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## **COLLOCATION AS A MINIMAL UNIT OF VOCABULARY ACQUISITION BUILDING IN ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS**

*This paper presents an academic research primarily focuses on defining collocation as a minimal unit in vocabulary acquisition building, on its importance for English Learners during English Learning Process and finally on its main role in practical usage of the English language.*

*The main objectives were realized through various materials exploration of general English vocabulary acquisition building in Canadian English (CE), American English (AE), and British English (BE). The research area was original Canadian, American, and British informational sources with special emphasis on different scholars' ideas as for English spoken language and vocabulary load in written texts. The research highlighted the significance of collocations through their necessary and completely right usage in English Teaching and Learning Processes. The investigation made it possible to specify the definition of 'collocation' and provide background information about collocations by gathering and analyzing Contemporary Linguistics scientists' works and expressed their opinions.*

*General scientific methods include deduction and induction, observation and generalization. Major linguistic methods employed in this paper are the structural (a definitive and distributional analysis) and contrastive (based on three variants of English) ones. The methodology used for this academic research is simple being profound and scientifically approved.*

*The notion of 'collocation' refers to the frequent co-occurrence and mutual expectation of some words which appear more often than by chance. In this sense, collocation can be called 'a restricted combination', which exists between a free combination and an idiom and has semantic transparency. The study of collocations was scanned through modern international researchers of CE / AE / BE. On having specified the definition of collocation and then shown the importance of collocations usage, we could finally provide some recommendations for the teaching and learning processes of collocations in order to improve and refresh modern English studies for students of linguistics / philology departments. These recommendations are as follows: teach / learn English via modern CE / AE / BE sources; emphasize on collocations structure and meaning during English Teaching and Learning vocabulary; pay a special attention to difference in similar collocations among various variants of English (for instance, as presented for CE / AE / BE in this paper); give preference to teaching / learning materials in native English; encourage students to read and listen to genuine CE / AE / BE written by native speakers; make use of online dictionaries, free corpora, and the Internet rich materials on a regular basis. Nowadays, there are many excellent dictionaries of CE / AE / BE collocations which are free and easy to be accessible.*

*The prospects for further study may cover building of a digital dictionary of most frequent collocations in Canadian English, American English, and British English.*

*Key words: collocation, minimal unit, vocabulary acquisition building, collocations usage, learning process, teaching process, English learners.*

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### **1. Introduction.**

It is vitally important for learners to build a large vocabulary in the English language which they are studying. One way to approach the issue of how many words learners need to know is to find out how many and what kinds of vocabulary are in the texts that learners read. Various researchers have looked into the number of word families in

different texts to see how big that vocabulary might need to be. A general rule of thumb for deciding how many words learners need in order to read a text without support is 98% and with support is 95 %. Various kinds of texts have different vocabulary loads. For example, a Canadian linguist Nation (2006) found that 98 % is reached for newspapers, novels, and university-level texts at 8,000–9,000 word families plus proper nouns. Another Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics Coxhead (2012) found the same load of 8,000–9,000 plus proper nouns at 98 % coverage for novels that might be read at the high school level, such as *Clepto, Split* by Lori Weber (Canadian English, CE), *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath (American English, AE), *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (British English, BE) Researches also dealt with vocabulary load in spoken language. A study of movies by Webb & Rodgers (2009), for example, found that 95 % coverage was reached at 3,000 word families plus proper nouns and marginal words (such as for example, fillers like *totally* and phrases like *you know: "English is like, totally fun to learn, you know?"*). These words might not seem useful, but they are actually a pretty important part of the English language. The authors also found that 98 % was reached at 6,000 word families plus proper nouns and marginal words. Dang and Webb (2014) looked at academic spoken English and found just over 96 % coverage with 4,000 word families plus proper nouns, but 98 % coverage at 8,000 word families plus proper nouns and marginal words. In another study, Coxhead and Walls (2012) developed a corpus of TED Talks ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)) and found that 95 % was reached at 5,000 plus proper nouns, and 8,000–9,000 word families plus proper nouns were needed to reach 98 %. Their finding suggests that TED Talks are closer in nature to academic writing. Studies like these can help us understand the vocabulary load of the texts we might be placing in front of students. You can find out how many words learners know or can recognize using Nation's Vocabulary Size Test (Nation&Beglar, 2007) (a copy of the test is on Tom Cobb's website, the Compleat Lexical Tutor (URL: [www.lextutor.ca](http://www.lextutor.ca))).

Teachers and learners need to make clear decisions about which words they will focus on. They can make these decisions by looking at the frequency of words, for example, by concentrating on the most frequent words in the language they are learning (for more on frequency in vocabulary, see Nation (2013); for a new General Service List of the most frequent words in English see Brezina&Gablasova (2013). Teachers and learners can make decisions about words to focus on by considering the goals for study. If learners are studying English for academic purposes, teachers might take into account word lists for their specialized subject area or general academic word lists such as the *Academic Word List* of Coxhead (2000 URL: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/-academicwordlist>). Teachers might decide to concentrate on vocabulary items that learners already know something about (e.g., meaning, spelling) and focus on other aspects of the word that are not so well established (e.g., common collocations, limitations of use). Another way to select words is to consider the items that occur in classroom texts and decide whether learning them is important for language learning in general, for everyday usage, for class, or for another important reason. English Learners (ELs) are encouraged to pay attention to aspects of word knowledge through a range of mostly interactive activities via working with multiword units, such as common collocations and phrases. Raising awareness of vocabulary in use is an important task for teachers in order to get better results of knowing English for ELs. For an intermediate learner of a foreign or second language, vocabulary has always been a bottleneck impeding his/her progress. At this stage, the traditional way of memorizing the meaning and pronunciation of a new word is far from meeting the need of the learner. With the expansion of the size of vocabulary, many problems arise concerning the proper usage of a word in context, among which is collocation. However, English students are more concerned about how to expand their vocabulary, that is, to increase the number of words they can remember. They pay no attention to or ignore the depth of their understanding of the word. How to deepen the understanding of the word is a problem facing them. Collocation is one of the most important aspects of knowing a word. That is to say, in order to deepen the understanding of a word, English students must know its collocations (Duan, 2012).

## 2. Aim and Objectives.

The aim of the present research is to define a collocation as a minimal unit in vocabulary acquisition building and to outline its primary importance for English Learners (ELs) in mastering English.

The objectives are: to look into definitions of collocation; to inquire into the importance of collocations usage; to provide some recommendations for the teaching and learning process of collocations. The basic concern that consistently ran throughout the research was the importance of admitting the collocations usage necessity as the minimal units in the English Learning Process (ELP) as well as in the English Teaching Process (ETP), no matter what variant of English it is (Canadian English (CE), American English (AE) or British English (BE)).

It is suggested that the students should be informed that **knowing collocations**, like grammar, is one aspect of not only English but all other languages that should be learnt if they want them to sound naturally. Mastery of vocabulary can contribute to the constructing of **correct collocations usage** as a part of necessary English **vocabulary acquisition building**. **Collocation** could be presented as **a universal linguistic phenomenon**.

## 3. Methodology.

The basic source for this research has been the recent foreign language studies on definition of collocations in the English Learning Process (ELP). **Additional sources** include both the print and the electronic informational materials. Print media that has been used consists of language studies journals, general linguistic information conducted in various papers on Language Studies or Applied Linguistics. This printed information has been collected from various articles on Linguistics and Language policy topics of Canada, America and Great Britain. The electronic media that has facilitated the research includes online articles, various vocabularies and dictionaries of CE, AE, and BE (*Canadian Collocation Dictionary*: URL: <https://collocations.enacademic.com/2390/Canadian>; *The American Heritage of the English Language*: URL: <https://www.ahdictionary.com>; *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*: URL: <https://www.freecollocation.com>), TED talks videos (URL: <https://www.ted.com>), advanced online scientific publications, free corpora on the Internet: *The Strathy Corpus of Canadian English* (URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/can/>), *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>), *British National Corpus* (URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>)).

**Linguistic methods** employed in this paper cover the following: **the structural method** providing brief insights into explanation of the collocation definitions (a definitive analysis) and their importance of admitting the collocations as the minimal units (a distributive analysis) in ETP as well as in ELP. Collocation seems as one of the most important aspect of knowing a word in language studying process. **The contrastive method** let us to compare / contrast and determine the main influenced points of CE, AE, and BE collocations and complete the various ways of teaching and learning them specifically and separately right in each variant of English.

**Linguistic analysis** of collocations is a research area with stakeholders from multiple fields, including learning sciences, sociolinguistics and other areas of linguistics, language technologies and machine learning, social psychology and sociology. Each field brings with it its own valuable store of wisdom as well as its own sets of research questions and methodologies that bring out different subsets of facets. While we view 'collocation' from a multi-disciplinary perspective, we adopt a technical definition of what linguistic analysis is, specifically an analysis that employs constructs from the field of linguistics that are designed to study English language (CE, AE, BE) as a primary focus of inquiry. While a wide variety of valuable frameworks for studying collocations of the English language have been developed within the learning sciences community, instead of considering these linguistic analyses of collocations, we consider them applications of theoretical constructs from the learning sciences to language interactions. The focus is on learning processes viewed through language rather than the language processes themselves. The advantage of a linguistic framework is that it allows us to avoid making a

commitment to one specific theoretical perspective within the learning sciences. **The research synthesis** contains the composition and combination of proper collocation usage in real oral speech and in written contexts according to clear understanding of its separate parts and elements as the one totally full form of foreign language.

In addition, all the stages involve **induction** and **deduction** to make the relevant conclusions. In this research, we address the issue of the interconnection between collocations and quality of ETP and ELP for ELs, and we recommend brief solutions for identifying collocations in CE, AE, BE as soon as possible via modern online resources. The major advantage of this research is that collocational information may be used to guide the parser through the maze of English language variants.

Conclusively, the methodology used for this academic research is simple being profound and scientifically approved. Moreover, this work has been challenging considering the fact that there is a serious dearth of original English (CE, AE, BE) printed resources in Ukraine and the research was based only on international English sources and original materials.

#### **4. Results.**

The present research explores and represents collocation as the minimal unit in vocabulary acquisition building in 2 stages: 1) specifying the definition of collocation(4.1); and 2) proving the importance of collocations knowledge (4.2).

##### **4.1. The Definition of Collocation.**

The idea of 'collocation' was first put forward by J. R. Firth in 1957. Although the word is used widely, scholars' opinions are divided when it comes to the meaning of collocation. Robins argues that collocation is "the habitual association of a word in a language with other particular words in sentences" (2000, p. 64). Robins' understanding of collocation agrees with Firth's and Halliday and Hasan's. In *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan argue that collocation as a means of cohesion is "the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments." (2001, p. 317). For example, the word *doctor* implies such words as *nurse, medicine, symptom, hospital*, etc. The *night* is closely related with *darkness*. 'Collocation', in this sense, is overlapped with the so-called 'semantic field'. Words occurring in collocation or in the same semantic field exist as a group fit in a given situation. But the presence of one word does not necessarily lead to the occurrence of others in the group. A distinction is often made between 'colligation' and 'collocation'. F. de Saussure called "relations based on linear character of languages" or "combinations based on sequentiality" syntagmatic relations (2001, p. 121). These relations are then specified as 'colligation', the grammatical patterns concerning certain head words, like "V to do, V doing and V that", and 'collocation', the regular company that a word keeps (Nation, 2004, p. 32), such as *strong wind* and *heavy rain*. We can see that collocation is the habitual co-occurrence of certain words in a certain grammatical pattern—colligation.

In other words, 'colligation' concerns the grammatical patterns required by certain words or types of words while 'collocation' focuses on lexical items repeatedly co-occurring in company in the frame of certain grammatical patterns. For example, the verb *enjoy* can be used in "V+ Doing" and "V + Noun" patterns. The selection of verbs and nouns in these two patterns are not at random. We can say *enjoy a dinner, enjoy a good income* and *enjoy one's life*, etc. but not *\*enjoy death*, or *\*enjoy crime*. In this distinction, the meaning of collocation is in a certain sense identical to Nation's definition of collocation. Nation regards collocation as "words that often occur together" or the company a word keeps (2004, p. 32). In corpus linguistics and computational linguistics, collocation defines a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. Being sub-type of phraseme, collocation is also a term in phraseology. A good case in point of a phraseological collocation is the expression *strong tea*. While the same meaning could be conveyed by the roughly equivalent *\*powerful tea*, this expression is considered not idiomatic or even incorrect by English speakers. By contrast, the corresponding expression for computer, *powerful computer* is preferred over *\*strong computer*.

Obviously, collocation is a kind of syntagmatic relation, but not all syntagmatic relations are called collocations. In order to better understand collocation, we have to make a distinction on the one hand between free combinations and collocation and on the other between 'collocation' and 'idiom'. Free combinations refer to the temporarily-made phrases based on certain grammatical rules to express certain ideas. For example, *buy a book* where *buy* can be replaced by *sell*, *select*, etc. and *book* by *ticket*, *pen*, etc. is a free combination. The combination is grammatically acceptable and semantically clear. The combination of *buy* and *book* is accidental depending on the meaning the speaker wants to express. That is, there is very weak or actually no obvious mutual restriction and mutual expectation between the two words *buy* and *book*.

The other distinction between 'collocation' and 'idiom' should be clarified. Idioms are fixed expressions with frozen meanings, thus fixed collocations, whereas collocations are mostly compositional in that the meaning can be calculated by putting the meanings of its component words together. Just as Sinclair says, "The principle of idiom is that a language user has available to him/her a large number of semi-pre-structured phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments" (1991, p. 110). An example of an idiom is *of course*, which operates effectively as a single word like "*anyway*" or "*somehow*". So, we can regard idiom as a special case of collocation, which will be left out of discussion in this paper.

To summarize, *collocation refers to the frequent co-occurrence and mutual expectation of some words which appear more often than by chance*. In this sense, *collocation can be called a restricted combination, which exists between a free combination and an idiom and has semantic transparency*. We will use this as the working definition for the present paper.

#### **4.2. The Importance of Collocation.**

Collocation is an important aspect in vocabulary acquisition building. Free combinations are easy to acquire because they come from the structure of extra-linguistic reality such as *dark night* and *blue sky*, etc. They are "manifestly related to the referential and substantial meaning of the words concerned" (Robins, 2000, p. 56). However, there are no motivations for most collocations. The same conceptual meaning can be realized by different words, so people talk of a *powerful motorcar*, but of *strong coffee*; and of *rancid butter*, but of *addled egg*. This inexplicability of collocation calls for more attention of both teachers and learners of English. For a teacher of English, collocation should be an indispensable part of vocabulary teaching; idiomatic collocations of a new word should be given to the students. As a learner of English, it is necessary for him/her to realize the importance of collocation in word acquisition and pay more attention to the proper use of collocation. Richard summarizes what is meant by mastering a word: 1) knowing the frequency of the word in oral and written language; 2) knowing the grammatical patterns of the word; 3) knowing its associated network with other words (1985, p. 183). Among these three criteria, the latter two are more significant for our discussion as soon as 2) is about colligation and 3) is about collocation. It is difficult or impossible in most cases to have such a thorough knowledge of a word. But these criteria are important in that they point out the importance of deepening the understanding of a word. So far as collocation is concerned, its importance in English teaching and learning is manifested in the following aspects. Collocation is a universal linguistic phenomenon. Words are always used together. They always present themselves in collocation. It is only logical to say that none of the natural languages are free of collocation. In fact, "words seldom occur in isolation" (Wallace, 1982, p. 30). Collocation is not only a necessary element of language but also an outstanding feature that makes language specific and correct. Therefore, to learn English well learners should attach much importance to collocation. Wallace in *Teaching Vocabulary* emphasizes that to know a word in a target language "may mean the ability to use it with the words it correctly goes with, i.e. in the correct collocation [...]" (1982, p. 27). Indeed, among many items of a word listed in dictionaries, the usage containing collocation information is very valuable and helpful. The aim of learning a new word is to put it in practical use and to make sentences. It is explicitly suggested in the introduction to *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* that "for the student, choosing the

right collocation will make his speech and writing sound much more natural, more native-speaker-like, even when basic intelligibility does not seem to be at issue" (2003, p.vii). There is a big difference between writing and speaking in English and writing and speaking in good English. The difference is to a great extent decided by the knowledge and command of collocations. In a sense, the publication of the specialized dictionary itself clearly demonstrates the importance of collocation in English learning. To conclude, to use good (idiomatic) English, learners of English must learn collocations. Collocation also provides a good way to memorize new words. Taylor is quoted by Nation when giving the reasons for studying words in collocation, "words which are naturally associated in context are learnt more easily than those not so associated; vocabulary is best learned in context; context alone is insufficient without deliberate association [...]" (2004, p. 38). The context and the deliberate association including collocations provide connections that help learners to deeply understand a word's meaning and furthermore to add it to his or her current vocabulary. While giving a clue to memorize new words the method to learn words by collocations also instructs learners to use right words in right time and place. In contrast, without any awareness of collocation, learners will make up something not native or even unacceptable.

Most English words are polysemous, i.e. having more than one meaning. This is the inevitable result of the development of English words and the requirement of the economy principle of language. As a result, difficulty arises when it comes to the exact meaning of a word in a given context. It is pointed out in *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (URL: <https://www.freecollocation.com>) that "the precise meaning in any context is determined by that context: by the words that surround the combine with the core word-by collocation" (2003, p. vii). For example, *handsome* can be used in different contexts: *a handsome man* is 'a good-looking man'; *a handsome woman* is 'a physically strong woman'; *a handsome reward* is 'a large amount of reward'; *a handsome present* is 'a generous present'. Only one meaning of *handsome* can be realized by the specific collocates in a given context. However, the common practice of students is to memorize the meaning of a word independent of any context and then apply the meaning whenever the word appears. This is the cause of some students' feeling that although they know all the words in a simple sentence, they cannot make sense of it. For example, all the words in the sentence "*She is my immediate neighbor*" are familiar to some students but they can't make sense of the sentence, for they don't know the meaning of *immediate* in the collocation *immediate neighbor*. So, the best way to memorize the different meanings of a word is to memorize its separate meaning in different collocations. A case may be made here that mastering a word means mastering all of its meanings. Since the different meanings of a word are decided by the context it appears in, memorizing its different collocations also means memorizing its different meanings.

## **5. Discussion.**

### **5.1. How to Teach and Learn Collocation.**

From what has been mentioned above, we can see that collocation is a big problem in learners' interlanguage. This is probably because inadequate attention has been paid to the teaching of collocation in teaching practice. In order to improve the quality of interlanguage and enable the students to produce idiomatic English, teachers of English must attach sufficient importance to the teaching of collocation when teaching vocabulary. The teaching of a new word must be conducted in a given context (but not in isolation). The teacher should divert students' attention to the exact context the new word used in and encourage them to try to remember the collocation the word appears in. The teacher's emphasis is necessary for students to develop a good habit of memorizing words in collocation. The consciousness of the importance of collocation in the learning of a new word will enable students to find the proper collocation for every word they learn.

The variety of English and its variants gives us more tasks which have to be completed via teaching and learning processes. In current research paper the deepest attention is given to CE because the connection between Canada and Ukraine is getting stronger and stronger every day. It means that CE is going to be in great demand in the future and thus CE collocations have to be investigated and studied more seriously and

considerably. The influence of French on CE could be studied deeply as well because the new Canadian collocations with French meanings appear every day.

All regions of Canada are institutionally bilingual. Every citizen has the right to be served in either French or English by government agencies, tried in either language in federal courts, informed in either language in public announcements on radio and television, and advised in both languages on product labels, tax forms, and all other official documents. Only two provinces have linguistic provisions in their constitutions: New Brunswick is constitutionally bilingual, and Québec is officially monolingual French (Joy, 1992, p. 79–80). Québec provincial laws forbid employers to require any language but French of prospective employees (Joy, 1992, p. 9) and forbid merchants from displaying English-language signs. Ironically, federal provisions on bilingualism ensure a nationwide presence for French from the Atlantic to the Pacific, even in regions where the francophone population is nonexistent, but the nationwide presence of English is interrupted officially, though not actually, by Québec monolingualism (Gold&McAlpine, 2010, p. 2–38).

In percentages, the mother-tongue groups are proportioned as follows: 59,2 % speak English, 22,7 % speak French, 0,4 % are English-French bilinguals, and 17,5 % have a mother tongue neither English nor French.

The French-English bilinguals in these figures count only "true bilinguals", rare individuals who learned both languages from birth (Weinreich, 1967, Ch. 3). There are, of course, millions of other bilinguals in Canada whose competence in the two languages is asymmetrical or unequal. In fact, French-English bilingualism has been increasing by leaps in the Ontario region bordering Québec under the stimulus of educational immersion and equity policies (Cartwright, 1988).

### **5.2. Canadian English Vocabulary Specificity and its Future Prospects.**

Even before Canada had a significant and widespread population, many distinctive features of the Canadian vocabulary came into being. Explorers and adventurers learned the names of all the places they visited from the natives, and in many cases the native names stuck. Canadian place-names resound with words from the native language stocks: from east to west, *Pugwash, Buctouche, Miscouche, Kejimikujik, Chicoutimi, Saguenay, Temagami, Napanee, Ottawa, Moosonee, Coboconck, Oshawa, Mississauga, Kakabecka, Wawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Ponoka, Wetaskiwin, Squamish, Esquimault, Nanaimo*, and in the north, *Tuktoyaktuk* and *Iqaluit*, to cite just a few. Other place-names, scarcely less exotic, translate native names: *Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw, Red Deer, Kicking Horse Pass, Yellowknife, Whitehorse*, among them. Some places had more than one name because the indigenous name contended with an imperial one: *Toronto* was called *York* after the nondescript duke who was George III's second son, but in the end – since 1834 – *the Mohawk* name, *Toronto*, meaning "*trees standing in water*", prevailed (Woods, 1993).

Indigenous plants and animals usually kept their native names, such as *tobacco, potato, tamarack, skunk, raccoon, beaver, grizzly (bear), moose, and caribou*. The European adventurers were novices in the wilds, and those who survived were the ones who availed themselves of native know-how and materials: they learned to use foodstuffs such as *pemmican*, weapons such as *tomahawks*, watercraft such as *kayaks*, and apparel such as *anoraks, mukluks, and moccasins*. Because the first explorers were often Québécois, a number of French terms attached themselves permanently to forest and plain: *prairie, portage, bateau, snye (<chenail 'channe')*.

As the population of the country grew with the influxes described earlier, the distinctive vocabulary grew with it. When the land in Upper and Lower Canada was surveyed into lots for the first settlers, the main survey lines, usually 1,25 miles apart, were called *concessions*, the French term, and country roads along them are called *concession roads*. In Ontario, the secondary roads that intersect concessions are called *side roads*.

One obvious area for vocabulary development comes from terms for technological innovations. Because the settlement of North America took place before the Industrial Revolution, the North American and the British branches of the language almost always developed different vocabularies for talking about machines. The automobile provides a

well-known example: British English has *bonnet* for North American *hood*, *boot* for *trunk*, *estate car* for *station wagon*, *windscreen* for *windshield*, *hooter* for *horn*, and so on. Similarly, British English has *lift* for North American *elevator*, *pavement* for *sidewalk*, *rates* for *taxes*, *lorry* for *truck*, *coach* for *bus*, and numerous other differences in names for post-colonial developments.

Though the southern hemisphere colonies were also populated before the automobile and other technologies came into being, those colonies were still tied so closely to England that they adopted the British terms. Thus, in the lexicon as well as in phonology, their closer link to the English of England is evident, and the distinctiveness of the North American branch from them is further defined.

Now more and more teachers have realized the importance of teaching Canadian English vocabulary, but as for how to teach such vocabulary there are still different arguments. Some teachers hold the view that since vocabulary can be learnt through extensive listening and reading, we don't need to spend much time teaching vocabulary explicitly in class. This is a great misunderstanding. Explicit vocabulary teaching is important. Part of class should be devoted to the explicit teaching of such vocabulary.

As for students of English, frequent experience of learning materials written in native language is very important. Students should be encouraged to listen to or read genuine CE written by native speakers. Immersion in native idiomatic English is helpful for developing good sense of English, especially good sense of collocation.

So far as the concrete methods of learning collocation are concerned, students can make use of the rich resources of dictionaries and the Internet. Nowadays, there are many excellent dictionaries of CE, AE, and BE collocations (*Canadian Collocation Dictionary*: URL: <https://collocations.enacademic.com/2390/Canadian>; *The American Heritage of the English Language*: URL: <https://www.ahdictionary.com>; *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*: URL: <https://www.freecollocation.com>). A good case in point is *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*. As it is mentioned in the preface of the dictionary, "no matter how convinced learners are in principle of the importance of collocation, it is difficult for them to put these principles into practice without the benefit of an up-to-date, corpus-based dictionary of collocation" (URL: <https://www.freecollocation.com>). The dictionary can meet the needs of students and teachers. Whenever you meet a difficulty in collocation, you can just look up the key word in the collocation in the dictionary. All its collocations are listed sequentially according to the frequency of each collocation.

For example, "*introduction of*" is common use among students of English. Sometimes, we also meet "*introduction to*". Are the two collocations both correct? If so, what is the difference? Or is only one of them correct? To solve the problem, you can just look up "*introduction*" in the dictionary and find the answer.

Nowadays, there are many free corpora on the Internet: *The Strathy Corpus of Canadian English* (URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/can/>), *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>), *British National Corpus* (URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>). When you want to learn how to use a word, i.e. its collocations, you need to know what other words are commonly used with it. You can explore this kind of knowledge yourself here by entering the word you want to investigate and its part of speech. Choose whether you want to see words that appear to the left or to the right of that word and their part of speech. You can immediately get the answer. A good case in point is *British National Corpus* (BNC). We can easily get access to the corpus. The first item 'Exploring Vocabulary: Collocation' is the program for exploring collocation. Still take '*introduction*' for example. Enter '*introduction*', choose its part of speech 'noun' and choose the part of speech you want to investigate after the key word '*introduction*', in this case 'preposition', then all the sentences containing '*introduction +preposition*' pattern in the BNC appear on the screen. You can investigate the idiomatic collocation of '*introduction*' with prepositions based on the examples found.

In conclusion, correct and idiomatic use of words depends largely on the mastery of their typical collocational behavior. In order to learn new words well and deepen understanding, both students and teachers of English should pay more attention to collocation and be aware of the importance of collocation in the acquisition of a word. And

students should make good use of collocation dictionaries and the resources on the Internet whenever they are not sure of the collocation a word should be in.

### 6. Conclusions.

The present research shows the results of exploration and presentation the collocations as the minimal units in vocabulary acquisition building for different variants of English (CE, AE, and BE).

The definition of collocation is fully described and totally given according to international researches about collocations and its usage in the English language. The importance of collocations usage is shown and the collocation is presented as an important aspect in vocabulary acquisition building. Collocation is highlighted as a universal linguistic phenomenon typical of all the languages. The results of this research show the importance of admitting the collocations usage necessity as the minimal units in English Learning Process as well as in English Teaching Process. The paper also gives the modern examples of collocations in CE, AE, and BE as well as the ways of their usage in studying process for English Learners. Different original Canadian English Vocabulary sources are presented and analysed to admit that the foreign language being learnt is still has to be investigated deeply and more attentively. It is important to know the historical aspects of studied language with its reflection in originally based collocations.

Some **recommendations** for the teaching and learning processes of collocations are finally provided in order to improve and refresh modern English studies for students of linguistics / philology departments. They are:

- teach / learn English via modern CE / AE / BE sources;
- emphasize on collocations structure and meaning during English Teaching and Learning vocabulary;
- pay a special attention to difference in similar collocations among various variants of English (for instance, as presented for CE / AE / BE in this paper);
- give preference to teaching / learning materials in native English;
- encourage students to read and listen to genuine CE / AE / BE written by native speakers;
- make use of online dictionaries, free corpora, and the Internet rich materials on a regular basis.

Nowadays, there are many excellent dictionaries of CE, AE, and BE collocations which are free and easy to be accessible

Conclusively, the research on collocations as the minimal units of vocabulary acquisition building in the English teaching and learning process has its profound contribution into the necessary and important modern English knowledge. This research paper has paved the way for future studies of collocations in the variants of English (CE, AE, and BE) and their huge importance and great influence on teaching and learning processes. The prospects for further study may cover building of a digital dictionary of most frequent collocations in Canadian English, American English, and British English.

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### Sources of Illustrative Materials

#### Free corpora on the Internet

- British National Corpus*. URL: <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>.
- Corpus of Contemporary American English*. URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>.
- The Strathy Corpus of Canadian English*. URL: <https://www.english-corpora.org/can/>.

**Electronic media**

*Academic Word List* by Coxhead (2000). URL: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist>.

*Compleat Lexical Tutor*. URL: [www.lextutor.ca](http://www.lextutor.ca).

**Collocation Dictionaries of CE, AE, and BE**

*Canadian Collocation Dictionary*. URL: <https://collocations.enacademic.com/2390/Canadian>.

*Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*. URL: <https://www.freecollocation.com>.

*The American Heritage of the English Language*. URL: <https://www.ahdictionary.com>.

*TED talks videos*. URL: <https://www.ted.com>.

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#### **КОЛОКАЦІЯ ЯК МІНІМАЛЬНА ОДИНИЦЯ ПОБУДОВИ СЛОВНИКОВОГО ЗАПАСУ В ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ**

*Представлена наукова розвідка має на меті сформулювати визначення колокації як мінімальної одиниці побудови словникового запасу. Зокрема, автор наголошує на важливості вивчення лексичної сполучуваності слів у процесі оволодіння природною англійською мовою.*

*Для досягнення поставленої мети було долучено різноманітні матеріали канадською англійською (CE), американською англійською (AE) та британською англійською (BE) і розглянуто принципи побудови загально англійського словникового запасу. Основою дослідження послуговували оригінальні канадські, американські та британські інформаційні джерела, що є дотичними до проблематики вивчення розмовного варіанта англійської мови та навантаженості словникового запасу в письмових текстах. Зроблено акцент на необхідності правильного використання колокацій у процесі викладання та вивчення англійської мови. У статті уточнено визначення поняття "колокація" та зроблено спробу систематизувати доробок сучасних мовознавців у галузі функціонування та вивчення колокацій.*

*Загальнонаукові методи, застосовані у розвідці, включають дедукцію та індукцію, спостереження та узагальнення. Основними лінгвістичними методами є структурний (методики дефініційного та дистрибутивного аналізу) та контрастивний аналіз (на матеріалі трьох варіантів англійської мови). Методологічні принципи дослідження дозволили отримати науково обґрунтовані результати.*

Поняття "колокація" вживається на позначення частотної варіативної (але не випадкової) сполучуваності слів та їх "взаємного очікування". У цьому сенсі колокацією можна назвати "обмежену комбінацію", що займає проміжне місце між вільною комбінацією та ідіомою й має семантичну прозорість. Вивчення колокацій проведено на матеріалі сучасних міжнародних досліджень CE / AE / BE варіантів англійської мови. Логічним продовженням уточнення поняття колокації та демонстрації важливості використання колокацій стало створення рекомендацій щодо залучення колокацій у процесі викладання та вивчення англійської мови, зокрема, ознайомлення студентів філологічних факультетів з сучасними досягненнями англійської мови досліджень. Ці рекомендації містять такі положення: викладати / вивчати англійську мову варто за допомогою сучасних джерел CE / AE / BE як варіантів англійської мови; робити наголос на структурі та значенні колокацій під час викладання та вивчення лексики англійської мови; звернути особливу увагу на різницю подібних колокацій між різними варіантами англійської мови (як це представлено на матеріалі CE / AE / BE варіантів англійської мови в даній розвідці); надавати перевагу навчальним матеріалам автентичною англійською мовою; заохочувати учнів читати та слухати матеріали, написані / записані носіями CE / AE / BE; регулярно користуватися онлайн-словниками, безкоштовними корпусами та численними Інтернет-джерелами. У контексті сьогодення широкі можливості для вивчення колокацій відкривають наявні у вільному доступі електронні словники колокацій CE / AE / BE. Перспективи подальших досліджень вбачаємо у можливості створення е-словника найчастотніших колокацій канадського, американського та британського варіантів англійської мови.

Ключові слова: колокація, мінімальна одиниця, побудова словникового запасу, канадський, американський та британський варіанти англійської мови, вивчення та викладання англійської мови.