



Using "Collocations" for Developing EFL Literacy Skills Among Preparatory School Pupils

By

Dr. Fatma S. Mohamed

Professor of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods Faculty of Education
Benha University

Dr. Mona S. Za'za'

Professor of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods Faculty of Education
Benha University

Dr. Abdellatef Elshazly Youssef

Lecture of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods
Faculty of Education
Benha University

Doria Tamim Abdallah

English language teacher

بحث مشتق من الرسالة الخاصة بالباحثة

Using "Collocations" for Developing EFL Literacy Skills Among Preparatory School Pupils

By

Dr. Fatma S. Mohamed

Professor of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods Faculty of Education
Benha University

Dr. Mona S. Za'za'

Professor of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods Faculty of Education
Benha University

Dr. Abdellatef Elshazly Youssef

Lecture of EFL Curricula and
Teaching Methods
Faculty of Education
Benha University

Doria Tamim Abdallah

English language teacher

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using collocations for developing EFL literacy skills among preparatory school pupils. The participants were eighty pupils in second year from 25 January Preparatory School in Benha at Quliobeya Governorate. The participants of the study were divided into two groups, the experimental group (N=40) and the control group (N=40). The pre literacy test was administered to the participants before the treatment. Then, the experimental group was taught collocations using the lexical approach while the control group was taught using the traditional method. Then the post literacy test was administered to both groups. Results of the study revealed that the program using collocations was effective in developing EFL literacy skills among the preparatory school pupils.

Key words:

Collocations, EFL literacy skills, the lexical approach.

Introduction:

In order to learn vocabulary of any foreign language effectively and not to be forgotten, learners should store them in their long term memory to be able to retrieve them later on when needed. "Remembering new words is often not an easy job for learners. That is why teachers try to utilize various techniques to present new words to them" (Baleghizadeh and Naeim,2011). Language learners need all information of language to be learnt-including vocabulary-transferred into long-term memory (Alzahrani,2011).

Marzona (2004) assures that if academically oriented experiences are not stored in permanent memory, they are not added to academic background knowledge. Lin (2002:65) points that "there are several problems facing learners learning English vocabulary. These include forgetting new vocabulary because learners do not use them in their daily life since they are not surrounded by English speakers". Also, learners have trouble memorizing and remembering the spelling of new vocabulary coupled with difficulty in pronunciation. Abdel Haq (2003:3) pointed out that "students learn vocabulary more effectively when they are directly involved in constructing rather than in memorizing definitions or synonyms".

According to Laufer and Nation, (1995) "vocabulary is not usually learned for its own sake". One of the most important aims of vocabulary learning is to bring learners' vocabulary knowledge into real communicative use. Where learners are in a situation, their production is influenced by their limited word store. While reading and writing, words are interwoven in a complex system in which knowledge of various levels of a lexical item is required in order to produce ideas successfully. Therefore, learners with limited vocabulary find difficulty when it comes to reading and writing. Hence, EFL learners need to give more attention to vocabulary learning.

There are many studies that examined students' vocabulary learning at different educational levels (e.g.; Nation, 1983; Horst et al., 1998; Qian, 1999; Hu and Nation, 2000; Zahar et al., 2001, Horst et al., 2005; Tekmen and Daloglu, 2006; Yu, 2007; Webb, 2009; Laufer and Ravenhorst - Kalvoski, 2010; Schmitt et al., 2011; White, 2014). These studies suggested that vocabulary knowledge may affect the ability to learn words incidentally through reading and writing. The reason for this may be that students with greater vocabulary knowledge are likely to have greater text comprehension, and this may allow them to pay greater attention to unknown words in the text to learn more vocabulary through reading and writing.

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000), literacy is the ability to read and write. Stromquist (2005) defined literacy as "individual access to reading and writing" (cited in Kell and Kell, 2014). Johnston (2003) showed that literacy achievement requires a more advanced set of complex skills, requiring numeracy, writing and reading in the English language.

In education for All Global Monitoring Report (2006), the most common understanding of literacy is that it is a set of tangible skills- particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing- that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them. Literacy can be viewed as an active and broad-based learning process. Reading and writing are important to help function in school, on the job, and in society. It is implicit in the right to education. It is recognized as a right, explicitly for both children and adults, in certain international conventions and included in key international declarations. As Rowsell (2012) confirmed that when our students write and read, they infuse this practice into their identities. Literacy learners bring their identities into the making of meaning, and as they learn to read, or put marks in their pages.

Rowse added that literacy is probably the single-most important part of education. Without literacy, all other learning is impossible. Literacy involves using reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to gain more knowledge. Without the ability to do any of these skills, there is absolutely no way to acquire more knowledge. Literacy is essential for learning. It is crucial that language arts teachers are not the only ones in the school stressing the importance of literacy. While the language arts teachers may be the only ones truly teaching literacy, it is the job of all educators to facilitate literacy learning. Literacy must come before any other learning can occur, and we cannot grow as a society without literacy.

Literacy is more than having the ability to read and write. It is about helping children to communicate with others and to make sense of the world. It includes oral and written language and other sign systems such as art, sound and sign language. Literacy also acknowledges the nature of information communication technology, and many other forms of representation relevant to children including screen based (NCCA, 2009).

To perform well in reading and writing, EFL learners need a massive word store and a variety of lexicon. Fu (2005) stated that lexicon is crucial for successful communication. This is probably due to the role played by vocabulary in learners' reading and writing that cannot be denied or even ignored.

Although studies on vocabulary, in general, have dramatically increased over the past 20 years (e.g. Laufer and Nation, 1995; Engber, 1995; Paribakht and Wesche, 1996; Coady, 1997; Read, 2000; Nation, 2001; Meara, 2002 & 2005; Hiebert and Kamil, 2005; Nation, 2006 & 2007; Yu, 2007; Nation, 2008; Johansson, 2008; Donohue, 2010; Schmitt, 2010; Yu, 2010; Nation, 2011; Crossley, 2013; White, 2014; Yazdi and Kafipour, 2014; Dai and Zhour, 2015), there is scarcity on the systematic examination of the relationship among vocabulary, reading

and writing. This may be partly attributed to the difficulties researchers encounter in collecting and analyzing read and written data.

Collocations are one type of lexical items. In addition to single words (the traditional mainstay of vocabulary teaching), polywords (more or less and so on,) and institutionalized expressions (good morning, no thank you, please pass the ...), the lexical approach emphasizes collocations. Collocations are conventional combinations of words such as abdicate + throne ; suspicious + of ; rancid + butter. In addition to being the largest category of lexical items, collocations are the backbone of Lewis' approach (Lewis, 1997).

Lewis (2000) defined collocations as the way in which words co-occur in natural text in statistically significant ways. Within the lexical approach, special attention is directed to collocations and expressions that include institutionalized utterances and sentence frames and heads. Hill (in Lewis, 2001:49) commented that "within the mental lexicon, collocation is the most powerful force in the creation and comprehension of all naturally occurring text".

With the recognition of the importance of vocabulary, many techniques and approaches to teaching and learning vocabulary have emerged, and collocation is just one of those techniques. It's a widely accepted idea that collocations are very important part of knowledge of language acquisition and they are essential to non-native speakers of English in order to speak or write fluently and accurately (Jaen, 2007).

Skrzypek (2009) stated that one of the criteria for knowing a word is being aware of other words with which it keeps company. In addition, Shin and Nation (2008) explained one of the reasons as to why teachers and learners should be interested in collocations: they improve learners' language fluency and ensure native-like selection.

ELT has changed its perspective on the teaching and learning of vocabulary in foreign language classes. A word collocating with others is thought to be one of the significant aspects related to words besides

multiple meaning, synonymy, connotations and register according to dictionary makers (Fernandez, 2009). Collocation plays an important role in language acquisition and knowledge of collocation contributes to the difference between native speakers and non-native speakers (Chan & Liou, 2005; Shei & Pain, 2000). Besides, collocations are really important to language learners to be better understood (Deveci, 2004). To know the meaning of a word most effectively, students need to know its associations with other words.

Nattinger and Decarrico (1992), one of the first researchers to discuss collocations, stated that the meaning of a word mostly depends on the other words that it collocates with; with the help of these collocates the learner keeps the words in memory and can easily infer the meaning from the context. They also argued that the notion of collocations is extremely important for acquiring vocabulary but its potential has not been fully utilized. Similarly, Chan and Liou (2005) explained that teaching of collocations in EFL classes does not get enough attention; as a result, students learning EFL are weak in collocation use. Rather than teaching vocabulary as single lexical items which causes a lexical incompetence on the part of learners, students must be made aware of the necessity of acquiring collocations (Farghal and Obiedat, 1995; Fan, 2009).

There have been many classifications of collocations. Many linguists classify collocations by syntactical class. The simplest formulation is into lexical and grammatical categories. Lexical collocations involve one open word (noun, verb, adverb or adjective) combined with another open word. Grammatical collocations are comprised of an open word combined with a preposition, clause, infinitive or gerund (Aish, 2014).

Lewis mentioned many kinds of collocations. He highlighted some of them, which are of special use to the learner. Hill and Lewis dictionary (1997) was organized into two sections and included some of these

categories mentioned above: starting from a noun (verb + noun ; noun + verb ; adjective + noun ; phrase) and starting from a verb or adjective.

Gitsaki (1999) gave and used over thirty types of collocations. However, they are all forms of the lexical/grammatical classifications, and she reduced her analysis to this dichotomy. Gitsaki based her categories on the system devised by Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) in their collocations dictionary which was organized alphabetically.

Other researchers categorized collocations along one or more continua. One such continuum is degree of fixedness, that is, the extent to which the collocates can be replaced by another word. At one end of the items are unchangeable (e.g. chip off the old block). At the other end are free combinations, words which have seemingly unlimited combination possibilities (e.g. red + virtually any concrete object). In between are semi-fixed items (e.g. ham and eggs), where the items could be reserved or bacon substituted for ham and colligations (syntactical patterns such as I am ___ ing). Some workers consider collocations to encompass this whole range. Others restrict use of the term of collocation to items that fall in the middle of the category. Nation, (2001) has ten attributes, along which he defined collocations. Some of the most important are: frequency of co-occurrence, adjacency, collocational specialization, fossilization, opaqueness and uniqueness of meaning. Renouf and Sinclair (1991) measured the degree to which either part of a collocation is bound.

Some researchers classified idioms and phrasal verbs as collocations. A major distinction between these two categories and collocations is the degree of opaqueness: the meaning of collocation generally derives from the meaning of the constituent parts, whereas idioms and phrasal verbs are overwhelmingly metaphorical. As long as this distinction is made clear to students, there is no reason why all three aspects of the lexical approach should not be learned as lexical chunks (Aish, 2014).

Hill (2000:63-64) classified collocations as follows:

- 1- *Unique Collocations*: These refer to collocations that are fixed and cannot be replaced by an/other word/s and are highly predictable. Hill gave an example, we shrug our shoulders explaining that shrug is used only with shoulders, not with our head or any other parts of the body.
- 2- *Strong Collocations*: These are not unique collocations but are strong or very strong. Strong collocations have a few other possible collocates. For example, the word rancid can be used with only a few words such as butter and oil.
- 3- *Weak Collocations*: These refer to words that may have a number of word partners and can be easily predicted such as dark green, light green, pale green, bright green, emerald green, lime green, lush green, rich green, olive green, dull green, etc.
- 4- *Medium-Strength Collocations*: These refer to collocations that can sometimes be weak collocations; however, they are not common for EFL/ESL learners, such as a door key and a key person. Normally learners already know each individual word but not as the whole phrase. Hill has suggested that this kind of collocation should strongly be emphasized in class.

Rote learning , which means that students have to memorize endless lists of single words in isolations, is still common practice in many Egyptian schools leading to superficial, surface-level knowledge and impeding meaningful vocabulary learning, which is the key to progress. As a result of rote learning, learners may transfer incorrect forms from their native language (negative transfer) (Aish, 2014). Teachers should raise their students' awareness of collocations and encourage learner autonomy because acquiring competence in collocations is a long process (Hill, 2000:33).

Learners should be sensitive to noticing collocations in language. Noticing is a key term in the lexical approach as it plays the role of

transforming input into intake and is "perhaps the most important of all methodological question". Lewis insisted that "exercises and activities which help the learner observe or notice language more accurately ensure quicker and more carefully-formulated hypothesis about language, and so aid acquisition, which is based on constantly repeated Observe-Hypothesis-Experiment cycle" (Lewis, 1997:52; Lewis, 2000:159).

It's worth mentioning that all four skills can be practiced in this way: reading and listening help learners notice collocations while writing and speaking activities provide opportunity to practice. Language learners should be presented with authentic texts (Hill, 2000:58). The way students record collocation is also important. Collocations should be recorded in an organized way. If you want to forget something, put it a list. Lewis suggested that the best organizing principle is using topics and semantic fields (Lewis, 1993).

Collocations can be taught through the four skills, each skill will support the other in noticing and practicing collocations through daily life situations and common topics. The most important thing here is how teachers implement collocations in each skill to be noticed and as Lewis said, the best thing to keep words in mind is to use them in natural situations and different topics (Lewis, 1993). Knowing a word definitely is much more than knowing what it means. Nation (1997) listed eight elements, which are necessary to have complete knowledge of a word: Spoken form, Written form, Grammatical behavior, Collocational behavior, Frequency, Stylistic register constraints, Conceptual meaning and Word associations.

In the lexical approach, collocational patterns form the core of word knowledge. The ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones (Thornbury, 2002). Increasing the learners'

collocational competence is the way to improve their language as a whole: The reason so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply because they have not been trained to notice which words go with which. They may know quite a lot of individual words which they struggle to use, along with their grammatical knowledge, but they lack the ability to use those words in a range of collocations which pack more meanings into what they say or write (Lewis, 2000).

Learning collocations not only increases the mental lexicon but develops fluency as well. Fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated items, which are available as the foundation for any linguistic novelty or creativity (Lewis, 1997:15). Pragmatic knowledge is also important in deciding which collocation to use, as some collocations are not appropriate for certain contexts. Hill (2000) argued that students should acquire more medium-strength collocations if they want to leave behind the intermediate level. Collocations are not words that come together to give meaning but feeling which words perfectly comes with which word. The native speaker finds it easily to communicate with others by using collocations, but the EFL students don't use collocations (Aish, 2014).

Teachers should be selective about what collocations to teach. They should make sure that they are active and appropriate for learners at different stages (Hill, 2000). They should encourage learners to guess the meaning of an unknown word from the context first and later show how useful a dictionary is. They should also encourage them to observe and record other useful collocations of the word/s, not just a single one (Islam, 2006). Besides, teachers and students should repeat and recycle the collocations already learnt every now and then in class activities to help learners register those learnt in their memory (Hill, & Lewis, 2000). Peer correction is recommended since it is a means to get feedback and instant reinforcement (Wei, 1999).

Hence, the role of teachers is to raise students' awareness of the

existence of lexical items. Teaching students to recognize familiar academic "collocations"; the way words combine, is probably one of the most significant breakthroughs for students and teachers. As a result, teachers should focus on fixed or semi-fixed expressions that occur frequently in the language rather than originally created sentences. In the lexical approach, Lewis (1993:195) suggested that "Pedagogical chunking should be a frequent classroom activity, as students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed and gradually develop ways, not of assembling parts into wholes, but of identifying constituent bits within the whole". Thus, teaching collocations should be as simple as it is supposed to be. It cannot be taught through the traditional ways so teachers need to know how to teach collocations in context, may be through activities which allow students practice collocation natural contexts (Aish, 2014).

Institutionalized phrases or collocations are known to be syntactically and semantically regular to a large extent, but statistically idiosyncratic. In other words, collocations are conventional associations of words whose co-occurrence happens more often than by chance. By contrast, lexicalized or multiword lexical units involve some degree of lexical, syntactic, and/or semantic idiosyncrasy, but may or may not be observed with higher than expected frequency in a given context. In other words, a multiword lexical unit is a combination of two or more words, not necessarily contiguous, that together form a single unit of meaning.

Multiword lexical units are semantically idiosyncratic to some extent, i.e., the unitary meaning of the expression cannot be determined merely by combining the meanings of the parts. They are also syntactically peculiar, i.e., they often behave differently from similar-on-the-surface combinations that are syntactic structures rather than lexical units. Lexis is seen by Lewis not as a vocabulary list, but as a set of lexical items, most of which are multi-word chunks. Chunks include collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions and idioms, and according

to Lewis, occupy a crucial role in facilitating language production, being the key to fluency (Moras, 2001).

There are some studies that confirmed that learners feel the lexical deficit as the major problem in their reading which in turns affects their writing. So, it is useful for language learners to receive training throughout a suggested program based on the lexical approach to develop their EFL vocabulary and literacy skills (Samir, 2007).

The lexical approach (LA) has emerged as an alternative to grammar based approaches since 1993 when the term lexical approach was coined by (Lewis, 1993). Lewis posited his ideas that vocabulary should be the most important aspect in teaching English stating that language is grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar (Lewis,1993). There were a number of objections to the lexical approach at the beginning; however, overtime, a lot of researchers have come out in favor and the lexical approach has found its way into the classroom.

According to Lewis (1993,1996,1997) and Bofman and Vamarasi (2006), there are many important principles of lexical approach such as:

- a) language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar. (b) the grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language consists of multi-word "chunks". Thus, there is no clear difference between grammar and lexis; instead, they form the endpoints on a continuum, and much falls in the middle.
- b) we learn both L1 and L2 in chunks __i.e., in multi-word units, these include fixed phrases, idioms, strong collocations, and semi-fixed expressions. Thus, a central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness of, and developing their ability to "chunk" language successfully.
- c) since the primary goal of language courses is successful communication, fluency is to be stressed over accuracy.
- d) grammar should be taught receptively, by raising students' awareness of structures through comparison and contrast.

- e) evidence from computational linguistics and discourse analysis influence syllabus content and sequence.
- f) a valuable method in learning lexis is the use of lexical notebooks. (Sanad, 2015).

It seems that the lexical approach is not popular among English teachers. This has resulted in vocabulary negligence and in particular, an unawareness of the importance of collocation in language learning. It is probably because teachers are more familiar with the grammar-translation methodology since they probably have the traditional mindset that mastery of the grammatical system is a prerequisite for effective communication (Olga, 2001). Later, they have been overwhelmed with the idea of the communicative approach. (Lewis, 2000) explained that the communicative approach concerns the expression and communication of meanings. With such an emphasis, fluency is obviously considered of more importance than accuracy. Students seem to be more proficient in two skills, i.e. speaking and listening, despite the fact that the approach itself emphasizes all the four skills.

The lexical approach puts the emphasis on getting students to notice lexical chunks during their exposure to English. This is called "noticing" or "conscious raising" and is considered the key for language acquisition. The teacher's role is to help the students develop their "noticing" skill, or in other words, to turn input (language exposure) into intake (language acquisition). Lewis uses the term to mean the deliberate effort on the part of the teacher to make the students aware of how the target language works. This implies that a central element of teaching should be raising our learners' awareness of the presence of chunks and hence their ability to use these building blocks themselves (Gibbon, 2006). That means students should be able to notice both form and function of a lexical item. This may include pointing out language patterns and irregularities, drawing contrasts and letting students deduce rules (Lewis, 1996).

Lewis' new paradigm, OHE (Observe – Hypothesize – Experiment) is learner – centered and it's based on the belief that out of fluency comes accuracy and errors are regarded as creative experiments not as representing failure (Lewis, 1996). Lewis pointed out that the students first observes or notices as aspect of the language. Second, throughout the hypothesize phase, the learner comes up with a "hunch" as to how he might communicate in a given situation by training students to use vocabulary notebooks which prepared by the researcher. Third, throughout the experiment phase, the learner experiments the learnt and processed input through tasks prepared by the teacher.

As this paradigm is learner – centered, teacher's role is very important as his talk is the major source of learner's input. His role also, is represented in the selection of materials and tasks and the creation of an appropriate atmosphere, raising learners' awareness with lexical chunks and collocations, organizing the technological system, providing scaffolding to help learners and directing learners' attention to chunks which are as large as possible. Teacher is an editor and advisor rather than corrector and evaluative. The learner's role is the most important here, as he is a data analyst and his role is central during the three phases. The learner observes, discovers, identifies, turns input into intake, discusses in groups, analyzes, hypothesizes and finally experiments the learnt and processed input through tasks. In this way the learner replaces the idea that the teacher is "the knower with the idea" that the learner is "the discoverer" (Sanad, 2015).

Bofman and Vamarasi (2006) presented a paper to introduce the lexical approach (LA) to those readers who may not be familiar with it and to demonstrate some ways, it can be applied in the teaching of Southeast Asian languages. Finally, Bofman gives several lexically-based exercises for teaching and learning of Thai. Consequently, there is a need to move from traditional approach to a learner-centered approach to develop learners reading.

Nattinger and Decarrico (1992) suggested several advantages of learning lexical phrases. First, learners can creatively construct sentences simply because the phrases are stored and reprocessed as whole chunks, and this can ease frustration and develop motivation and fluency. Second, since phrases have their origins in common and predictable social contexts, they are easier for learners to memories, as opposed to separate words. Third, phrases work as productive tools for communicating with other people. This can further create social motivation for learning the language. Fourth, since most phrases can be analyzed by regular grammatical rules, and classified into patterns, learning phrases can help learners understand grammatical rules of the language. Thus, lexis is central in creating meaning, grammar plays a secondary role in managing meaning. When this principle is accepted, the logical implication for teachers is that we should spend more time helping learners develop their stock of phrases, and less time on grammatical structures. So, the present study focuses in developing EFL literacy skills throughout a suggested program based on the collocations.

Background of the problem:

In spite of the importance of EFL literacy skills, there is a lack in EFL literacy skills among preparatory school pupils. Thus there is a need for finding an effective instructional approach for developing EFL literacy skills among preparatory school pupils.

In order to be fully sure of the problem of this study, the researcher conducted a pilot study including some texts. It requires students to read the text and answer questions that follow it. This test has been applied to forty second year preparatory school pupils. The results of this pilot study confirmed the low level of the pupils in EFL literacy skills. So, it is clear that there is a great need for developing EFL literacy skills among preparatory school pupils. This study used collocations based program for developing EFL literacy skills among second year preparatory school pupils.

Statement of the problem:

The problem of the present research can be defined in the second year preparatory school pupils' inefficient literacy skills. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of collocations based program for developing the EFL literacy skills among second year preparatory school pupils.

Questions of the Study:

To face this problem, the present research is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the features of a program based on collocations for developing EFL literacy skills among second grade preparatory school pupils?
- 2- What is the effect of collocations on developing EFL literacy skills among second grade preparatory school pupils?

Delimitations of the Study:

The current research is limited into the following:

- Eighty second graders of preparatory school in 25 January School for Girls in Banha, Qalioubiya Governorate, Egypt.
- Some EFL literacy skills (reading and writing) required for the second year preparatory pupils.

Hypotheses of the study:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the literacy skills post test.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the literacy skills pre-post test.

Instruments and materials:

To achieve the purpose of the study, two equivalent forms of EFL literacy skills test (prepared by the researcher), and a rubric for scoring them were used.

Test of Literacy skills

Description of the test

The present study used two equivalent forms of EFL literacy skills test (a pre and a post test). The total number of test items was 76. The test items were based on a three point scale depth of processing for vocabulary as follows:

- Association - learning a form - meaning connection (question 2 & 3).
- Comprehension - recalling the meaning of previously met items (question 4 & 5).
- Generation - producing a novel response to items such as restating a definition in different words or making original sentences (question 1).

The test items were prepared also in the light of vocabulary knowledge and use. The test included a very large group of words that occur very infrequently and covers only a small proportion of the text being tested. The characteristics of those words are:

- Most of the words in the pre-test text are low frequency words, few are of moderate frequency.
- Most of the words in the texts tested are proper nouns which are of low frequency words.
- Most of the words are connected with the learners need to know.
- The test items also were prepared to reflect the lexical approach requirements, which are:
 - Common words as in question item (4- c) (5-D)
 - Polywords as in items (5- A)
 - Sentence frames (5- B)
 - Lexical phrases and expressions as in (5- c) (3)

The Validity of the literacy skills test:

In order to validate the literacy skills test, they were submitted to jury members in Curricula and Methods of Teaching English(n=9). They were asked to indicate the suitability of tests' content for the academic

level of the pupils and the clarity of instructions. They also indicated whether the passages were difficult and long or not; the suitability of the test and how far each question measure the skills intended to measure and whether the questions cover all the skills in the study. In the light of the jury's suggestions and notes which took into consideration, the modifications were performed and the content of the test was modified in the final form.

Reliability of the literacy skills test:

The test-retest methods was used to determine the reliability of the literacy skills test. As the researcher applied the test to the sample and re- applied them after two weeks. The reliability correlation of the pre test (0.79) and (0.92) for the post test. So, it can be noticed that there are high significant positive correlation between the sample scores on both the pre and the post tests. So the literacy skills tests are reliable.

Participants of the study:

The participants of the present study consisted of 80 second year pupils from 25 January Preparatory School for Girls , enrolled in the academic year (2018-2019). Two intact classes were selected for participating in the study; class 2/A (n=40) served as the experimental group and class 2/B (n=40) served as the control group.

The Experimental Treatment

A program was designed for developing literacy skills using collocations based program. It contained 11 sessions. Each session lasted for 60 minutes.

Procedures of the study:

After the participants in the research have been selected, the researcher applied the EFL pre literacy skills test, then she applied the sessions of the training program using collocations in the 25 January a Preparatory School for Girls at Qaliobiya Governorate- during the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019. Each session included the procedures of the strategy, stages of implementation, steps of

implementation, task-requirements based on the strategy and activities as an application of the task through a reading text. By the end of all sessions, the researcher applied the EFL post literacy skills test to determine the effectiveness of collocations based program. The participants' EFL literacy skills were developed as a result of using collocations based program.

Findings of the study:

The results of the research will be presented in the light of following hypotheses:

1- Findings of the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the literacy skills post test".

For testing this hypothesis, t-value was calculated to reveal that the difference between the two groups in the literacy test (post test). To measure the effect size η^2 of the treatment, in the literacy test. The effect size η^2 was calculated through the following table as follows:

Table (1) T-test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the literacy skills post test

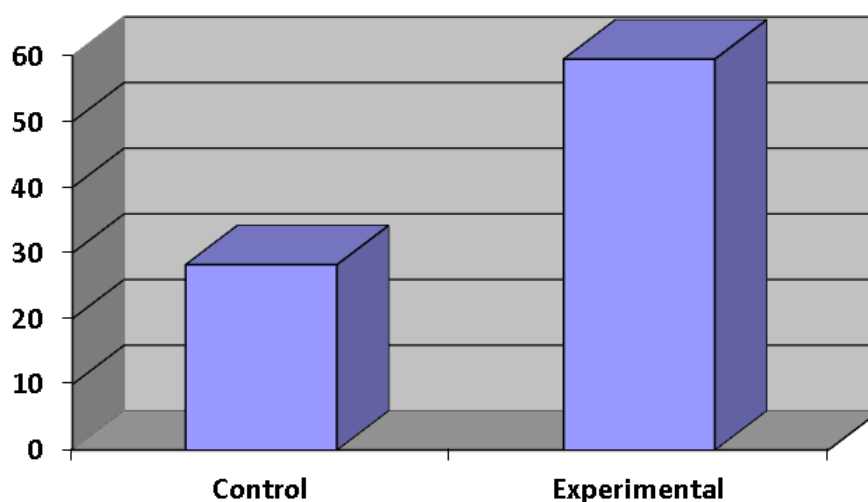
Group	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	t- value	Df	a Sig	η^2
Experimental	40	59.53	9.71	13.16	78	0.01	0.79
Control	40	28.23	11.49				

It is clear that : "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post testing. The level of significance is (0.01). This significance is in favor of the experimental group. This proves the first hypothesis.

The effect size η^2 of the treatment on the experimental group is (0.79). It is considered as big and appropriate value which indicates that

the significance is attributed to the treatment effect. The following figure shows this:

Figure (1) : The mean scores of the experimental group and control group in the literacy skills post test



2- Findings of the second hypothesis:

The second hypothesis states that "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the literacy skills pre-post test".

For testing this hypothesis, t-value was used to signify the differences in the pre_ post test and the effect size η^2 was also used to ensure and verify the treatment effect. The following table shows this:

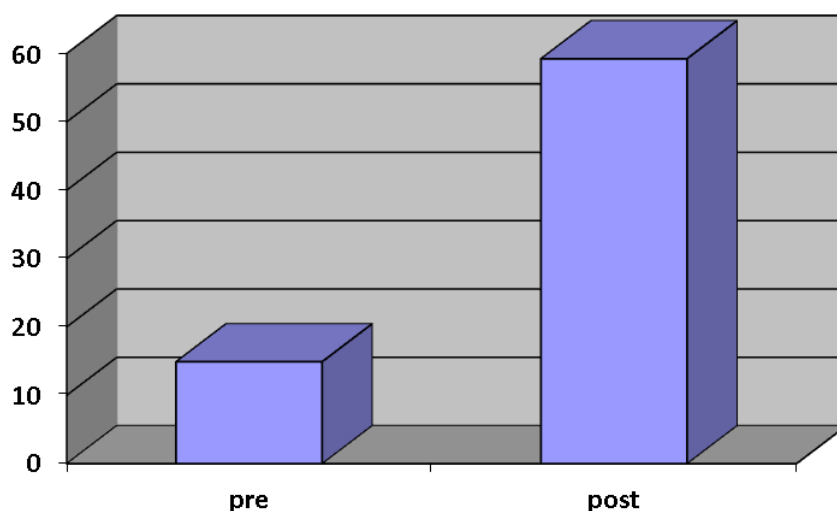
Table (2) : T-test between the mean scores of the experimental group in the literacy skills pre - post test

application	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	t- value	df	a Sig	η^2
post	40	59.23	9.71	21.17	39	0.01	0.92
Pre	40	14.90	7.06				

It is clear that : "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre _ post testing. The level of significance is (0.01). The difference is in favor of the post testing. This proves the second hypothesis.

The effect size η^2 of the treatment is (0.92). It is a big and appropriate value which indicates that a great percentage of the difference is attributed to the treatment effect (The experimental one). At the same time, it indicates the effectiveness of the treatment in improving the pupils literacy skills. The following figure shows this:

Figure (2) : The mean scores of the experimental group and control group in the literacy skills pre-post test



In sum, it can be concluded that collocations based program is effective in developing EFL literacy skills among second year preparatory school pupils.

Conclusion:

The present research attempted to develop the EFL literacy skills among second year preparatory school pupils through the use of collocations based program. The results of the current research proved the effectiveness of collocations based program in developing EFL literacy skills among second year preparatory school pupils. Therefore, collocations based program is recommended for second year preparatory pupils to develop their EFL literacy skills.

References

- Abdel-Haq, E. M. (2003). The Effects of Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Learning (CAVL) on 4th Grade Primary School Pupils Vocabulary Acquisition. 5th scientific Conference for Egyptian Assembly for Curricula and Teaching Methods, P.1-28 .
- Aish, M., S. (2014). The Lexical Approach (Collocations) in developing The Secondary Stage Students English Active Vocabulary. An M.A. Thesis, Institute of Educational studies, Cairo University.
- Alzahrani, M. A. B. (2011). The Effectiveness of Keyword-Based Instruction in Enhancing English Vocabulary Achievement and Retention of Intermediate Stage Pupils with Different Working Memory Capacities. M.A. thesis, Faculty of Education- Taif University.
- Baleghizadeh, S. and Naeim, M. Y. (2011). Enhancing Vocabulary Retention Through Semantic Mapping: A Single-Subject Study. The International Journal- Language Society and Culture, 32,11-16, URL: www.edu.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL.
- Benson, M., Benson, E. & Ilson, R. (1997). The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations. (revised) Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Bofman, T. & Vamarasi, M. (2006). Teaching Thai and Indonesian with The Lexical Approach. Journal of Southeast Asian Language Teaching, 12, Retrieved from: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/jsealt/Volume12Spring2006/Articles/Teaching%20Thai%20and%20Indonesian%20with%20the%20Lexical%20Approach.pdf>.
- Chan, T., & Liou, H. C. (2005). Effects of Web-Based Concordance Instruction on EFL Students' Learning of Verb-Noun Collocations. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 18(3), 231-250. doi:10.1080/09588220500185769. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09588220500185769>

- Coady, J. (1997). L2 vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading. In J. Coady, and T. Huckin (Eds.). *Second language vocabulary acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.225-237.
- Crossley, S. (2013). Advancing research in second language writing through computational tools and machine learning techniques: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 46(2), 256-271.
- Dai, Z., and Zhou, Y. (2015). Empirical Studies on English Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Mainland China over the Past Two Decades. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4(2),1-10. Retrieved from:<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1667001965?accountid=30906>.
- Deveci, T. (2004). Why and How to Teach Collocations. *English Teaching Forum*, 42(2), 16-19.
- Donohue, D. (2010). *Vocabulary and Reading Growth in Children with Intellectual Disabilities: The Influences of Risks, Adaptive Behavior and A Reading Intervention*. (A published PhD dissertation), Georgia State University, Department of Psychology, Psychology Dissertations.
- Engber, C. A.(1995). The relationship of lexical proficiency to the quality of ESL compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4,139-155.ISSN 1060-3743, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743\(95\)90004-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743(95)90004-7).
- Fan, M. (2009). An exploratory study of collocational use by ESL students: A task based approach. *System*, 37, 110-123. doi:1016/j.system.2008.06.004. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.06.004>.

- Farghal, M., & Obiedat, H. (1995). Collocations: A neglected variable in EFL. *International review of applied linguistics in language teaching*, 33(4), 315-331. doi:10.1515/iral.1995.33.4.315. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/iral.1995.33.4.315>.
- Fernandez, R. F., Prahlad, S. R. R., Rubtsova, E., & Sabitov, O. (2009). Collocations in the vocabulary English teaching as a foreign language. *Acimed*, 19(6), 1-5.
- Fu, I. (2005). Student approaches to learning chinese vocabulary (order No.3255277). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Full Text; ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (305415738). Retrieved from <http://search.ProQuest.com.docview/305415738?accountid=30906>.
- Gibbon, D.(2006). In a word, some thoughts on Learning, Teaching and testing lexis. *LANG Matters*, year 5, issue 13.7-8.
- Gitsaki, C. (1999). Second language lexical acquisition: A study of the development of collocational knowledge. Pethesda, MD: International scholars publications.
- Hiebert, A. & Kamil, M. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary Bringing: Research to practice. Mahwah, New Jersey: London.
- Hill, J. & Lewis, M. (2000). Classroom strategies, activities and exercises. In M. Lewis (Ed.). , *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach* (PP. 88-117). Hove, England: Language Teaching Publications.
- Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From Grammatical Failure to Collocational Success. In M. Lewis (Ed.). , *Teaching collocation: further development in the lexical approach* (PP. 47-69). England: Language Teaching Publications.

- Horst, M., Cobb, T., & Meara, P. (1998). Beyond a clockwork orange: Acquiring second language vocabulary through reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 11,207-223.
- Laufer, B., & Nation, P. (1995). Vocabulary size and use: Lexical Richness in L2 Written Production. *Applied Linguistics*, 16,307-322.
- Horst, M., Cobb, T., & Nicolae, I. (2005). (Expanding academic vocabulary with an interactive on-line database.) *Language Learning and Technology*,9,90-110.
- Lin, S. (2002). Modeling a Supplemental Course Web Site for EFL Vocabulary Acquisition. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delaware, USA.
- Hu, M., & Nation, I.S.P. (2000). Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 13,403-430.
- Marzona, R. J. (2004). Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Islam, C. (2006). Lexical approach: What does the lexical approach look like? <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/lexical-approach1.shtml>>ISSN1327-774X
- Jaén, M. M. (2007). A corpus-driven design of a test for assessing the ESL collocational competence of university students. *International Journal of English Studies*, 7(2), 127-147.
- Johansson, V. (2008). Lexical diversity and lexical density in speech and writing: a developmental perspective. Lund University, Dept. of Linguistics and Phonetics. Working Papers, (53),61-79.
- Johston, J. (2003). The effects of direct, explicit, and systematic instruction in phonological awareness in literacy acquisition for kindergarten and first grade students. PhD. Duquesne University.

- Kell, M & Kell, P. (2014). Literacy and language in East Asia, Education in The Asia – Pacific Region: Issues. Concerns and Prospects. V.24.
- Laufer, B., & Nation, P. (1995). Vocabulary size and use: Lexical Richness in L2 Written Production. *Applied Linguistics*, 16,307-322.
- Laufer, B., & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, G.C. (2010). Lexical threshold revisited: Lexical text coverage, learners' Vocabulary size and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 22,15-30.
- Nation, P. (1983). Testing and teaching vocabulary. *Guidelines*, 5,12-25.
- Lewis, M. (1993). *The lexical approach: The state of ELT and a way forward*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. (1996). Implications of a lexical view of language. In: J. Willis & D. Willis. (Eds.), *Challenge and change in language teaching*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the lexical approach*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. (2000). *Teaching collocations*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. (2001). *Teaching collocations: Further developments in the lexical approach*. Hove, England: Thompson-Heinle Publications.
- Lin, S. (2002). *Modeling a Supplemental Course Web Site for EFL Vocabulary Acquisition*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delaware, USA.
- Marzona, R. J. (2004). *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Meara, P. (2002). The rediscovery of vocabulary. *Second Language Research*, 18(4),393-407. doi: 10.1191/0267658302sr211xx.

- Meara, P. (2005). Lexical frequency profiles: A monte carlo analysis. *Applied Linguistics*, 26,32-47.
- Moras, S. (2001). Teaching vocabulary to advanced students: A lexical approach. *Karen's linguistics Issues*, Available at: <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/teachingvocabulary.html>.
- Nation, P. (1983). Testing and teaching vocabulary. *Guidelines*, 5,12-25.
- Nation, P., & Warring, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, Text coverage and word lists. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.). *Vocabulary: description, acquisition and pedagogy* (1st ed., PP. 6-19). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary In Another Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63(1), 59-82.
- Nation, P. (2007). The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 2-13.doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2167/illt039.0>.
- Nation, P. (2008). Lexical awareness in second language learning. *Encyclopaedia of Language and Education*. (Second edition) Volume 6: Knowledge about language. J. Cenoz and N.H. Hornberger (eds) New York: Springer Science, 167-177.
- Nation, P. (2011). Research into practice: vocabulary. *Language Teaching*, 44, 529-539.doi:10.1017/S0261444811000267.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), (2009). *Aistear: The early childhood curriculum framework*. Dublin: Author.
- Nattinger, J. R., & Decarrico, J. S. (1992). *Lexical Phrases and Language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Olga, D. (2001). *Genres and discourses in education, work and life*. Oslo University College, Norway.

- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000). (6th edition) Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- Paribakht, T. S., & Wesche, M. (1996). Enhancing vocabulary acquisition through reading: A hierarchy of text-related exercise types. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 52(2),155-178. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/216427911?accountid=30906>.
- Qian, D. D.(1999). Assessing the roles of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. *Canadian Modern Language Review*. 56, 282-308.
- Read, J. (2000).Assessing vocabulary. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511732942.
- Renouf, A. & Sinclair, J. (1991). Collocational frameworks in English. In K. Aijmer & B. Altenberg (eds.) (1991) *English Corpus Linguistics: Studies in Honour of Jan Svartvik* (PP. 95-110) London, UK: Longman.
- Rowsell, K. (2012). *Literacy and education: understanding the new literacy studies in the classroom*. Second edition. British library cataloguing in publication data.
- Samir, L. (2007). The importance of vocabulary development in reading comprehension in EFL classes. *Revue Science Humaine (Human Science Journal)*. 28,(B), 45-56.
- Sanad, H.A.E.(2015). A program based on the lexical approach to develop English as a Foreign language (EFL) vocabulary and reading comprehension skills among secondary schoolers. Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Education, Suez University, Ismelia, Egypt.
- Schmitt, R. (2010). Insights into vocabulary learning and acquisition, *Journal of applied linguistics*, No.4(10)

- Schmitt, N. (2010). Key issues in teaching and learning vocabulary. In R., Chocon-Beltran, C., Abbelo-contesse and M., Torreblanca-lopez, (eds.) .Insights into Non-native vocabulary teaching and learning. Multilingual Matters.
- Schmitt, N., Jiang, X., and Grabe, W. (2011). The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension. *Modern Language Journal*. 95,26-43.
- Shei, C. C., & Pain, H. (2000). An ESL writer's collocational aid. *Computer Assisted language learning*, 13(2), 167-182. Doi:10.1076/0958-8221(200004)13:2;1-D;FT167.
- Shin, D., & Nation, P. (2008). Beyond single words: The most frequent collocations in spoken English. *ELT Journal*, 62(4), 339-348. Doi: 10.1093/elt/ccm091. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm091>.
- Skrzypek, A. (2009). Phonological short-term memory and L2 collocational development in adult learners. *EUROSLA yearbook*, 9(1), 160-184. Doi:1075/eurosla.9.09skr.
- Stromguist, N. P. (2005). The political benefits of adult literacy. The university of East Anglia (UEA), Norwich <http://www.efareport@unesco.org>.
- Tekmen, E. A. F., & Daloglu, A. (2006). An investigation of incidental vocabulary acquisition in relation to learner proficiency level and word frequency. *Foreign Language Annals*. 39,220-243.
- Thornburry, S. (2002) : *How to teach vocabulary*. London : Longman.
- Webb, S. A. (2009). The Effects of pre-learning vocabulary on reading comprehension and writing. *Canadian Modern Language Review*. 65,441-470.

- Wei, Y. (1999). Teaching collocations for productive vocabulary development. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to speakers of other languages. New York.
- White, R. (2014). Lexical richness in adolescent writing, insights from the classroom : An L1 vocabulary development study. (Unpublished MA Thesis) , Victoria University of Wellington.
- Yazdi, M. , Kafipour, R. (2014). A qualitative study of vocabulary learning strategies applied by Iranian undergraduate EFL learners in real learning setting. International Journal of language Academy. ISSN: 2342-0251. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18033/ijla.325>.
- Yu, G. (2007). Lexical diversity in MELAB writing and speaking task Performances. Span Fellow Working Papers in Second or Foreign Language Assessment. English Language Institute, University of Michigan.
- Yu, G. (2010). Lexical diversity in writing and speaking task performances. Applied Linguistics, 31,236-259.
- Zahar, R., Cobb, T.& Spada, N. (2001). Acquiring vocabulary through reading : Effects of frequency and contextual richness. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 57,4,541-572.