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Lexical collocations: a contrastive view

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Abstract

For some time now there has been, in the field of EFL teaching, a growing awareness of the importance of lexical collocations for vocabulary learning. One of the main obstacles to teaching lexical collocations systematically, however, is their number, which amounts to tens of thousands. In this article,

it is argued that this enormous teaching and learning load can be reduced by a contrastive approach to the concept of lexical collocation. An exemplary German-English contrastive analysis of noun + verb and verb + noun collocations shows that there is, for a considerable portion of them, direct translational equivalence. Such lexical collocations do not have to be taught. The teaching of lexical collocations in EFL should concentrate, instead, on items for which there is no direct translational equivalence in English and in the learners' respective mother tongues.¹

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