to understand ideas.	two
	The student has one main idea but the supporting details do not make ideas understandable.	three
	The student has no main idea, but more than one main idea that lacks supporting details and it is difficult to understand ideas.	four
Organization	Writing has a definite beginning, middle, and end in which the beginning draws the reader in and ties the ideas together and the end makes the reader feel finished and think.	one
	Writing has a clear beginning, middle, and end but sentences need further development.	two
	Writing has a definite beginning, but the end is inappropriate, or a definite end but the beginning is inappropriate either.	three
	Writing has no definite beginning, middle, or end.	four
Grammar	The student uses correct grammatical rules (e.g. verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, articles, Conjunctions, prepositions, plural form) and sentence structure. There are no grammatical errors.	one
	The student makes 1-2 errors in rules (e.g. verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, articles, Conjunctions, prepositions, plural form) and sentence structure.	two
	The student makes 3-5errors in grammatical rules	Three

	(e.g. verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, articles, Conjunctions, prepositions, plural form) and sentence structure.	
	The student makes more than 5 errors in grammatical rules (e.g. verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, pronouns, articles, Conjunctions, prepositions, plural form) and sentence structure.	four
Vocabulary	The student uses appropriate, correct, and accurate vocabulary, collocations and word forms that convey the meaning clearly.	one
	The student uses appropriate words with minor errors in vocabulary choice, collocations, and word forms but they do not distract the reader from getting the meaning.	two
	The student uses a small range of words and collocations and some word forms are incorrect. This distracts the reader from getting the meaning.	three
	Most words and word forms that the student uses are incorrect, lack variation, and vividness and distract the reader from getting the meaning. Writing is not supported by any collocations or expressions.	four
Mechanics	The student uses correct punctuation and capitalization rules. There are no punctuation and capitalization errors.	one
	The student makes 1-2 errors in punctuation and capitalization rules.	two
	The student makes 3-5 errors in punctuation and capitalization rules.	three
	The student makes more than 5errors in punctuation and capitalization rules.	four

Objective No.2: To pinpoint the collocations suitable for second -grade preparatory students.

Objective No.3: To integrate the lexical collocations instruction into EFL writing classes for second -grade preparatory students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, these recommendations are suggested:

1 -EFL teachers should integrate the lexical collocation instruction into writing instruction.

2 -EFL students should be trained to use various types of collocations.

3-EFL teachers should empower learners by adopting lexical collocation-based writing instruction as it encourages them to be actively and safely engaged in the writing process.

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Suggestions for Further Research:

Based on the findings of this study, the following are suggestions for further research :

1-Further research can examin the effect of the collocation-based writing instruction on EFL students' vocab. acquisition

2-More research is needed to investigate the impact of the EFL collocation-based writing instruction on students' attitudes towards writing.

3-It is possible to compare the effect of the collocation-based writing instruction versus traditional approaches on EFL students' writing skills.

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دمج تدريس المتلازمات اللفظية في فصول الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية فى المرحلة الإعدادية

(مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية)

إعداد

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المستخلص: هدف البحث الحالي إلى دمج تدريس المتلازمات اللفظية في فصول كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المرحلة الإعدادية. حيث تبنى الباحث المنهج الوصفي, استنادًا إلى مراجعة الأدبيات ذات الصلة باعتبارها المصدر الرئيسي لجمع البيانات، حاول البحث تحديد مهارات كتابة الفقرة التي يفتقر إليها طلاب الصف الثاني الإعدادي، وتحديد المتلازمات اللفظية المناسبة لهؤلاء الطلاب. الدراسة عبارة عن ورقة مفاهيمية تتبنى المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. كشفت نتائج مراجعة الأدبيات ذات الصلة أن مهارات الكتابة تضمنت (الطول (الكمية) والمحتوى والتنظيم والقواعد النحوية والمفردات وآليات الكتابة) كما أظهرت النتائج أيضًا كيفية دمج التعليم القائم على التجميع المعجمي في المراحل الثلاث للكتابة: (1) مرحلة ما قبل الكتابة، (٢) مرحلة الكتابة و(3) مرحلة ما بعد الكتابة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم تقديم العديد من التوصيات والاقتراحات لمزيد من البحوث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المتلازمات اللفظية، فصول الكتابة، التعليم الإعدادى، تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، مصر.