

Using Concordance-based Materials to Enhance Collocation and Semantic Prosody Knowledge of Thai EFL High School Students

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Abstract

A corpus is a collection of naturally-occurring texts that can be retrieved and analyzed to find out how language is used. In EFL classrooms, language corpora have been used to promote students' awareness of lexical behaviour, such as collocations and connotations. Despite its widespread use among practitioners in many instructional contexts to enhance students' learning, little attention has been paid to using concordance-based materials to improve collocations and semantic prosodies of Thai high school students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL).

Thus, this paper first briefly reviews the significance of collocations and semantic prosodies for Thai high school students. It then analyzes situations of teaching and learning vocabularies in a Thai context and investigates how corpus materials can be utilized for improving students' vocabulary learning. Finally, it suggests how to use concordancing materials and Data-Driven Learning (DDL) to enhance collocations and semantic prosodies knowledge of the learners.

Keywords: Corpus, Collocations, Semantic prosody, Vocabulary, DDL, Thai high school students

Introduction

A corpus is a collection of a naturally-occurring texts in a computer readable format that can be used retrieved and analyzed using corpus analysis software (e.g., Charles, 2002; Teubert & Cermakova, 2007). Through using a special type of computer software, corpus users can process the stored data by “counting words, making frequency of alphabetical lists of words or clusters of words, presenting examples of words or phrases with left- and right-contexts, identifying collocates or co-text words or phrases of the target word” (Sripicharn, 2009, p.11). Undeniably, corpus is a window into the world of authentic language and serves as a supplementary tool for helping EFL learners reach authentic use of language and be able to use language more naturally and accurately. Currently, corpora have also been used to design and write language teaching materials, such as grammar books and dictionaries (Kartal & Yangineksi, 2018).

Learning through corpus promotes analytical and critical thinking of EFL students. To enhance critical thinking, teachers need to cultivate students to think, question and/or seek answers themselves. However, it seems that this strategy has hardly employed in teaching

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and learning in Thailand since most students have been cultivated to listen and follow what teachers said rather than think, question, and try to find the answers themselves. This behaviour hinders Thai students' from thinking critically, but also impacts teaching English in Thailand. In vocabulary instruction, most Thai teachers still emphasize mindless memorization of the rules, while many students believe that such learning technique works for learning English vocabulary (Pookcharoen, 2007). Due to such deductive approach, most Thai students are spoon-fed and bombarded with tons of English words and rules all the time, but may not know how to use them precisely. They learn vocabulary like a parrot practiced to repeat and memorize without thinking and analyzing anything. During over three years of my teaching experience, I observe that Thai students lack knowledge of vocabulary, especially collocation and semantic prosody, and many research studies (e.g. Boonyasaquan, 2005; Malligamas, & Pongpairoj, 2005; Suksaeresup, 2008) confirm my observation by indicating that Thai EFL students have low collocational proficiency. Owing to this problem, I therefore suggesting employing Tim Johns' Data-Driven Learning (DDL), which evolves the role from teacher-center to student-center, from deduction to induction, and from spoon-fed traditional teaching to inductive learning style, in the hope that it can foster students' knowledge of collocation and connotation, to encourage them to think critically when learning vocabulary, and, above all, to raise Thai teachers' awareness to bring corpora into classroom. Therefore, this paper first briefly reviews the primary significance of learning and teaching collocation and semantic prosody for EFL students. It then analyses the situation in which Thai EFL students learn vocabulary and reflects the problems of the inefficient vocabulary instruction in Thailand. Finally, it introduces Data-Driven Learning (DDL) as one of effective solutions and suggests practical concordancing activities in reading classroom.

The Importance of Collocation and Semantic Prosody for Thai High School Students

Vocabulary is the core of English as it is the springboard to other skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to O'Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter (2007), vocabulary is like an umbrella that covers other elements of the language, and one of the most important elements is collocation and semantic prosody. Collocation, as Sinclair (1991), Baker (1992), and O'Keeffe et al (2007) defined, is a pair or group of words that appear frequently together. Meanwhile, semantic prosody is the collocational meaning arising from the interaction between a node word and its collocates (Louw, 2000) and can be realized in the form of positive, neutral and negative connotations (Stubbs, 1995). At present, the notion of collocation and semantic prosody plays a very crucial role in applied linguistics and has been studied by many corpus linguists e.g. Sinclair (1991), Louw (1993), Stubbs, (1995), Partington (1998), Hunston (2002) and Sripicharn (2002). For instance, the term *cause* habitually collocates with negative semantic prosody, such as *problem* and *trouble*, (Stubbs, 1995) while '*bring about*' typically collocates with positive connotation (Xiao & Mcenery, 2006). In my view, if EFL students have sufficient knowledge of collocation and connotation, they can potentially listen, speak, read, and write in English more properly and proficiently. Conversely,

if they lack such knowledge, it is difficult for them to be an efficient English learner? Also, as James (1998) and Nation (2001) stated, the ability to use collocational convention of a foreign language greatly contributes to one's nativelikeness, whereas the lack of such ability indicates one's foreignness. In the same vein, Hill (2000) affirms that the collocational proficiency enables learners to be more fluent and express meanings without having to produce long sentences. Since the collocational knowledge is considered as language competence (Herbst, 1996), it is important and necessary for EFL students to understand and make use of collocation and semantic prosody accurately in order to communicate ideas effectively and naturally.

Situations in Learning Vocabulary of Thai High School Students

Nowadays, Thai students learn vocabulary for academic purpose, i.e. they want to pass exams at schools, GAT and national entrance exam. A large number of Thai students still learn a great deal of vocabulary deductively, while many of them turn to English cramp schools, such as Kru Somsri English School or Enconcept E-Academy. These tutors tend to teach English vocabulary through singing songs or grouping near synonymous words together with the hope that such methods would make vocabularies easy for students to memorize. Yet, Thai students may not know how to use English words precisely. For example, they might perceive that the words '*due to*', '*owing to*', and '*thanks to*' can be used interchangeably in all situations since they understand that these words share the same meaning to the words '*because of*'. Unfortunately, however, they may not realize that these words tend to have different collocation and semantic prosody. Thus, without the analysis of corpus data, some aspects of language like this cannot be easily noticed by learners, teacher or even native speaker (Sripicharn, 2002), and L2 learners have no ways of understanding the collocational nature, their use, and largely hidden complexity (Kennedy, 2003). However, although corpora provide an effective way for learner to learn collocation and for a teacher to prepare teaching material (Woolard, 2000), many Thai high school English teachers are not aware of this. They still focused merely on mindless memorization. This kind of learning words can cause the failure of using collocations (Yu, 1992, cited in Pookcharoen, 2007), and it is the national problem that we all need to concern.

Problems in Learning Collocation and Semantic Prosody of Thai EFL Students

As the deductive strategy mentioned above, a large number of research studies show that Thai students have low collocational proficiency. While Sripicharn (2002, cited in Chatpunnarangsee, 2013) found that Thai undergraduate students make collocational errors, such as '*divided to*' and '*a terrible memorable*', Chatpunnarangsee (2013) affirms this by saying that, during her eight years of teaching experience, That students lack collocational knowledge, thereby writing English with a foreign accent. Boonyasaquan (2005, 2006) and Suksaeresup (2008) also corroborate that undergraduate students have low ability in using collocation in translating from Thai into English. Suksaeresup (2008) found many types of errors, such as '*divided to*', '*is amused at/with*', and '*dark/bitter coffee*', so she proposed

that collocation should be taught in the English language classroom. Apart from collocational error in translation, Malligamas and Pongpairoj (2005) investigated the university students' receptive and productive knowledge of English collocations in multiple choices, error recognition and gap filling tasks. Finding that Thai students had difficulty dealing with collocations in both reception and production tasks, Malligamas and Pongpairoj (2005), therefore, advocate a lexical approach to develop the students' collocational knowledge. Similarly, many studies (e.g. Mongkokchai, 2008; Supanfai 2012; Wongsirisombat, 2011; Phoocharoensil, 2011, 2013; Yumanee, 2012) reveal that Thai EFL students tend to translate collocation from Thai into English when conducted with difficulties in dealing with collocations. In other words, their performances are influenced by mother-tongue transfer. Interestingly, even some ESL students who held B.A. from Thai universities and had lived in the US for many months still have collocational errors in L2 writing, for example, '*a medicine student*' and '*the only child*' (Chatpunnarangsee, 2010).

Analyzing roots of the problem, I found many factors causing students' collocational error. For instance, since Thailand is an EFL country, students have hardly immersed themselves in the English language and thus lack enough linguistic input (Chatpunnarangsee, 2013). Also, many dictionaries do not provide examples which have enough collocation and semantic prosody, so learners are not aware of them (Lee, 2011; McGee, 2012). Another possible factor is that students do not use critical thinking skill in learning vocabulary. As spoon-fed all the time, they merely memorize words, but do not truly understand how to use the words. If they have a chance to learn from authentic and well-designed concordancing input, I believe that their language competence can improve. Lastly but not least, both teachers and learners lack corpus knowledge—a technology that can be used to teach collocation and semantic prosody.

Role of Data-Driven Learning (DDL) in Solving the Problems

There is no 'best' teaching method; there is only 'effective' and 'practical' approach which suits a particular lesson or context. If collocational and connotative error is an illness, DDL can be an exercise which cures such illness. It might not be the best approach, but it is one effective solution/medicine for the students. DDL, or concordancing classroom, was defined as 'the use in the classroom of computer-generated concordances to get students to explore the regularities of patterning in the target language, and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output' (Johns & King, 1991, p. iii). This approach changes the role from teacher-center to student-center, from deduction to induction, and from spoon-fed teaching to Socrates' learning style because students have to think, question, and find the answer themselves. The teacher do not feed knowledge to students; it is the students' duty to think, 'identify', 'classify', and 'generalizes' the similarities and differences of the language from concordances themselves (Johns, 1991a,b, cited in Sripicharn, 2003). The teacher will not teach students right away, but gradually guide and ask them such critical questions as 'Why?' and 'How?' to make them think, while students will notice concordance

lines, analyze, and discuss with each other and/or with the teacher. They will be driven by authentic language data presented in the form of concordance lines, and act as “Sherlock Homes” (Johns, 1997, cited in Chambers, 2010) and “linguistic detective” (Johns 1998; 1999a,b; and elsewhere, cited in Sripicharn, 2003, p.204) who try to explore collocational nature and hidden connotative meanings. Through DDL, they will use critical thinking in learning vocabularies. This facilitates their learning because as a linguistic detective, they will come up with the rules by themselves and potentially retain vocabularies longer.

With regard to research, many studies relating to the use of corpus data in college level in EFL/ESL settings have revealed that DDL is effective for vocabulary instruction (e.g. Sun & Wang, 2003; Gaskell & Cobb, 2004; Chang & Sun, 2009; Yunas & Awab, 2012). For example, in a Thai context, Todd (2000) examined inductive ability of twenty-five postgraduate students in learning English from a concordancing activity, which they made small concordances of the lexical items from the Internet and applied patterns from the concordance to correct their own errors. The result suggests their ability to induce valid pattern from their self-selected concordances and make valid self-correction of their errors. Sripicharn (2003) also found that the undergraduate students in a writing course had positive attitudes towards concordance-based tasks and that the classroom concordancing was useful for learning the pattern and use of the target items even though the learning and transfer effects of DDL were not reported to be significant. The finding of Sripicharn (2003) is consistent with some studies carried out by Poocharoensil (2012) and Chatpunnarangsee (2013), in that learners have positive attitudes toward learning English from concordancing activities. Besides the positive attitude, Chatpunnarangsee (2013) found that, based on the scores of pre- and post-tests, approximately 91% of undergraduate students in two sections of a writing course had distinct improvement in incorporating web-based concordances. The most important factor in tackling collocational problems is their English proficiency; in addition, DDL can promote their autonomy in learning (Chatpunnarangsee, 2013).

However, it is important to state that DDL might have some negative drawbacks. For example, concordance lines are chubby sentences, so it might be difficult for students to read and make sense of the concordance lines (Sripicharn, 2003). Learners might also feel frustrated with the difficult tasks on corpora, such as choosing a relevant corpus and interpreting the results (Farr, 2008, cited in Yunus & Su’ad, 2012). To tackle the problems, teachers need to familiarize students with corpora and prepare well-manageable and not-too-difficult concordances (Sripicharn, 2003).

Using Concordance-based Activities/Materials to Foster Collocation and Semantic Prosody Knowledge of Thai High School Students

Many research studies have revealed that Thai EFL students have problems in using English collocations (Boonyasaquan, 2005, 2006; Dokchandra, 2019; Malligamas & Pongpairoj, 2005; Suksaeresup, 2008; Thongvitit, & Thumawongsa, 2017). The lack of collocational competence may cause incorrect and inappropriate use of collocations and semantic

prosodies, affecting their language and communication. In a Thai context, little attention has been paid to teaching semantic prosody to EFL students. It is, therefore, worthwhile to suggest some practical concordancing activities for teaching collocation and semantic prosody to Thai high school students.

In a case that the students do not have background knowledge about a corpus or concordance lines before, it is crucially important for a teacher to scaffold or familiarize the students with corpus by providing them a clear explanation about corpus, including easy-to-follow concordancing workshop. This will help students know corpus websites, such as Lextutor and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), and practice searching words and analyzing KWIC and concordance lines with a help and a guideline from a teacher. Learners can use their mobile phones to get access to corpus data. Importantly, students need to know that they must read KWIC and concordance lines vertically when analyzing the data.

After students get acquainted with a corpus, the teacher might have them notice concordances of the search words which may differ in semantic prosody. Such words can include ‘cause’ and ‘gain’ (see Figures 1 - 2). Students can be asked to notice and analyze similarities and differences of these two words in terms of their part of speech, collocation, connotation and overall lexical/grammatical pattern. Teachers can ask them the following questions to make them think: 1) What does the word ‘cause’ frequently collocate with? 2) What do you think when you see the surrounding collocates of ‘cause’? 3) What do people normally gain? and 4) How do you feel when you see the surrounding collocates of ‘gain’?

<p>, you know , normal people who did n't want to t being drenched with spilled waste and chemicals known to drain our treasure , and worst of all , harm and trying to control for a lot of the other factors that is of producing burns . But the higher wavelengths can also , I think we have the group that was going to is inched up to the point where it is bound to some downsides to fanasteride . First off , fanasteride does cause irritation in your gut and would be more likely to Genetics researchers have identified a number of genes that can be caused by this mosquito PYLE Do these type of mosquitoes still < free speech is a separate issue from targeting someone to bet . Unlike over-the-counter medications , ginger does not blood flow -- cigarette smoking being one of them -- can at the same time encouraged her to do what could only four or five days . But they assume intense bombing will , can cause a hump in the back , and sometimes grow . Ten percent tested positive for E. coli which can </p>	cause any trouble] And just as in everyday life walking the street cause cancer and neurological disorders . Altogether , affidavits cause casualties to our young men and women . Tavis : One last cause crime] Jens says there 's an array of different variables ar cause damage to the skin , particularly with chronic exposure , a cause damage with these bombs in New York , and I think we cause death] but it 's justified by saying it 's necessary to cause decreased some sexual function . There 's also a question cause diarrhea KING We 'll be right back with Durk Pearson and cause different forms of heart disease . I guess with so many pe cause disease ? BORDES : Ah , in other areas of the world cause distress and to cause pain and emotional distress in their I cause drowsiness or dry mouth . Unfortunately , there 's not er cause dysfunction. (Footage-of-people-) WALLACE : (Voiceover cause embarrassment to the university KING Larry , how did yo cause enormous damage] Sala and his wife are already thinking cause fatal bone fractures] However , the third and newest prop cause food poisoning] And 2.9 percent had an even nastier bug
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Figure 1: A screenshot from COCA for “cause” collocation

ntain some perceived status), identified regulation (to Quick Tip # Whittle your middle : Women who work out at the University of Michigan . # " " Once you us stronger because each game you could see the team do n't have to remove the fluff from milkweeds , you of the world ; I think this has allowed me to occurs in these situations , and individuals generally reality to it . It took me a long time to veling . When you travel , you expand your knowledge , pp. 187-88) . This consideration of how art forms can when he claims , " You give up some things and student teachers could n't develop themselves enough to he has helped Thai , Vietnamese , and Indonesian artists ss . If teachers provide acceptable outlets for children to of local law involving the use of illegal documents to respectively . Example 4 (Non-convexity , robustness , bably similar to women in other colonies , who hoped to sk children in several midwestern cities . The youngsters that . She 'd learned other stuff too . How to gain knowledge or skills) , and intrinsic motivation (related to less belly fat than women who do n't . In one study gain momentum from the infrastructure , an availability of pe gain more confidence playing without Mike . We 'll take a few I gain more control over them and save on storage space if you gain more flexibility in the way I view the world and its various gain much-needed recognition from their colleagues) ; takin gain my confidence during rehearsals , to think ' I can do this gain new experiences , and create new feelings in your paintin gain or lose mainstream appeal is another vital point for gain others . You can 't skate , but you do n't have gain professional expertise , and that they would be able to gain prominence and exposure . In 2008 , she exhibited wor gain recognition and a sense of importance through humor , gain residency . If that happens , he would be sent to the gain scheduling and switching delays) This example is based gain security , wealth , and prestige by affiliating themselves gain self-esteem as they learn to make paper , set type and I gain seventeen pounds eating cafeteria food and chocolate a

Figure 2: A screenshot from COCA for “gain” collocation

Also, teacher needs to give the students some clues or suggestions on how to observe the output page, so the students can see the words with contexts on the left and on the right. Once students notice and can answer that ‘cause’ tends to appear with negative words, such as *problem* and *death*, whereas ‘gain’ typically collocates with positive things, such as *knowledge* and *information*, teacher can realize that they have a potential to analyze the corpus data by themselves. Most importantly, students need to be “warned about **the trap of over-generalisation** by making too strong conclusions when they work only on limited data” (Sripicharn, 2010, p.382, emphasis added). The corpus-based materials in Figures 1 and 2 are just a screenshot from COCA, so they should be considered as ‘limited data.’ Hence, teacher who utilize such materials have to suggest their students to employ “hedging words or phrases such as ‘seem to’, ‘is likely to’, ‘is typically or commonly or frequently used’ when they report their interpretation to show that they have made cautious interpretations of the corpus evidence.” (Sripicharn, 2010, p.382). Training students to analyze and interpret the corpus data is the key for effectively learning and teaching collocation and semantic prosody through DDL.

Here, the teacher might provide the students with another two words which distinctly differ in semantic prosody: *commit* and *acquire*. These words can be a clear example for learning collocation and semantic prosody (See Figures 3-4). During teaching, teachers need to question students to make them think and analyze the corpus data. The teacher might challenge students’ ability to analyze the data by choosing words or phrases that tend to

carry distinct negative semantic prosody, such as 'set in', 'sit through', 'break out', and 'fraught with' so that learners have a wide range of vocabulary, together with collocation, semantic prosody, and phraseology. Students need to be trained to interpret the corpus data carefully to avoid over-generalization.

Figure 3: A screenshot from COCA for “commit” collocation

Figure 4: A screenshot from COCA for “acquire” collocation

Another interesting activity is called ‘YOU MAKE HOMEWORK & I WILL DO A CAKE’. A teacher can choose some simple but incorrect collocations, such as ‘make homework,’ ‘do cakes,’ ‘quick food’ or ‘busy hair’ and then ask students to correct them by analyzing KWIC of these words in corpus. Also, teacher can ask students to find collocation in songs, movies, clip videos in YouTube, magazine, or textbooks, and share such collocations to their peers. In addition, the students can be encouraged to visit corpora websites, such as COCA or Lextutor and probe some concordance lines of English words that are useful for their real-life conversation. Students can choose some words, such as ‘interesting’ and ‘interested’ (See Figure 5), ask their friends to distinguish the similarities or differences between words in terms of collocation and grammatical pattern, and share ideas to each other under a supervision of teacher.

ire. The mercenaries were little INTERESTED in farming and added nothing to t
it's time of puberty, your Mhm. INTERESTED in fashion, your interested in th
an international group of banks INTERESTED in financing the construction of
are are very very few who are er INTERESTED in finding a gambling haunt or a
iant vegetables. For those of us INTERESTED in food as well as fun, "Red Arrc
ne floor, so But you're not that INTERESTED in football Well yeah. I'll tell
a more. And don't tell me you're INTERESTED in freedom unless you support the
ture looks black for those of us INTERESTED in freedom." "Fergus, you're a Tc
. #DIVERSIFICATION PLANS# We are INTERESTED in further diversification into c
just at the age when I'm getting INTERESTED in girls, and suddenly I have ugl

1 Highness, it is, it is, it is INTERESTING that when I attended the Annual
are determined to marry. It is INTERESTING that, although the percentage of
that. Furthermore, the list is INTERESTING for its omissions. It omits, for
in spend very little time. It is INTERESTING to note however that Nepalese me
ien in the English Civil Wars is INTERESTING, because the fact that nearly ev
able. 49:1131 HANK Ernie this is INTERESTING to me because family is the most
ision from the environment. It is INTERESTING to note that medium compulsives
n populations in Iceland. It is INTERESTING to note that the southernmost po
strictly adhered to (and it is INTERESTING that this is almost never done b
vability, I think, I think it is INTERESTING to have someone like that you kn
old of many contributions. It is INTERESTING, however, to consider one partic

Figure 5: A screenshot from Lextutor for “interested” and “interesting” collocation

Conclusion

Corpora play an important role in increasing vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners. This paper suggests how concordance-based materials and DDL can be used to improve the use of English collocation and semantic prosody of Thai high school students. The paper also raises learners’ awareness of analyzing corpora cautiously in order to avoid the over-generalizations of the corpus data.

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