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## THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CORE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING COLLOCATION SKILLS IN THE FORMATION OF ENGLISH SPEECH

Alimov Jamshid Ravshanovich

Teacher Of Termiz State University, Uzbekistan

**ABSTRACT:** This article delves into the essential role of collocation skills in the development of English language proficiency. Collocations, defined as natural word pairings commonly used by native speakers, are crucial for achieving fluency, coherence, and authenticity in both spoken and written English. The article outlines the significance of collocation in language acquisition, categorizing various types such as verb-noun, adjective-noun, and verb-preposition collocations. It further explores the characteristics of effective collocation instruction, emphasizing contextualized learning, the importance of frequency and naturalness, and the integration of these skills into communicative practice. The core principles of teaching collocations include focusing on high-frequency word combinations, ensuring lexical and syntactic appropriateness, and promoting metacognitive awareness in learners. Additionally, the article discusses task-based learning and the use of technology to enhance collocation acquisition. Overall, the article serves as a comprehensive guide for language educators seeking to improve their students' collocational competence and fluency.

**KEYWORDS:** Collocation, English language acquisition, Fluency, Lexical competence, Syntactic appropriateness, Contextualized learning, Task-based learning, Communicative practice, Metacognitive awareness, Language teaching methodology, Technological tools in language learning, Pragmatic competence, Native-like fluency, High-frequency collocations, Pedagogical strategies;

### INTRODUCTION

In the realm of foreign language acquisition, one of the fundamental components of language proficiency is the development of collocation skills—how words naturally combine and co-occur in speech and writing. Collocations, defined as habitual word pairings or combinations that native speakers commonly use, are a crucial aspect of language fluency. In the case of English, mastering these combinations is indispensable for achieving native-like proficiency. Collocation proficiency not only enhances lexical knowledge but also contributes to the naturalness and appropriateness of speech and writing. This article explores the general characteristics and foundational principles of teaching collocation skills in English language learners, emphasizing their theoretical underpinnings, pedagogical applications, and practical methodologies.

Collocation refers to the habitual pairing of words that are often found together within the same context, creating a natural-sounding, idiomatic expression. This phenomenon is a central feature of language acquisition because it reflects the authentic patterns of language use. For example,

in English, phrases like make a decision, do homework, have a bath, and take a break are considered collocations because these word combinations occur frequently in both spoken and written communication. Mastering collocations is essential for students aiming to achieve fluency, as it allows learners to sound more natural, cohesive, and intelligible in their use of the language.

Collocations can be categorized into several subtypes based on the syntactic and lexical relationships between the words involved. These include:

- **Verb + Noun Collocations:** These are perhaps the most common type of collocation. Examples include: make a decision, do research, have an impact, take a risk.
- **Adjective + Noun Collocations:** These combinations typically describe qualities or characteristics of things. For example: strong coffee, deeply concerned, heavy rain, highly recommended.
- **Noun + Noun Collocations:** These are common in terms describing objects or concepts. For instance: information technology, football match, shopping mall, phone number.
- **Adverb + Adjective Collocations:** These pairings intensify or modify the meaning of adjectives. Examples include: extremely difficult, highly unlikely, deeply disappointed.
- **Verb + Preposition Collocations:** These expressions involve a verb and a preposition that together create a specific meaning. For instance: believe in, look after, rely on, think about.

One of the central challenges in mastering any language, including English, is the development of fluency—speaking and writing with ease and authenticity. Collocations play a vital role in achieving this goal. A learner's ability to use words in their natural combinations significantly affects their fluency. By learning common word pairings, learners can form phrases and sentences that reflect native-like speech patterns, which enhances both the naturalness and appropriateness of their communication. This is particularly important because, while grammatical correctness ensures that language is understood, it does not always guarantee that speech sounds fluent or idiomatic. For example, a learner may say make a walk instead of take a walk, which may sound grammatically correct but is unnatural in English.

**Contextualized Learning of Collocations-** The effective teaching of collocations necessitates an approach that emphasizes context. Collocations are not merely a set of arbitrary word combinations but are intrinsically tied to particular situations, registers, and genres. Therefore, the acquisition of collocations must go beyond rote memorization and focus on the application of these combinations in various linguistic contexts. Learners must understand how collocations fit into specific discourse scenarios and how their meaning can change based on the surrounding context. For example, the collocation make an effort has a general, neutral meaning in most contexts, but in certain situations (e.g., formal or academic writing), it may carry a more nuanced or specialized meaning.

**Active and Passive Learning Approaches-**The development of collocational competence can be divided into active and passive learning processes. Active learning involves the explicit teaching and practice of collocations, where learners consciously engage with word combinations through speaking, writing, and other communicative activities. Passive learning, on the other hand, occurs as learners are exposed to native-like speech and text—through reading, listening, and

interaction in real-life or simulated contexts. Both methods are essential for developing fluency. Active learning allows for immediate application and practice, while passive learning provides the necessary exposure to real-world usage.

Pragmatic Competence and Collocation Use- Pragmatics refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various social contexts. In this regard, collocations are inextricably linked to pragmatic competence, as the appropriate use of collocations in different contexts can significantly affect the communicative success of an utterance. For instance, using the collocation make a complaint is highly appropriate in a formal setting, whereas give a complaint would be considered incorrect or awkward. Teaching collocations, therefore, requires a focus on not only grammatical correctness but also the suitability of a given word combination to specific communicative contexts.

Collocations should be taught in context rather than in isolation. This approach ensures that learners acquire not only the collocations themselves but also the understanding of when and how to use them appropriately. Contextualized teaching involves presenting collocations within authentic texts, such as dialogues, stories, and articles, where they are used in their natural linguistic environment. By contextualizing collocations in real-world situations, learners are better equipped to recognize and use them in similar circumstances.

One of the core principles in teaching collocations is focusing on high-frequency combinations that occur naturally in spoken and written English. This is because the most commonly used collocations are the most crucial for effective communication. Teaching these collocations first gives learners the foundational vocabulary necessary for expressing a wide range of ideas and feelings. High-frequency collocations, such as take a shower, make a mistake, and have a good time, are fundamental building blocks of fluent language use.

It is essential to teach collocations not only in terms of word combinations but also with attention to their syntactic and lexical appropriateness. For instance, while the verb make commonly collocates with nouns like decision, suggestion, and effort, it does not collocate with nouns like progress or impression, where other verbs such as make progress or form an impression would be more appropriate. Educators should guide learners in understanding the specific syntactic structures associated with collocations, helping them internalize these patterns. The application of collocations should be integrated into all aspects of communicative practice. Learners should be encouraged to use collocations in speaking and writing tasks, as well as in more spontaneous interactions. This approach promotes active usage and reinforces the learner's ability to use collocations naturally and fluently. For example, role-play exercises, debates, discussions, and written assignments can all be used to provide ample opportunities for learners to incorporate collocations into their communication.

Encouraging metacognitive awareness in learners is crucial for the long-term retention and effective use of collocations. Learners should be taught strategies for noticing, recording, and reviewing collocations as they encounter them in various texts. This could involve keeping a personal collocation diary, engaging in regular review of learned collocations, and monitoring their own use of collocations in speaking and writing. Such self-regulation ensures that learners

actively manage their own learning process, reinforcing the integration of collocations into their linguistic competence.

Task-based learning (TBL) is an effective methodology for teaching collocations. This approach involves creating tasks that require learners to use specific collocations to complete communicative activities. These tasks may include problem-solving exercises, collaborative projects, or interactive discussions, all of which encourage learners to produce authentic speech while using appropriate collocations. The integration of technology into collocation instruction can enhance the learning experience. Online resources such as collocation dictionaries, language learning apps, and interactive multimedia can help students access vast corpora of real-world language usage. Videos, podcasts, and online texts expose learners to authentic language use, allowing them to observe how native speakers employ collocations in various contexts.

The acquisition of collocation skills is an essential aspect of mastering English, as it directly impacts fluency, coherence, and naturalness in communication. Teaching collocations requires a thoughtful, context-driven approach that considers both linguistic and pragmatic factors. By integrating effective pedagogical strategies, such as task-based learning, contextualized instruction, and the use of technology, educators can enhance learners' ability to use English collocations appropriately and fluently.

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