



Promoting EFL Reading Comprehension Skills among Secondary School Students through a Collocation –Based Program

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of a collocation- based program on Promoting EFL Reading Comprehension skills among secondary school students. The researcher hypothesized that the suggested program would be effective in developing interpretive and critical reading comprehension skills. Participants of the study included a group of Second year secondary school students (N=40) from Minya Elkamh secondary school for girls. A reading comprehension pretest posttest was used to obtain data. Design of the study was one group experimental pre-posttest. The material of the study included a collocation- based program. Participants were pre-assessed before treatment. The posttest reading comprehension test was presented to the study sample after intervention Findings were analyzed statistically through the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) program. T-value, mean scores, standard deviation and degree of freedom were calculated.. Findings proved the effectiveness of the collocation based program in developing reading comprehension interpretive and critical skills. Recommendations and suggestions for further research were presented.

Key words:**Reading comprehension & collocations .****Introduction**

Reading in a foreign or second language is often a laborious process, often caused by underdeveloped word recognition skills, among other things, of second and foreign language readers (Gorsuch & Taguchi; 2008). Reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. It 's a complex process in which many skills are used . The act of comprehending text involves a person's ability to know and use strategies (metacognition) before, during, and after reading to successfully understand what is being read (.Many factors affect this process, such as reader, text, work, context and vocabulary (Yilderm et al. , 2011) . Reader factor includes prior knowledge, linguistic skill, and metacognitive awareness. The text factor encompasses genre, structure, and content of reading material; work factor includes aim of reading effort; and context factor involves socio-cultural environment and quality of reading instruction. Vocabulary is associated with all of these factors .

The goal, therefore, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences (Woolley, 2011). In developing reading comprehension skill, therefore, ability to read well and possess a good command of vocabulary should be seriously encouraged.

2.5.2. Purpose Of Reading:

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. According to Harmer (2001) , students learn to read for many purposes such as careers, study, and simply for pleasure . Moreover, reading texts provides good models for English writing. It also provides opportunities to study language; vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way we construct sentences, paragraphs and texts. Also, reading texts introduces interesting topics, stimulate discussion and excite imaginative responses.

The purpose(s) for reading and the type of text determine the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies that readers need to apply to achieve comprehension. Reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understand how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose (NCLR, 2004).

Martin (1991) mentioned that the purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what you already know. He stated that reading comprehension requires motivation, mental frameworks for holding ideas, concentration and good study techniques. These techniques are as follows:

1. Develop a broad background by reading newspapers, magazines and books.
2. Know the structure of paragraphs.
3. Identify the type of reasoning. Does the author use cause and effect reasoning, hypothesis, model building, induction or deduction?
4. Anticipate and predict the author and predict future ideas and questions.
5. Look for the method of organization.
6. Create motivation and interest.
7. Pay attention to supporting cues.
8. Highlight, summarize and review.
9. Build a good vocabulary.
10. Use a systematic reading technique like SQR3.
11. Monitor attention, concentration and effectiveness

Reading comprehension is important for many reasons:

- The large amounts of text students must read in content-area classes.
- Textbook-based instruction assumes that students can read and derive meaning from the text.
- Text comprehension means that the reader is able to understand how the reading material is structured, that is, the way ideas are interrelated and the subordination of some ideas to others to convey meaning to readers.

- Text may be organized by a narrative (story) or expository (informational) structure. Effective reading comprehension strategies are needed to gain meaning from these different text structures.

According to Hoing (2001) proficient readers make decisions and select reading strategies that fit the text and their reading purpose. These key strategies include:

- Questioning the text and then searching for answers.
- Clarifying unknown words or concepts.
- Making predictions then confirming or changing them.
- Summarizing chunks of text while reading .
- Making inferences.
- Using context clues , text aids, graphics and contextual clues .
- Visualizing what they are reading .
- Connecting text to prior knowledge and previously read sections.
- Understanding purpose of the text.

2.5.3.1. Characteristics Of Good Readers According To The Texas Reading Initiative (2002):

- Good readers tend to set goals for their reading.
- Good readers read words accurately and quickly, and simultaneously deal with the meanings of those words, phrases and sentences .
- Good readers connect the meaning of one sentence to the meaning of another.
- Good readers interact with the text by asking themselves questions about its content and reflecting on its ideas.
- Good readers continuously evaluate their predictions and revise them as needed
- Good readers are selective as they read. They are likely to focus more of their attention on the parts of the text that are most closely tied to their reading goals.
- Good readers often make inferences.

- Some good readers may also create mental images, or visualize a setting, event, or character to help them understand a passage in a text.

There is wide agreement among reading researchers that every time a reader reads anything, they make use of the following strategies:

- **Activating and Using Background Knowledge:** This strategy requires readers to activate their background knowledge and to use that knowledge to help them understand what they are reading.
- **Setting Purposes**
- **Predicting.** This strategy involves the ability of readers to get meaning from a text by making informed predictions
- **Making inference.** This strategy requires readers to evaluate or draw conclusions from information in a text.
- **Decoding Text :** identify word and sentence meanings
- **Summarizing :** Summarizing is an important strategy because it can enable readers to recall text quickly. It also can make readers more aware of text organization, of what is important in a text and of how ideas are related
- **Visualizing :** This involves the ability of readers to make mental images of a text as a way to understand processes or events they encounter during reading.
- **Generating and Asking Questions.** The ability of readers to ask themselves relevant questions as they read is especially valuable in helping them to integrate information, identify main ideas, and summarize information. Asking the right questions allows good readers to focus on the most important information in a text
- **Monitoring understanding** - This involves the ability of readers to know when they understand what they read, when they do not understand, and to use appropriate strategies to improve their understanding when it is blocked
- **Using Clarifying and Corrective strategies** where needed
- **Reflecting on** and Applying the meaning that has been made to new situations

In brief, because good readers have conscious control of their strategy use, they are able to make decisions about which strategies to use and when to use them. Most good readers do this with little or no explicit strategy instruction. Most students, however, can benefit greatly from organized, explicit instruction that teaches them to use specific strategies for understanding text.

Dunn et al. (2008) conducted a study that involved an examination of the impact of a self-questioning strategy on the text-reader assisted comprehension skills of six students in grades five through eight with reading disabilities (RD). The purpose of their study was to determine the degree older children with RD comprehend text-reader assisted text that is at or above their actual grade level and whether comprehension of text-reader assisted text could be enhanced if students with RD were taught and prompted to used self-questioning strategies. Students were asked to listen to and visually track sixth to seventh grade level text that was read to them using the Kurzweil 3000 text-reader software. They were then asked to answer seven multiple-choice inferential questions and to summarize the passage in a retell. Data were analyzed using a multiple-baseline, single subject design and a repeated-measure ANOVA. Results suggested that students with RD could have comprehension difficulties that are not resolved by text-reader software, and that self-questioning strategies significantly improve their ability to comprehend text supported by text-reader software. Results, however, varied between students.

Ali's (2001) study aimed at identifying the effect of using the Jigsaw Reading technique on the EFL pre-service teachers' English language reading anxiety and comprehension. The subjects of the study were seventy-two students enrolled in the third year English Department, Faculty of Education, Cairo University, Fayoum Branch. They were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group; each consisted of thirty six students. The experimental group was instructed to read sixteen passages using the Jigsaw Reading technique. The control group read the same passages individually. The subjects of both groups were exposed to the same questions after reading each passage for checking their comprehension. The

experiment lasted for two months and a half introducing two reading passages for each group per week. The subjects' reading anxiety was pre- and post-tested using a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) designed by the researcher. Their reading comprehension was also pre- and post-tested using the TOEFL reading comprehension section. Findings of the study showed there was a statistically significant difference between the means of scores obtained by the subjects of the treatment group and those of the control group in foreign language reading anxiety in favor of the treatment group. This indicates that the use of the Jigsaw Reading technique resulted in lowering the foreign language reading anxiety of the treatment group subjects. Findings also showed that the subjects of the treatment group outperformed those of the control group in reading comprehension; something which can be considered as an outcome of reading anxiety reduction. The study presented some recommendations in the light of the results and suggested some topics for further research.

Models of Reading Comprehension:

A key element in explaining reading is the amount to which what the brain already knows affects perception of what is being read (top-down processing). This idea was initially thought to be in contrast to earlier ideas that reading was a linear progression from page to understanding (bottom-up processing), but newer research seems to indicate that both elements play important parts in reading.

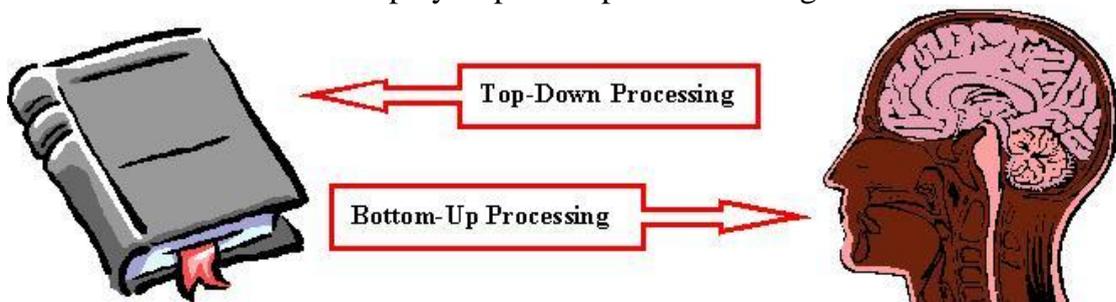


Figure (1): reading processes

When talking about models of reading comprehension, three important principles must be mentioned. According to Griffiths **et al** (2011), these principles are summarized as follows:

1. Text comprehension is a dynamic, interactive process between the individual, the text, the reading activity (i.e., purpose), and the larger socio-cultural context for reading
2. Interactions occur within the individual, involving both top down and bottom up reading and cognitive processes
3. Successful comprehension and retention depends on the ability to reliably access and integrate background knowledge, and the ability to generate, maintain and update iterative forms of meaning constructions.

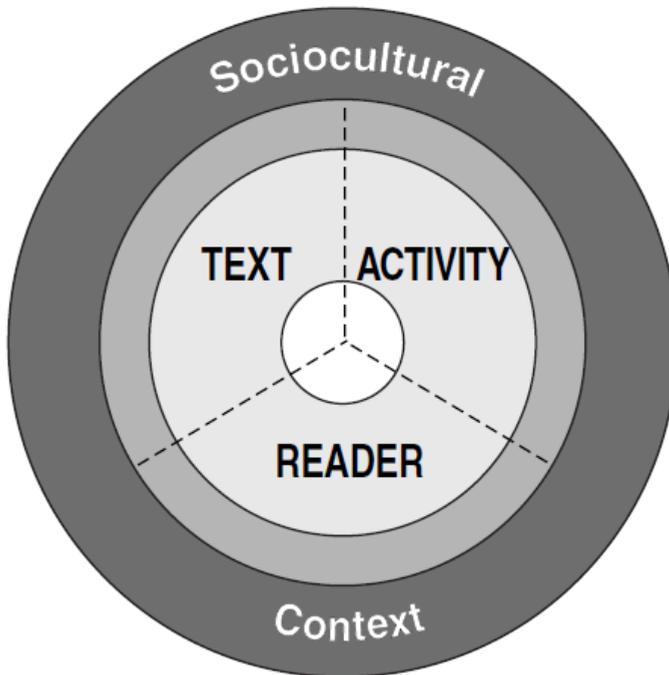
A complete view of the reading comprehension process must account for the dynamic, interactive processes that occur between a *reader*, *text*, and the reading *activity*, within a range of socio-cultural factors. Thus, comprehension entails three elements:

- The *reader* who is doing the comprehending
- The *text* that is to be comprehended
- The *activity* in which comprehension is a part.

The reader element refers to factors that the individual reader brings to the reading comprehension process. This element encompasses reading and cognitive skills, as well as individual psychosocial and biological factors that influence the reading process.

The text element includes factors inherent in the reading material. Examples include text genre (i.e. narrative vs expository), level of text (e.g. introductory vs advanced) and characteristics such as font, graphics and layout. The activity element refers to the reader's purpose and goals (e.g., leisure reading vs. reading to learn) for reading text. These elements are interrelated, and dynamic. The influence of the reader, text and activity elements will vary across the pre-reading, reading and post-reading phases of the reading process.

The sociocultural context is the environmental backdrop for the reading



comprehension process. Factors including, “economic resources, class membership, ethnicity, neighborhood, and school culture, can be seen in oral language practices, in students self-concepts, in the types of literacy activities in which individuals engage, in instructional history, and of course in the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Figure (2): Elements of comprehension , (Adapted from RAND Reading Study Group, 2002)

The reader

To comprehend, a reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities. These include cognitive capacities (e.g., attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualization ability), motivation (a purpose for reading, an interest in the content being read, self-efficacy as a reader), and various types of knowledge (vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of specific comprehension strategies).

The text

The features of text have a large effect on comprehension. Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text. During reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension. These representations include, for example, the surface code (the exact wording of the text), the text base (idea units representing the meaning), and a representation of the mental models embedded in the text. Texts can be difficult or easy, depending on factors inherent in the text, on the relationship between the text and the knowledge and abilities of the reader, and on the activities in which the reader is engaged.

The activity

Reading does not occur in a vacuum. It is done for a purpose, to achieve some end. Activity refers to this dimension of reading. A reading activity involves one or more purposes, some operations to process the text at hand, and the consequences of performing the activity. During reading, the reader processes the text with regard to the purpose. Processing the text involves, beyond decoding, higher-level linguistic and semantic processing and monitoring. Each process is more or less important in different types of reading, including skimming (getting only the gist of text) and studying (reading text with the intent of retaining the information for a period of time).

THE CONTEXT

One important set of reading activities occurs in the context of instruction. Understanding how the reader's purpose for reading and operations are shaped by instruction, and how short- and long-term consequences are influenced by instruction, constitutes a major issue within the research agenda we propose.

Historically, models were developed that represented the reading process as either "bottom-up," starting with the perceptual processing of text and moving upward through word recognition to comprehension, or "top-down," starting with activation of prior knowledge and proceeding downward .

2.5.5.1. The Top- Down Reading Model :

The Top Down Model Reading Process, which involves reading chunks of text, is the polar opposite of the paradigm taught in schools for decades, a process called Bottom Up where students decoded

vocabulary before reading began. This method employs vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge and social construction to derive meaning from text. This type of processing is often easier for poor readers who might have trouble with word recognition but have knowledge of the text topic. Meaning is extrapolated "as a whole" through the student's knowledge. The top-down reading model theory encourages students to focus more on understanding the main ideas of a passage than understanding every word. Even if students do not understand each word, they are likely to grasp the meaning of a text as a whole. Babies learn to speak much the same way. model encourages students to rely on their own knowledge and use context clues to understand new concepts or words.

Example

Pre-reading activities (i.e. activating schema, previewing, and predicting) + background knowledge (cultural, linguistic, syntactic, and historical) = **comprehension**

2.5.5.2. The bottom-up Reading model:

This method of understanding uses knowledge of letter-sound relationships, lexical or word knowledge and syntactic or contextual understanding of the text to make meaning of previously unknown material. This type of processing can be assisted by the teaching of phonemic awareness and sentence structure skills. Students who use only surface structure approaches to understanding often find it difficult to comprehend the text.

Example

letters → letter clusters → words → phrases → sentences → longer text → meaning = **comprehension**

2.5.5.3. The Interactive Reading Model;

The Interactive Reading Model, as developed by David E. Rumelhart in 1977, describes a model of the reading process and the way linguistic elements are processed and interpreted by the brain. The Interactive Model of Reading recognizes that effective reading instruction requires a focus on overall language skills related to letter and letter-sounding knowledge (*surface structure cueing systems*) and background knowledge, vocabulary, and sharing and applying meaning (*deep structure cueing systems*). The model combines both

surface structure systems -- the sensory, bottom-up portion of reading -- with deep structure systems -- the thinking, or top-down, aspects of reading -- to build meaning and memory for all learners. Readers use both knowledge of word structure and background knowledge to interpret the texts they read. For example, a student who encounters an unknown word might use surface structure systems like grapho phonic, or letter-sound, knowledge to decode the word. A different student might find it easier to use deep structure systems like semantic knowledge, such as meaning and vocabulary, to decode the same unknown word. This model allows the reader to bring his own background knowledge to reading and to interact with others to build meaning and memory from the text.

Example

Knowledge base + bottom-up strategies + top-down strategies = comprehension

Interaction (“balance”) of bottom-up and top-down strategies:



figure (3) Surface Structure Systems (the sensory portion of reading)

- Grapho-phonics (letter-sound knowledge): Students/readers decode texts through surface structure letter-sound connections.
- Lexical (word knowledge): Students/readers build a reservoir of words to use in reading and building a lexicon.
- Syntactic (structure of language): Students/readers use structures at word-, sentence- and full-text levels for meaning.

Deep Structure Systems (the thinking portion of reading)

- Semantic (meaning; vocabulary knowledge): Students/readers engage in reading to develop meaning, concepts, and language.
- Schematic (background knowledge): Students/readers use what they know to support new learning.
- Pragmatic (social construction of knowledge): Students/readers use each other and the classroom environment to remember and extend what is read.

How a reader accesses the systems is dependent upon the reader, the context, and the text. And two of the systems, schematic and pragmatic, allow readers opportunities to bring what they know to reading and then interact with others to build meaning and memory.

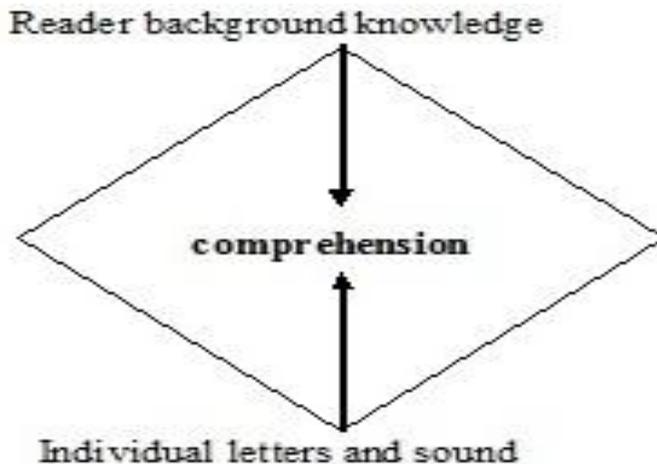


Figure (4): interactive reading approach from : Murtagh (1989)

2.5.6. Reading Comprehension Skills:

The review of literature exploring the operationalization of reading ability has led the inclusion, in Rumpitz's (2003) model, of four skills that are crucial for successful reading: (1) scanning for details; (2) skimming for gist; (3) making inferences; (4) ability to decode and interpret unknown lexical items. According to **Gates (2008)**, reading comprehension is composed of several skill levels that work with various language or text chunks: awareness of phonemes (sounds), decoding skills (taking apart words), fluency (ease and speed of decoding), vocabulary knowledge (word meaning), grammar skills (syntax), and strategy skills (meta-learning skills to figure out what the text is about).

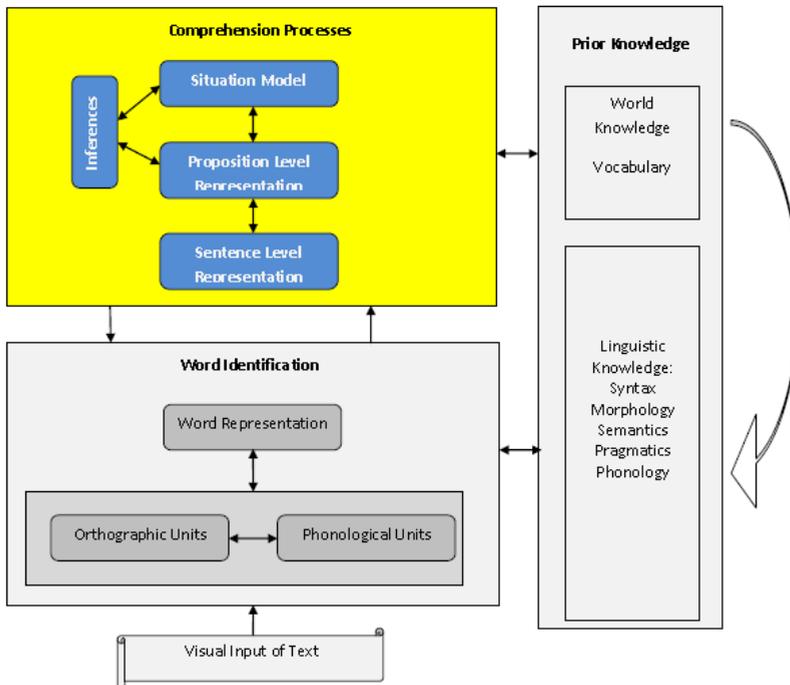


Figure (5): an interactive activation model reading from : Perfitti and Oakhill (2005)

2.5.6.1. Levels Of Comprehension:

According to Mohamed (1999) , Reading comprehension skills are classified into three main levels; the first is *the literal comprehension* level which focuses on reading the passages, hearing the words or viewing the images. It involves identifying the important and essential information. Comprehension at this level involves surface meanings. At this level, teachers can ask students to find information and ideas that are explicitly stated in the text. In addition, it is also appropriate to test vocabulary. According to Karlin(1971), "being able to read for literal meanings, i.e. stated ideas is influenced by one's mastery of word meanings in context'. With guidance, students can distinguish between the important and less important ideas. The second level is the *interpretive* At which the focus shifts to reading between the lines, looking at what is implied by the material under study. It requires students to combine pieces of information in order to make inferences about the author's intent and message. At this level also, students go beyond what is said and read for deeper meanings. Students need to be able to see relationships among ideas. Components of the inferential level include thinking processes such as drawing conclusions, making generalizations and predicting outcomes. At this level, teachers can ask more challenging questions such as asking students to do the following:

- Re-arrange the ideas or topics discussed in the text.
- Explain the author's purpose of writing the text.
- Summarize the main idea when this is not explicitly stated in the text.
- Select conclusions which can be deduced from the text they have read.

The third is the *critical or applied* level whereby ideas and information are evaluated. Guiding students through the applied level shows them how to synthesize information, to read between the lines and to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts, principles and implications presented in the text. At this level, students can be tested on the following skills:

- The ability to differentiate between facts and opinions.
- The ability to recognize persuasive statements .

- The ability to judge the accuracy of the information given in the text.

Helwa (2010) , Shehata (2006) and Mohamed (2009) reported three levels of comprehension and the sub skills related to each one as follows:

2.5.6.2. Literal comprehension:

Literal comprehension is the simplest, most direct form of comprehension (Carnine et al., 1997). This type of comprehension involves literal questions or statements directly expressed in passages. Although many students master this skill naturally, others must receive guidance to understand the literal meaning of text.

- Knowledge of word meaning
- Recall of details directly stated in own words.
- Understanding the grammatical clues.
- Recall of main idea explicitly stated .
- Knowledge of sequence of information presented in a passage.

2.5.6.3. Interpretive comprehension :

According to Grabe (2009), Shehata (2006) and Helwa (2010), this level of comprehension means reading between the lines or making inferences , a process of deriving ideas that are implied, not directly stated. These inferences are made in the main idea, supporting details, sequence, and cause and effect relationships. Inferential comprehension could also involve interpreting figurative language, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, determining the mood, and judging the author's point of view.

- Understanding the ideas and information not explicitly stated in the page.
- Understanding the author's tone , purpose and attitude .
- Infer factual information , main ideas, comparisons, cause/ effect relationships.
- Summarizing.

2.5.6.4. Critical or applied comprehension :

This high level of comprehension requires the reader to use some external criteria from his/her own experience in order to evaluate the quality, values of the writing, the author's reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations. The reader will react emotionally and intellectually with the material. According to Shehata (2006) and Helwa (2010) , critical reading involves the following components:

- Reading the information in a passage indicating its meaning to the reader.
- Analyzing and evaluating the quality of written information.
- Recognizing the author's purpose and tone
- Identifying the author's overall organizational pattern
- Recognizing explicit/implicit relationships between words, phrases, and sentences
- Distinguishing between facts and opinions
- Detecting bias
- Recognizing valid arguments
- Drawing logical inferences and conclusions

2.5.6.5. Text Comprehension And Vocabulary Learning

Comprehension was defined by the Research and Development (RAND) Reading Study Group (RRSG, 2002) as “the process of simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print.” This definition was intended to signal the importance of a number of key features of comprehension: the accurate decoding of print, a process of meaning construction through which inferences and information not available from the print are incorporated into the meaning representation, and active, motivated engagement from the reader. Kara (2013) assured that there is agreement among vocabulary specialists that lexical knowledge is the heart of language learning . One way of vocabulary learning both in the foreign language is reading. It was argued that there is a strong correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary. Research on English as a second language had showed both a positive and significant correlation between learners' vocabulary knowledge and their reading comprehension (Yildirim

et.al. (2011; Webb , 2009; Nagy , 2007 ; Khabiri & Pakzad ,2012 and Akbulut ,2007). .

Baumann (2009) stated that all research about reading comprehension and vocabulary, including correlational, factorial, and readability, has showed that vocabulary is an essential component of reading comprehension. No text comprehension is possible, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's key words. (Laufer, 1997). Reading comprehension is also affected by textually relevant background knowledge and the application of general reading strategies, such as predicting the content of the text, guessing the meaning of unknown words in context, making inferences, recognizing the type of text and text structure, and grasping the main idea of the paragraph (Mehrpour and Rahimi; 2010).

Zhang and Anual (2008) studied the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension with 37 secondary students learning English in Singapore. The Vocabulary Levels Test was used to measure students' vocabulary knowledge. Result showed that students' vocabulary knowledge at the 2000-word and the 3000-word levels were correlated with their reading comprehension. This shows a close relationship between vocabulary knowledge and English reading comprehension. Further, Martin-Chang and Gould (2008) found a strong correlation both between vocabulary and reading comprehension and between reading rate and primary print knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental in reading comprehension because it functions as identical as background knowledge in reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge facilitates decoding, which is a significant part of reading .

Mehrpour and Rahimi (2010) carried out a study to determine the effect of general vocabulary knowledge and gaining familiarity with the specific vocabulary content of a reading or listening comprehension test on a group of Iranian EFL learners' reading and listening comprehension ability. Two group so of male and female English majors (N ¼ 58) participated in the study. In one group (the treatment group), the participants were given a reading comprehension

test accompanied by a glossary which contained the meaning of the most difficult words appearing in the reading comprehension test. In the other group (the control group), the students received the same test without the glossary. The same procedure was followed for a listening comprehension test in the two groups in another session. The analysis of the data revealed that the students in the treatment group significantly outperformed those in the control group in both reading and listening comprehension tests. Further analysis of the data indicated that the learners' knowledge of the general vocabulary content of the reading and listening comprehension texts only affected their performance on the reading comprehension test. The results of the present study shed more light on the influence of knowledge of vocabulary on reading and listening comprehension.

Instructional Procedures that Promote Comprehension:

Based on previous research and effective practice, the following Instructional activities and procedures may be used to help students learn how to coordinate and use a set of key comprehension strategies as they read a variety of texts.

Before Reading

Before reading, the teacher may:

- Motivate students through activities that may increase their interest—book talks, dramatic readings, or displays of art related to the text—making the text relevant to students in some way.
- Activate students' background knowledge important to the content of the text by discussing what students will read and what they already know about its topic and about the text organization.

Students, with some help from the teacher, may:

- Establish a purpose for reading.
- Identify and discuss difficult words, phrases, and concepts in the text.
- Preview the text (by surveying the title, illustrations, and unusual text structures) to make predictions about its content.
- Think, talk, and write about the topic of the text.

During Reading

During reading, the teacher may:

- Remind students to use comprehension strategies as they read and to monitor their understanding.
- Ask questions that keep students on track and focus their attention on main ideas and important points in the text.
- Focus attention on parts in a text that require students to make inferences.
- Call on students to summarize key sections or events.
- Encourage students to return to any predictions they have made before reading to see if they are confirmed by the text.

Students, with some help from the teacher, may:

- Determine and summarize important ideas and supportive details.
- Make connections between and among important ideas in the text.
- Integrate new ideas with existing background knowledge.
- Ask themselves questions about the text.
- Sequence events and ideas in the text.
- Offer interpretations of and responses to the text.
- Check understanding by paraphrasing or restating important and/or difficult sentences and paragraphs.
- Visualize characters, settings, or events in a text.

After Reading

After reading, the teacher may:

- Guide discussion of the reading.
- Ask students to recall and tell in their own words important parts of the text.
- Offer students opportunities to respond to the reading in various ways, including through writing, dramatic play, music, readers' theatre, videos, debate, or pantomime.

Students, with some help from the teacher, may:

- Evaluate and discuss the ideas encountered in the text.

- Apply and extend these ideas to other texts and real life situations.
- Summarize what was read by retelling the main ideas.
- Discuss ideas for further reading.

1. Collocations:

One of the most problematic areas for foreign language learning is collocation. It is often seen as arbitrary and overwhelming, a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to the attainment of native-like fluency. Laybutt 's (2009) study takes an approach suggested by recent corpus research by investigating the functional role of collocation for cohesion within a genre-specific corpus of written sports reports (WSR). Through a comparison with a large reference corpus, the study found that certain key collocations contributed to cohesion both within individual texts, or what will be termed `intra-textual` cohesion, and also across texts within the genre, or `intertextual` cohesion. It was also found that many of these collocations are the result of underlying metaphors. The study suggests that, for foreign language learners, focusing on this functional role of collocation within genre may provide a more systematic and manageable technique for the study of collocation.

Lewis (2000:132) defines collocation as the way in which words co-occur in natural text in statistically significant ways . Also he defines it as the strength of association or the probability of two words occurring together (Lewis ,1973). For Nattinger and DeCarrio (1997), collocations are defined as strings of specific lexical items that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance, such as rancid butter and curry favor (p.36). While for James (1998), collocations are the other words any particular word normally keeps company with (p. 152). Yildiz (2012; 28) defines collocation as a sequence of words or terms which co-occur more often than would be expected by chance. Hill (2000) suggests four kinds of collocations: 1) unique collocations e.g. foot the bill, 2) strong collocations e.g. moved to tears; 3) weak collocations e.g. a good weekend and lastly 4) medium-strength collocations, e.g. do the laundry. Collocation is not determined by

logic or frequency, but is arbitrary, decided only by linguistic convention (Lewis, 2002; 111). Within the lexical approach, special attention is directed to collocations and expressions that include institutionalized utterances and sentence frames and heads.

5.1. Classification of collocations

Collocations fall into two major categories:

grammatical collocations, collocations that involve grammatical structure, e.g. *turn on the radio*. Grammatical/syntactic collocations relate to combining a main word with a grammatical word, such as an adjective + a preposition (happy about, suspicious of, absent from), a verb + a preposition (talk about, participate in, know of / about), or a noun + a preposition (research on, approach to).

Table (1) Grammatical collocation by Benson et al. (1997).

| Patterns | Rules | Examples |
|----------|--|--|
| G1 | noun + preposition | <i>The blockade of enemy ports</i> by our navy. |
| G2 | noun + to + infinitive | They made <i>an attempt to do it</i> . |
| G3 | noun + that-clause | He took <i>an oath that he would do his duty</i> . |
| G4 | preposition + noun | We discovered it <i>by accident</i> . |
| G5 | adjective + preposition | They were <i>angry at my friends</i> . |
| G6 | adjective + to + infinitive | She is <i>ready to go</i> . |
| G7 | adjective + that-clause | It is <i>necessary that he be replaced immediately</i> . |
| G8 | 19 verb patterns, including: verb + to + infinitive, verb + gerund, verb + object 1 + object 2, and others | <i>She continued to write.</i> <i>They enjoy watching TV.</i> <i>The police fined him fifty dollars.</i> |

Note. Adapted from Benson *et al.*, 1997, pp. xvi-xxviii. A grammatical collocation is “a phrase consisting of a dominant word (noun, adjective, or verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause” (p. xv).

Table (2) Lexical collocations by Benson et al. (1997).

| Patterns | Rules | Examples |
|----------|---|--|
| L1 | verb (creation/activation) + noun | She <i>does the laundry</i> everyday. |
| L2 | verb (eradication/nullification) + noun | The teacher <i>declined</i> our invitation. |
| L3 | adjective + noun / noun + noun | The room has a <i>sour smell</i> . |
| L4 | noun + verb (action) | <i>Bombs exploded</i> across Bangladesh. |
| L5 | noun (unit) + of + noun | David gave Elisa a <i>bouquet of flowers</i> . |
| L6 | adverb + adjective | They are <i>closely acquainted</i> . |
| L7 | verb + adverb | They <i>argued heatedly</i> in that debate. |

Note. Adapted from Benson *et al.*, 1997, pp. xxx-xxxv. Typical lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs” (p. xxx).

1. Unique collocations: These refer to collocations that are fixed and cannot be replaced by an/other word/s and are highly predictable (p. 51). Hill has given an example, We shrug our shoulders explaining that shrug is used only with shoulders, not with our head or any other parts of the body.

2. Strong collocations: These are not unique collocations but are strong or very strong. Strong collocations have a few other possible collocates. For example, the word rancid can be used with only a few words such as butter and oil.

3. Weak collocations: These refer to words that may have a number of word partners and can be easily predicted such as dark green, light green, pale green, bright green, emerald green, lime green, lush green, rich green, olive green, dull green, etc.

4. Medium-strength collocations: These refer to collocations that can sometimes be weak collocations; however, they are not common for EFL/ESL learners, such as a door key and a key person. Normally learners already know each individual word but not as the whole phrase.

Hill has suggested that this kind of collocation should strongly be emphasized in class.

Hsu (2007) investigated the use of English lexical collocations and their relation to the online writing of Taiwanese college English majors and non-English majors. Data for the study were collected from 41 English majors and 21 non-English majors at a national university of science and technology in southern Taiwan. Each student was asked to take a 45-minute online English writing test, administered by the web-based writing program, Criterion Version 7.1 (Educational Testing Services) to examine the subjects' use of lexical collocations (i.e., frequency and variety). The test was also used to measure writing fluency of the two student groups. Test results were examined to answer the two major questions for correlation (1) between the subjects' frequency of lexical collocations and their writing and (2) between the subjects' variety of lexical collocations and their writing. The study findings indicated that: (1) there seemed to be a positive correlation between Taiwanese college EFL learners' frequency of lexical collocations and their online writing scores; and (2) there seemed to be a significantly positive correlation between the subjects' variety of lexical collocations and their online writing scores.

Seesink (2007) examined how teaching academic vocabulary collocations affected the writing development of six students in an Intensive English Program (IEP). Collocation was presented and taught both in-class and via Moodle, the course management software used as the online environment. The study also looked at how these learners perceived blended instruction. These learners came from various language backgrounds. Data were collected via a questionnaire, in-class observations, and learners' journals, writing samples, mid-course reflections, online logs, and interviews. The class instructor also provided data in the form of instructor's journals and an interview.

The results demonstrated that prior to teaching collocations, the teacher needed to clarify the concept and its importance to learners. Moreover, the results showed that learners benefited from explicit teaching of vocabulary collocations. Regarding blended instruction, the learners perceived the online component as a review/practice tool rather than an integral part of the course. The study also revealed a certain lack of commitment with the online exercises, especially when these exercises were not directly affecting the learners' grades.

Webb & Kagimoto (2009) investigated the effects of receptive and productive vocabulary tasks on learning collocation and meaning. Japanese English as a foreign language students learned target words in three glossed sentences and in a cloze task. To determine the effects of the treatments, four tests were used to measure receptive and productive knowledge of collocation and meaning. The results showed that both tasks led to significant gains in knowledge with little difference between the size of the gains. When participants were grouped according to level, the productive task was more effective for higher level learners, and the receptive task was more effective for lower level learners. Mean scores on the productive tests were slightly higher for both tasks on the test of meaning than on the test of collocation. However, the findings indicate knowledge of collocation may be acquired at a rate similar to that of meaning, and that tasks which focus on collocation, as well as meaning, may be effective.

In the same field, Seesink (2007) conducted a case study that examined how teaching academic vocabulary collocations affected the writing development of six students in an Intensive English Program (IEP). Collocation was presented and taught both in-class and via Moodle, the course management software used as the online environment. The study also looked at how these learners perceived blended instruction. These learners came from various language backgrounds. Data were collected via a questionnaire, in-class observations, and learners' journals, writing samples, mid-course reflections, online logs, and interviews. The class instructor also provided data in the form of instructor's journals and an interview. The results demonstrated that prior to teaching collocations, the teacher needed to clarify the concept and its importance to learners. Moreover, the results showed that learners benefited from explicit teaching of vocabulary collocations. Regarding blended instruction, the learners perceived the online component as a review/practice tool rather than an integral part of the course. The study also revealed a certain lack of commitment with the online exercises, especially when these exercises were not directly affecting the learners' grades.

Durrant (2009) described the creation of one listing of positionally-variable academic collocations and evaluated the extent to which it is likely to be useful to students from across a wide range of disciplines. A number of key findings emerged. First, cross-disciplinary collocations differ in type from the collocations on which most researchers have traditionally focused in that they tend not to be combinations of two lexical words, but rather pairings of one lexical and one grammatical word. Second, most of the words which are found in academic collocations are not found on Coxhead's influential Academic Word List. This, it is argued, reflects a serious methodological weakness in Coxhead's listing. Third, the vocabulary needs of students in the arts and humanities are characteristically different from those of students in other disciplines. Researchers and teachers therefore need to deal with these learners separately. The paper finishes by making a number of recommendations for future developments in this area.

Hsu's (2007) study investigated the use of English lexical collocations and their relation to the online writing of Taiwanese college English majors and non-English majors. Data for the study were collected from 41 English majors and 21 non-English majors at a national university of science and technology in southern Taiwan. Each student was asked to take a 45-minute online English writing test, administered by the web-based writing program, Criterion Version 7.1 (Educational Testing Services) to examine the subjects' use of lexical collocations (i.e., frequency and variety). The test was also used to measure writing fluency of the two student groups. Test results were examined to answer the two major questions for correlation (1) between the subjects' frequency of lexical collocations and their writing and (2) between the subjects' variety of lexical collocations and their writing. The study findings indicated that: (1) there seemed to be a positive correlation between Taiwanese college EFL learners' frequency of lexical collocations and their online writing scores; and (2) there seemed to be a significantly positive correlation between the subjects' variety of lexical collocations and their online writing scores.

Cortes's (2006) study focused on the teaching of a special type of recurrent word combinations called lexical bundles to a group of university students in a writing-intensive history class. Pre- and post-instruction analyses were conducted on students' class assignments in order to identify the use of these lexical bundles. In addition, alternative expressions used with functions similar to those of these bundles were analyzed in students' final written production for the course. The findings of the study reflected no difference between pre- post instruction

production of lexical bundles but they indicated an increase in students' awareness of and interest in these expressions.

Collocations versus Multiword Lexical Units:

Institutionalized phrases or **collocations** are known to be syntactically and semantically regular to a large extent, but statistically idiosyncratic. In other words, collocations are conventional associations of words whose co-occurrence happens more often than by chance. By contrast, lexicalized MWEs or **multiword lexical units** (MWUs) involve some degree of lexical, syntactic, and/or semantic idiosyncrasy, but may or may not be observed with higher than expected frequency in a given context. In other words, a multiword lexical unit is a combination of two or more words, not necessarily contiguous, that together form a single unit of meaning. MWUs are semantically idiosyncratic to some extent, i.e., the unitary meaning of the expression cannot be determined merely by combining the meanings of the parts. They are also syntactically peculiar, i.e., they often behave differently from similar-on-the-surface combinations that are syntactic structures rather than lexical units . Lexis is seen by Lewis not as a vocabulary list, but as a set of lexical items, most of which are multi-word chunks. Chunks include collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions and idioms, and according to Lewis, occupy a crucial role in facilitating language production, being the key to fluency (Mors,2001).

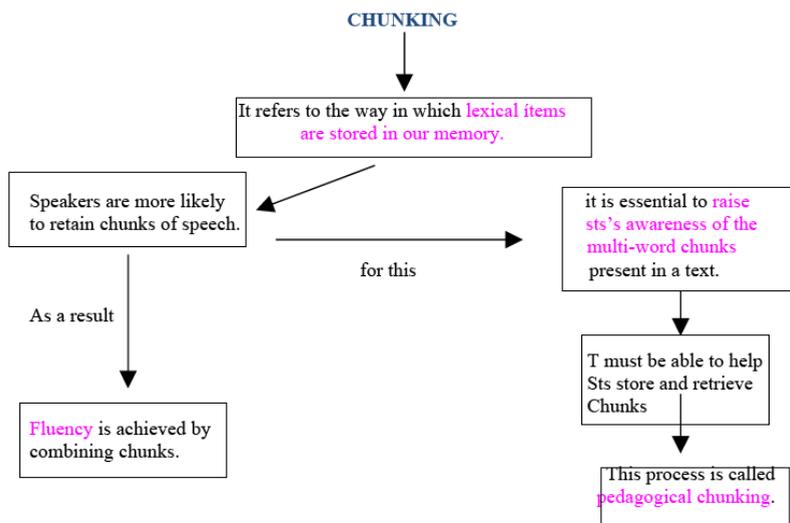


Figure (6): chunking

Yu (2009) investigated whether two different means of learning the word sequence ‘despite the fact (that)’ lead to differential outcomes of the acquisition of the grammatical structure imbedded in the word string which is, due to L1 transfer, especially problematic for Chinese learners of English. The participants of the study were randomly divided into two groups. While one group was taught the grammatical structure under investigation through explicit instruction, the other group was required to commit the word string to memorization through repetition or recitation without being given any explicit instruction. It turns out, following the results of subsequent tests, that the recitation group significantly outperformed the instruction group in terms of procedural knowledge whereas the instruction group outperformed the recitation group on declarative knowledge. The inference that can be drawn from the study, among other things, is that the memorization of the whole word string may facilitate the acquisition of the imbedded structure, especially on the procedural level, whereas explicit instruction can only exert visible influence on the awareness of knowledge. One explanation for the result is that ‘despite the fact (that)’ was memorized as an unanalyzed whole, i.e.

chunk. It is suggested that formal criteria for grouping phrases be introduced in language teaching programmes.

In another study Cortes's (2006) focused on the teaching of a special type of recurrent word combinations called lexical bundles to a group of university students in a writing-intensive history class. Pre- and post-instruction analyses were conducted on students' class assignments in order to identify the use of these lexical bundles. In addition, alternative expressions used with functions similar to those of these bundles were analyzed in students' final written production for the course. The findings of the study reflected no difference between pre- and post- instruction production of lexical bundles but they indicated an increase in students' awareness of and interest in these expressions.

In a similar study, Biber & Barbieri (2007) investigated the use of lexical bundles in a wide range of spoken and written university registers, including both instructional registers and student advising/management registers (e.g., office hours, class management talk, written syllabi, etc.). The findings show that lexical bundles are even more prevalent in non-academic university registers than they are in the core instructional registers. Most surprisingly, lexical bundles are very common in written course management (e.g., course syllabi), in contrast to previous research which showed bundles to be much more common in speech than in writing.

Zhao (2009). investigated whether second language learners' lexical chunks competence in vocabulary learning has any correlation with their language production through analysing results from a multiple-choice chunk test and a writing test. In addition, if the research shows that there does exist some relationship between these two competences, some pedagogical suggestions on using lexical chunks instruction in L2 learners' language acquisition will be brought forward.

Also, Lindstromberg & Boers (2008) explored complementary means of facilitating chunk-learning. Evidence has been reported that L2 chunks which exhibit alliteration are significantly easier for learners to remember than similar, non-repetitive chunks. In the present paper we demonstrate that an evidently less salient kind of phonemic repetition, assonance, also has significant mnemonic effect. The relevance of this for language pedagogy is underscored by estimates suggesting that phonemic repetition, including assonance, is ubiquitous in (English) phraseology.

Hyland's (2008) paper explores the forms, structures and functions of 4-word bundles in a 3.5 million word corpus of research articles, doctoral dissertations and Master's theses in four disciplines to learn something of disciplinary variations in their frequencies and preferred uses. The analysis shows that bundles are not only central to the creation of academic discourse, but that they offer an important means of differentiating written texts by discipline

Why collocations should be taught

Hill (2000) states that collocation should play an important part in our teaching from lesson one (p. 60). Balcı& Çakır (2012) reported that teaching of collocations in English foreign language classes did not get enough attention; as a result, students learning English as a foreign language are weak in collocation use. Rather than teaching vocabulary as single lexical items which causes a lexical incompetence on the part of learners, students must be made aware of the necessity of acquiring collocations (Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Fan, 2009).

The lexical approach

We could not talk about vocabulary teaching nowadays without mentioning Lewis (1993), whose controversial, thought-provoking ideas have been shaking the ELT world since its publication (Moras, 2001). In recent years a new approach to second language teaching has been developed: the Lexical Approach. It has been presented as an alternative to grammar-based approaches, with a new emphasis on lexis. Lewis (1973) suggested that the Lexical Approach is based on the idea that language is made up of other structural elements besides what we traditionally think of as grammar. The lexical approach focuses on developing learners' proficiency with words and word combinations. It is based on the idea that an

important part of language acquisition is the ability to produce lexical phrases as chunks and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993,p. 95). Lewis insists that he is offering 'a principled approach, much more than a random collection of ideas that work' (p.205) and he defines approach as being 'an integrated set of theoretical and practical beliefs, embodying both syllabus and method' (LA, p. 2).

As Lewis maintains, we deliberately try to think of collocations, and to present these collocations in our expressions instead of individual words. That is, rather than trying to break things into ever smaller pieces, we have a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic ways (Lewis, 1997). *Lian (2007)* discussed the lexical approach in college English teaching and learning. He stated that the lexical approach can help students learn to use English in an idiomatic way rather than in a Chinese way which may cause misunderstanding or confusion of native English speakers. As for the college English Teaching in China, he assured that the lexical approach works better than the traditional word-based teaching and learning. It can help students to learn “real” or “authentic” English and improve the students’ ability to use English in all-around way.

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The collocation based Program:

Lewis proposes the " *Observe – Hypothesize – Experiment* " paradigm instead of the traditional model " *Present-Practice-Perform* .

Lewis (1996) points out that the student first observes or notices an aspect of the language which is collocations , then he comes up with a 'hunch ' as to how he might communicate in a given situation , which he then tries out on a more advanced speaker of the language. The teacher helps students make explicit their perceptions of similarity and differences and then by selecting the further input materials or providing the learners with good questions about the input , helps them to correct , clarify and deepen those perceptions. Methodologically, it implies activities which involve sorting , matching, identifying and describing. The cycle repeats itself . The paradigm has the student build his own knowledge of the foreign language rather than having it prepackaged for him (Lewis,1993).

Lewis (1996) states that there is no suggestion that these three elements occur in learner sequence, but only that all three occur, perhaps in parallel , or in different order in different occasions. The reciprocal relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension has been recognised and best promoted by a group of scholars ,the first of them was Michael Lewis who introduced a new paradigm for developing vocabulary on a lexical base . This paradigm is called, (Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment) "OHE". According to Lewis (1993), the PPP paradigm is teacher –centred and it gives priority to accuracy on the expense of fluency, it's misleading. But, Lewis' new paradigm ,OHE , is learner-centred and it's based on the belief that out of fluency comes accuracy. According to the traditional paradigm, PPP, errors were regarded as representing failure . But according to the OHE paradigm, they are regarded as creative experiments.

The paradigm's stages are outlined as follows:

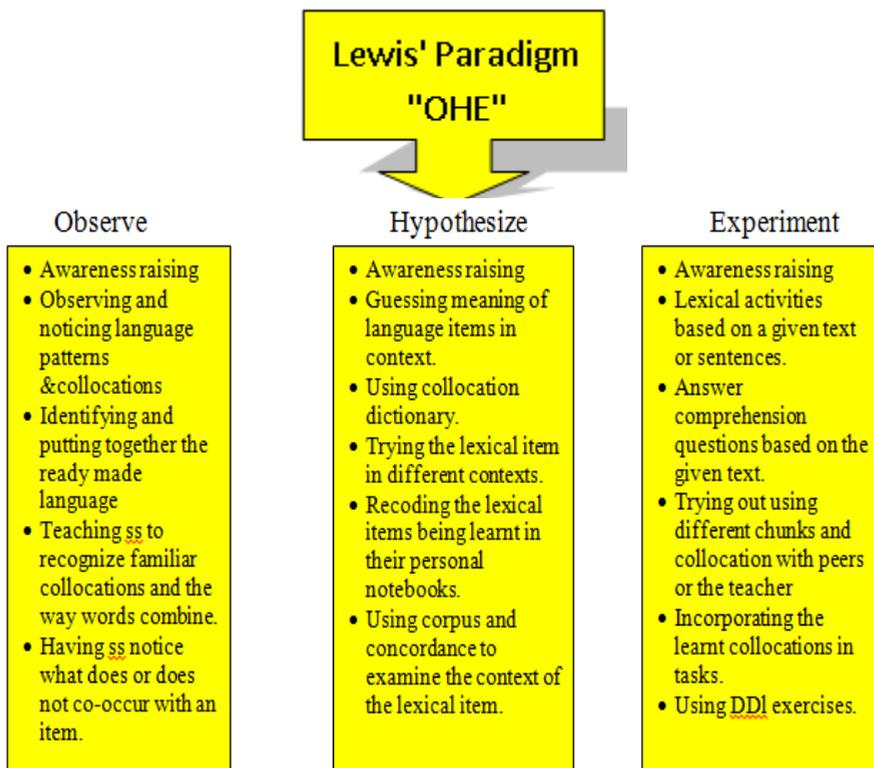


Figure (7) :Components of Lewis' new paradigm (OHE)

Throughout the hypothesize phase, it's very important to train students to organize personal vocabulary notebooks as a means for increasing learners' lexical competence. Note-taking has multiple advantages in that it provides: (1) an advance organizer of the most essential lexical items (2) accountability for active student engagement during the instruction, (3) a reference for later rehearsal and study.

The introduction of the notebooks to the students involves explaining the concept of vocabulary notebooks as a personal dictionary and the teacher using a model vocabulary notebook to introduce the concept and assessing the learners in initial organization of their notebooks . The teacher focuses on the importance and aim of introducing

vocabulary notebooks into EFL vocabulary instruction. These aims, according to Fowle (2002) are as follows:

1. Acting as a tool to empower the learners to become more independent in their learning.
2. Inspiring independent thinking and learners' independence.
3. Complementing other classroom activities aimed at increasing learners' lexical competence. " the more energy a person expends when manipulating and thinking about a word, the more likely it is that they will be able to recall and use it later" (Schmitt and McCarthy 1997: 3).
4. Exposing learners to various methods of recording vocabulary empower them and provide them with valuable study skills.
5. Encouraging learners to use 'discovery strategies' such as using dictionaries, inferring meaning from context, and asking for clarification from teachers and other students.
6. Ensuring the process of discovery of meaning that enhances learners' independence .
7. Encouraging learners to use cognitive strategies including ; deduction, contextualization, grouping , note –taking , translation , key word, repetition, recombination and inferring.
8. Providing opportunities for developing self- management strategies.

In the OHE paradigm, the use of Concordance software or printouts of it (prepared by the teacher) allows students to explore massive amounts of authentic language. Concordances reveal not only 'word meanings and functions' in general (Gavioli, 2001) but also 'extraordinary range of information' about the language, i.e., the lexical, syntactic, semantic and cultural information; common collocates; idioms; fixed phrases; collocations. Bariankova (2009) views that using corpora and concordances in the classes could be used for inspiration or a challenge in the classrooms. Some students may be interested in, and willing to cooperate but some students might find it very difficult to work with the Internet corpus so the teachers should not assess this activity but only provide it as a change or challenge in learning. It allows learners to:

- quickly see how words are actually used in their field of study.
- use an inductive method to construct a grammar rule, after looking at many examples of the word used in context.

- meet authenticity in the learning process.
- assume control of the learning process. Teachers become facilitators of the process of discovery and coordinators of student-initiated research
- exhibit intelligence and imagination when given control over their learning on computers which are essential dumb and un-imaginative.
- answer their own questions
- discover language grammar collaboratively. Students are acting as research director and collaborators.

As this paradigm is learner- centred, teacher's role is very important as his talk is the major source of learner's input. His role also, is represented in the selection of materials and tasks and the creation of an appropriate atmosphere , raising learners' awareness with lexical chunks and collocations , organizing the technological system, providing scaffolding to help learners and directing learners' attention to chunks which are as large as possible .Teacher is an editor and advisor rather than corrector and evaluative. The learner's role is the most important here, as he is a data analyst and his role is central during the three phases. The learner observes, discovers, identifies, turns input into intake, discusses in groups, analyzes hypothesizes and finally experiments the learnt and processed input through tasks . In this way the learner replaces the idea that the teacher is “the knower with the idea that the learner is “the discoverer”.

3.6.4.1. How the teaching looks like within OHE paradigm :

According to Lewis (1997) , some hints about how the teaching looks like within OHE paradigm which is based on the lexical approach to teaching vocabulary are as follows:

- 1) Successful language is a wider concept than accurate language. Emphasis is on successful communication not grammatical mastery.
- 2) Language is not learnt by learning individual sounds and structures and then combining them, but by an increasing ability

to break down wholes into parts. We can also use whole phrases without understanding their constituent parts.

- 3) Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
- 4) Grammar is acquired by a process of observation, hypothesis and experiment. That is, the Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment cycle replaces the Present-Practise-Produce Paradigm.
- 5) Grammar exploration instead of grammar explanation.
- 6) Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
- 7) First and second language comparisons and translation—carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word—aimed at raising language awareness.
- 8) Repetition and recycling of activities.
- 9) Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.
- 10) The language activities consistent with a lexical approach must be directed toward naturally occurring language and toward raising learners' awareness of the lexical nature of language
- 11) Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.
- 12) Working with language corpuses created by the teacher for use in the classroom or accessible on the Internet—such as the British National Corpus (<http://thetis.bl.uk/BNCbib>) or COBUILD Bank of English (<http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk>)—to research word partnerships, preposition usage, style, and so on.

Context of the problem

Very little attention is paid to the syntagmatic aspect of lexis known as collocation. In this sense, foreign language learners often rely on their native language in trying to communicate or translate. As a learner and a teacher of English in an EFL environment in Egypt, collocations do not receive much attention from teachers in the classroom. When students read texts, they may not recognize collocations as meaningful phrases, which would inhibit their understanding of the text. In this context, the focus is restricted to drills or repetition of individual words, in particular verbs. Consequently, students graduate from schools with a very low ability to communicate or express themselves effectively in English using collocations (Shehata, 2008). Matsuno & Sugiura (2002) and Koya (2005) have reported insufficient

collocational knowledge among EFL learners and confirmed that collocations create a challenge to language learners in EFL settings.

Aim of the study

The present study aims at investigating the effect of a collocation – based program on promoting reading comprehension interpretive and critical skills among secondary school students.

Significance of the study

1. For second year secondary school students:

Developing students reading comprehension skills through raising their awareness of and using new trend in language teaching and learning

2. For EFL teachers:

(a) Providing them with a collocation-based program to promote EFL reading comprehension skills .

(b) Changing their traditional concept of English learning and teaching raising their awareness that lexis is the core of language while grammar plays a subservient role..

3. For EFL Course designers:

(a) Providing them with a program that can develop reading comprehension skills.

Statement of the problem

Second year secondary school students seem to face difficulty in reading comprehension skills. This problem may be due to the ineffective vocabulary teaching methods. Thus , they need a new treatment to promote these skills.

Delimitations of the study

The present study is limited to:

1. EFL Inferential reading comprehension skills required for second year secondary school students
2. EFL Creative reading comprehension skills required for second year secondary school students
3. A collocation – based program.
4. A sample of second year secondary school students

Questions of the study

1. What are the reading comprehension skills required for second year secondary school students

2. To what extent do second year secondary school students master these skills?
3. What are the features of the program used to promote EFL reading comprehension skills among secondary school students?
4. What is the effect of a collocation –based program on promoting **Interpretive** reading comprehension skills among secondary school students?
5. What is the effect of a collocation –based program on promoting **critical** reading comprehension skills among secondary school students?

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the study sample in the inferential (interpretive) reading comprehension skills in the post- treatment.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the study sample in the creative reading comprehension skills in the post- treatment.

Procedures:

1. Preparing a pre-post reading comprehension skills test for second year secondary school students through:
 - a) Preparing a reading comprehension skills list for secondary school students .
 - b) Reviewing literature and previous studies related to EFL reading comprehension skills .
 - c) Preparing a list of reading comprehension skills required for secondary school students.
 - d) Submitting the list to a jury to verify its validity and modifying and setting the list according to the jury's suggestions.
 - e) Submitting the test to a jury to verify its validity and modifying and setting the test according to the jury's suggestions.
2. Identifying the basics of a program based on collocations through:
 - a) Reviewing literature and previous studies related to collocations and word combinations.

- b) Designing a collocation based program.
3. Identifying the effects of the collocation based program on developing reading comprehension skills through:
 - a) Selecting a sample of students as the experimental group.
 - b) Applying the pre-post reading comprehension skills test on the sample.
 - c) Applying the program on the sample .
 - d) Applying the pre-post reading comprehension skills test on the sample group.
 - e) Identifying the effect of the collocation -based program on promoting reading comprehension skills among second year secondary school students.
4. Collecting data.
5. Analysing data using the appropriate statistical methods.
6. Discussion of results
7. Recommendations and suggestions

Method & Procedures:

▪ Participants of the study

Participants were randomly selected from second year secondary school students (N=40) at Minya Elkamh secondary school for girls , Sharkyya governorate in the second term of the academic year 2014/2015 Their age ranged from 16 to 17 years old. One group pre-post study design was used.

▪ Instruments & material of the study

1. A reading comprehension skills checklist
- 2- The researcher prepared a Pre-post Reading comprehension test.

3-The suggested collocation –based program:

A collocation-based program was prepared by the researcher in order to be administrated to the experimental group.

Main goal of the program was to develop reading comprehension skills among secondary school students through developing interpretive and critical reading comprehension skills and helping learners identify relationships among ideas, and see the implied meanings of these ideas.

General goals of the LABP are interpreted into specific objectives. At the end of the program, students will be able to

1. Notice lexical chunks in contexts.

2. chunk language successfully
3. Produce lexical phrases and chunks as a raw data for language.
4. Recognize larger units of language and focus attention on naturally occurring expressions rather than rule-generated sentences.
5. Organize lexical vocabulary notebooks.
6. explore massive amount of authentic language
7. Identify relationships among ideas, and see the implied meanings of these ideas.

Content of the program:

The material of the program consisted of (21) sessions. The first two sessions are introductory. Sessions are designed on the base of Lewis's OHE paradigm. The Sessions follow the three stages of the paradigm as follows:

1. **Stage one (Observe) :** in this stage, the learner is exposed to the new language (comprehensible input: a reading passage). The Observe phase involves exposure to new language, providing the learner with opportunities to NOTICE and recognize various features of the text(s) that they will be asked to process for meaning (Lewis, 2000). Turning input (the language they meet) into intake (the language they acquire and have access to spontaneous use) or transition from input to intake. This means When learners come into direct contact with the target language, this is referred to as "input." When learners process that language in a way that can contribute to learning, this is referred to as "intake."

2. **Stage two (hypothesize) :** in this stage, The learner forms unconscious hypotheses and ideas about how the language works. The hypothesize phase, where the learners begin to sort through the input and form hypotheses about the language system (Lewis, 2000). In the FL syllabus this phase is of the cycle is prompted through the lexical approach exercises which aim to draw awareness to various lexical patterns found in the texts.

3. **Stage three (experiment):** The learner puts these ideas into practice and tries them out actively in the reading comprehension passage. In the Experiment phase, learners test and reformulate their hypotheses (Lewis, 2000); this is achieved by using the language to complete language tasks that are functionally connected to the general topic(s) of the text(s).

Instructional aids

Teaching aids were connected with the tasks in the sessions. They vary as follows: Printouts for the reading comprehension texts, collocation dictionaries or printouts of them, lexical notebooks, cards, blackboard, data show and an online concordance or print outs of it.

Activities

1. Intensive and extensive reading
2. Letting learners notice the lexical chunks while reading texts
3. Letting learners record language patterns by providing them the opportunity to discover chunks on their own.
4. Directing students' attention to the specific chunks in the text
5. Guessing meaning from context
6. Studying with dictionaries
7. Categorizing word chunks
8. Completing the missed parts
9. Making expressions with have/make/get etc.
10. Using sentence heads
11. Using summarizing words
12. Observing collocations and lexical chunks
13. Fill in the blank(s)
14. Spaghetti matching
15. Recording collocations
16. Collocations charts
17. Finding collocations in texts
18. Corpus tasks
19. Cross words
20. Matching
21. Comprehension questions

Evaluation of the LABP program

Since assessment is necessary for determining whether the program meets its goals, different methods of assessment were used in the current study

1. **Formative evaluation:** The formative evaluation is done throughout the tasks of the program.
2. **Summative evaluation :**The summative evaluation is made through the post-tests.

Results and discussion

The overall purpose of the present study was to promote reading comprehension skills through using a collocation-based program. Tools consisted of a pre-post reading comprehension test that was used to assess students' performance before and after treatment.

Findings of Hypothesis 1:

The first hypothesis of the study states that “There are no significant differences between the mean scores of the study sample in the inferential (interpretive) reading comprehension skills in the post-treatment”.

To test this hypothesis, t-test analysis was conducted to investigate the effect of a collocation based program on the interpretive reading comprehension skills . Results are shown Table (3)

Table (3) :T-value for paired sample t-test in the interpretive reading comprehension skills

| Skill | Test | N | mean | SD | T-value | D.F. | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----|------|------|---------|------|------|
| interpretive reading skills | Pre-test | 40 | 2.33 | 2.39 | 5.049 | 39 | .000 |
| | Post test | 40 | 4.25 | .954 | | | |

Table (3) Shows that the mean scores of sample's in the posttest (4.25) is higher than that pretest scores (2.33) . T-value is (5.049) which is significant at .01. This means that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the study sample between pre and post test scores in the interpretative Reading comprehension sub-skills test in favor of the post test. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings of Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the study sample in the creative reading comprehension skills in the post-treatment.

To test this hypothesis, paired sample t-test value conducted to investigate the effect of a collocation-based program on the critical reading comprehension skills. Results are shown in table (4).

Table (4):T-value for paired sample t-test in the critical reading comprehension skills

| Skill | Test | N | mean | SD | T-value | D.F. | Sig. |
|-------------------------|-----------|----|------|-------|---------|------|------|
| Critical reading skills | Pre-test | 40 | 1.30 | 1.829 | -12.963 | 39 | .000 |
| | Post test | 40 | 5.73 | 1.132 | | | |

Table (4) Shows that the mean scores of sample’s scores in the posttest (5.73) is higher than that pretest scores (1.30) . T-value is (12.963) which is significant at .01. This means that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the study sample between pre and post test scores in the critical Reading comprehension sub-skills test in favor of the post test. Thus,the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

Findings of the present study proved the effectiveness of the program in promoting interpretive and critical reading comprehension skills among secondary school students . In the present study, using a collocation-based program in teaching reading comprehension skills proved to be effective in developing interpretive and critical reading comprehension among secondary school students. The results are illustrated in figure (8).

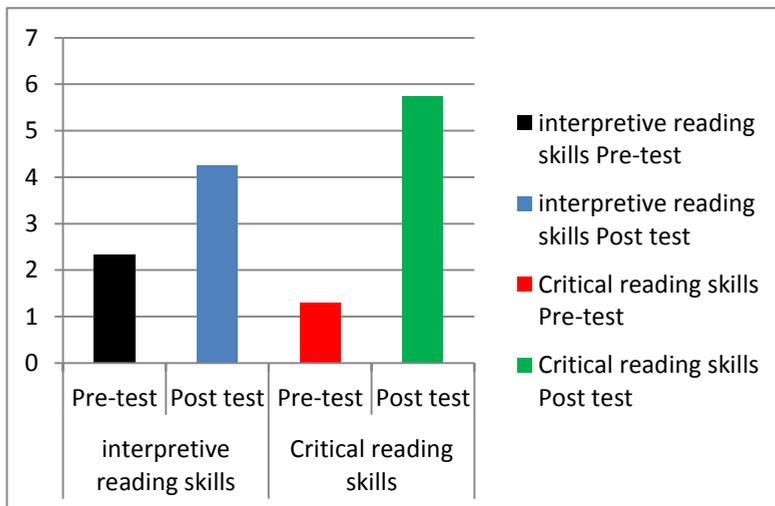


Figure 8. Mean scores between the pre and post assessment of interpretive and critical reading comprehension skills

Figure (8) indicates that the study sample's performance in the post test outperformed that of the pretest. The researcher attributes this result to the effectiveness of the collocation-based program in promoting reading comprehension skills .

This experiment indicates that raising learners' consciousness and teaching lexical collocations can help them understand the English texts better. When the teaching of vocabulary items is taken into account, most of teachers prefer to use classical vocabulary teaching techniques like synonyms, antonyms, mother tongue translation and definition . . The problem appears more when they are exposed to reading comprehension texts, when the words appear in different contexts, students fail to understand the relevant meaning of the word in relation to context. They also would not be able to use the new words they have learned even if they remember the meaning because they do not know the appropriate collocates. The results are in line with Tseng, (2002); Rahimi (2005) ; Bonk (2000) and Mahmoud (2005) who proposed that collocations can hang the elements of the text together and create cohesion which helps learners to comprehend the text easier. Throughout the program , learners were made aware of their insufficient collocational knowledge, and the importance of collocational knowledge in language comprehension and production.

In the present study, material incorporated into the suggested program was built on important skills for the literal comprehension level ,such as; context to predict word meaning or select missing words, facts that must attend readers to factual details and identifying the main idea of each paragraph. Interpreting information often requires readers to understand the vocabulary in the text. They may need to link words that have similar meaning or ideas, understand words that link ideas and synthesize ideas using word meanings to assist analysis of texts. Interpretive meaning is often hidden throughout the text and requires the use of inference and understanding the relationship between events and characters or causes and consequences. Employing literal comprehension skills is

the basis for interpretive comprehension through understanding that particular information belongs together. Interpretive reading begins with a good understanding of the material.

The results of the study are in line with the work of other researchers investigating the effect of collocations and lexical chunks on reading comprehension. This finding is consistent with Ganji's (2012), Lien's (2003) and Hsu (2010) investigated whether collocation instruction would result in more positive effects on the participants' reading comprehension in comparison to the other two strategies namely vocabulary instruction and no instruction. Kelly (1991) also believed that knowledge of collocations helps the students a lot in language comprehension skills of reading. Ganji (2012) proved that collocation instruction is a more successful technique for preparing students for the reading test. Sadighi & Sahragard (2013) concluded that teaching lexical collocations affected learners' reading skills positively.

Meanwhile, results of the present study contrasts with Tekingul's (2013) study which resulted in that collocation teaching has not a positive effect on reading comprehension compared to single-item vocabulary instruction. Tekingul attributed the result of his study to the advanced level of learners who have already mastered quite a few metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension. Thus, the treatments were not effective, and the participants could locate the answers even without the treatment sessions. Another conclusion for lack of significance of the findings could be due to a single reading passage. The present study and Lien (2003), and Hsu (2010) used multiple reading passages.

Recommendations

The present study proved the effectiveness of the collocation based program in promoting reading comprehension interpretive and critical reading comprehension skills. EFL teachers can actually add 'collocation-focused' pre-teaching activities before presenting reading passages. They help teachers in accomplishing their challenging task of teaching English. These results show that collocation instruction, as the key word of the lexical approach, is a more successful technique

for preparing students for the reading test because it helps them understand the text better and, hence be able to answer more comprehension questions. This study may be useful for teachers and students to become adapted to a relatively new approach which will be ready to lend a hand in their vocabulary development.

Suggestions

In the light of the present study's results, the researcher suggests the following suggestions for further research:

- Examining the effect of using the collocation based program on earlier levels of students
- Investigating the effect of using the collocation based program on promoting writing skills in different levels

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تحسين مهارات القراءة في اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية باستخدام برنامج قائم على المتلازمات اللفظية

ملخص البحث

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى دراسة اثر برنامج قائم على المتلازمات اللفظية على تحسين مهارات القراءة في اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية . افترضت الدراسة فعالية البرنامج في تنمية مهارات القراءة التفسيرية و النقدية . اشتملت عينة الدراسة على مجموعه من طلاب الصف الثانى الثانوى (العدد ٤٠) من مدرسة الثانوية بنات بنيا القمح محافظة الشرقية . تكونت ادوات الدراسة من اختبار قبلى- بعدى . استخدمت الباحثة التصميم التجريبي الذى يتكون من مجموعه واحدة و اختبار قبلى بعدى. كما اشتملت على برنامج من تصميم الباحثة قائم على استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية. بعد تطبيق البرنامج تم عمل اختبار بعدى للطلاب . و قد تم تحليل النتائج احصائيا و تم حساب قيمة (ت) و متوسط الدرجات و الانحراف المعياري و درجة الحرية . اثبتت النتائج فعالية البرنامج القائم على المتلازمات اللفظية في تنمية مهارات القراءة بمستوييها التفسيري و النقدى . و في نهاية البحث تم تقديم المقترحات و التوصيات .