# Lexical Collocations in English Teaching Modules: An In-depth Analysis

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## Abstract

This research aims to investigate lexical collocation in English teaching modules. The method of this study was designed as quantitative research. This research was a corpus-based study. The data was collected from an online platform, Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM). This study attempted to find answers to the research questions: What are lexical collocations in EFL classrooms? What are the frequencies of lexical collation in EFL classrooms? The researcher was equipped with AntCont to generate a wordlist and frequency and with COHA to do an analysis. The research results show that English teachers lack lexical collocation frequency in their teaching modules. The researcher found that the highest category of verbs and nouns dominated the corpus. The recommendation for EFL teachers is essential to expose lexical collocation in their teaching modules and to contribute to the knowledge mastery of lexical collocation and its application in the classroom context.

**Keywords:** English teaching module, lexical collocation, *Platform Merdeka Mengajar*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that each language has its natural order in which words appear or are put together in sentences or utterances. This is known as collocation in English terms. The researcher uses the term co-occurrence as a core point to explain the meaning of collocation. It refers to the co-occurrence of lexical items and grammatical patterns (Poulsen, 2022). In linguistic and language teaching the term "collocation" is vague. Moreover, students often completely dismiss the criterion of co-occurrences in a certain span. Most non-native students ignore this competence in language acquisition. Collocations are the necessary components of second language lexical competence. Collocation is considered an important item in language acquisition (Majeed Rana, 2020). The fluent use of the native language is the frequent use of collocations. Understanding collocation, students can produce many sentences or utterances that students never heard or said before. Students spend years learning English learning vocabulary and

grammatical rules but still their writing and speech do not belong to native-like-selection (Chi & City, 2021).

In second language learning, a lack of knowledge concerning the appropriate usage of collocations creates problems in various areas of second language acquisition, especially regarding productive skills competence.  In Thailand, EFL learners make some collocation errors since students have insufficient concepts and knowledge about collocation (Boonyarattanasoontorn et al., 2020). Collocation has received an intention in vocabulary acquisition studies as an important part of competence since collocation contributes to linguistics (Tabak, 2023). To acquire collocation competence, many students use various learning strategies, such as reading strategies or vocabulary learning strategies. Collocation is often neglected language form that foreign language teachers and students should focus on to achieve competence in a target language (Boonraksa & Naisena, 2021). Another challenge is for EFL learners to adopt collocation appropriately because they still operate the collocation system in their first language  (Boonraksa & Naisena, 2021). Still, collocation is a reliable indicator of a high language proficiency level. Numerous studies are still facing difficulties in mastering types of collocation. Implementing a corpus approach in language may be the most suitable and practical approach to teaching collocation. It is beneficial as it also offers reliable references for learners to explore, and teach (Hua & Azmi, 2021). The basis of language learning is to acquire components of the language, Students will not be able to use language either receptively or productively if they do not master collocation purposively (Lateh et al., 2021).

The study of lexical collocation has been conducted by many researchers in the past few decades. In the language model for retrieval and categorization of lexical collocation, this study found most models perform well in distinguishing light verb construction (Espinosa-Anke et al., 2021). Also, Thai students have relatively weak knowledge of collocation but do better on receptive collocation tasks than on productive collocation tasks (Jeensuk, S., & Sukying, 2021). Similar to the study about negative transfer in the lexical collocation, the finding showed that Turkish students transferred their text from Turkish to English negatively (UZUN, 2020). This problem happens in Indonesia where Indonesian EFL learners often make collocation errors in their essay writing. The finding showed that lexical collocation appears more frequently than grammatical collocation (Rahman, 2021).

The most effective method for assisting students in developing their writing skills was to combine communicative and collocational approaches (Eid & Al-Jamal, 2023). The result showed that word-to-word collocations are more effective than grammar-based ones. The finding was that textbooks fail to cover the topic of collocation. The lack of collocations in textbooks makes English less refined and more

alien for EFL learners than it is actually. It is beneficial for English teachers to provide collocation materials for the students to accommodate their writing and speaking skill (Handayani & Angelina, 2020).Collocation in the textbooks showed insufficient repetition and a narrower range of association strength. That happened in Korea as well where learners may not benefit enough from collocation strength so collocation strength level needs to be considered in developing English curriculum and materials (Kim & Oh, 2020).  Teaching collocation explicitly in front of the classroom is necessary because there is a relation between language ability and collocational knowledge (Bao & Pham, 2022). As well as the teachers, they also must have language ability and collocational knowledge. The researcher wants to see the teachers' ability to use collocation in the lesson plan. This study is an attempt to fill in this problem in teaching English by addressing the following research question:

1. What lexical collocation combinations appear most frequently in teaching modules?
2. What is the frequency of the lexical collocation in teaching modules?

Since word combinations are very prominent in language teaching, it needs to investigate collocation in teachers' frequency in their teaching modules more deeply. To ensure teachers master lexical collocation, the researcher developed a corpus of teaching modules from the online platform, *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM). This study noted seven combinations of lexical collocation. (Benson, 2010).  The seven combinations of lexical collocation are presented in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Seven Combinations of Lexical Collocation by (Benson, 2010)

| Collocation Pattern | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Verb (transitive) – noun | make an impression |
| Verb (eradication) – noun | reject an appeal |
| Adjective – noun | a rough estimate |
| Noun – verb | blood circulates |
| Noun – of – noun | a bouquet of flowers |
| Adverb – adjective | strictly accurate |
| Verb – adverb | affect deeply |

It can be briefly stated that for students to promote their communicative competence, their formulaic competence should also be good. This need should be considered in teaching collocation to the students and teaching collocation knowledge either in written documents or speaking performances during a class. Preliminary studies draw that most EFL students have insufficient knowledge and performance about lexical collocation. Thus, this study aims to investigate the use of lexical collocation in English teacher teaching modules. It is expected the results of this study will be noticed by teachers in their decision-making related to the teaching and learning process.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was corpus-based research. This research is based on corpus linguistics which has a collection of written texts that are stored electronically (Reppen & Simpson-Vlach, 2019). It is a powerful tool for language analysis and gives tremendous insight into how language use varies in different situations. This study was employed to analyze lexical collocation in English teacher teaching modules. The present study assessed lexical collocation usage concerning the language input of English teachers' modules.

The researcher compiled the teaching modules newly published in *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* which are most frequently downloaded and viewed. There were 26 teaching modules collected from PMM based on citations. All teaching modules were grouped into F phase (including 11$^{th}$ grade and 12$^{th}$ grade). There are two steps in obtaining the data. First, the teaching modules were converted into a Word file using an online platform from PDF to Word extension. After, the researcher imported it into Notepad software. The researcher operated AnCont 3.5.9 software by selecting wordlist and concordance. For reference corpus, COHA was the best decision. The researcher ensured the word combination was collocated properly with COHA. The researcher then tabulated the data in the form of a table. The researcher ensured that the findings will be beneficial for English language teaching.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data from English teacher teaching modules were extracted to obtain the word and its number by utilizing AntConc 3.5.9 to see the lexical collocation appearances in the corpus. The 52 wordlists are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2. The 52 keywords in the corpus of English Teaching Modules

| No | Freq | Keywords | No | Freq | Keywords |
|----|------|----------|----|------|----------|
| 1 | 40 | Do | 27 | 6 | Patient |
| 2 | 29 | See | 28 | 6 | Shark |
| 3 | 13 | Story | 29 | 5 | Consume |
| 4 | 10 | Animal | 30 | 5 | Make |
| 5 | 10 | Think | 31 | 5 | Meat |
| 6 | 9 | Ask | 32 | 5 | Share |
| 7 | 9 | Food | 33 | 5 | Take |
| 8 | 9 | Friend | 34 | 5 | Tell |
| 9 | 9 | Meeting | 35 | 4 | Continue |
| 10 | 9 | Need | 36 | 4 | Give |
| 11 | 8 | Help | 37 | 4 | Look |
| 12 | 8 | Know | 38 | 4 | Nice |
| 13 | 7 | Learn | 39 | 4 | Prepare |
| 14 | 7 | Game | 40 | 4 | Present |

| No | Freq | Keywords | No | Freq | Keywords |
|----|------|----------|----|------|----------|
| 15 | 7 | Get | 41 | 4 | Real |
| 16 | 7 | Week | 42 | 4 | Suggestion |
| 17 | 6 | happy | 43 | 4 | Want |
| 18 | 6 | Information | 44 | 4 | Work |
| 19 | 6 | Good | 45 | 3 | Avoid |
| 20 | 6 | Kindness | 46 | 3 | Guess |
| 21 | 6 | Life | 47 | 3 | Lead |
| 22 | 3 | Listen | 48 | 3 | New |
| 23 | 3 | Danger | 49 | 3 | Practice |
| 24 | 2 | Fictional | 50 | 2 | likely |
| 25 | 1 | Ahead | 51 | 1 | Comprehend |
| 26 | 1 | Comfortable | 52 | 1 | Carefully |

From 52 keywords listed above can be grouped into six main areas according to their associated word combinations as follows:

1. Keywords referring to verb-noun combination, e.g., *think the story, ask somethings, need inspiration.*

2. Keywords referring to adjective-noun combination, e.g., *visual representation, genuine compliment, small puppy.*

3. Keyword referring to noun-verb combination, e.g., *animals behave, shark loses.*

4. Keyword referring to noun-of-noun combination, e.g., *a group of people, kinds of food, legend of princess.*

5. Keyword referring to adverb-adjective combination, e.g., *most likely, just fictional.*

6. Keyword referring to verb-adverb combination, e.g., *listen carefully, danger ahead.*

Table 3. Most frequent keywords found in COHA

| Number | Keywords Combinations in the ETTM corpus | Frequency in corpus reference/COHA |
|--------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | *Most likely* | 4450 |
| 2 | *Listen carefully* | 394 |
| 3 | *A group of people* | 342 |
| 4 | *Kinds of food* | 139 |
| 5 | *Ask somethings* | 100 |
| 6 | *Danger ahead* | 66 |
| 7 | *Think the story* | 30 |
| 8 | *Visual representation* | 23 |
| 9 | *Small puppy* | 9 |
| 10 | *Animals behave* | 6 |
| 11 | *Genuine compliment* | 2 |

Shown in Table 3, only eleven referring combinations that the researcher could collect and had a high frequency in COHA, such as *most likely; listen carefully; a group of people; kinds of food; ask*

*something; danger a head; think the story; visual representation; small puppy; animal behave; a genuine compliment*. The problem is that English teachers mostly write English teaching modules in *Bahasa Indonesia* including teaching instruction in the modules. In the modules, the teachers use English only in doing tests. From planning, implementation, and evaluation in the modules, the teachers mostly use *Bahasa Indonesia*. The researcher got several lexical collocations in the corpus ETTM, yet eleven lexical collocation combinations can be gathered.

The researcher collected 26 English teaching modules retrieved from *Platform Merdeka Mengajar*. Only six lexical collocation combinations were found by the researcher. They were (1) verb transitive-noun, (2) adjective-noun, (3) noun-verb, (4) adverb-adjective, (5) verb-adverb, (6) noun-of-noun. From this, English teachers who developed the teaching modules are still weak in collocation. It also means that English teachers are rarely associated with collocation in English teaching processes. Lesson plans, seating arrangements in the classroom, monitoring class, and teaching experiences are essential for teachers (Iqbal et al., 2021). The researcher also believes that everything in the classroom will not be far from the teaching modules or lesson plans that have already been prepared.

## 4.  CONCLUSION

The study analyzed 26 English teaching modules which were categorized into lexical collocation. There were six lexical collocations appeared in English teacher teaching modules. Only verb (eradication)-noun combination did not occur. The study proved that English teacher teaching modules had not provided the variation of lexical collocation. English teachers must accommodate collocation knowledge and materials in their teaching modules to ensure students comprehend English collocation appropriately. There is no doubt that collocations are a significant part of English language learning in exposing students' speaking and writing skills to be native-like speakers. Teachers must emphasize students' interactions with collocation and have collocation knowledge and pedagogical competency in teaching collocation.

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