AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS AND COLLIGATIONS IN THE TURNABOUT SERIES NOVELS AT ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study aims to raise awareness in teaching Thai variety of English collocations and colligations. The findings of collocations and colligations from three English novels, *Grafted Pine Tree, Chester's Magic Island, and From Atikarn's Diary*, written by Thai students. The results indicate that the major source of Thai variety of English collocations was through transliteration from Thai to English and the results also show that collocations were used to narrate the sequence of the story, and describe characters and settings. Moreover, the dominant collocations used in the three novels are VG+NG collocations. Finally, the colligation patterns reveal that each collocation has its own grammatical pattern.

Key Words: collocation, colligation, Thai variety, creative writing, students' novels.

Introduction

While doing the Teaching Practicum in the Graduate School of English (GSE), Assumption University, the researcher had a chance to read the novel *From Atikarn's Diary*, which was prescribed for the Basic English course. The novel was based on a project by English IV students called the Turnabout Series.

The main objective of this research was to study Thai variety of English collocation, (the way in which words co-occur in natural text) and colligations (the way one word regularly co-occurs with a particular grammar

pattern) produced by the students in the edited versions of *Grafted Pine Tree, Chester's Magic Island* and *From Atikarn's Diary*. The study includes NG+VG, VG+NG, ADJ+NG, ADV+ADJ and VG+ADJ collocations and colligation pattern of each collocation found in the novels.

Literature Review

According to Lewis (1993: 95), one of the central features of lexis is collocation. Words and collocations are intimately associated with the content of what the user expresses rather than what the language user is doing, complaining or explaining, etc. This feature of language is helpful for learners in the sense that it enables and encourages them to produce a comprehensive, natural and balanced range of vocabulary, which is vital in the Lexical Approach.

Traditionally, a language is divided into two parts: grammar (structure) and vocabulary (words). However, Lewis challenges this fundamental view of language by arguing that vocabulary should be the core of language teaching. He originally theorizes the Lexical Approach and also states "language consists of chunks, which combine and produce continuous coherent texts" (Lewis 1998: 7).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001: 132), a lexical approach in language teaching refers to the belief that not only grammar but also lexis is considered as a significant part in language learning. The centrality of language learning and language teaching is lexicon, lexical units or chunks that are used as a single item.

The Lexical Approach, according to Lewis (1993: 1), focuses on "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."

In addition, the main principle of the Lexical Approach is to 'allow students to experience language items in natural contexts and to learn from their experience, which relies on the learners' corpus' (Willis 1994: viii). The Approach aims at highlighting the students' proficiency of words and their combinations or co-occurrences, which become the basis for the learner to perceive patterns and word-structure.

The researcher agrees that grammar is not the main path of learning language but lexis. Language is an ordered arrangement of words, not a verbalized structure. In Thailand, for example, grammar has been a dominant part of learning English for several decades. Thai students, yet, cannot use English fluently. The researcher believes that the problem is the students

know only the grammar rules but they do not know what vocabulary to use in sentences. The important factor that needs to be strengthened to the students is vocabulary. Therefore, in the researcher's opinion, learning lexical items might give a new dimension to language teaching.

Collocation is likely to be a new term to many English teachers in Thailand. The term "collocation" was originally coined by J.R. Firth in his paper in 1951, *Modes of Meaning*. He defines collocation as the company words keep – their relationships with other words.

Most linguists propose a similar view on the concept of collocation, all keeping a focus on the word co-occurrences. According to Lewis (2000: 132), collocation is about the way words naturally co-occur in used language. They are not the words being put together, but they co-occur naturally.

Therefore, collocations should be focused on at every stage of language learning and "should be highlighted in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating" (Boonyasaquan 2007: 99). In addition, Nesselhauf (2005: 1) points out that the knowledge and ability to use collocations or the word combinations is essential for students since language exposure is limited to them in many contexts.

Moreover, colligation is another aspect of collocation that teacher should pay attention in teaching students English too. Colligation is another major idea put forward by Firth (1957), and Hoey provides a straightforward definition: "Colligation can be defined as 'the grammatical company a word keeps and the positions it prefers; in other words, a word's colligations describe what it typically does grammatically" (Hoey 2000: 234)

Similarly, Michael Lewis (2000: 137) defines colligation as the way one word co-occurs with a particular grammar pattern.

Thus, colligation is a similar idea to collocation, but with a different emphasis. For example, Hargreaves (2000: 213) compares colligation to collocation "verb + to infinitive" is a colligation, "dread + think" is a collocation which exemplifies the colligation.

Colligation is concerned with the relationship between grammatical classes, whereas collocation is concerned with the words that belong to these grammatical classes.

However, from the researcher's experience, vocabulary teaching has rarely been systematic. It is assumed that students will pick up the necessary vocabulary by reading while focusing on the importance of getting the structural system. In reality, formal vocabulary teaching has tended to be either random resulting from a particular student question for a certain word or centered on traditional presentation of the words associated with a certain topic or field (Hameed 2008: 10). Likewise, resourceful materials such as

students' writing might be neglected. Therefore, it is necessary to start from the students' writings, as this would give an idea to teachers about what they should teach their students. Creative writing not only represents a means of communication, which makes it attractive in the classroom, but has a large number of benefits. Creative writing increases the joy of writing and strengthens learners' motivation as they have freedom to express their ideas and feelings. (Fearnside 2006: cited in Schlepphege 2009: 5).

Woolard (2000) points out that a practical way of teaching collocation is to look at students' writing, which can provide useful insights to the teaching of collocation. For example, it indicates students' understanding, knowledge, proficiency, deficiency or even their style of using collocations.

Additionally, as the English language has become "a lingua franca" or "World Englishes", students' use of collocations and expressions can be considered as their variety of English, rather than errors. Teachers should take note of this existence in order to supplement and raise students' awareness about varieties of English (Jenkins; 2007).

Research Questions

1. What are NG+VG, VG+NG, ADJ+NG, ADV+ADJ and VG+ADV collocations found in
   a) *Grafted Pine Tree*
   b) *Chester's Magic Island*
   c) *From Atikarn's Diary?*

2. How do NG+VG, VG+NG, ADJ+NG, ADV+ADJ and VG+ADV collocations reflect colligation patterns in the
   a) *Grafted Pine Tree*
   b) *Chester's Magic Island*
   c) *From Atikarn's Diary?*

3. Is there any Thai variety of NG+VG, VG+NG, ADJ+NG, ADV+ADJ and VG+ADV collocations in the three novels? If so, what are they?

Research Population

Writers of The Turnabout Series were English IV students from various faculties at Assumption University. Most of them are Thai, but there were some Chinese, Japanese and Burmese students. However, only chapters written by Thai students are used in the research. The study includes 46

chapters out of 66 in the three novels: six chapters from *Grafted Pine Tree*, 30 chapters from *Chester's Magic Island* and 10 chapters from *From Atikarn's Diary*. The age group of the writers is between 19-20 years. There are a total number of 23 male writers and 23 female writers in the three novels; four male writers and two female writers from *Grafted Pine Tree*, 11 male writers and 19 female writers from *Chester's Magic Island*, and eight male writers and two female writers from *From Atikarn's Diary*.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher had access to the unedited and the edited versions of the novels. The former versions reflect the students' original writing and the latter versions were corrected and edited in terms of grammar and spelling mistakes before publication. In this study, the unedited versions of *Grafted Pine Tree, Chester's Magic Island* and *From Atikarn's Diary* from the Turnabout Series are used.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Wordsmith Tools 5.0 to list collocations and colligation patterns in the novels. The researcher consulted the Oxford Collocation Dictionary, British National Corpus and two Thai native Speakers to indicate whether collocations found in the data can be considered as Thai variety of English collocations.

Findings of Collocations

The collocations found in the three novels are shown in the tables below.

Table 1: Collocations Found in *Grafted Pine Tree*

Type	Collocations From Wordsmith Tools
NG+VG	time + pass bus + stop phone + ring
VG+NG	waste + time spend + time take + time take + breath take + hand start + engine solve + problem pay + money change + clothes wear + clothes wear + shirt erase + tear pay + attention give + surprise hold + party raise + head answer + question shake + head ask + question
ADJ+NG	sweet + smile fresh + air deep + breath big + smile
ADV+ADJ	completely + different
VG+ADV	say + softly say + sadly say + smoothly say + happily love + deeply see + clearly
TOTAL	33

Table I shows the existence of 33 collocations in the *Grafted Pine Tree* which are connected to theme of the story. The story reflects the characters' lives at a university and their love relationships. The examples of collocations that reflect students' routines and university life are "bus + stop" "phone + ring" "shake + hand" "hold + party" "answer + question" "ask + question" and "wear + clothes".

Likewise, the examples of collocations that show emotions and perceptions on love and relationship between boys and girls are "love + deeply" "say + happily" "say + sadly" "give + surprise" "erase + tear" and "sweet + smile".

Table 2: Collocations Found in *Chester's Magic Island*

Type	Collocations From Wordsmith Tools
NG+VG	ground + split wind + blow
VG+NG	take + time spend + time pass + way hear + voice hear + sound hear + noise glance + eye nod + head save + life change + mind light + fire light + candle solve + problem pass + examination answer + question make + relationship start + conversation start + fire pay + attention
ADJ+NG	narrow + way joyful + life dark + sky gigantic + spider deep + forest fresh + water fresh + air sweet + smell wide + lawn bright + sand
VG+ADV	walk + directly know + exactly shout + loudly say + softly run + directly come + closely
TOTAL	37

Table 2 consists of 37 collocations from *Chester's Magic Island that* reflect the theme of the novel. The collocations are related to the characters' school routine, adventure and excitement.

The examples of collocations in *Chester's Magic Island* that demonstrate adventure and excitement are "ground split" "light + candle" "hear + sound" "save + life" "deep + forest" and "gigantic + spider".

The examples of collocations reflecting students' school routine are "solve + problem" "pass + examination" "answer + question" "make + relationship" "start + conversation" and "pay + attention".

Table 3: List of Collocations in *From Atikarn's Diary*

Type	Collocations From Wordsmith Tools
NG+VG	train + arrive train + go face + pale eye + shine bomb + happen bomb + burst situation + happen wind + blow
VG+NG	raise + hand take + photo take + breath start + engine control + situation raise + voice shake + head sip + coffee get + information give + information ask + question pay + money find + truth hold + gun break + idea pay + attention push + button press + button break + relationship
ADJ+NG	dark + skin soft + voice trembling + voice heavy + rain fresh + air deep + breath
VG+ADV	say + loudly walk + quietly walk + stealthily
TOTAL	36

Table 3 shows 36 collocations *from Atikarn's Diary*. Similar to the *Grafted Pine Tree* and *Chester's Magic Island*, there is a connection between collocations and the theme of the novel. Collocations found in the novel reflect journalism and terrorism, which are main concerns of the novel.

The examples of collocations related to journalism are "find + truth", "control + situation", "get + information", "give + information" and "take + photo".

Likewise, the examples of collocations that reflect terrorism are "bomb + burst" "bomb + happen" "hold + gun" and "control + situation".

Table 4: Collocations in the Three Novels

Usages of Collocations	Grafted Pine Tree	Chester's Magic Island	From Atikarn's Diary
To narrate the sequence of events	✓	✓	✓
To describe the settings	✓	✓	✓
To describe the characters' actions	✓	✓	✓
To describe the characters' emotions	✓	✗	✓
To describe the characters' appearances	✗	✗	✓

It is interesting to note from Table 4 that *Grafted Pine Tree* and *From Atikarn's Diary* contain collocations that describe the characters' emotions, unlike *Chester's Magic Island*. This can be because *Grafted Pine Tree* and *From Atikarn's Diary* focus on love and relationship between people, so the characters' emotions are expressed in the texts. Unlike *Chester's Magic Island*, which deals with the descriptions of characters' adventures and settings.

Moreover, only the collocations in Atikarn's Diary describe the characters' appearances. This can be because the story is told from Atikarn's point of view - a journalist covering terrorism. Therefore, as he wrote down his diary, he must have included descriptions of people he met.

Figure I: Percentage of Types of Collocations in the Three Novels
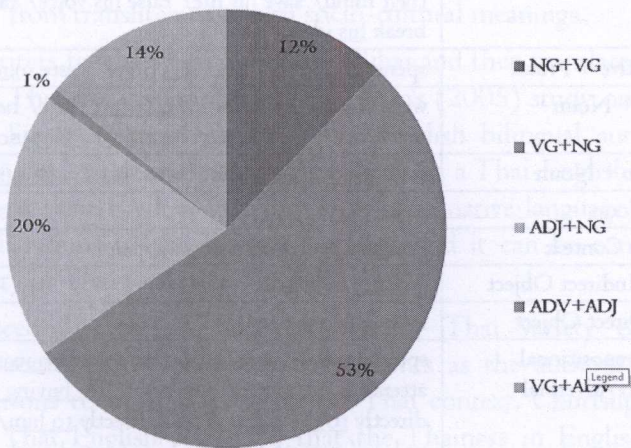

Figure I shows the percentage of collocations found in the three novels in percentage. There are a total of 106 collocations in the *Grafted Pine Tree*, *Chester's Magic Island* and *From Atikarn's Diary*. From Figure I, the most common type of collocation is VG+NG, which account for 57 out of 106 or 53%; whereas, ADV+ADJ is the least, only 1 out of 106. Furthermore, the numbers of ADJ+NG collocations is 20%, 15% for VG+ADV collocations and 13% for NG+VG collocations.

The finding supports Toomnun's (2007) study on *Kinnaree* magazine in which ADV+ADJ collocations were the lowest accounting for only 1.79%. Similar to Mongkolchai's study (2008) on students' ability in using English collocations, the results show that ADV+ADJ collocations were the lowest in the study.

Findings of Colligations

As shown in Table 5, the findings of the colligations indicate that each collocation has its own significant grammar pattern.

Table 5: Summary of Colligations of the Collocations in the Study

Colligation Patterns	Collocations/ Examples
I. Deictic+ Noun articles + noun possessives + noun	start <u>a</u> conversation/ start <u>a</u> fire/ hear <u>the</u> sound/ hear <u>a</u> voice/ hear <u>the</u> noise/ light <u>a</u> fire/ light <u>a</u> candle waste <u>your</u> time/ answer <u>her</u> question/ ask <u>his</u> question/ raise <u>his</u> head/ shake <u>her</u> head/ take <u>her</u> hand/ change <u>their</u> mind/ save <u>his</u> life/ raise <u>his</u> voice/ raise <u>her</u> hand/ break <u>his</u> idea
2. Numerative + Noun	spend <u>more</u> time/ take <u>less</u> time/ waste <u>much</u> time
3. Epithet + Noun	wear <u>beautiful</u> clothes/ wear <u>white</u> shirt/ hear <u>a strange</u> voice/ hear <u>loud</u> noise/ hear <u>the howling</u> sound
4. Classifier + Noun	wear <u>white cotton</u> shirt/ wear <u>black western-style</u> clothes
5. Plural Noun	erase tear<u>s</u>
6. Negative Context	bomb happen/ situation happen
7. with an Indirect Object	give <u>her</u> a surprise
8. with a Direct Object	love <u>someone</u> deeply
9. with a Prepositional Phrase as an Adverbial Phrase	spend time <u>in classroom</u>/ waste time <u>on mathematics</u>/ pay attention <u>in science</u>/ pay money <u>for buying clothes</u>/ run directly <u>to the shores</u>/ walk directly <u>to him</u>/ ask question <u>to him</u>/ pay attention <u>to Ling</u>/ run directly <u>to the beach</u>/ walk directly <u>to him</u>
10. with a Prepositional Phrase as a Post-Modifier to a Noun	hear voice <u>from the cave</u>/ hear the sound <u>of waterfall</u>/ get the information <u>about PHI</u>/ get information <u>of PHI</u>/ give the information <u>about the villagers</u>/ break the relationship <u>between them</u>/ narrow way <u>between the shelf and the door</u>
II. with an Adverb	time pass <u>quickly</u>
I2. with a Verbal Verb	say, ask <u>with</u> soft voice/ <u>say, ask in</u> trembling voice
I3. with an Infinitive with to as a Non-Finite Verb	spend time <u>to stay with Chester</u>, pay attention <u>to hear the suffering voice</u>
I4. with a Present Participial as a Non-Finite Verb	spend time <u>waiting for you</u>

From the analysis, it is evident that each collocation has its dominant colligation pattern. Likewise, the findings support Lewis's view (1993: 95) regarding lexical items, that "a language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar." which means that each word has its own grammar pattern.

Additionally, the researcher agrees with Lewis (1993: 1), that these collocations and colligations will eventually become raw data for learners to perceive word-structure and features of language.

Findings of Thai Variety of Collocations

There are eight collocations that are possibly Thai variety of English collocations. They are "bomb + happen", "ground + split", "situation + happen", "break + idea", "break + relationship", "erase + tear" and "walk + stealthily". These collocations do not exist in both OCD (Oxford Collocation Dictionary) and BNC (British National Corpus) because they are produced from transliteration with socio-cultural meanings.

The writers first expressed an idea in Thai and then translate the words into English. This study supports Watkhaolarm's (2005) study on discourse strategies in literary texts written by Thai English bilingual authors, that transliteration creates styles that may be termed as a Thai-English style. The authors pattern their English structure after their native language and bring different collocations to the English language and it can be considered as another variety or Thai variety of English.

The second cause of the existence of Thai variety of English collocations comes from socio-cultural elements as the authors have used these collocations to express events in the Thai context. Chutisilp's (1984) research for Thai English suggested that the Thainess in English resulted from the process of contextualization. She provided an explanation that Thai socio-cultural system is reflected in the language. The researcher agrees that the occurrences of Thai variety of English collocations in the data may be a result of the writers' socio-cultural background. The researcher agrees with Werder (1993) that even lacking experience in reading novels in English or in creative writing, the writers have developed new forms of expression, communication and self-awareness through creative writing. The students create instances of cultural expression through English in the Thai context, which is important in realizing the potential of English as a World language.

In addition, it is interesting that these Thai variety collocations do not change the overall meaning. No matter "situation + happen" or "situation + occur" is used in the context, the meaning is still comprehensible.

Conclusion

Concerning English education in Thailand, it is important that teachers focus on the Thais' use of English in the classroom and raise the students' awareness about Thai variety of English. Unlike mathematics that has fixed formulas, there is no universal English that every English language user is competent. Every English speaker uses a different style of English as they have their own way to approach, acquire, express and use the language.

Each variety of English has its significance with cultural bases and rhetorical strategies; teachers should scaffold the knowledge of Thai variety in order to make them understand and use in appropriate contexts.

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