

Examining collocations in EFL Textbooks and Providing Teaching Guidelines

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ABSTRACT. *The aim of this study is to analyze the four most common collocation types found in seventh- through ninth-grade English textbooks (verb-noun, adjective-noun, verb-preposition, and adjective-preposition), with a primary focus on the reading texts. The research aimed to develop pedagogical guidelines relevant to the communicative paradigm and eclecticism, as a result. This study used a descriptive-analytical research design, specifically a content analysis method, to identify the accented collocations throughout a set of junior high school English textbooks. It was discovered that only 9% collocations out of the vocabulary found in the textbooks is present in the three books, while only 1% is found in Band II of the Revised English Curriculum of the Ministry of Education (2013), which includes all possible collocations for intermediate level learners (from the seventh to the ninth grades). Implications for the classroom were drawn from the research.*

KEYWORDS: CALL, CL, collocations, content analysis, eclecticism, eclectic method, junior high textbooks, pedagogical guidelines, TPACK

INTRODUCTION

Collocations are significant chunks with unique properties that fall under the chunk umbrella. John Firth (1957: 194) coined the term "collocation" as "words that keep company" as a linguistic term. The idea was that the word (s) it collocates with influences its meaning. Sinclair (1966) also defined "node" and "collocate": the "node" is the lexical unit's "kernel," and the "collocate" is the word (s) that associates with it.

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Since 1994, the standard definition of "collocations" has been the one adopted by the Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2002), which is similar to the one introduced by Firth in (1957: 194): "The process by which words in a language combine to produce natural-sounding speech and writing is known as collocation. Collocations, in other words, are word groups that frequently occur together ". The Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2002) was consulted in order to verify the accuracy of the collocations used in this study.

There are two kinds of collocations: lexical and grammatical. Lexical collocations are typically composed of two parts. One of them, according to Sinclair (1966), is the "node" (kernel), and the other is the "collocate". The first is used metaphorically, while the second is used literally. Lexical collocations can take many different syntactic forms. The study, however, will only look at two types of lexical collocations:

- a) Verb + Noun = *do homework, make the bed, commit suicide*
- b) Adjective + Noun = *strong coffee, weak tea, confirmed bachelor*

Grammatical collocations are made up of a dominant verb, a noun, an adjective, and a preposition or grammatical structure. The current study, however, only looked at two types:

- a) Verb + preposition = *agree with*
- b) Adjective + preposition = *afraid of, careful about, involved in*

One of the officially approved textbooks used in Palestinian schools is the Eric Cohen Junior High School Textbook Series (*Sky High*, 2017 for grade 7; *Just Thinking*, 2015 for grade 8; *Just Imagine*, 2015 for grade 9). It is a series for mixed-ability classes in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades that are supposed to meet all Revised Curriculum requirements and has been approved by the Ministry of Education. The vocabulary Bands are one of the changes and modifications made to the revised curriculum (Band I for foundation level, Band II for intermediate level, and Band III for proficiency level).

The Ministry (2013) and a committee led by Prof. Penny Ur (2014) decided to include the phenomenon of chunks in the vocabulary Bands due to its significance. In spite of the fact that Palmer (1976) discussed the various syntactic structures of collocations, the term "collocations" is not mentioned. Instead, it is grouped in with the term "chunks" without taking into account the distinct qualities that collocations possess.

In 2017, after the Ministry of Education approved the revised curriculum, this series was adapted into a textbook. However, there is a lack of communicative and varied activities or drilling exercises that specifically refer to collocations in the supplementary workbooks, which are primarily intended to consolidate understanding of collocations that enhance English proficiency (Shemesh & Zelenko, 2017; Daon, 2015; Coddington, 2015).

Problem of the study

Based on her teaching experience, the researcher observed that Arab learners struggle to effectively acquire vocabulary, particularly collocations. They struggle with collocations because they don't understand how the lexis works; for example, they don't know which verbs or adjectives collocate with nouns or which prepositions go with verbs or adjectives.

Furthermore, the researcher discovered that her students generally recognize single words, remember their meanings, and perform well in reading texts only if the collocations are transparent. The researcher also observed that by clarifying the meanings of any ambiguous collocations her students encountered, their word recognition, vocabulary retention, and overall reading performance increased. If the collocations are too idiomatic, they feel uncomfortable and embarrassed, which affects how well they read.

Research Questions

This study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1- To what extent does the Palestinian series of Junior high school textbooks: *Sky High*, (2017), for the seventh graders; *Just Thinking* (2015), for the eighth graders; *Just Imagine*, (2015), for the ninth graders include collocations?
- 2- Do collocations meet the criteria of the curriculum guidelines?

Purposes of the study

The purpose of this research is to content analyze collocations in the series of *Junior High school textbooks* in order to introduce pedagogical guidelines highlighting the teaching of English language collocations at Arab Junior High schools in Palestine.

Significance of the study

The current study, which focuses on Palestinian EFL students, is significant because it adds to the body of knowledge about the potential impact of both identification and guidelines for teaching collocations in EFL reading classes. Curriculum designers, educational policymakers, and EFL teachers and students are likely to be particularly interested in the current research findings. Furthermore, the study raises EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of incorporating collocations in foreign language teaching and learning syllabuses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Laufer and Hill (2000) looked at how using online dictionaries integrated into text affected the retention of new collocations. Students studying English as a Foreign Language at universities in Israel and Hong Kong made up the study's participants. It was found that using an online dictionary helped with memory retention of collocations.

Koya (2004) analyzed verb-noun English collocations in textbooks for 10th grade students in Japan and found that collocations are neglected in kind and number despite the importance of collocations to strengthen learners' English control. The researcher suggested textbooks include collocations to build a large vocabulary, though collocation teaching has been emphasized in recent years.

Wang and Good (2007) investigated the importance of verb-noun pairs in language fluency due to collocations in EFL textbooks. In Taiwan's three English high school textbook series, the corpus analysis discovered few repetitions. The researchers suggested that textbook writers and designers rethink textbooks by reassessing the importance of repetition for EF learners to acquire collocations. To compensate for the lack of collocations in EF textbooks, EFL teachers should use explicit instruction.

Keshavarz and Salimi (2007) investigated the relationship between 100 Iranian EFL learners' collocational competence and their performance on a test that included both lexical and grammatical collocations. The findings revealed a link between EFL learners' collocational competence and their performance on the test. As a result, the findings reinforce collocational knowledge among EFL and ESL learners, leading to an improvement or increase in their English proficiency level.

Hsu (2010) investigated the effects of implementing direct collocation instruction on the vocabulary growth and reading comprehension of three groups of English majors at Taiwanese colleges and universities. Direct lexical collocation instruction was found to improve vocabulary learning more than reading comprehension across all groups, and it also outperformed the other two types of instruction in patterns of vocabulary retention.

Abdoui (2010) examined how teaching collocations improved the writing fluency of Arab Algerian students of foreign languages. Initial evaluations revealed an abundance of "miscollocations" and a general deficiency of collocational knowledge. The study reported that the experimental group outperformed their counterpart group significantly.

Chen and Truscott (2010) investigated incidental acquisition during reading with 72 Asian university freshmen, introducing words through meaningful reading texts. They intended to investigate how word repetition (recurrences) in reading influences and develops EFL learners' word acquisition in terms of word knowledge, as well as how L1 translation equivalent influences target word meaning acquisition. The results revealed that repetition has a positive impact on EFL learners' word acquisition. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the L1 translation equivalent affects the acquisition of the target collocation meaning; the absence of an L1 equivalent translation causes great difficulty in acquiring a word's meaning.

Al-Sakran (2011) looked into the proficiency with lexical and grammatical collocations in writing and listening comprehension among advanced Arabic-speaking English learners. In total, 68 people from Saudia and Colorado took part in the study. ESL students outperformed their EFL counterparts in a task measuring their ability to use

collocations in the target language. There was statistically significant evidence that verb-noun collocations were superior to adjective-noun and verb-preposition pairings. The results of all four assessments showed that Arabic-speaking English learners had a weak grasp of collocations.

Guilani (2011) investigated the effects of increased awareness on verb collocation and colligation feedback. 300 non-English majors from three universities in Guilan, Iran, were chosen for this study. It is discovered that the raising awareness strategy and the improved verb collocation feedback have a positive relationship. Because of the textbooks' emphasis on structure, the study also found that students had a solid grasp of grammatical collocations. The lack of exposure to everyday cultural interactions, which are seen as a rich provider of authentic and natural language, is also reflected in students' limited production of lexical collocations.

Rahime and Momeni (2012) examined the impact of teaching collocations on students' English language skills. For this quasi-study, sixty Iranian high school graduates were split into two groups. The results of the post-test showed that the experimental group did better than the control group, indicating that learning collocations was beneficial.

Sadighi and Sahragard (2013) investigated the relationship between lexical collocational density and EFL reading comprehension. Eighty Iranian sophomores with varying levels of proficiency took the reduced TOEFL test administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS, 1998). The treatment was found to be effective, as teaching lexical collocations improved students' reading skills. They discovered that texts with a high lexical density improved learners' comprehension.

Molavi and Hosseini (2014) examined lexical collocations in three EFL textbook series using a corpus-based methodology. Using an online corpus and AntConc 3.2.1, the researchers compared textbook collocations to actual usage by native speakers. The study suggests that noun-adjective pairs should be given equal weight. According to the results, authors of textbooks and language instructors should exercise greater caution when choosing target collocations to teach. The target collocations must be utilized in the same manner as native speakers.

Webb, Newton, and Chang (2013) analyzed collocation learning, focusing on the role of repetition. Students at a university in Taiwan who were taking English as a second or foreign language were given a modified graded reader in which 18 target collocations occurred 1, 5, 10, and 15 times, respectively. The findings demonstrated that exposure to collocations in a graded reader on 15 occasions was sufficient to produce significant learning gains. Furthermore, listening to a graded reader while reading on one's own can lead to the unintentional acquisition of collocations.

Suárez and Natal (2017) compared the treatment of collocations in EFL intermediate and upper intermediate textbooks. Both textbooks contain a large number of active collocations that students must learn. In the intermediate textbook, single words take

precedence over collocations. The most collocations were found in adjective-noun pairs. Students are still having difficulty with this writing. Many syntactic structures that students struggle with are ignored or only partially acknowledged in textbooks. The findings necessitate the development of a new design framework for textbook collocations.

El-Dakhs, et-al (2018) compared the efficacy of explicit instruction and incidental learning for L2 collocation acquisition in a study with 114 Arab elementary EFL students. Explicit learning outperformed incidental learning in both immediate recognition and recall. Form recognition was improved only temporarily through accidental learning. According to the findings, students have the ability to "notice" and "raise awareness" of collocations through explicit instruction.

Basal (2019) investigated the feasibility of provoking a collaborative dictionary using digital tools to compare the effectiveness of online and offline methods of teaching and learning adjective-noun collocations. Two groups of 53 Turkish participants, were selected through convenience sampling. Results from both short- and long-term posttests showed that online tools were more effective than offline ones in teaching adjective-noun collocations.

Imane (2021) investigated the use of CALL in teaching collocations to Algerian students of English as a foreign language. The findings showed that the participants' CALL app usage was quite varied. In reality, most applications were on social media sites, which were not designed for collocation instruction or development.

Al-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019) investigated the effects of incorporating (CLT) activities on the oral proficiency of EFL students at the University of Jeddah's English Language Institute. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group.

Al-Jarrah, et-al (2019) examined the eclectic method for teaching English as a foreign language to Arab seventh graders. The experimental group was taught using CALL through Principled Eclecticism to fit the method to the learner, while the control group was taught using traditional methods to fit the learner to the method. The eclectic method allowed students to experience different teaching methods. Experimental methods outperformed controls.

Khaled (2020) compared the use of collocations in English and Arabic and made an estimate of Palestinian students' ability to understand and correctly use collocations. A total of 35 third-year students from the Islamic University of Gaza took part in the project. The research urged educators involved in the teaching of English and the translation process to improve both.

Assaf, Al-Jamal, and Rababeh (2020) examined the effect of an e-learning Quizlet-based program on the reading comprehension of 10th grade EFL Jordanian students. The results revealed that the experimental group performed better than the control group.

The most effective method for assisting students in developing their writing skills was to utilize a combination of the communicative and the collocational approaches. EFL writers (learners) can acquire a wide variety of collocations with the help of the Communicative Approach, which not only improves their capacity for communication but also makes their writing sound more like that of native speakers. Both the inductive and deductive methods are acknowledged to have value, and there is "universal agreement" that each method has several advantages as well as a number of disadvantages. It is not sufficient to consider that there is a single "best" method. The "conscious awareness and intention" approach is at the heart of the explicit method, which is founded on a deductive reasoning process and places a premium on the role of the instructor (to learn intended collocations). To learn target collocations, students of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) must infer the actions necessary to achieve the goals they have set for themselves (implicit approach).

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

This chapter mainly is concerned with defining the research method and procedures followed by the researcher in order to inquire into the issue of collocations in Palestinian Junior High School EFL textbooks. It includes a detailed description of the analysis, the research instrument and its validity and reliability, procedures of data collection and data analysis.

Design of the Study

The study follows the descriptive analytical research design; it aims to accurately and systematically describe and evaluate the phenomenon of *collocations* to answer the question of the frequency of *collocations* in the target series and attempts to collect quantifiable data for statistical analysis of the reading texts. It allows only to collect and describe the phenomenon of *collocations*. Therefore, a survey tool- three lists of *collocations* that appear in the series of textbooks are used to gather data. In light of the obtained findings, pedagogical implications will put forth.

Instrument of the Study

In public middle schools, a content analysis of Palestinian EFL textbooks (for heterogeneous classes) was used. As part of this study, three textbooks were content-analyzed using the researcher's exhaustive lists of only four categories. The three researcher-generated lists used to collect data are **Active Collocations** found in the three textbooks' vocabulary boxes as new vocabulary to be taught.

The researcher created a data collection instrument (content analysis). The researcher then classified the collocations into two categories (lexical and grammatical

collocations). That is, they were classified according to their type. The researcher went through the textbooks and analyzed all of the collocations using frequencies and percentages.

Materials under Analysis

The current study is primarily intended to investigate the extent to which Palestinian EFL textbooks include (inclusion) collocations as well as the extent to which they meet the criteria of the curriculum guidelines, whether they cater or do not cater, or if they cater only partially within the guidelines. To address this issue, the researcher chose three EFL textbooks (for heterogeneous classes) that were used in public middle schools in Palestine during the academic year 2020–2021.

***Sky High Textbook*, by Shemesh & Zelenko (2017):**

The title page, table of contents, and opening words are among the 168 pages in the textbook. It is composed of five units, each with three parts (language outcomes, skills and strategies outcomes, and project outcomes). It's an interesting textbook for a variety of seventh-grade classes. It satisfies all of the requirements of the Revised Curriculum and has been approved by the Ministry of Education. The course includes a student book, workbook, teacher's guide, audio CD and links for listening and reading, and digital formats.

***Just Thinking-* by Daon (2015):**

The book's 192 pages are made up of the title page, table of contents, and opening words. It is composed of five units, each with three parts (language outcomes, skills and strategies outcomes, and project outcomes). It is a stimulating course for intermediate-level mixed-ability classes at stage 2. It is permitted to be used in the Revised English Curriculum. The course includes a workbook, a teacher's guide, and audio components. There are also digital versions available.

***Just Imagine-* by Coddington (2015):**

The book's 192 pages are made up of the title page, table of contents, and opening words. It is composed of five units, each with three parts (language outcomes, skills and strategies outcomes, and project outcomes). It is an energizing course for Intermediate Level, Stage 3 mixed ability classes. It is permitted to be used in the Revised English Curriculum. The course includes a workbook, a teacher's guide, and audio components. There are also digital versions available.

Reading (the pre reading, reading text, and post reading; HOTS) from only one of the four language skills sections was used to analyse the materials mentioned above (reading).

Criteria of Analysis

One criterion has been selected to meet the purpose of this study:

(1) **Inclusion**; or containment- to check and judge whether the content under analysis (the textbooks of 7th to 9th graders) includes a certain phenomenon, concept and a piece of knowledge or not. This study focuses on the inclusion of collocations.

Units of Analysis

The nature of the current study requires the use of only one unit of analysis: the collocations of the four different types mentioned above. These following three units were used in the present analysis of one of the four language skills sections (reading): *Pre-reading texts; reading texts; post reading/ HOTS*, this part contains the exercises that appear after the main reading texts.

Categories of Analysis

The researcher devised a **comprehensive** list of four categories in order to investigate the extent to which Palestinian textbooks include and emphasize collocations (verb-noun, adjective-noun, verb- preposition, adjective-preposition). The researcher developed her own list of categories for each textbook. contains the collocations introduced by the Ministry of Education; Band II- which includes all possible collocations for intermediate level (from seventh to ninth grades). compares the textbook discovery to the Ministry of Education's guidelines (2013).

Validity of the instrument

The content validity of the research instrument used in this study (CA of collocation lists-containing all the Active Collocations found in textbooks) was ensured. The researcher looked at the percentage of collocations in each textbook out of the total vocabulary in each. The instrument was kindly exposed to a jury of four experts and a panel of TEFL experts to determine appropriateness and suitability for the study, who confirmed its validity.

To ensure that the instrument was appropriate for the study's design and objectives, the researcher considered all of the jury's suggestions. The expert panel declared the instrument fit for use in this study after re-examining the amended version. To ensure the consistency of the analysis, the researcher created a pre-defined set of categories (verb-noun, adjective-noun, verb-preposition, adjective-preposition) and operationally defined them. The panel members agreed that only four categories should be included in the lists, stating that it is preferable to narrow the analysis rather than adding more categories.

Reliability of the Instruments

Even though this is a quantitative study, the researcher felt it was necessary to employ various reliability measures to ensure the consistency of the data collected by the research

instrument.

Intra-Rater Reliability

After analysing the three textbooks (including all four collocation categories), the researcher reanalyzed the same textbooks over a two-week period using the same units, criteria, and categories of analysis. This allowed the researcher to avoid the memorization effect, which can lead to biased results. Before calculating the final frequencies and percentages for each table for the second time, the researcher corrected all incorrect data (wrong number of pages, miscalculations, unnoticed collocations, etc.). The intra-rater reliability coefficient was calculated to be 100% using Holsti's equation (1969).

Inter-Rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability was also used by the researcher to ensure that the data collected was as accurate as possible. To that end, an assistant analyst content analyzed a few categories from each of the three textbooks before selecting a random sample of four categories from the content analysis lists.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the findings of the current study, which looked at the *inclusion* of collocations in reading texts (of only four lexical and grammatical types: verb-noun, adjective-noun, verb-preposition, and adjective-preposition) in the Junior High School English textbook series (7th to 9th grades). The current study also looked at whether the textbook collocations adhered to the curriculum guidelines. The answers to the key questions will be displayed in this chapter.

Results pertinent to the first research question:

Table 1: Results- Book 7

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency	Percentage
Book 7 Sky High	Lexical collocations:		
	Verb- noun	6/801	0,007
	Adjective-noun	8/801	0,009

Book 7 Sky High	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition	2/801	0,002
	Adjective- preposition	2/801	0,002
Total		18/ 801	0.02

Table2: Results- Book 8

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency	Percentage
Book 8 Just Thinking	Lexical collocations:		
	Verb- noun Adjective-noun	10/533 4/533	0.018 0.007
Book 8 Just Thinking	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition Adjective-preposition	4/533 3/533	0.007 0.005
Total		21/533	0.039

Table3: Results- Book 9

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency	Percentage
Book 9 Just Imagine	Lexical collocations:		
	Verb- noun Adjective-noun	13/710 9/710	0.018 0.012
Book 9 Just Imagine	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition Adjective-preposition	2/710 1/710	0.002 0.001
Total		25/ 710	0.035

To answer the first question, the Tables of results related to each of the three textbooks are displayed . The results of the analysis of the textbooks for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders show that there are not enough collocations included or embedded in them (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). In sum, the results are as follows:

The Sky High textbook (see **Table 1**) has only **18** collocations out of the total of 801 (**0.022**); **14** of them are *lexical collocations* and **4** are *grammatical collocations*.

In the Just Thinking textbook (see **Table 2**), only **21** collocations out of the 533 items of vocabulary appear in the textbook (**0.039**); **14** of them are *lexical collocations* and **7** are *grammatical collocations*.

Just imagine that the textbook (see **Table 3**) has only **25** collocations out of the 710 items of vocabulary that appear in the textbook; **22** of them are *lexical collocations*, while **3** are *grammatical collocations*.

7.2 Results Pertinent to the Second Research Question:

The Table below shows the results of using a quantitative approach to answer this question. It is preferable to present the Ministry of Education's Table of Collocations, which are used in the curriculum, before reporting the results (Please see **Table 4**).

Table 4: Results- Band II

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency out of Band II	Percentage out of Band II
Band 2- Ministry of Education	Lexical collocations:		
	Verb- noun	10/2200	0,004
	Adjective-noun	3/2200	0,001
Band 2- Ministry of Education	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition	8 /2200	0,003
	Adjective-preposition	5 /2200	0,002
Total		26/2200	0.01

As it is shown in the Table, *Band II* has only **26** collocations out of the whole number of items of vocabulary that appear in the band: **2200 (0.01%)**, of which 13 are *lexical collocations* and **13** are *grammatical collocations*. Comparing collocations in the textbooks with the criteria of the curriculum guidelines, the percentage of collocations in each textbook in general is **surprisingly** greater than the percentage of the curriculum guidelines (*Sky High* (**0.02**), *Just Thinking* (**0.03**), *Just Imagine* (**0.03**), *Band II* (**0.01**). When looking at the table, *Band II* is not the best option. This means that curriculum guidelines need to be revised first by policymakers and other interested parties. Regarding the comparison with *Sky High* (see **Table 5**):

Table 5: Results- Book 7 in Parallel to Band II

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency out of Band II	Percentage out of band II
Book 7 Sky High	Lexical collocations: Verb- noun	6/2200	0,002
	Adjective-noun	8/2200	0,003
Book 7 Sky High	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition	2/2200	0,0009
	Adjective-preposition	2/2200	0,0009
Total		18/2200	0.006

As it is shown in the table, *Sky High* has only **18** collocations out of the whole list of vocabulary items appear in *Band II*; 2200 (**0.006**) of them are *lexical collocations*, while **4** are *grammatical collocations*. The comparison with *Just Thinking* is in **Table 6** as follows:

Table 6: Results- Book 8 in Parallel to Band II

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency out of Band II	Percentage out of Band II
Book 8 Just Thinking	Lexical collocations: Verb- noun	10/2200	0.004
	Adjective-noun	4/2200	0.001
Book 8 Just Thinking	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition	4/2200	0.001
	Adjective-preposition	2/2200	0.0009
Total		20/2200	0.006

As shown in the table, *Just Thinking* has only **20** collocations out of the whole items of vocabulary appear in *Band II*; **2200 (0.006)**- **14** of them are *lexical collocations* while **6** are *grammatical collocations*. The comparison with *Just Imagine* is in **Table 7** as follows:

Table 7: Results- Book 9 in Parallel to Band II

Source of collocations	Category of collocations	Frequency out of Band II	Percentage out of Band II
Book 9 Just Imagine	Lexical collocations: Verb- noun	13/2200	0.005
	Adjective-noun	9/2200	0.004
Book 9 Just Imagine	Grammatical Collocations:		
	Verb- preposition	3/2200	0.001
	Adjective-preposition	1/2200	0.0004
Total		26/ 2200	0.01

As it is shown in the table, *Just Imagine* has only **26** collocations out of the whole list of vocabulary items appear in *Band II*; **2200 (0.01%)** of them are *lexical collocations*, while **4** are *grammatical collocations*.

Discussion of the Results Related to the First Question

The answer to the first inquiry led to an analysis of the textbooks' inclusion of collocations. **Tables 1, 2, and 3** display the results of a detailed analysis, which showed the situation to have previously been as follows:

Seventh grade textbook

Students can find **18 active** collocations among **801** lexis in the *Sky High* textbook (see **Table 1**), 6 verb-noun (0.007) and 8 adjective-noun (0.009) pairs, 2 verb-preposition (0.002) pairs, and 2 adjective-preposition (0.002) pairs are all examples of active collocations (0.02).

Sky High, has also **197 passive** collocations appear deceptively in the reading texts. For instance, "weather forecast" on page 14, which is verified in the *Oxford Dictionary* as a collocation on page 322. So, English teachers should highlight these collocations among students to draw their attention more to collocations.

Sky High, has also *ill-formed* collocations. For instance, "wear a coat" on page 14, is not verified in the *Oxford Dictionary* as authentic collocation. However, the dictionary suggests on page 126 the collocates: "shrug (yourself) into"/ pull on/ shrug on/ throw on/ button up a coat. So, textbook authors should take this valuable note into account in the next publication.

Sky High has also "half collocations"; nodes without collocates or collocates without nodes. I give myself permission to call them "miscollocations" to draw the teachers' attention to distinguish between *combinations* and *collocations*. Combinations that are not confirmed in the collocation dictionary as collocations. However, teachers think they are collocations. So, I have listed them to enlighten teachers about the false perception, and to make them distinguish between collocations and combinations; not every combination considered as a collocation. For instance, "spend time" on page 21; or "turn on" on page 10 as an active item; it is not a full collocation by itself, however, it is a node. Suggested collocate on page 463 of *Oxford Dictionary* is : turn on *the light* (it is also suggested put on/ switch on the light . So, it will be beneficial if textbook authors tire themselves to add collocates to such phrasal verbs in the next publication. Besides, teachers should highlight the topic of combinations and collocations to their students and ask them to find suitable collocates.

Eighth grade textbook

Students can find **21 active** collocations among **533** lexis in the 8th grade *Just Thinking* textbook; 0.037 (see **Table 2**).

Just Thinking, has also **301** *passive* collocations appeared deceptively in the reading texts. For instance, "make a movie" on page 9, which is verified in the Oxford Dictionary as a collocation on page 511; it is also suggested "produce/ direct a movie". So, English teachers should highlight these collocations among students to draw their attention more to collocations.

Just Thinking, has also *ill-formed* collocations. For instance, "check the crime scene" on page 9, is not verified in the *Oxford Dictionary* as authentic collocation. However, the dictionary suggests on page 681 the collocates: "survey the murder scene". So, textbook authors should take this valuable note into account in the next publication.

Just Thinking, has also "half collocations"; "miscollocations". For instance, "crazy about" on page 52, is not verified in the *Oxford Dictionary* as authentic collocation.

Ninth grade textbook

Students can find **25** *active* collocations among 710 lexis in the 9th grade *Just Imagine* textbook; 0,036 (See **Table 3**)

Just Imagine also has **311** *passive* collocations appear deceptively in the reading texts. For instance, "have the confidence" on page 11 which is verified in the Oxford Dictionary as a collocation on page 149. So, English teachers should highlight these collocations among students to draw their attention more to collocations.

Just Imagine also has *ill-formed* collocations. For instance, "discover secrets" on page 11, is not verified in the *Oxford Dictionary* as authentic collocation. However, the dictionary suggests on page 689 the collocates: "uncover/find out secrets". So, textbook authors should take this valuable note into account in the next publication.

Just Imagine also has "half collocations"; "miscollocations". For instance, "go online" on page 24; "wait for" on page 11; or "pick up" on page 89 as an active item; it is not a full collocation by itself, however, it is a node. Suggested collocates on page 569 of Oxford Dictionary (adverbs like idly/ carefully/ gingerly + pick sth up) : "I idly pick up a magazine". So, it will be beneficial if textbook authors tire themselves to add suitable collocates to the phrasal verbs in the next publication. Besides, teachers should highlight the topic of combinations and collocations to their students and ask them to find suitable collocates.

The results show that, despite the importance of collocations in helping students become proficient writers and speakers, textbooks fail to adequately cover the topic. The results also showed that word-to-word collocations are more effective than grammar-based ones. That's why it's not shocking that students from different educational systems are so incompetent in English language. The lack of collocations in textbook writing and speech makes the language appear less refined and more alien than it actually is.

This is in line with the research of Shammas (2013), who also expressed disappointment in the level of collocational competence among Master's degree candidates. In a similar vein, Namvar (2012) found graduate students' writing to be lacking due to issues with lexical and grammatical collocations. My students also frequently struggle with collocation. This is in line with the claims made by Bui (2021) and Swan (1995:518), who argued that learning English collocations is particularly challenging for those who are not native speakers of the language.

Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Question

The purpose of this study was to investigate the second question and determine if the textbooks' use of collocations is consistent with the standards set forth by the curriculum guidelines. Band II, which includes all possible collocations for the intermediate level (see **Table 4**, please), is a curriculum guideline used from the seventh to the ninth grades. **Tables (5-7)** show the quantitative findings, which suggest:

In both Band II of the Ministry of Education (2013) and the three textbooks, there is a significant difference in the number of collocations (verb noun; verb-preposition; adjective-noun; and adjective-preposition pairings) and other items of lexicon. In other words, single words take precedence over collocations. Band II contains 26 collocations out of 2200 lexical units (0.01) (**Table 4**). The three textbooks collectively (see **Tables 1-3**) include 64 collocations out of 2044 (0.03) lexical items.

Collocations are used extremely infrequently in both Band II (0.01) and the textbooks, by themselves, as a whole (0.03). Nonetheless, and surprisingly, the majority of books advocate for Band II (0.03: 0.01). Band II (as a source of guidelines) should presumably do better than textbooks, not the other way around.

It is evident that Band II is not a suitable criterion to use as a guide. The extracted findings are consistent with the findings of the previous studies: despite the emphasis of Smith (2005) on the importance of including collocations in the curriculum and despite their importance in advancing EFL learners' proficiency, collocations do not receive sufficient attention inside (and outside of) the language classroom, nor are they adequately taught systematically in EFL textbooks with sufficient associated activities (Vasiljenic, 2014). Nofal (2012) also stated that the curriculum did not emphasize collocations in particular.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study concluded the following: there is no guiding principle for defining and prioritizing the inclusion of collocations in EFL textbooks; single words are prioritized over collocations; collocations are introduced as an afterthought rather than the focus of an entire chapter. Thus, learning, acquiring, and translating collocations can be challenging for English as a Foreign Language students because of their arbitrary nature, especially grammatical collocations with a wide variety of prepositions.

Collocations are difficult to learn because of their rarity, unfamiliarity, and lack of common usage, and they are rarely explicitly taught in EFL classrooms. Band II cannot be used as a benchmark for teaching collocations because they are not emphasized in the curriculum, no credit for collocations.

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