

In-service teacher's perceptions toward teaching collocation to intermediate EFL learner's productive skills

Truong Ngoc Khanh Van^{1*}, Van Cong Hoang Truong¹

¹ Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Corresponding author's email: vankhanhtruong29@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1438-8371>

 <https://doi.org/10.54855/ictep.24513>

© Copyright (c) 2024 Truong Ngoc Khanh Van, Van Cong Hoang Truong

Received: 16/07/2024

Revision: 06/10/2024

Accepted: 09/10/2024

Online: 14/10/2024

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

perceptions, teaching collocations, productive skills, in-service teachers

Collocations play a crucial role in second language learning and teaching, especially in relation to writing and speaking skills. The existing studies examine teachers' more personal and subjective views in using collocations to teach productive skills. Moreover, previous studies have been limited to discovering possible teaching approaches to assist teachers in effectively teaching collocations at the intermediate level. The current study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of the challenges of teaching collocations to enhance EFL learners' productive skills at the intermediate level. To get optimal results, twenty in-service teachers who are pursuing master's degrees in English linguistics contribute to answering the research questionnaire. The study's findings indicate that collocations are important for students to generate the English language, and most teachers found it difficult to teach their learners to use collocations accurately in writing and speaking skills. Furthermore, the researchers found the limitations and suggestions to conduct in future research about teaching collocation.

Introduction

Background of the study

In second language acquisition, Wilkins (1972, p. 111-112) asserts that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." Similarly, McCathy (1990) emphasizes that vocabulary is an important language training component. Folse (2004) and other linguistics also highlight vocabulary's essential role in learning a foreign language. Therefore, vocabulary is essential for language learning; it is crucial in effective communication and language acquisition.

Collocations are considered combinations of two or more words that change their meaning. Nattinger (2014) argues that collocations are crucial for learning vocabulary. Furthermore, using common collocations can enhance speaking and writing skills. Understanding the significance of vocabulary is crucial for acquiring proficiency in a foreign language, and collocations are a key aspect of this relevance.

Collocations are essential for learners to achieve in learning a language. Collocations are especially important for learners to improve both accuracy and fluency, aiming for a high level of skills in the second language (Wray, 2002). Furthermore, collocation efficiency serves as an indicator or standard for assessing a learner's linguistic knowledge (Hill, 2000). Therefore, learners must acquire sufficient collocation to be fluent and capable of using a language effectively (Pawley & Syder, 2014). When learners pay sufficient attention, collocational information could significantly impact learners' language ability and help them upgrade their levels. (Lewis, 2000).

The need for teaching collocation is a concern; the role of the teacher is an important factor in the learner's language ability. Al-Seghayer (2017) indicates that EFL teachers must be aware of fundamental competencies to help learners succeed in English learning acquisition and thus succeed in teaching the English language. Thus, the role of EFL teachers is to master teaching collocation so that what is delivered to learners is able to understand and acquire the knowledge of collocation clearly.

Statement of the problems

On the part of EFL learners, learning collocation is used to make errors in productive skills. Bui (2021) states that EFL learners frequently internalize collocations in their mother tongue, but they are not natural in English. Similarly, the majority of collocation mistakes are caused by a lack of awareness of collocations and interference from the mother tongue (Shih, 2000). Hashemi et al. (2012) also significantly highlight the errors of EFL learners using collocation, such as the mother tongue, the mistake of collocational style, the collocational knowledge, and the interlingual and intralingual transformation. The other aspects of learners it is also dependent on instructors related to the school environment, English materials, and teaching approach.

The purpose of the study

The value of collocation refers to vocabulary, which is an essential part of vocabulary. (Hammer, 1992). Thus, teachers should guide collocation in the classroom and ensure that EFL learners have sufficient knowledge of collocation while using the proper teaching technique. In contrast, teachers also deal with challenges in teaching collocations to EFL learners (Bui, 2021). The paper attempts to shed light on the challenges of in-service teachers when teaching collocations to ELF learners in English classrooms, specifically at the intermediate level.

Literature review

Definitions of collocation

The special significance of collocation in language has been acknowledged for years, and most linguists have shared a similar outlook on the concept of collocation. The term "collocation" originates from the Latin verb "collocare," which is translated as "to set in order/to arrange" (Ahmed, 2012). Firth (1957) defines semantic connections as the regular and common collocation of words. An illustration of this phenomenon is the ability between the term "night" and the concept of "dark", as they possess the capacity to combine and form a cohesive unit.

Baker (1992) stated that collocation is the specific words together on a frequent basis in a language. Similarly, according to Lewis (2000), collocation is defined as words that co-occur in typical content in statistically significant ways. The co-occurrences of words or phrases such as "bitter chocolate" and "strong coffee" are recurrent, and they sound acceptable and natural to native speakers (Martyńska, 2004). In addition, Prodromou (2003) defined collocation as the

product of years of regular use of fluent English speakers. The automation of collocations facilitated the usage of chunks so native speakers to communicate effectively and fluently. Moreover, Evert (2008) defines collocation as a combination of two words that appear next to one another in language. Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2002) described the term collocation as a combination of words in a language to generate natural sounds in speaking and writing skills. For example, these combinations in English, such as "heavy wind" or "strong rain," are not natural and accurate.

Classification of collocations

The categorization of collocations can be used in several ways, but the most common classifications of collocations are lexical and grammatical collocations and strong and weak collocations.

According to Lewis (2000) classified collocations as follow:

1. *Strong collocations*: collocations consist of a set of specified collocates. For instance, rancid butter or rancid oil, etc.
2. *Weak collocations*: collocations have many collocates. For example, a variety of things can be cheap or expensive, good or bad, etc.
3. *Medium-strength collocations*: words appear together more often than weak collocations. For example, hold a meeting, carry out a study, etc.

In addition, Benson and Ilson (1986) state that collocations can be classified into two primary categories: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical collocations consist of words that are either a noun, an adjective, or a verb combined with a preposition or infinitive. Lexical collocations consist of content words and do not include prepositions or infinitives. Some examples are:

Grammatical collocations:

Pattern	Examples
Noun + preposition	Blockade against
Adjective + preposition	Pleased with
Preposition + noun	By accident

Lexical collocations:

Pattern	Examples
Noun + noun	Traffic accident
Verb + adverb	Smile broadly
Verb + noun	Do homework

The importance of collocations in productive skills

Definitions of productive skills

Golkova and Hubackova (2014) assert that productive skills, referred to as active skills, are the spoken or written communication of knowledge generated by a language user. Furthermore, productive skills refer to writing and speaking skills that can be used as a "barometer" to assess learners' understanding (Hossain, 2015).

The importance of collocations in writing skills

Collocations play a crucial role in creating and writing text for learners. The lack of collocational knowledge can cause the writing skills of language learners to be weak (Akhter & Nordin, 2022). Therefore, language performance can enhance proficiency and fluency when

learners perceive collocations of instruction into writing skills.

Moreover, the need to concentrate on collocational structure in writing is paramount, as the mother tongue interference may be a significant factor in productive skills where collocations appear to be more salient. According to Kawakato et al. (2005), language learners should be given greater opportunity to experience the common linguistic forms and structures of academic discourse as well as learn to recognize the terms that frequently occur together in academic writing. The practical experience enables learners to produce the correct collocations and the use of language correctly in their own writing.

Bahardoust and Moeini (2012) state that the main purpose of the writing course should be collocation instruction. Although the learners may recognize every word in isolation, they are likely unfamiliar with all collocations (Bui, 2021). The role of collocations can have a significant impact on writing ability.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) suggest that the common combination of words can assist students in expressing their ideas in the most natural way. It also gives them additional options to choose from, including more colorful, expressive, and precise combinations. Furthermore, collocations might help students enhance their writing style (Ying & Hendricks, 2004). This means that learners can use collocations to make their content greater and easier to read. Moreover, McIntosh et al. (2009) imply that choosing the proper collocations makes a learner's writing the same as a native speaker and represents "intermediate" writing.

The importance of collocations in speaking skills

According to Sung (2003), there is a relationship between speaking skills and the understanding and application of lexical collocations. It is acknowledged that incorrect combinations of words (collocations) and collocational errors negatively affect learners' spoken language Mahmoud (2005).

In addition, Hsu and Chiu (2008) claim that the same with English lexical collocations seemed to have positive impacts on the speaking ability and proficiency of English learners. Learners using lexical collocations helps them make speech sound more fluently and reduce hesitation in communication skills. Furthermore, Shooshtari and Karami (2013) and other researchers have demonstrated that possessing a strong grasp of collocations is beneficial for enhancing the ability to speak fluently. Learners have a strong grasp of collocations to construct sentences smoothly and reduce the cognitive load to produce speech.

EFL learners' collocational errors in productive skills

Bahns and Eldaw (1993) argue that the mother tongue is the cause of EFL learners' collocation errors. Liu (1999) identifies the factors contributing to EFL learners' proficiency in organizing collocations:

1. Lack of collocational concept: Learners were unsure which word it would combine with.
2. Direct translation: Learners remembered the word as it was translated into the mother tongue.
3. Ignorance of rule restrictions: Learners were unaware that some collocations were based on word meaning and range, while others failed to consider grammar rules.
4. Lack of knowledge of collocational properties: Learners were unaware of the possible collocational properties of the words studied.

The findings study of Mahmoud (2005) support the assumption that EFL learners depend on both interlingual and intralingual approaches to transfer English collocations. Mahmoud (2005)

demonstrates that Arabic-speaking learners made collocation errors, particularly lexical collocations, because of interlingual transfer from Arabic to English. They implement the interlingual transfer approach, replacing Arabic terms with English ones. Therefore, researchers point out collocations were produced inaccurately because of negative mother tongue transfer.

Besides, Farghal and Obiedat (1995) observe that students who lacked knowledge of particular collocations tended to rely on techniques such as synonyms, paraphrase, avoidance, and transfer. Students didn't transfer appropriate collocations, which led to frequent lexical collocation errors in the writing performance (Do & Le, 2023). To sum up, EFL learners often use collocational errors in both written and spoken skills because of "the interference of their mother tongue, lack of the collocational concept, the interlingual transformation, the shortage of collocational knowledge" (Hashemi et al., 2012 p. 523).

The challenges of teaching collocations in productive skills

According to Deveci (2004), the challenges of teaching collocations indicate learners encounter problems when learning collocations, including intralingual difficulties, negative transfer from the mother tongue, incorrect use of prepositions in phrasal verbs, mistakes in using collocations as meaningful, decreased retention collocation when learning on definitions.

Bui (2021) states that the majority of teaching resources in secondary and high schools in Vietnam prioritize the instruction of grammar and vocabulary in isolation without addressing collocations' Context. In the study by Duong and Nguyen (2021), the researchers found that teachers are not able to pay enough attention to teach collocations in English classes when teachers tend to focus on grammar or isolate words instead of chunks of English. The EFL learners only focus on grammar and isolated vocabulary in their spoken and written performance. Thus, this causes learners to lack the sequencing of collocations and inhibits their ability to conduct their skills effectively.

The follow-up study by Nguyen (2024) claims that the biggest challenge to teachers when teaching collocations in the classroom is time constraints. Teachers deal with the difficulties of time to provide many collocations to learners, especially in the Vietnamese Context. She also finds the aspect of time management solutions that teachers can use to conduct activities and explain the main collocations. Thus, learners pay attention to implementing many useful collocations, but time limits are avoidable to teachers in the classroom.

Previous studies

Sung (2003) investigated the use of collocations knowledge to speaking skills among international learners enrolling at a Pittsburgh university. Her study involved 72 non-native English speakers. There are two tests for each subject: collocations and speaking tests. The first test evaluated the learners' comprehension of lexical collocations, while the subsequent test assessed the participants' usage of lexical collocations and their speaking skills. The finding revealed a significant relationship between lexical collocation knowledge and the subject of speaking skills.

Hsu and Chiu (2008) said that the impact of collocation knowledge is related to the level of speaking performance among Taiwanese EFL learners in university. The research was collected from 56 junior English majors. The researcher conducted three tests, including the lexical collocations exam, the English-speaking exam, and the Phonepass spoken English exam. The aim of these tests is to assess the knowledge of collocations as well as learners' speaking proficiency. The finding indicated that the mastery of collocations significantly facilitates learners' speaking performance.

Another study of teaching collocations conducted by Attar and Allami (2013) investigated the relationship between teaching collocations and EFL learners' speaking performance. The study participants were 80 intermediate-level learners. They were divided into experimental and control groups, and the test consisted of 30 questions and an interview as a pretest and posttest. The findings demonstrated that the experimental group worked better than the control group following collocation instructions. Additionally, the learners showed positive attitudes through explicit collocations of instruction.

Regarding teacher perception, Phuong (2012) examined teachers' perceptions of teaching English collocations to learners at the pre-intermediate level in the Vietnamese Context. Her study was accomplished by 35 teachers who implemented the survey questionnaire and collocation test. Thus, she claimed that teachers' positive behaviors in teaching collocations play an important role in language skills. Phuong (2012) also found that teachers should focus on commonly using collocations in the comparison of the synonyms' collocation activities.

In a study conducted in Turkey, Mutlu & Kaslioglu (2016) examined the views and instructional methods of Turkish EFL teachers on the teaching of collocations to learners. The researchers administered the questionnaire to 32 high school teachers and 326 learners and conducted semi-structured interviews with 6 teachers. Thus, their study emphasized that high school teachers conducted a lot of collocations knowledge in language teaching. Besides, teachers influence learners' attitudes toward the main content, teaching performance, and tendencies to use specific instructional techniques in EFL settings.

According to Le (2017), the researcher explored the teachers' perceptions about teaching collocations with an appropriate approach in high school. The research implemented a case study approach analysis, using data collected from both a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The study's results revealed that the teacher's comprehension was lacking in the field of lexical collocations. In addition, pupils receive insufficient collocation advice. Besides, teachers should be provided with methods to effectively integrate teaching collocations into the lesson.

Duong and Nguyen (2021) studied how learners and teachers use collocations to enhance writing skills. The study consisted of 47 English-majored juniors and 5 English teachers at Van Lang University. Researchers employed both online questionnaires and email interviews to collect the data, and SPSS was used to analyze these data. The study found that perceptions toward the advantages of collocations in academic writing are similar; the ignorance of collocations in language instruction and ineffective learning strategies might result in numerous restrictions.

Adriosh (2023) explored teachers' perspectives on teaching collocations to undergraduate EFL learners in Libya. The researcher applied qualitative methods to collect and analyze data. The participants joined 8 lecturers in four universities who were interviewed. The findings suggested that teachers should provide learners with opportunities to practice and use collocations in meaningful contexts.

Nesselhauf (2003) described a study that analyses the use of collocations by advanced German learners' level of speaking skill in written production. The researcher aims to examine the errors made by learners when using collocations in their writing, as well as the influence of incorporating collocations in the target language. The participants are thirty-two junior and senior German-speaking English learners, who are required to complete an argumentative and non-technical essay in three steps. All of the writings were chosen at random and are intended to investigate the use of collocation. According to the researcher's findings, learners find it

challenging to use and master grammatical collocation combinations.

Mounya (2010) explored the teaching of lexical collocations relevant to foreign language competency and writing skills. In a case study, the study investigated the use and impact of collocation on first-year learners at Guelma University's English Department in Algeria and the use of first and second languages by learners. Her research reveals that learners must use collocation for effective writing, and she suggests that they be treated as lexical chunks rather than single words.

According to Eidian et al. (2013), they investigated the influence of lexical collocations on Iranian EFL learners' writing abilities. The participants are EFL learners at the pre-intermediate level who will complete online writing assignments for the study. Following the findings, lexical collocations awareness on writing skills is overpowering, implying that collocational competence could assist authors in achieving writing fluency.

Sadeghi and Panahifar (2012) explored the use of collocations in Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills. The data were acquired from 30 intermediate-level Iranian EFL learners who completed a collocation test and answered topic-specific interview questions. The study's findings demonstrated a significant association between learners' understanding of collocations and their speaking skills.

Biskri (2012) investigated how raising awareness of lexical collocations affects EFL learners' speaking proficiency. She collected data for the study from 50 Algerian first-year learners at the University of Guelma. The researchers divided the pupils into two experimental and control groups. The post-test results for the experimental group were positive as opposed to the control group. As a result, the study concluded that lexical collocation could help learners enhance their speaking skills.

Shamsudin et al. (2013) analyzed Iranian EFL learners' errors in their use of collocation in speaking skills. The researchers chose fifteen Iranian postgraduate learners to study in an intensive English course at the University of Technology in Malaysia. Two speech tests are administered as study instruments: one unscripted and one public. The findings revealed that Iranian EFL learners committed lexical collocation errors in both exams. As a result, the researchers recommended that learners work harder to master more lexical collocations and practice speaking skills on a regular basis.

Hassani & Jamali (2014) studied the impact of teaching English lexical clusters on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking accuracy. The study included 41 male and female intermediate-level EFL learners studying English at Zabankade Institute in Tehran. The participants were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. Both groups were given a pretest to determine their speaking ability. The results demonstrated that teaching lexical clusters to the experimental group greatly improved the participants' speaking accuracy and competence.

Begagić (2014) conducted a thorough analysis of the first- and fourth-year English major learners in Zenica's receptive and productive understanding of lexical collocations, focusing on three types: "verb + noun," "adjective + noun," and "verb + adverb collocations through exams that are both productive and receptive. Despite their general lack of understanding of collocations, the results showed that all of them appeared to know more about receptive collocations than productive collocations, with both groups of learners finding the "verb + adverb" collocation type to be the most challenging.

Research gaps

As mentioned in the previous study, a few studies have dealt with teachers' perceptions of

teaching collocation in high school and university (Le, 2017; Mutlu & Kaslioglu, 2016; Sung, 2003). Other research focuses on teaching EFL learners at pre-intermediate, intermediate, and undergraduate levels (Phuong, 2012; Attar & Allami, 2013; Adriosh, 2023); however, this has been limited to in-service teachers' perception toward teaching collocation with EFL learners' intermediate level. Therefore, this study has been investigated to conduct the in-service teachers' perceptions who are studying Master class at VLU University toward the challenges of teaching collocation with EFL learners in productive skills.

Research Questions

As mentioned above, the study's main purpose is to examine what in-service teachers can teach collocation with EFL learners. To achieve this purpose, the research has posed two questions:

1. What are in-service teachers' perceptions toward teaching collocation to intermediate EFL learners?
2. What are the challenges of teaching collocation to intermediate EFL learners' productive skills?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The current study is conducted at the faculty of foreign languages of Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The study took place in the first semester of the academic year 2024 – 2025. Twenty in-service teachers pursuing a master's class in English study and used to teach English at English centers and secondary schools joined the research participants, and they were asked to participate in the questionnaire survey. Their ages ranged from 23 to 30, regardless of gender. Prior to this study, the in-service teachers had a chance to teach English to learners of intermediate level, and they had at least one year of experience teaching. Moreover, these in-service teachers frequently used and conveyed collocational knowledge in writing and speaking lessons.

Design of the Study

A quantitative method was utilized to conduct this study. Collecting data on teachers' perceptions can be consistent. Specifically, the data were gathered by analyzing a questionnaire distributed to twenty in-service teachers who are studying master's classes at Van Lang University during the 2024 – 2025 academic year.

Procedure

The procedures were carried out for approximately two months, and considerable results were obtained. An online website named Google Forms was used to create the questionnaire. This survey was adapted study of Phuong (2012) and Le (2017) about teacher's perception of teaching collocation, the pattern of collocation by Benson and Ilson (1986), and the role of collocation and challenges of teaching by Bui (2021), (Liu, 1999). The research question conducted to explore is considerable and suitable for exploratory participants in the study. By using this internet-based tool, the data was gathered conveniently and effectively. After three weeks, the researchers could collect information from 20 out of 20 participants. After successfully acquiring the quantitative data, the researchers tabulate them into statistical figures and interpret their meaning.

Data collection & analysis

Based on the five-point Likert scale, the questionnaire was designed with five degrees of affirmation, ranging from the lowest degree, “strongly disagree,” to the highest degree, “strongly agree” (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree). Therefore, the 20-item questionnaire was to investigate each in-service teacher's perceptions of teaching collocations in productive skills. The questionnaire was categorized into three sections. The first section referred to the personal information of participants. The second section involved in-service teachers' perceptions toward teaching collocations for EFL learners' writing and speaking skills. The last section related to challenges teachers may encounter during the process of teaching collocational knowledge to EFL learners.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Research question 1: What are in-service teachers' perceptions toward teaching collocations to intermediate EFL learners?

This study consisted of 20 respondents in total. A 20-item questionnaire was created to collect descriptive data. The results were analyzed and presented in the form of descriptive statistics. The following parts aim to deal with the first research question:

Table 1.

In-service teachers' perceptions of the advantages of teaching collocations in productive skills

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	Collocations play an important role in a learner's writing style.	5%	0%	20%	45%	30%
2.	The appropriate collocation makes learners' writing the same as that of native speakers.	10%	10%	0%	45%	35%
3.	Collocation instruction is the main purpose of the writing class.	15%	25%	20%	25%	15%
4.	The use of collocation knowledge can improve learners' language fluency.	10%	0%	10%	50%	30%
5.	The use of collocation knowledge can improve learners' language accuracy.	10%	0%	5%	55%	30%
6.	Lexical collocations have a positive impact on learner's speaking skills.	10%	0%	15%	45%	30%
7.	Collocation training can enhance to learner's speaking skills.	10%	0%	20%	35%	35%
8.	A good command of collocations facilitates the improvement of speaking skills.	10%	0%	30%	20%	40%

(Notes: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree)

As shown in Table 1, in-service teachers generally tend to have positive attitudes toward teaching collocational knowledge in writing and speaking classes. Firstly, according to in-

service teachers, the use of collocational knowledge in improving learners' language accuracy received the greatest percentage (85%). The second largest benefits of conveying collocations in productive classrooms were the appropriate collocations in creating native-like written texts and the use of collocations in enhancing learners' language fluency (80%). Additionally, most in-service teachers strongly agreed that teaching collocations in productive class sessions, which accounted for the third highest proportion (75%), significantly impacts learners' writing styles and speaking skills. In contrast, collocation instructions, which were the major goal of writing classes, achieved the least agreement of 40% of in-service teachers. To conclude, most in-service teachers acknowledge the positivity and advantages of teaching collocations in improving learners' writing and speaking skills, especially in enhancing language accuracy; however, they claimed that teaching collocations was not the prime purpose of writing classes.

The finding of this study reveals that almost all participating in-service teachers who teach EFL learners at an intermediate level guide the knowledge of collocation in class. All participants proved that the importance of collocation can affect their learners, specifically lexical collocation rather than grammar collocation. The results parallel the study of Benson and Ilson's categories of collocation (1989). Regarding productive skills, all participants choose productive skills to focus on teaching collocation about writing skills rather than speaking skills. This shows that writing skills are very important in English class (Akher & Nordin, 2022), but speaking skills are also emphasized during the teaching of collocations (Sung, 2003). In addition, the findings of the study were also shown in a row with some previous studies.

Based on the teachers' perception of the teaching collocation in a positive aspect, the finding results match with the study of Phuong (2012) that teaching collocation plays an important role in EFL learners enhancing language skills. Similarly, the study of Akhter and Nordin (2022) stated that the role of collocation in EFL learners produces a writing context. Next, the study also found that the use of collocation knowledge can improve learners' language fluency and accuracy. Wray (2002) affirmed that teaching collocation helps learners enhance their language skills and improve their fluency and accuracy. Lastly, the findings correspond to the findings from Phuong (2012) about teaching collocation with speaking and writing skills. However, the findings found that collocation instruction cannot be the main purpose of writing in the classroom, whereas the study of Bahardoust and Moeini (2012) claims that teachers can shape the main role of collocation in writing skills from the classroom environment.

Research question 2: What are the challenges of teaching collocations to intermediate EFL learners' productive skills?

Table 2 indicates in-service teachers' attitudes toward the challenges of teaching collocations in productive skills. Firstly, the greatest percentage of difficulties in teaching collocations in productive classrooms was learner's unawareness of the grammatical rules of collocations (80%). Moreover, the second largest proportion of challenges of teaching collocations in writing and speaking sessions was the direct transfer of learners' mother tongue to create collocations (75%). In addition, the third highest challenges of teaching collocations in productive classes were the isolation of teaching grammar and vocabulary and the inference of learners' mother tongue when learning collocations (70%). However, 30% of participants reported not lacking teaching materials with collocations' contexts, and this challenge also received the lowest agreement. In conclusion, most in-service teachers encountered difficulties with the grammatical rules of the use of collocations and the influence of learners' mother tongues in learning collocations; however, teaching materials for collocations were not the main problem.

Table 2.

In-service teachers' perceptions of challenges of teaching collocations in productive skills

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	Teachers lack material with collocations' Context.	5%	30%	35%	20%	10%
10.	Teachers find it difficult to teach collocations with limitations on time.	0%	25%	20%	35%	20%
11.	Teacher deals with the isolation of teaching grammar and vocabulary.	0%	25%	5%	50%	20%
12.	Teachers' comprehension of collocation is insufficient.	5%	15%	35%	45%	0%
13.	When teachers are teaching collocation, learners infer the mother tongue when learning collocation.	5%	10%	15%	45%	25%
14.	When teachers are teaching collocation, learners lack the collocational knowledge to generate collocation.	5%	10%	30%	40%	15%
15.	When teachers are teaching collocation, learners are unaware of the grammatical rule of collocation.	5%	10%	5%	55%	25%
16.	When teachers are teaching collocation, learners transfer the mother tongue directly to create collocation.	15%	0%	10%	35%	40%

(Notes: SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree)

According to teachers' perception of the challenges when they are teaching collocation, the study found similarities to many previous studies, but some of the statements contrast with them. Firstly, the finding reveals that one of the challenges for teachers is that their comprehension of collocation is insufficient. However, the study of Le (2017) explores the challenges teachers face when teaching collocation to learners who have insufficient lexical background knowledge. Secondly, the findings showed that the challenges teachers face when they deal with EFL learners lack a collocation background of knowledge, inferring the mother tongue when learning or generating collocation, and transferring the mother tongue to produce collocation for both speaking and writing skills.

The finding is the same as the study of Liu (1999), which pointed out the characteristic of learners' errors in the process of learning collocation in the English classroom. On the other hand, the finding also has opposing opinions, such as teacher lack of material on collocation' Context, teacher difficulty instructing the knowledge of collocation in limited time, and teacher handling with training vocabulary and grammar collocation.

The finding study contrasts with the study of Bui (2021), which investigated the majority of teaching English context in Vietnam based on teaching grammar and words in isolation.

Additionally, the study by Nguyen (2024) asserts that time constraints in the classroom are the biggest challenges to teachers. This study suggests that English teaching collocation should be developed as much as possible.

Understanding learner errors and choosing the appropriate Context of collocation are very curtailed ways of developing learners' proficiency in productive skills. Last but not least, this study will imply that future studies can examine deeper how in-service teachers generate the teaching approach to help EFL learners in teaching collocation.

Conclusion

Summary of the study

In summary, research suggests that the way in-service teachers perceive instructional collocation can positively influence the productive skills performance of EFL learners. The research also investigates the role of collocation in teaching and how the usage of collocation with EFL learners produces successful results in the learning process. Furthermore, the study plans to investigate teachers' understanding of collocation, the value of collocation education in classrooms, and the difficulties of teaching collocation. During the research, in-service teachers studying in a master's class at Van Lang University taught English classes to EFL learners at the intermediate level. Participants respond to the collocation pattern and can use their skills to teach and support their learners' speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, they recognize that understanding collocation has positive advantages, as it can help EFL learners improve their language proficiency and productive skills. However, teaching collocation in English will be difficult for teachers who do not comprehend their learners' performance. Teachers occasionally expect to improve the teaching environment because of time constraints and the source of instructional collocation. Thus, it is vital to cope with obstacles and independence for many teachers to improve their professional skills and thoroughly prepare curriculum content to make each lesson more dynamic and interesting in the classroom.

Limitation

The study evaluated many theoretical studies from scholarly sources and compiled the conclusions, although it still has limitations. The first limitation of the study is that twenty participants were unable to generalize the results due to a lack of time, although the fact that the researchers are aware that a survey can be undertaken to obtain information from other teachers. Another drawback of the study is a lack of concern for the level of learners. Furthermore, one of the study's shortcomings is the lack of a mixed-method interview to explore the issues that teachers have when teaching collocation.

Recommendation for future research

Various ideas for future research on the same topic have emerged based on present discoveries and probable constraints. Firstly, the topic can continue to have more participants in other Masterclasses and teachers in different schools. Secondly, this survey is limited to the level specified in the questionnaire. Thus, the researcher must update the question type connected to the instruction degree. Furthermore, this study investigates teaching collocation, which allows the researcher to undertake another part of teaching strategies, such as how teachers execute the teaching method in classroom contexts.

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our gratitude to all the respondents who took part in our survey. We also would like to send our appreciation to Van Lang University at 68/69 Dang Thuy Tram Street, Ward 13, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where our research was uploaded.

References

- Adridosh, M. M. (2023). Investigating Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Collocations in Undergraduate EFL Classrooms in Libyan Context. *Journal asmarya*, 12-1, (1) 39.
- Ahmed, Z. A. A. (2012). *English lexical collocation knowledge of Libyan university learners*. Bangor University (United Kingdom). Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/English-lexical-collocation-knowledge-of-Libyan-Ahmed/747dea27ce71f619b72419ccb1f9d16130eb7dd7>
- Attar, E. M., & Allami, H. (2013). The effects of teaching lexical collocations on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and practice in language studies*, 3(6), 1070-1079. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.6.1070-1079>
- Bahns, J., & Eldaw, M. (1993). Should we teach EFL learners collocation? *System*, 21(1), 104-114. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X\(93\)90010-E](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X(93)90010-E)
- Bahumaid, S. (2006). Collocation in English-Arabic translation. *Babel*, 52(2), 133-152. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/babel.52.2.03bah>
- Bartsch, S., & Evert, S. (2014). Towards a Firthian notion of collocation. *Vernetzungsstrategien Zugriffsstrukturen und automatisch ermittelte Angaben in Internetwörterbüchern*, 2(1), 48-61.
- Begagić, M. (2014). English language learners' productive and receptive knowledge of collocations. *Explorations in English Language and Linguistics*, 2(1), 46-67. <https://doi.org/10.1515/exell-2016-0003>
- Benson, M. (1985). Collocations and idioms. *Dictionaries, lexicography and language learning*, 61-68.
- Bui, T. L. (2021). The role of collocations in the English teaching and learning. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1(2), 99-109.
- Deveci, T. (2004). Why and How to Teach Collocations. *English teaching forum online*. Retrieved March 3, 2007 from www.exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol42/no2/p16.
- Do, N. H. M., & Le, Q. T. (2023). Lexical collocation errors in essay writing: A study into Vietnamese EFL students and their perceptions. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, 2(2), 1-20. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.23221>
- Duong, D. T. H., & Nguyen, N. D. T. (2021, March). Using collocations to enhance academic writing: A survey study at Van Lang University. In *17th International Conference of the Asia Association of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (AsiaCALL 2021)* (pp. 275-287). Atlantis Press. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210226.035>
- Evert, S. (2008). Corpora and collocations. *Corpus linguistics. An international handbook*, 2, 1212-1248. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108992602>

- Farghal, M., & Obiedat, H. (1995). Collocations: A neglected variable in EFL. *IRAL*, 33(4), 315-333. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/iral.1995.33.4.315>
- Firth, J. (1957). Modes of meaning. In J. Firth (Ed.), *Papers in linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hashemi, M., Azizinezhad, M., & Dravishi, S. (2012). Collocation a neglected aspect in teaching and learning EFL. *Procedia-Social and behavioral sciences*, 31, 522-525. DOI:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.097>
- Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In L. Michael (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further developments in the lexical approach* (pp. 47–69). Language Teaching Publications. Retrieved from <https://tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume4/ej16/ej16r12/>
- Hsu, J. Y., & Chiu, C. Y. (2008). Lexical collocations and their relation to speaking proficiency of college EFL learners in Taiwan. *Asian EFL Journal*, 10(1), 181-204. Retrieved from <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/main-editions-new/lexical-collocations-and-their-relation-to-speaking-proficiency-of-college-efl-learners-in-taiwan/index.htm>
- Hsu, J. Y., & Chiu, C. Y. (2008). Lexical collocations and their relation to speaking proficiency of college EFL learners in Taiwan. *Asian EFL Journal*, 10(1), 181-204. Retrieved from <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/main-editions-new/lexical-collocations-and-their-relation-to-speaking-proficiency-of-college-efl-learners-in-taiwan/index.htm>
- Laufer, B. (2010). The contribution of dictionary use to the production and retention of collocations in a second language. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 24(1), 29-49. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/ecq039>
- Lê Linh, H. (2017). *Thanh Hoa High School Teachers' perceptions Of Collocation And Collocation Teaching* (Doctoral dissertation, Đại Học Quốc Gia Hà Nội Trường Đại Học Ngoại Ngữ Khoa Sư Phạm Tiếng Anh).
- Lewis, M. (1993). *The Lexical Approach*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications. *REYS, S.; BRIONES, S.; POCOVI, MB de*, 53-59. Retrieved from <https://tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume1/ej02/ej02r3/>
- Lewis, M. (Ed.). (2000). *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Liu, C. P. (1999). A study of Chinese Culture university freshmen's collocational competence: "Knowledge" as an example. *Hwa Kang Journal of English language & literature*, 5, 81-99. Retrieved from <http://ir.lib.pccu.edu.tw/handle/987654321/22380>
- Mahmoud, A. (2005). Collocation errors made by Arab learners of English. *Asian EFL journal*, 5(2), 117-126. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261961111_Collocation_errors_made_by_Arab_learners_of_English
- Martyńska, M. (2004). Do English language learners know collocations?. *Investigationes linguisticae*, 11, 1-12. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.14746/il.2004.11.4>
- Mutlu & Kaslioglu (2016). Turkish EFL teachers and learners perceptions of collocations. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*. (pp. 81-99). Retrieved from:

- <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/262852>
- Nattinger, J. (2014). Some current trends in vocabulary teaching. In *Vocabulary and language teaching* (pp. 62-82). Routledge.
- Nguyen, H. X. C. (2024). Teaching and Learning Collocations in the Vietnamese Context: Teachers' Voices. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, 15(1), 71-89.
<https://doi.org/10.54855/acoj.241515>
- Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Learners of English*. 2002. Oxford: OUP.
- Pawley, A., & Syder, F. H. (2014). Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Nativelike selection and nativelike fluency. In *Language and communication* (pp. 191-226). Routledge.
- Phuong, D. T. (2012). *Collocations in "New Headway Pre-Intermediate" and common errors in English collocations by non English major learners at Hanoi University of Science and Technology*. Unpublished Master Thesis. University of Languages and International Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Prodromou, L. (2003). Collocation. Retrieved April 24th, 2024, from the Language Study section of the Macmillan Essential Dictionary Webzine, published by Macmillan Publishers, <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/med-magazine/May2004/19-Language-Study-Collocati-on-UK.htm>.
- Shih, H. H. (2000, February). Collocation deficiency in a learner corpus of English: From an overuse perspective. In *Proceedings of the 14th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, information and Computation*. pp. 281-288.
- Sung, J. (2003). *English lexical collocations and their relation to spoken fluency of adult non-native speakers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
- Wray, A (2000). *Formulaic Sequences in Second Language Teaching: Principle and Practice, Applied Linguistics*. 21(4) pp. 463-489. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/21.4.463>.
- Wray, A. 2002. *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ying, Y., & Hendricks, A. (2004). Collocation awareness in the writing process. *Reflections of English Language Teaching*, 3, 51-78. Retrieved from <https://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/51-78yanghendricks.pdf>

Biodata

Truong Van Ngoc Khanh is a postgraduate at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, discusses in-service teachers' in teaching collocations to EFL students. The Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University is where she is currently conducting her research.

Van Cong Hoang Truong is a postgraduate of Van Lang University's Faculty of Foreign Languages in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Viet Nam, discusses in-service teachers' in teaching collocations to EFL students. The Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University is where he is currently conducting his research.