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Abstract

The author of this paper will substantiate the argument that communicative creativity and development of foreign language learners may be enhanced through carefully selected corpora which are applied as a useful tool in the second language pedagogy. Corpora constitute the easiest way to access the contexts in which given words and phrases appear to be suitable for native speakers of a particular language. This means that with their help learners have the opportunity to acquire the actual language which is used in everyday conversations by various groups of people. Moreover, corpora can save a lot of time, because learners can focus on language that they need in appropriate situations for determined communicational tasks. That is why learning collocations with their support can be easier and faster. The aim of this paper is to investigate how corpora can be applied to teaching and learning of English and whether they are truly indispensable for educational purposes. Accordingly, the results of empirical research consisting of observations and tests conducted among the Polish students of secondary schools will be shown to prove how the creative abilities in their communicative performance may be reinforced with the acquisition of English collocations.

KEYWORDS: English phraseology, collocations, corpus based teaching, modern technology in learning, computer-assisted language acquisition.

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Introduction

Establishing factors which have an impact on achieving communicative competence in a foreign language is one of the most important objectives of contemporary linguistics. Nowadays, the majority of scholars emphasises the significance of the so-called formulaic language in achieving the competence in question. In short, formulaic language includes different kinds of word combinations, such as collocations. It is claimed that native speakers of any language have an instant access to an enormous base of formulae which they use in an automated manner when they intend to utter a sentence. The same process is believed to take place in learners of a foreign language. In effect, at present, collocations are believed to be a crucial element of L2 that enables its learners to achieve communicative competence.

From this perspective, it is important for foreign language teachers to be able to efficiently teach collocations to their students. At the same time, the problem of teaching collocations has been tackled by only few scholars. Thus, difficulties in choosing an appropriate tool for learning and teaching English collocations with special reference to speaking activities result from the fact that the topic in question has been in fact revealed although seldom explicitly undertaken, for example, in the works of Ellis (2001) and Nation (2001). The same comment refers to the selected positions on collocations authored by Wouden (1997), Herbst (1996), Fontenelle (1994), and Moon (1992). Accordingly, at present, the significance of collocational knowledge is emphasised in achieving communicative competence in EFL. However, there is general lack of teaching techniques and strategies that could be used to develop collocation skills in learners of English.

Consequently, the objective of the current paper is to present the impact of teaching English collocations in a corpus-based approach on development of communicative skills. What is more, the project was designed to bridge the gap between using corpora and collocations in learning and teaching. To put it differently, the ultimate goal of the present project was to investigate whether a corpus-based approach to teaching English collocations has a positive impact on communicative competence of learners. The article presents the result of the study that aimed at achieving the above objectives.

There were two groups of Polish students attending a private secondary school that participated in the study in question. The students represented approximately the same level of knowledge and proficiency in terms of English collocations. The classes were selected randomly from all third-form classes in the school (60 students in total). These groups were taught English collocations using different pedagogical approaches. The first group underwent traditional ways of teaching and the second group was taught using a corpus (British National Corpus). Prior to the commencement of the research, the students were asked to sit a collocation pre-pre-test which enabled for evaluating their overall knowledge of English collocations. In the course of the subsequent stage of the study, the participants were divided into two groups and asked to take another pre-test which aimed at confirming the previous results. The second pre-test constituted the first part of the data which was used for the analysis. Upon the completion of the project the students were again asked to sit a test, this time – the post-test. The aim of this test was to evaluate the difference related to the knowledge of collocations in both groups. Subsequently, the data from the second pre-test and the post-test were compared in order to evaluate the impact of the modified instruction (i.e., the inclusion of corpora) on collocational knowledge of students. The results of the aforementioned tests and observations of speaking activities with the use of collocations allowed for the assessment of the impact of corpora on communicative skills of the participants. On the whole, the present article puts forward an effective tool for teachers to apply in order to develop speaking skills of their students.

Theoretical Background

The literature clearly shows that scholars have been interested in the possible outcome of incorporation of corpora into learning and teaching L2. Much research has been conducted on how corpora can be employed and how people can benefit from them (Partington (1998); Jones and Sinclair (1974); Sinclair (1991); Stevens (1995); Bernardini (2000); Henry and Roseberry (2001), McEnery and Wilson (2001); Bernardini (2002); Connor and Upton (2004); Nesselhauf (2005); Sinclair (2005); Scott and Tribble (2006), O'Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter (2007)) However, little has been said about enriching students' knowledge concerning English collocations with the employment of corpora.

On the Notion of the Corpus

The scholars differ in how freely they apply the notion of corpus. However, there is an increasing consensus that a corpus has four main characteristics: (1) sampling and representativeness, (2) finite size, (3) machine-readable form, and (4) the standard reference. The notion of corpus that has been considered during these studies is:

> a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research (cf. Sinclair, 2005, pp. 1–16).

This definition shows that corpora can be found only in electronic form. What is more, it demonstrates that corpora have been designed to be as representative as possible. There is no doubt that the above can be helpful for learners of foreign languages. It is for the reason that they can find out whether the words that they want to work with are typical for a given linguistic context or if they should look for another expression that is more commonly applied in the target language by native speakers.

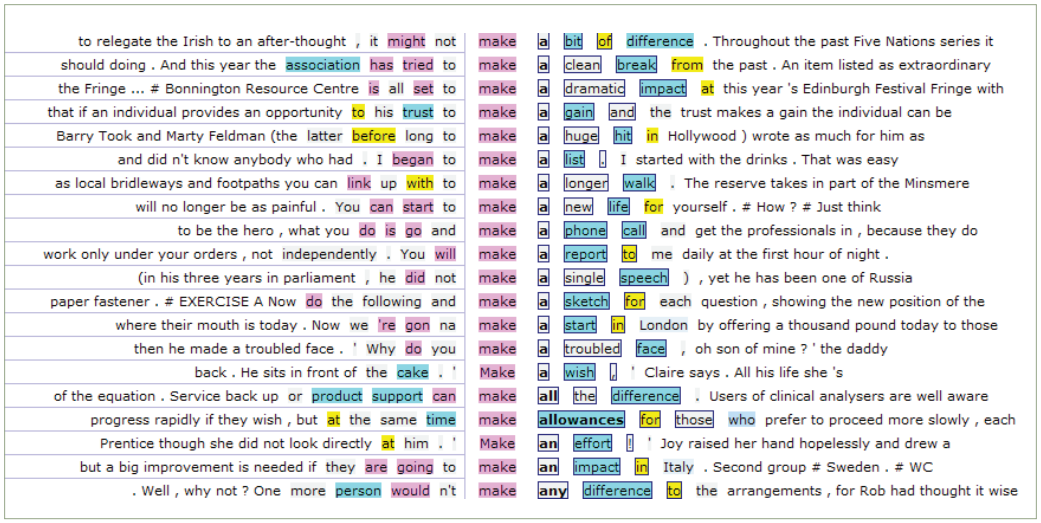
Furthermore, it is very important to note that a corpus in itself provides vast and deep knowledge about the language in question. That is why people have created computer programs to enhance its usage. Such programs are called concordances. They search corpora to find key words and the context in which they can be handled. The user sees on the screen sentences with the key words in the middle, and the context to the left and right of them.

Concordancing and L2

Students and teachers mostly utilize concordancing programs in order to cope with various situations at school. In addition, teachers apply them to acquire deeper knowledge about the usage of given words. This can result in better explanations of particular problems in class. There are some words in English that are not easily interpreted by Polish students, and there are some that can be translated into Polish with the use of only one word. This situation leads students to their incorrect usage of English words in different contexts.

Teacher's self-education could solve such problems, because it would allow them to explain such phenomena to students in a more comprehensible manner. What is more, with the help of concordances teachers can prepare more diversified lessons for their students. They can prepare hand-outs with results taken from concordancing programs and ask students to make generalisations about a given word's usage, to underline which contexts are more frequent than others, or to find new collocations. Concordancing programmes are designed to facilitate the usage of corpora. Students can also take advantage of concordancing programs. They can have access not only to dictionary explanations of a given word but also to real usage. Students can thus save a lot of time by learning promptly how to work with words in actual contexts, and this can help them to overcome their problems with communication. It is common among students to know some words without knowing whether they can be utilized in a specific context or not. With the help of concordancing programs, students can easily get access to the information they need.

Figure 1 presents a sample of the concordance (KWIC) for the verb *make* from the British National Corpus (http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/)



to relegate the Irish to an after-thought , it might not	make	a	bit	of	difference	. Throughout the past Five Nations series it
should doing . And this year the association has tried to	make	a	clean	break	from	the past . An item listed as extraordinary
the Fringe ... # Bonnington Resource Centre is all set to	make	a	dramatic	impact	at	this year 's Edinburgh Festival Fringe with
that if an individual provides an opportunity to his trust to	make	a	gain	and	the	trust makes a gain the individual can be
Barry Took and Marty Feldman (the latter before long to	make	a	huge	hit	in	Hollywood) wrote as much for him as
and did n't know anybody who had . I began to	make	a	list	.	I	started with the drinks . That was easy
as local bridleways and footpaths you can link up with to	make	a	longer	walk	.	The reserve takes in part of the Minsmere
will no longer be as painful . You can start to	make	a	new	life	for	yourself . # How ? # Just think
to be the hero , what you do is go and	make	a	phone	call	and	get the professionals in , because they do
work only under your orders , not independently . You will	make	a	report	to	me	daily at the first hour of night .
(in his three years in parliament , he did not	make	a	single	speech	)	, yet he has been one of Russia
paper fastener . # EXERCISE A Now do the following and	make	a	sketch	for	each	question , showing the new position of the
where their mouth is today . Now we 're gon na	make	a	start	in	London	by offering a thousand pound today to those
then he made a troubled face . ' Why do you	make	a	troubled	face	,	oh son of mine ? ' the daddy
back . He sits in front of the cake . '	Make	a	wish	.	'	Claire says . All his life she 's
of the equation . Service back up or product support can	make	**all**	the	difference	.	Users of clinical analysers are well aware
progress rapidly if they wish , but at the same time	make	**allowances**	for	those	who	prefer to proceed more slowly , each
Prentice though she did not look directly at him . '	Make	**an**	effort	.	'	Joy raised her hand hopelessly and drew a
but a big improvement is needed if they are going to	make	**an**	impact	in	Italy	. Second group # Sweden . # WC
. Well , why not ? One more person would n't	make	**any**	difference	to	the	arrangements , for Rob had thought it wise

Figure 1
A sample fragment of concordance for the verb *make*

Collocations

Collocations have constituted part of linguistic research for centuries. In different times they were denoted by different terms by different scholars. Speaking about the history of collocation, Martelli (2007) referred to Firth (1890–1960), the founder of what was known as the contextualism. Firth saw the collocation as a statistical use of given sets of words and did not see any direct relation of collocations with semantics. He showed that the meaning of words depends on different contextual factors.

Collocations can be seen, according to Martelli (2007, pp. 13–14), as one part of the words' meaning. The meaning of a word depends on the words that precede it, on the words that go after it, and on the context. However, it is very hard to establish one definition of the collocation which would be accepted by all scholars who carry out research on this aspect of language.

Scholars have applied the term collocation to describe entities that are familiar for them and, in most cases, their descriptions are different from those presented by others. That is why it is not easy to determine which description should be considered to be the leading one. Despite these differences, there are two main approaches to collocations, specifically the frequency-based approach and the phraseological approach (Martelli, 2007, pp. 14–21).

It is works of scholars such as Halliday (1966), Sinclair (1991), Kjellmer (1987), Jones and Sinclair (1974), or Greenbaum (1970) that have had a significant impact on the frequency-based approach to collocations. The emphasis in these works is put on the frequency of the occurrence of sets of words. The distance between those words is also perceived as very important. To say that some words collocate with others, a specific distance between words must be preserved. It means that, for example, the collocating words cannot occur more than five words away from each other: there cannot be more than five words between them in a sentence. In the view of Nesselhauf (2005, p. 12), if the frequency of the co-occurrence of given words is high, it means that these words collocate.

As far as the phraseological approach to collocations is concerned, it has been influenced by Cowie (1998) and Meunier and Granger (2008). In this case, collocations are distinguished from other lexical items such as idioms or free combinations. Collocations are differentiated from free combinations, because they can be considered as virtually fixed sets of words that do not go together accidentally. This means that changing one word can result in changing the meaning of the phrase. On the other hand, words that form free combinations can

be changed without altering the meaning. Distinctions between idioms and collocations are made on the basis of transparency. Idioms are not lexically transparent but collocations are. Collocations have at least one word that has its own meaning, and idioms can only be studied in their entirety. The phraseological approach also focuses on the relationship between words that form collocations. Words can be classified as either autonomous or dependant. An autonomous word has its own meaning and is chosen to occur in a particular context because of its actual meaning. It also determines what kind of a dependant word is used. The dependant word is conditioned by the autonomous word and is not involved in forming the collocation.

Although these two approaches seem to be different, they both try to solve the problem of how collocations are formed and why some words are taken to form them and why others cannot occur in collocations. This also shows how complex the learning of collocations can be and why research serving to facilitate this process should be conducted.

Methods

The current article proposes an effective tool enhancing development of speaking skills using English collocations that can be used by teachers. The tool in question was developed as a result of the corpus-based research project on English collocations. During the research in question two groups of Polish students of secondary schools were taught English collocations using different pedagogical approaches.

The first group was instructed using a traditional teaching approach, whereas the second group was taught with the use of corpus (British National Corpus). The results of students' tests as well as the author's observations of various speaking activities with the use of collocations indicate that the use of corpora enhance English collocations acquisition by students of L2.

The choice of the tool was motivated by the desire to provide teachers with a tool that could be easily accessed at school. In addition, numerous studies have shown that it is the way in which collocations are used that distinguishes native and non-native speakers of English. Therefore, teachers should make every effort possible to teach English collocation to their learners.

The Aim of the Project

The aim of this project was to investigate how students would react when the method of teaching L2 was changed. The project was designed to bridge the gap between using corpora and collocations in learning and teaching. Its goal was to investigate whether a corpus-based approach to teaching English collocations might significantly increase students' knowledge. The project aimed to analyse in a comparative manner the results of the participants before and after the change of the teaching method.

The Participants

Two classes of third-form students from a Polish private secondary school were selected to take part in this project. The students represented approximately the same level of knowledge and proficiency in terms of English collocations. The classes were selected randomly from all third-form classes in the school. They consisted of 60 students altogether. The gender distribution was approximately 55 % male and 45 % female.

Location

The research took place in a Polish private secondary school in Lodz as the author of the project has been working there and had the opportunity to do the research. There are not many studies conducted on the problem of the acquisition of English collocations in the Polish private schools. Therefore, conducting a study in this institution was aimed at filling this gap in Polish literature of the subject.

Procedure

The participants of the study were randomly divided into two groups. The first group was named the traditional (control) group. The students assigned to the aformentioned group were instructed with the use of the traditional teaching method. The method of L2 teaching was the same as before the commencement of the research. The participants' belonging to the control group used traditional textbooks and dictionaries during their English lessons. They performed these exercises that were available in their textbooks. What is more, teachers prepared additional activities which were based on different materials selected by the teacher. Students were asked not to do any additional activities beyond these included in the original syllabus for their classes.

The second group was named the experimental group. In the case of this group, the method of teaching L2 was changed, specifically the traditional way of teaching was replaced by the corpus-based approach. Students were taught the way in which they should work with the corpora (British National Corpus) and concordancing software. The above enabled them to have access to those resources at home.

As stated previously, British National Corpus was selected for the purposes of the current research. The reason for the above was that it constitutes a collection of spoken and written texts created by a consortium of universities, publishers, and the British government. Moreover, it was utilized due to its size (90 million words of written English and 10 million words of spoken English) and rich diversity of texts' domains. The particpants used handouts which included the rudimentary rules for finding collocations within the corpus and exercises for them to perform with the help of corpora at school. The participants studied the hand-outs in order to discover the contexts in which various words can be used and to learn the way in which words should be selected to collocate with each other.

For instance, the subjects applied concordances in the KWIC (Key-Word-In-Context) format in which collocations are sorted to the left or right of the key word. Thus, they could focus on the main item of the study which was situated in the center of the page. It is worth mentioning that the particpants were aware of other items that collocate with the particular item whose use they mastered.

Prior to the commentment of the research, the students were asked to sit a collocation pre-pre-test to evaluate their overall knowledge of English collocations. In the course of the subsequent stage of the study, the students were divided into two groups and asked to take another pre-test which aimed at confirming the previous results. The second pre-test constituted the first part of the data which was used for the analysis.

Upon the completion of the project the students were again asked to sit a test, this time – the post-test. The aim of this test was to evaluate the difference related to the knowledge of collocations in both groups. The post-test was more difficult than it was the case with the previous one. It is for the reason that students were required to come up with their own words as it was not a multiple-choice test. The test in question constituted the second part of the data used for the analysis. Importantlly, the observation of students' performance during speaking activities was another element of the study.

Limitations

There were certain limitations identified in the current study which should be mentioned here. First of all, the number of participants was limited to 60 students of the same school. The students were characterised by approximately the same language proficiency and knowledge of English collocations. This is quite a small number of particpants and, therefore, results cannot be generalised to all L2 teaching situations. It would be advisable to include learners from different schools and at different language levels to the study.

Furthermore, the period in which the study was conducted was limited and it was not possible to observe students' progress and differences among the two groups in a longer timescale. The narrow scope of the experiment provides only initial data for further studies and conclusions.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was conducted in two stages. First of all, the average results of pre-pre-tests and pre-tests results for both groups were compared. The above enbaled the assesment of any potential differences in knowledge of English collocations among the particpants of the study. This was conducted with the use of Mann-Whitney's test whose aim was to establish whether the difference in knowledge of collocations between the traditional and experimental group was statistically significant.

In the course of the second stage, the data collected with the use of post-tests was compared in order to see the difference in an average score for each group. The result of the aforementioned comparison showed the difference in acquiring collocations among the two groups of particpants. The comparison of the traditional and experimental groups' results was conducted with the use of Mann-Whitney's test in order to establish whether the difference among the two groups is statistically significant.

The overall aim of data analysis was to determine whether the results gathered in the course of the study were statistically significant. The above enabled to determine whether the implementation of corpora can be treated as a useful tool for both English teachers and learners.

Results and Discussion

The results of the pre-pre-test showed that the students in both groups were charcaterized by approximately the same level of proficiency in the English language including English collocations. The errors, which were made by the students, mostly represented the same area of knowledge of collocations. For instance, the participants managed slightly better with verbs than with adjectives.

The first five sentences of the pre-pre-test (prior to the introduction of groups) were the most difficult for all the students. During the process of checking the tests, it was found that the students made the majority of mistakes in this particular part of the test. What is more, it was found that 95 % of the students did not choose the correct answer for the second sentence. On the other hand, they did not have any problems with sentence number 12. The average score received by the particpants for the pre-pre-test was 9/15.

Figure 2
The results of the pre-test

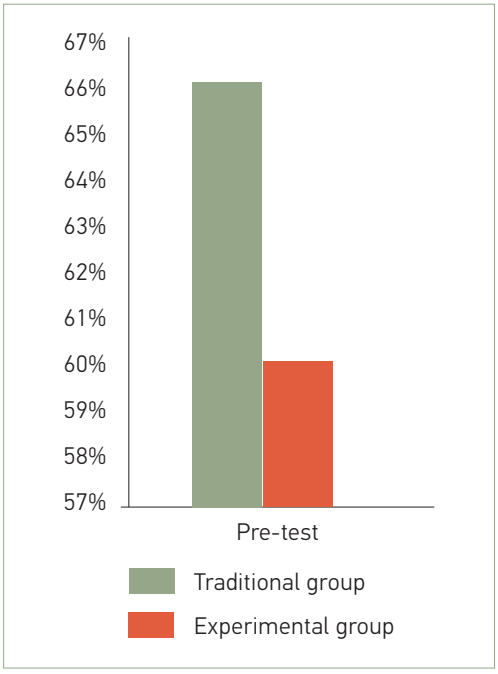


Figure 2 summarises the results of the pre-test for both groups. It can be seen that the average score received by the students was slightly higher than previously, specifically 10/15 points in the traditional group and 9/15 points in the experimental group. Nevertheless, there is no significant difference among these test results. In contrast to the pre-pre-test, in the case of the pre-test the students made the majority of mistakes at the end of the test. It was the final six sentences that proved to be the most difficult for them.

Analogically, the traditional group made the majority of their mistakes in this part of the test, but still slightly fewer than the experimental group. At the same time, the difference between the two groups is negligible. It was also revealed that, in both groups, there were individuals who possessed knowledge and language skills above the average. Similarly, there were individuals that were below the average level of the respective groups.

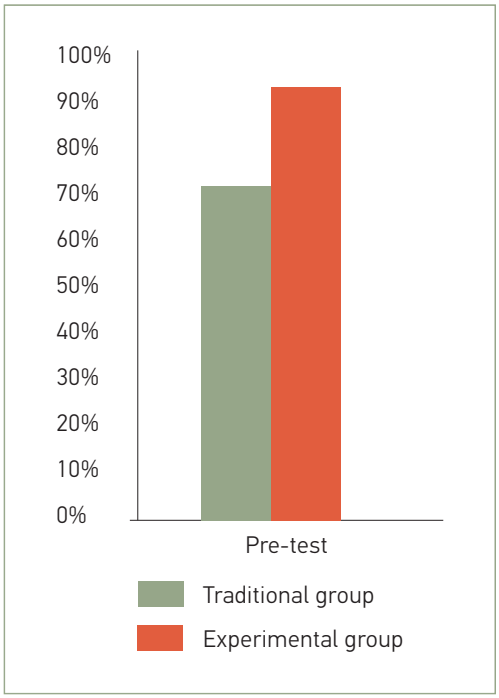


Figure 3
The results of the post-test

The results of the post-test reveal that there was a change in the average number of points scored by the students from the experimental group in the post-test as compared with the previous tests. As stated previously, the post-test was not a multiple-choice test. Students had to come up with their own words and they were not provided with a list of words to choose from. Although this test seemed to be more difficult than the previous ones, its results show that the number of scored points was higher in the case of every single individual who took part in the project. There were 90 % of the students from the traditional group that were wrong in sentence seven and all of them did very well in sentence fourteen. As for the experimental group, 70 % of the students were correct in sentence seven and they did quite well in the rest of the sentences.

On the whole, students from the experimental group had better knowledge about sets of words that should be used in different contexts. The test also revealed that the students from the traditional group, where the methods of teaching were not changed, did just a little bit better than previously.

The following Figure 3 presents the comparison of post-tests results for both groups. It can be seen that the average score in traditional group is 11/15 points, whereas the average score in experimental group is 14/15 points.

Figure 4 below summarizes the student's results. It is immediately visible that the project has enriched the experimental group's ability to use English collocations when speaking. In the majority of cases, students belonging to this group did not make mistakes connected with the appropriate choice of word that collocates with other words.

The results of the current project are in agreement with the results obtained during previous research into the corpus-based approach to teaching and learning second language. On the whole, the results obtained indicate that these students that were exposed to corpora can most efficiently deal with problems associated with the use of collocations in English, especially in the course of speaking activities.

The difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test is approximately 7 % for the traditional group and 27 % for the experimental group. Overall, this amounts to a further increase of 20 % in the experimental group. According to Mann-Whitney's test the difference in knowledge of collocations between the traditional and experimental group in the post-test was statistically significant. Figure 5 summarizes student's results.

Figure 4
The distribution of points in the tests results

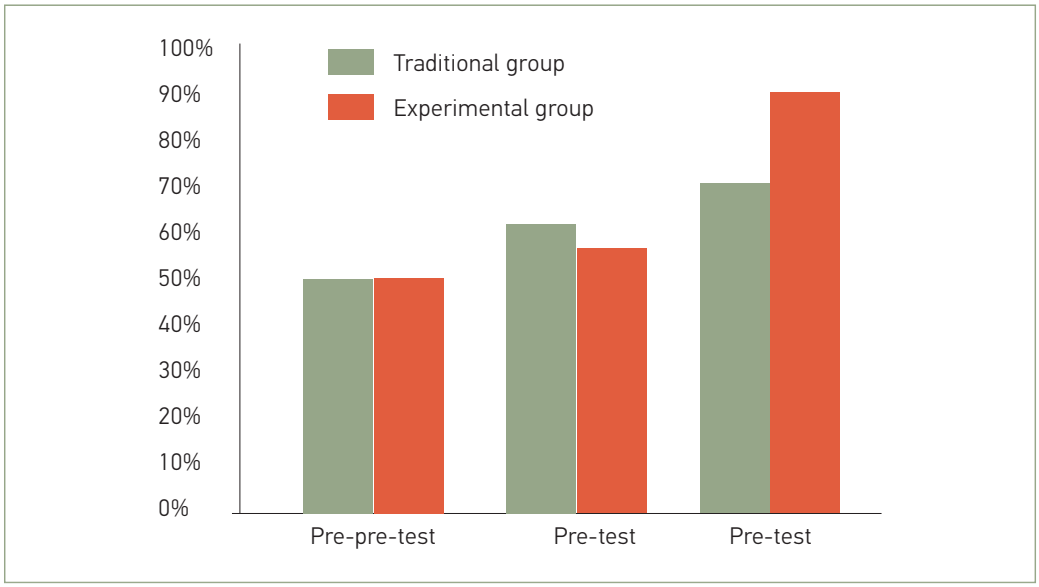


Figure 5
The distribution of points in the tests results

Tests	Average number of points		Percentage (%)	
	Traditional group	Experimental group	Traditional group	Experimental group (%)
Pre-pre-test	9/15		60	
Pre-test	10/15	9/15	66	60
Post-test	11/15	14/15	73	93

The aforementioned result is satisfactory, however does not suggest that corpora should totally replace traditional methods of teaching. To put it differently, the results obtained in the course of the research indicates that language corpora can be a good additional source of information that should accompany traditional methods of L2 teaching.

Lastly, it has to be mentioned that corpora are so vast that it may be difficult or even impossible for the second language students to find a vocabulary item that they look for. Nevertheless, as the current project showed, the above problem has been efficiently solved by the introduction of concordancing programmes. These programmes enable users to browse the corpora and search for the exact words and contexts that they need.

Conclusions

Second language is sometimes very hard to acquire and to master. This problem led scholars to develop methods and techniques that would facilitate people's endeavours to learn L2 language. The recent development is focused on the corpus-based approach to language acquisition. Corpora are electronic data bases containing vast knowledge about language. One can easily gain access through them to contexts that one may be interested in. People can learn a lot from corpora because they can see how the real, living language works. They do not have to

learn separate words, and they can learn substantial chunks of language at the same time. This gives them the opportunity to learn how to apply language appropriately in a given situation.

The project confirmed previous research into the corpus-based approach to learning second language conducted by scholars. The results indicate that students who were exposed to corpora can deal better with problems associated with the use of collocations in English, especially in speaking activities. The difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test comes to approximately 7 % for the traditional group and 27 % for the experimental group. Overall, this amounts to a further increase of 20 % in the experimental group. This result is good, but does not suggest convincingly that corpora should totally replace traditional methods of teaching. In my opinion the result rather indicates that language corpora can be good additional sources of information that accompany traditional methods of teaching L2. Their use may result in providing the students with knowledge which is closer to the real use of the language. It may be argued that corpora are so vast that students will not be able to find what they need at a particular moment, but this problem has been solved by concordancing programmes, as was pointed out above. Students can thus browse the corpora and search for the exact words and contexts that they actually need.

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Malgorzata Luzcz. Bendravimo anglų kalba įgūdžių stiprinimas vartojant anglų kalbos kolokacijas mokomuosiuose tekstuose

Straipsnyje argumentuotai pagrindžiama, kad komunikacinį kūrybingumą ir besimokančiųjų svetimos kalbos lavinimą galima sustiprinti rūpestingai atrenkant tekstus, kurie yra naudingas įrankis besimokant svetimos kalbos. Tekstų rinkiniai – tai lengviausias būdas priartėti prie tokių kontekstų, kuriuose žodžius ir frazes vartoja tie, kurių ta kalba yra gimtoji. Tai reiškia, kad studentai turi galimybę išmokti tokią kalbą, kurią žmonės vartoja kasdieniuose pokalbiuose. Dar daugiau, tekstai gali sutaupyti laiko, nes besimokantieji išmoksta tokią kalbą, kuri reikalinga nustatytoms komunikacinėms užduotims atlikti tam tikrose konkrečiose situacijose. Todėl kolokacijų mokymasis iš tekstų gali būti ir greitesnis, ir lengvesnis. Straipsnio tikslas yra ištirti, kaip tekstai ir jų rinkiniai gali būti taikomi mokant ir besimokant anglų kalbos, ir ar jie tikrai būtini mokymo tikslams pasiekti. Todėl straipsnyje bus pateikti empirinio tyrimo, kurį sudaro stebėjimas ir testai, teikti Lenkijos vidurinių mokyklų studentams, rezultatai, kurie įrodo, kad kūrybinius gebėjimus galima sustiprinti per anglų kalbos kolokacijas.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Collocations pre-pre-test

Name _____

Choose the correct option.

1. The cost of living in Poland has become _____ high over the last five years.
   A. **astronomically** B. totally C. utterly D. blatantly
2. The government should not launch genetically modified crops that can be _____ deadly for people.
   A. partially B. particularly C. **potentially** D. painfully
3. When we arrived at Switzerland, we were so surprised because the weather was _____ cold.
   A. unfortunately B. **unseasonably** C. unpredictably D. astronomically
4. Despite the fact that the concert was _____ subsidised by local government, tickets were still out of reach for many fans.
   A. tremendously B. avidly C. **heavily** D. astronomically
5. Today is the 10th anniversary of establishing our news website and I have to say that is it still _____ read by thousands of people around the world.
   A. **avidly** B. vividly C. heavily D. tremendously
6. It was _____ unfair when the referee awarded the enemy team a penalty kick after that simulated fault.
   A. painfully B. **blatantly** C. widely D. bitterly
7. My theoretical driving test was _____ easy.
   A. laughingly B. humorously C. highly D. **absurdly**
8. The race I was watching last night was _____ slow at the beginning, but after 30 minutes it started to speed up.
   A. massively B. astronomically C. utterly D. **painfully**
9. Jack the ripper is _____ believed to be the most mysterious murderer in Victorian England.
   A. thoroughly B. **widely** C. greatly D. massively
10. I am _____ appalled by the Government's idea of increasing taxes once again this year.
    A. tremendously B. terribly C. awfully D. **utterly**
11. This new guy in our class is _____ attractive. I have to find out what he likes.
    A. avidly B. absolutely C. **irresistibly** D. heavily
12. After all of Mark's efforts he was _____ disappointed when he found out that his colleague got promoted instead of him.
    A. painfully B. **bitterly** C. completely D. totally
13. When I woke up I was surprised. It was _____ weather after so many rainy days.
    A. peaceful B. soft C. horrible D. **mild**
14. Come on Tom. You cannot be serious, don't tell me such _____ .
    A. stories B. excuses C. **lies** D. joke
15. I hate this place. The weather is horrible: only _____ rains. I do not even expect one sunny day.
    A. **heavy** B. strong C. hard D. bulky

Appendix 2. Collocations pre-test

Name _____ Group _____

Choose the correct option.

1. I really _____ the sweetest dog of mine when I was on holiday with my parents.
   A. liked B. **missed** C. enjoyed D. hated
2. My neighbours had a loud party last night. I wanted to go sleep, but at 2 a.m. I was still _____ awake because of the music.
   A. **wide** B. absolutely C. partially D. terribly
3. It was only a _____ of time. I told him to go the theatre.
   A. spend B. throw C. take D. **waste**
4. I was _____ aware of my current situation but I could not help it.
   A. **well** B. sure C. full D. quite
5. It is _____ important for them to drive this cargo on time.
   A. quite B. **vitally** C. crucial D. vital
6. I am _____ sorry. I did not mean to say that. Can you forgive me?
   A. **terribly** B. horribly C. terrible D. outstandingly
7. I am done here. It was very _____ work. I hope the next project will be more approachable.
   A. great B. difficulty C. **hard** D. mundane
8. My mom_____ everyone about my little accident when I was young. It was embarrassing.
   A. **told** B. spoke C. tell D. narrated
9. When someone wants to _____ a family, he or she has to take into account how much responsibility this means.
   A. begin B. **start** C. hold D. get
10. I do not drink _____ coffee because afterwards I look like a drugged man.
    A. **strong** B. heavy C. soft D. sweet
11. My career was a _____ success until I had that horrible accident.
    A. wonderful B. **great** C. strong D. big
12. They warned about _____ rains in place. But it passes all understanding.
    A. strong B. powerful C. **heavy** D. stormy
13. After a horrible day at work I need a _____ drink to relax.
    A. **strong** B. heavy C. powerful D. sharp
14. Have you ever felt such a _____ breeze blowing from the sea?
    A. enormous B. heavy C. **strong** D. hard
15. Did you think about _____ a shower? I think it would be reasonable after 12 hours of work.
    A. made B. having C. **taking** D. doing

Appendix 3. Collocations post-test

Name _____ Group _____

Fill in the correct word.

1. Don't worry: in this company you will be able to _____ some experience.
   The answer is: gain.
2. Do you think it is not appropriate to _____ a photo here?
   The answer is: take.
3. Be careful with this medicine. I _____ serious side-effects when I was taking it.
   The answer is: had.
4. The elephant in our zoo _____ birth to her baby last night.
   The answer is: gave.
5. Tom always _____ most of his leisure time playing computer games.
   The answer is: spends.
6. The concert _____ place on Monday at 7 p.m. in a local club.
   The answer is: took.
7. Did you _____ your homework yet?
   The answer is: do.
8. How can I make Tom _____ his mind about this trip?
   The answer is: change.
9. Don't worry: it _____ time to heal all wounds.
   The answer is: takes.
10. This matter can _____ a role in preventing further escalation of this conflict.
    The answer is: play.
11. I forgot to turn off the gas stove and the whole kitchen _____ fire.
    The answer is: caught.
12. Please, doctor, _____ me the truth. Is this a serious matter?
    The answer is: tell.
13. You have to _____ fit if you want to win this race.
    The answer is: keep.
14. It was the biggest mistake that he _____ .
    The answer is: made.
15. It doesn't _____ sense, does it?
    The answer is: make