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# THANH HOA HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF COLLOCATION AND COLLOCATION TEACHING

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# NHẬN THỨC VỀ KẾT HỢP NGỮ VÀ VIỆC GIẢNG DẠY KẾT HỢP NGỮ CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG THÀNH PHỐ THANH HOÁ

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# ABSTRACT

The present study makes investigations into Thanh Hoa high school teachers' perceptions of collocation and collocation teaching. The teachers' understandings about collocation were examined through the way they perceived its definition, its categorizations, and how it differs from other word combinations. Regarding the perceptions of collocation teaching, the rank of collocation among aspects of a vocabulary item, the impacts of collocation on language acquisition and the effective methods of teaching collocations were explored through the lens of the teachers.

The study employed a case study approach to provide an in-depth analysis of teachers' perceptions of collocation and collocation teaching. Data sources included survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. As the main source of information, data from the questionnaire were analyzed statistically, while data from the interviews were integrated accordingly to give insights into the matters of research.

The findings of the study reveal that high school teachers of English in Thanh Hoa city had insufficient understandings about the nature of collocation. Besides, although they showed great acknowledgement about the integral role of collocations in students' language development, the teachers still paid inadequate attention to collocation teaching. Therefore, there is an ultimate need for a professional training program to first orientate the teachers to adopt more accurate views about collocations and later provide them with methods to integrate collocation teaching into their lessons.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1. Rationale for the study

Vocabulary has long been acknowledged to play a pivotal role in second language acquisition, as some of the most renowned scholars in linguistics once asserted that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkins, 1972, p.111-112) or that "Lexis is the core or heart of the language" (Lewis, 1993, p.89). While language structures can be compared with the skeleton of language, the function of vocabulary is to provide the vital organs and the flesh (Hammer, 1991). That is the reason why in the last three decades, vocabulary replaced grammar to become the focal area of second language research. Although the common practice of vocabulary acquisition merely involves the understanding of words' definition and pronunciation, the process of activating a word involves learning how that word collocates with others in order to form a meaningful phrase. For example, when learning the word "exam", English learners also need to get familiar with "take an exam", "pass an exam" or "fail an exam". That is why it is stated that words do not exist in isolation (Lewis, 1993), but they rather appear in chunks. This idea about lexis leads to the emergence of collocation as an indispensable category in vocabulary learning and teaching.

Nattinger (1988, p.70) argued that "the whole notion of collocations is extremely important for acquiring vocabulary". Sharing the same view on the utmost importance of collocation, some scholars even contend that knowledge of language depends on collocational knowledge (Ellis, 2001) and a speaker needs to acquire sufficient collocational knowledge to become fluent and able to use a language appropriately (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Despite the widespread use of collocation and the acknowledgement about its fundamental role in the language (Kjellmer 1984; Stubbs 1995; Nation 2001), collocation has not received an adequate amount of attention in language teaching and learning and thus it has not performed its best to benefit learners. Once being treated with sufficient

attention, collocational knowledge could make a significant impact on language proficiency of students, as it is believed to help upgrade intermediate learners to advanced level (Lewis, 2000; Thornbury, 2002). Therefore, there is an urge to integrate the teaching of collocations into the English learning curriculum.

As far as the need for collocation teaching is concerned, the active role of teachers is the deciding factor. According to Faez (2011), effective EFL teachers must have knowledge base including expertise, understanding, awareness and skills so as to give the best guidance to students. Thus, in order to successfully bring collocational knowledge into formal English classes, ESL/EFL teachers need to have proper perceptions of collocation and collocation teaching so that what is delivered to students could be guaranteed to be clear, accurate and beneficial. There have been several international studies carried out with the aim to raise the awareness of the importance of collocation teaching such as those done by Hodne (2009) and Alfahadi et al. (2014). In Vietnam, the topic about teachers' perceptions of collocation and the importance of teaching collocation in ESL/EFL classrooms is still under investigated, so this research was conducted with the purpose to provide insights into this area of concern.

## 2. Statement of research problem and research questions

In recognition of collocation's importance, it is undeniable that English teachers play a key role in helping students first get familiar with the concept and later be able to identify and apply collocations into contexts. Teachers should be the ones who draw their attention to the high priority lexis, because students with limited time and English learning experience may easily be misled in collocation acquisition. Woolard (2000, p.36) argued that "Collocations must become part of that planned language input". Hill (2000, p.60) even demanded an official status for collocation in teaching methodology, as he asserted: "Collocation is not an added bonus which we pay attention to once students have become sufficiently advanced. Collocation should play an important part in our teaching from lesson one". Considering the feasibility of incorporating collocations into teaching practice, Lewis (2000) maintained that it does not require a radical change in

teaching to make room for collocations. In order to successfully bring collocations to classroom, the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of teachers are the prerequisites. Only when teachers could have full awareness about collocation coupled with proper teaching methods could they give the most effective guidance to students.

Although topics revolving around collocation have been widely discussed by a great number of researchers worldwide, collocation remains a fairly novel concept in the context of teaching and learning English in Vietnam. The majority of previous studies related to collocation in Vietnam have only focused on the comparison and contrast between English and Vietnamese collocations (Nguyen, 2011; Do, 2010) and raising collocation awareness of students (Le, 2005; Vo, 2010). However, little literature regarding Vietnamese EFL teachers' perception of collocation was found. Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate the perceptions of English teachers at high schools in Thanh Hoa city about the notion of collocation and the importance of teaching collocations. In brief, the study purports to address the following questions:

**1. How do Thanh Hoa high school teachers perceive collocation?**
**2. What are their perceptions of teaching collocations at high school?**

**3. Significance**

As one of the initial studies on teachers' perceptions about collocation in Vietnam, the research's results is expected to raise EFL teachers' awareness about the role of collocation in language acquisition and the importance of teaching collocations. In other words, this research aims to orientate English teachers in Thanh Hoa city and elsewhere in our country to adopt more accurate views about collocation and its role in language learning generally and vocabulary learning particularly. Moreover, based on the findings about the collocational knowledge of Thanh Hoa high school teachers, implications would be made regarding the matter of providing further professional training.

## 4. Overview of the rest of the paper

The remaining parts of the paper includes four main chapters, namely *literature review*, *methodology*, *results and discussions*, and *conclusion*. *Chapter 2* reviews literature on the essential knowledge about collocations, the importance of collocations in language development, and the methods to teach collocations. Besides, it provides information about what previous studies have uncovered about teachers' perceptions of collocations so as to locate the position of the present study. In the following part, *chapter 3* introduces the methodology employed to conduct the research. Detailed information about the research approach, research site and participants was offered. Also included are methods for data collection procedure and data analysis. *Chapter 4* is where the results of the study were presented and discussed in detail. In the end, *the last chapter* of the paper provides a summary of the major findings of the study and gives significant pedagogical implications. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the limitations of the study and consequently offers suggestions for further studies.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1. Definition of collocation

The term "collocation", originated from the sphere of lexicon studies, has been defined and understood in various ways (Bahns, 1993). Besides the inference from its original Latin word - the verb "collocare" which means "to set in order/ to arrange", there exits two different sides of understandings about the term. One way to define collocation is to put it in relation with meaning and another way is to consider it without a semantic relation between words.

Regarding the former understanding of collocation, Firth – a British linguist – was acknowledged as the one who brought the term into prominence in lexical field (Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Hill, 2000). Firth (1957, p.181) defined collocations of a given word as "statements of the habitual or customary places of that word". From Firth's perspectives, words obtain their meaning from their co-occurrence in texts. It means that acquiring meaning of a word could not go without knowing what words can occur with it or "the company it keeps" (1957, p.11). There has been a substantial amount of research on collocation that further developed Firth's groundwork. For instance, McIntosh (1961) and Palmer (1976) based on Firth's viewpoint to add the notion of ranges, which states that a word could only be used with a whole set of words having some common semantic features. In other words, a word has a certain tolerance of compatibility. However, the ranges and variety of collocation could also be colossal (Bolinger and Sears, 1981). Such knowledge of range helps distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable collocations.

Meanwhile, some linguistic researchers did not share the same view about the semantic relation between words that collocation exhibits. For example, McCarthy (1991) regarded the notion of collocation as a kind of cohesive device, which means it serves another function besides meaning in sentences. Another typical example is the notion of collocation defined through the lens of discourse by Halliday and Hasan (1997). They claimed that collocation is related to "cohesive effect of pairs of words" such as flame – candle, king – crown, hair –

comb (AL – Zahrani, 1998, p.19). In other words, those pairs of words would generate cohesive force if they occur in adjacent sentences (ibid).

Although there are two contrasting views about collocation, the term can generally be defined as: "Collocations are loosely fixed, arbitrary recurrent word combinations and the meaning of the whole do reflect the meaning of the parts." (Benson et al, 1986, p.23). The definition was adopted in this study; since it satisfactorily reveals the nature of collocations and thus provides readers with fundamental understandings about this area of English language, without involving too many terms in linguistics for non-majors to comprehend.

## 2. Collocation – an important aspect of vocabulary

According to Nation (2001), effective vocabulary teaching requires high awareness about what needs to be taught about a word, which is called "the learning burden of a word" (p.2). Although the "learning burden" differs from word to word according to how the word relates to the first language knowledge and the prior knowledge of the second language, it mainly revolves around three main categories; namely meaning, form and use.

| **Meaning** | Form and meaning Concept and referents Associations | Is the word a loan word in the L1? Is there an L1 word with roughly the same meaning? Does the word fit into the same sets as an L1 word of similar meaning? |
|---|---|---|
| **Form** | Spoken form Written form Word parts | Can the learners repeat the word accurately if they hear it? Can the learners write the word correctly if they hear it? Can the learners identify known affixes in the word? |
| **Use** | Grammatical function Collocations Constraints on use | Does the word fit into predictable grammar patterns? Does the word have the same collocations as an L1 word of similar meaning? Does the word have the same restrictions on its use as an L1 word of similar meaning? |

**Table 2.1: Discovering learning burden (Nation, 2001, p.3)**

It is necessary to take into careful consideration what is involved in knowing a word so as to work out the "learning burden" systematically. The table above is inserted with the kinds of questions that can be asked to explore the learning burden of a word. As can be seen, collocation is one of the many listed aspects when it comes to know a new vocabulary item, and it is classified into the category of use. Since how teachers view the importance of each aspect of a word greatly affects their method of teaching, this model of Nation was adopted in questionnaire design to find out how teachers rank the importance of collocations among other aspects of a word.

## 3. Collocations and other combinations of words

Without being restricted, words can be combined in a wide variety of ways. Thus, to have a clear perception about the notion of collocation, it is significantly important to draw a distinction among collocations, idioms and other word combinations (Bahns, 1993; Wang, 2001; Wu, 1996), despite the fact that these combinations bear a close similarity with each other even to the point that they could be easily put in the category of collocations (ibid).

Researchers adopt various views when describing different terms and scopes of collocations. For example, by integrating Cowie and Howarth (1996) 's model, Chen (2008) came up with the four categories of word combinations:

|   | Category | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Free combinations** | The meaning of a free combination is interpreted from the literal meaning of individual elements, such as *drink tea*. |
| 2 | **Restricted collocations** | A restricted collocation is more limited in the selection of compositional elements and usually has one component used in a specialized context, such as *perform a task* |
| 3 | **Figurative idioms** | A figurative idioms has a metaphorical meaning as a whole that can somehow tell its literal interpretation, such as *do a U-turn.* |
| 4 | **Pure idioms** | A pure idiom is a single unit whose meaning is totally unpredictable from the meaning of its components, such as *blow the gaff* |

**Table 2.2: Chen (2008)'s categorization of word combinations (Farrokh, 2012, p.58)**

Another model that could be referred to when discussing word combinations is Benson et al. (1986b). In this model, collocations are put in comparison with other combinations of words, namely compounds, idioms, transitional combinations and free combinations. This model clearly differentiates collocations from other types of word combinations in terms of the fixedness and thus reveals the distinguishing nature of collocations. Moreover, another plus point of this model is that the definition of each type is accompanied with several typical examples which makes it more comprehensible. The list below briefly describes those five types of word combinations with the sequence from the most fixed combinations to the freest one.

|   | Category | Definition |
|---|----------|------------|
| 1 | **Compounds** | The most fixed word combinations, are completely frozen, and no variations at all are possible. The instances of nominal compounds are: *floppy disk, aptitude test* and an example of compound verb is: *break through* |
| 2 | **Idioms** | Idioms refer to relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the meanings of their component parts. The instances of idioms are: *to kill two birds with one stone, to kick the bucket, to spill the beans.* |
| 3 | **Transitional combinations** | The combinations whose meaning are close to their component parts are regarded as more frozen and less variable than collocations. The instances of transitional combinations are: *for old time's sake, the facts of life, to be in a tight spot.* |
| 4 | **Collocations** | Collocations are loosely fixed, arbitrary recurrent word combinations and the meaning of the whole do reflect the meaning of the parts. The instances of collocations are: *pure chance, to commit murder, close attention*, and *keen competition.* |
| 5 | **Free combinations** | Free combinations are taken as the least cohesive of all combinations. Their components are the freest in regard to being combined with other lexical items. The instances of free combinations are: *to recall an adventure, to analyze a murder* |

**Table 2.3: Benson (1986b)'s categorization of word combinations (Farrokh, 2012, p. 58-59)**

Sharing the same views with Benson et al. (1986b), Bahns (1993) argued that what distinguishes collocations from idioms is their ability to reflect the constituent parts. Compared to free combinations, collocations are used more frequently, spring to mind more readily and are more psychologically salient (ibid). Curse (1986, p.41) also said, "there are transitional areas between free combinations and collocations, and between collocations and idioms".

The model of Benson (1986b) was adopted in this study in the design of the questionnaire with the purpose to examine how far the teachers understand the differences between collocations and other types of word combinations.

## 4. The categorization of collocations

Benson (1986a, 1986b) and Lewis (2000) were the two prominent figures in the field of collocation study, who laid the firm foundation for a lot of further collocational research. Thus, it would be a mistake if not mentioning their models in the discussion of the categorization of collocations.

## 4.1. Benson et al.'s categorization of collocations

The classification of collocations by Benson et al. (1986a) was widely acknowledged to be second to none so far (Hsueh, 2000; Liu, 1999a; Tsai, 1996), which has become the reference for a substantial number of collocational research (Bahns, 1993; Chang, 1997; Liu, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a; Wang, 2001). According the Benson et al, collocations can be categorized into two main groups, namely lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. The lexical collocations could be formed of nouns, adjectives, verbs or adverbs. There are seven types of lexical collocations in the framework of Benson et al, which would be listed in Table 2.4.

| Type | Pattern | Examples |
|------|---------|----------|
| L1 | Verb (donating, creation, or activation) + noun (pronoun or prepositional phrase) | Compose music, make an impression, set a record, spin a top |
| L2 | Verb (meaning eradication or nullification) + noun | Ease tension, withdraw an offer, dispel fear, lift a blockade |
| L3 | Adjective + noun | A formidable challenge, a chronic alcoholic, strong tea |
| L4 | Noun + verb (action) | Bombs explode, adjectives modify, alarms sound |
| L5 | Noun1 of noun2 | A school of whales, a colony of bees, a piece of advice |
| L6 | Adjective + adverb; adverb + adjective | Big enough, strictly accurate, sound asleep, deeply absorb |
| L7 | Verb + adverb | Anchor firmly, amuse thoroughly, appreciate sincerely, affect deeply |

**Table 2.4: Lexical collocation categorization designed by Benson et al. (1986a)**

Regarding grammatical collocations, they are formed of dominant words, such as noun, an adjective, or a verb, and a preposition or grammatical structure like an infinitive or a clause. There are eight types of grammatical collocations in the study of Benson et al, which would be listed in Table 2.5.

| Type | Pattern | Examples |
|------|---------|----------|
| G1 | Noun + preposition | Apathy toward |
| G2 | Noun + to infinitive | He was a fool to do it |
| G3 | Noun + that clause | He took an oath that he would do his duty |
| G4 | Preposition + noun | In advance, at anchor |
| G5 | Adjective + preposition | They are afraid of him |
| G6 | Predicate adjective + to infinitive | It was stupid for them to go |
| G7 | Adjective + that clause | She was afraid that she would fail the |

| | | exam |
|---|---|---|
| **G8** | SVO to O/ SVOO | He sent a book to his brother/ He sent his brother a book |
| | SVO to O (no movement for dative) | They described the book to her |
| | SVO for O/ SVOO | She bought a T-shirt for her husband/ She bought her husband a T-shirt |
| | SV prep. O/ SVO prep. O | He came by train/ We invited them to the meeting |
| | SV to infinitive | They began to speak |
| | SV to infinitive | He had better go |
| | SVV-ing | They enjoy watching television |
| | SVO to infinitive | She asks me to come |
| | SVO infinitive | She heard them leave |
| | SVOV-ing | I caught them stealing apples |
| | SV possessive V-ing | Please excuse my waking you so early |
| | SV(O) that- clause | They admitted that they were wrong |
| | SVO to be C | We consider her to be very capable |
| | SVOC | She dyed her hair red |
| | SVOO | We bet her ten pounds |
| | SV(O) adverbial | He carried himself well |
| | SV(O) wh-word | He wants what I want |
| | S (it) VO to infinitive / S (it) VO that-clause | It surprised me to learn of her decision/ It surprised me that our offer was rejected |
| | SVC (adjective or noun) | She was enthusiastic/ The flower smells nice |

**Table 2.5: Grammatical collocation categorization designed by Benson et al. (1986a)**

## 4.2. Lewis's categorization of collocation

Another renowned framework when it comes to collocation classification is Lewis (2000). Like Benson et al (1986a), Lewis made a list of 20 different types of collocations. There could be noticed some additional types compared to the list of Benson et al.

|    | Pattern | Example |
|----|---------|---------|
| 1  | Adjective + noun | A difficult decision |
| 2  | Verb + noun | Submit a report |
| 3  | Noun + noun | Radio station |
| 4  | Verb + adverb | Examine thoroughly |
| 5  | Adverb + adjective | Extremely inconvenient |
| 6  | Verb + adjective + noun | Revise the original plan |
| 7  | Noun + verb | The fog closed in |
| 8  | Discourse marker | To put it another way |
| 9  | Multi-word prepositional phrase | A few years ago |
| 10 | Phrasal verb | Turn in |
| 11 | Adjective + preposition | Aware of |
| 12 | Compound noun | Fire escape |
| 13 | Binomial | Backwards and forwards |
| 14 | Trinomial | Hook, line and sinker |
| 15 | Fixed phrase | On the other hand |
| 16 | In complete fixed phrase | A sort of … |
| 17 | Fixed expression | Not half! |
| 18 | Semi-fixed expression | See you later/ tomorrow/ on Monday |
| 19 | Part of a proverb | Too many cooks … |
| 20 | Part of a quotation | To be or not to be … |

**Table 2.6: The classification of collocations adopted from Lewis (2000, pp. 133-134)**

Lewis (1997) once viewed collocations from another aspect, which categorized collocations into four groups, namely strong, weak, frequent and infrequent. The fixedness and restriction are what distinguish strong and weak collocations. While the link between words in strong collocations is so tight that makes the phrase function like a single word, the link between words in weak ones is so loose that each of the word can easily combine with other words. For instance, strong collocations are *drink beer, drug addict* and weak collocations are *a good chance, a nice day.* Regarding frequent and infrequent collocations, the distinction is based on their frequency of co-occurrence in a corpus.

Compared to the model of Lewis (2000), that of Benson et al (1986a) is more comprehensive, because it gives careful consideration for both lexical and grammatical collocations while the model of Lewis lacks concern for the later. Since the study aims to investigate the teachers' perceptions of both these types of collocations, the model of Benson was chosen for this study. In addition, the framework of Benson (1986a) logically and systematically classifies collocations into two groups of lexical and grammatical collocations. Each group consists of many clearly illustrated patterns, which well reflect the arbitrary nature of collocations. Meanwhile, the framework of Lewis might be a little confusing when putting compounds, phrasal verbs and fixed expressions into the categorization of collocations.

## 5. The importance of developing collocational knowledge

According to Cowie (1992) and Carter & McCarthy (1988), English collocation plays a vital role in both receptive and productive language competence. They asserted that memorizing collocational groups can help raise students' awareness of lexical restrictions. Carter & McCarthy stated that "Collocations teach students expectations about what sort of language can follow from what has preceded. Students will not have to go about reconstructing the language each time they want to say something but instead can use these collocations as pre-packaged building blocks" (1988, p.75). Therefore, the collocational knowledge can also help students develop the ability to realize

which couple of words could be in accompany and furthermore avoid wrong word choice when producing language.

The fundamental importance of collocation in language acquisition was later backed up by a great number of researchers. Collocation can be one of the most noticeable aspect to differentiate between native speakers and non-native speakers, as Mc Carthy and O'Dell wrote in "English collocation in use - Intermediate": "Collocations give you the most natural way to say something: *smoking is strictly forbidden* is more natural than *smoking is strongly forbidden*" (Mc Carthy & O'Dell, 2005, p.6). It is a matter of fact that native speakers keep a considerable number of prefabricated lexical chunks in their memory. Therefore, second language learners need to store, retrieve and make the most of their lexical resources to combine as many ready-made chunks of language as possible in order to attain language fluency and accuracy of native-speaker level. As Lewis (1997) affirms, only when learners can chunk language successfully do they truly understand how language works. Furthermore, Lewis (2000) put forward the idea that collocation learning can help intermediate-level students who are slow at making notable progress in their learning to escape the "intermediate plateau" (p.14). He insisted that by changing strategies from enriching grammatical resources and obtaining more new and rare words to transforming already-known words into a great number of collocations, intermediate students can see marked improvements.

As the benefits of learning collocations appear to be profound, the following parts in this section are going to shed more light on the importance of developing collocational knowledge of English learners by presenting the three most popular arguments about the vital role of collocations in English language learning.

## 5.1. Language knowledge requires collocational knowledge.

Collocations appear densely in English language. Hill (2000, p.53) claimed that "it is possible that up to 70% of everything we say, hear, read or write is to be in some form of fixed expression". Collocations put the emphasis

on the strong patterning existing in language and prove the failure of the word-by-word approach when it comes to meaning in text. Nation (2001, p.321) also stated that "The strongest position is that language knowledge is collocational knowledge because the stored sequences of words are the bases of learning, knowledge and use". Since collocations seem to be the biggest constituent of the English language, they are so prevalent that learners are likely to come across collocations in almost every text they read, every tape they listen and make use of them in every of their writings or speeches. That is the reason why enriching collocational knowledge turns out to be the shortcut to embrace the vast knowledge of English language.

**5.2. Efficient language acquisition requires collocational knowledge**.

It is widely acknowledged that language acquisition happens faster and more efficiently when learned in "chunks", such as set phrases or routines (Ellis, 2001, p.67). This belief was shared among a number of scholars. Schmitt's assertion is one of the examples: "Lexical phrases in language reflect the way the mind tends to 'chunk' language in order to make it easier to process" (2000, p.78). Aitchison (1987, p.79) also claimed that there are "powerful and long lasting" links between words in the mind. In the first language acquisition, young children acquire language in chunks (Bolinger, 1976), even it is claimed for producing collocational constructions they could not have learned from their parents (Pinker, 2007, p.55).

Studies of second language acquisition also support the belief that chunking words helps facilitate language learning. According to Gleason (1982, p.355), work on second language acquisition proves that second language learners often begin with the acquisition of "chunks" and "prefabricated routines" rather than "generative systems". In a comparative study of first language and second language English speakers, Conklin and Schmitt (2008, p.72) found that what they term "formulaic sequences" were read more quickly than "non-formulaic sequences" by both groups of participants, which can be

interpreted that such chunks "have a processing advantage over creatively generated language".

In brief, all the aforementioned evidence leads to the conclusion that the organization of collocations in mind to some extent facilitates efficient language processing in terms of both language reception and language production.

**5.3. Fluent language use requires collocational knowledge.**

This argument for the learning of collocation is well supported in the study of Pawley and Syder (1983). In the study, they found out that memorized clauses and clause-sequences greatly contribute to the high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation. Findings in their research also shows that speakers demonstrate a high degree of fluency when describing familiar experiences or activities in familiar phrases. That is why they came to the conclusion that is "we believe that memorized sentences and phrases are the normal building blocks of fluent spoken discourse." (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p.208).

Another study sharing the similar position is the study of learners of French as a second language by Hawkins and Bazergui (1996), which found that learners storing memorized sequences resulted in their improved fluency. Holding the same stance, Sung (2003) in a study of international students in the USA and Hsu and Chiu (2008) in a study of Taiwanese EFL learners proved the impact of collocation learning on English learners' fluency by showing a significant correlation between the knowledge of lexical collocations and the subjects' speaking proficiency.

The three aforementioned beliefs advocating the fundamental importance of teaching collocation in ESL/EFL classrooms raise an urge to consider how to teach collocations to learners of English. This matter is going to be addressed in the next section.

## 6. Methods to teach collocations

It is stated that collocation has gained its position as an indispensable category of lexical patterning and it has fast becoming "an established unit of description in language teaching courses and materials" (Woolard, 2000, p.28). Liu (2000a) asserted that the more frequently students are taught English collocations, the more accurately they can use collocations. This statement was later backed up by the investigation of Lin (2002) in which she found that students made progress in producing collocations after receiving collocation instruction. Therefore, in order to upgrade the collocational competence of students, it is necessary to put focus on collocation teaching.

This section will discuss some approaches to teach collocations with selected examples of typical collocations. Since collocations come in a variety of forms as mentioned earlier, different types of collocations require different learning activities. Besides explicit teaching and using dictionaries which are the two most conventional methods, the following parts are going to introduce four more less familiar teaching methods; namely using concordances, memorizing unanalyzed chunks, input enhancement and output enhancement.

### 6.1. Deliberate teaching of new collocates

Channell (1981), in one of the pioneering studies recommending teaching collocations explicitly, found that students could not make the most of their known words as they only use them in a restricted number of collocations that they are certain about. To deal with this problem, Channell asserted that students need to have exposure to a wide variety of typical collocations associated with a word when the word is first acquired. To make it possible, she recommended the use of example sentences or collocational grids.

| | Woman | Man | Child | Dog | Bird | Flower | Weather | Landscape | View | House | Furniture | Bed | Picture | Dress | Present | Voice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| handsome | | + | | | | | | | | | + | | | | + | |
| pretty | + | | + | + | + | + | | + | + | + | | + | + | + | | |
| charming | + | | + | | | | | | | + | | | | + | | + |
| lovely | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |

**Table 2.7**: **Collocation grid (Channell, 1981, p.120)**

Grids are the most useful when it comes to presenting adjective + noun and delexical verb + noun combinations. For example, grids can be used to show acceptable adjective + noun collocations, such as *qualified physiotherapists*, as well as unacceptable ones. Moreover, they can help learners be aware of restrictions of delexical verb + noun combinations, such as *get my tea, going on holiday* and *made him some tea* after having encountered them in a text.

On the other hand, the grid approach shows some downsides. Neusselhauf (2005) pointed out the undesirable side of grids is that they only provide information on the form, not the usage of collocations. She stated that knowledge of all aspects of usage (for example, semantic prosody, pragmatics and stylistics) can only be learned in typical contexts (Nesselhauf, 2005, p.269). Moreover, Carter claimed, "teachers sensitive to teaching vocabulary in context will not present the grids as immutable, but rather as hypotheses which learners can test against further data." (1998, p. 219). Therefore, girds need to be used appropriately with other learning activities to compensate for the limitations.

## 6.2. Concordances

Another effective tool for teaching collocation is concordances. As Koosha and Jafarpour (2006) defined, concordance is "a method of analyzing language by studying structures and lexical patterns found in digital database".

The main learning benefit of concordances is to help students recognize the collocation in different contexts and consequently know how it is used by native speakers (ibid). However, a problem involving the use of concordances is that the overwhelming number of examples that may come up can confuse learners. For example, when using corpus search of the item "looking up", the concordance lines provide several different uses and shades of meaning (Figure 2). Although advanced learners may gain a lot of benefits from those concordance lines, learners of lower-level may be hindered by the overwhelm of information. Therefore, despite many merits that concordance lines can offer, teachers need to take them into careful consideration when using with their learners. A sample of concordance lines for "looking up" taken from the Bank of English is provided below:

ill, the food stores were not in a good way either. He paused, **looking up** into the sky, eyes straining. Was the object growing larger?
aving time to begin a new project," said Ninheimer, without **looking up** from the notations he was making in the current issue of So
as one of the few remaining private homes. `I say, things are **looking up** a bit! Father's flat in Paris wasn't nearly as grand as this."
ole bonne femme . He was moved to Aldershot. Things are **looking up**. I've landed a job in the kitchen of the officers' mess of th
r her." "Galilee built this house?" Niolopua nodded, still not **looking up**. "When?" "I don't know exactly. A long time ago. It was the
he said scarcely a word throughout the supper, seldom even **looking up** from her plate. There was no doubt as to the star of the eve
flower in the hedgerow; the drone of a jet overhead, and his **looking up**, squinting against the brightness of the sky, to see it making
udents, telling a story about how God 's hands worked; then **looking up** and seeing a stranger at the back of the room, and dying. Hi
tower with a beautiful marble balcony rose from the castle. **Looking up**, Jung noticed the elegant figure of a regal woman sitting o
ead made public their findings for others to apply. Life was **looking up** when, in 1906, Pierre died after being run over by a lumber
at the petri dish had not only not been contaminated, but, on **looking up** the records, found that the climate in London in July to Aug
cher." The couple had returned from the park and were now **looking up** towards the sky through a hole in the roof of the turf shed
heck for trachoma hung from the ceiling. `God," Mark said, **looking up** at it, `vicious." He began to compare the texts of the psalm
egory sat down to eat with his new family, not speaking, not **looking up**, worried that no one would feed Oliver, that he would neve
his wings in intellectual exploration. He had spent his time **looking up** pointless information, memorizing facts, and writing papers

This activity could be useful for raising awareness of delexical verb + noun collocations (*get my tea*) and phrasal verbs (*put the light on)* (Willis, 1998).

## 6.3. Using dictionaries

Farrokh (2012) asserted that collocation dictionaries can be regarded as another valuable source of data. Regarding the use of these tools, there are two ways that teachers can help students develop collocational knowledge, which are to have students do in-class activities using dictionaries and to provide students with independent learning strategies. For example, if learners find the phrase *She's made a fool of you* difficult to understand, they could be asked to look at the entry for *fool* in a good English- English dictionary, such as *Collins*

*COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (2003) which provides the following information and examples:

> If you **make a fool of** someone, you make them seem silly by telling people about something stupid that they have done, or by tricking them. *Your brother is making a fool of you... He'd been made a fool of.*

From this source of data, learners can get some contextual information on the use of the expression, which further assists their understanding of it as well as gets them to see the degree of restriction that it has. Moreover, this particular entry shows instances of other expressions with *fool,* such as *more fool you*, *play the fool* and *act the fool* and thus offers advanced learners more learning opportunities. Nevertheless, to maximize the positive effects of using dictionaries, learners need to adopt a systematic method to record the information they receive. Once learners are taught to use dictionaries effectively, they are able to explore collocations on their own and consequently develop collocational knowledge outside classroom.

## 6.4. Memorizing unanalyzed chunks

Nation (2001) believed that memorizing unanalyzed chunks can be an important learning strategy, which is suitable for those who want to achieve fluency in limited areas. For example, the acquisition of fixed expressions such as *you can talk, what do you call it* or *What's he got to do with it?* can be made with this strategy. Notably, Nation (2001, p.343) proposed the learning guidelines for individual words which can be applied for memorizing chunks effectively. They are listed as follows:

1. Write each chunk on a small card with its translation on the other side so that there has to be active retrieval of its form or meaning.
2. Repeat the chunk aloud while memorizing it.
3. Space the repetitions so that there is an increasingly greater interval between learning sessions.

4. Use mnemonic tricks like the keyword technique, putting the chunk into a sentence, visualizing examples of the meaning of the chunk, and analyzing its parts.

5. Don't learn chunks with similar words or meanings together. They will interfere with each other.

6. Keep changing the order of the word cards to avoid serial learning.

## 6.5. Input enhancement

Khanchobani (2012) argued that visual input enhancement is one of the ways to direct learners' attention to the formal aspect of language by using a variety of typographical techniques such as underlining, bolding or highlighting to increase the perceptual salience of the target forms. Many researchers such as Alanen (1995), Doughty (1991), Shook (1994), and Williams (1999) also studied the effects of visual input enhancement. They all agreed on the fact that input enhancement implicitly and obtrusively draws the learners' attention to form contained in the written input, and thus makes it possible to maintain the message while the intended language features are focused (ibid). According to the research of Rezvani (2011), after receiving input enhancement treatment, the groups of learners made remarkable gains in terms of the acquisition of grammatical collocations.

## 6.6. Output enhancement

As Rezvani (2011) defined it, output refers to the outcome or product of the language acquisition process. Based on the proposal of Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985, 1995, 2000, 2005), output can not only be regarded as a final product of learning but also a stimulus to second language learning. Producing target language also offers learners unique opportunities for a level of processing that may be required to develop target-like proficiency and higher accuracy. Swains pointed out that in an attempt to produce target language (vocally and silently), learners may notice that they do not know how to say or write precisely the meaning they wish to convey (ibid). This could positively affect second

language learners by giving them a signal of their linguistic problems and bringing their attention to solve their linguistic deficiency (ibid). The results of research on Iranian EFL learners by Rezvani (2011) revealed that like input enhancement, output tasks also lead to considerable acquisition of grammatical collocations.

Although all of the six methods of collocation teaching that have been mentioned above appear to be feasible for teachers to apply in their lessons, each of them has its own merits and demerits. Unlike concordances which requires technology resources, the method of memorizing chunks is easier for teachers to conduct, but it appears to be more suitable for self-learning. Regarding the methods of input and output enhancement, in spite of being time-consuming, they are truly beneficial, as they offer students chances to learn and use collocations in contexts. As far as explicit teaching is concerned, despite the fact the method requires careful preparation of teaching materials, teachers can take the full control of the knowledge input. Last but not least, since dictionaries have long been the most essential tool in language teaching and learning, teachers would apparently face fewer obstacles when applying the method of using dictionaries to teach collocations in class. In this study, how the teachers perceived the effectiveness of these six methods in collocation teaching would be brought to light.

## 7. Teachers' perceptions of collocations

Although reviews of studies on collocations shows growing research interests in this area of language knowledge, perception-based studies on collocations and collocation teaching are limited. Nevertheless, such investigations are necessary, since they could be used to equip teachers with appropriate professional knowledge and beliefs to support learning efforts of students (Gao & Ma, 2011). In other words, teachers' perceptions are worth exploring, because they can profoundly influence teachers' attitude toward the knowledge input, their teaching styles and tendencies to use particular instructional techniques (Mutlu & Kaşlioğlu, 2016).

Among the limited number of studies concerning this issue, the study done by Phuong (2012) investigated university teachers' perceptions of teaching English collocations in the Vietnamese context. They study found that the positive attitudes of teachers towards collocation teaching, since they held the belief that collocations play an important role in developing language proficiency. Phuong (2012) also found that the teachers put much focus on commonly used collocations in such activities as comparing the synonyms of collocations, and they pointed out that students' collocational errors are rooted in the negative transfer from their negative language and students' habit of learning words in isolation.

Another recent study revolving around teachers' perceptions of collocations took place in Turkey. From what the results brought, Mutlu & Kaşlioğlu(2016) came to the conclusion that high school teachers in Turkey gave much emphasis on collocational knowledge in language teaching, and they believed that collocations can be learnt implicitly as well as through activities with explicit focus.

Considering the fact that relevant studies on teachers' perceptions of collocations in Vietnamese context are scare, this study was, therefore, carried out to shed light on how high school teachers in a particular city in Vietnam perceive collocation and its position in English language teaching.

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The present chapter describes in detail the methodology the researcher employed in implementing this qualitative research, including reasons for the selections of research approach, research site, participants, data collection, and data analysis.

## 1. Research approach

Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which involve developing explanations for social phenomena, and its method which in general generates words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Patton, 2002). As the nature and purposes of qualitative research promise to help the researcher gain insights into the teachers' perceptions, qualitative approach was chosen.

The definition of qualitative research could be extensive, as Corbin (1990) once regarded it with "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p.17). Qualitative research with the long history in the field of education holds an unshakeable position when it comes to research methodology. Its origin could be dated back to the year 1969 when qualitative research was promoted as a method to explore new and more complicated ways of understanding social complexities. Barton and Lazarfeld (1969) once claimed that "… like the nets of deep sea explorers, qualitative studies may pull up unexpected and striking things for us to gaze upon" (p.166).

As far as the purposes of qualitative research are concerned, there are two main purposes. First, it focuses on natural setting (like a school or a classroom) and makes use of a human to gather data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to have better understandings about what is happening. This proves to match the aim of the present study, as it aspires to collect data from all high school teachers in Thanh Hoa city, Vietnam to acquire knowledge about their perceptions of collocations and their collocation teaching. Second, qualitative research makes sense of the complexities within that natural setting. Qualitative

research involves the range of realities and meanings that are specific to the different contexts of study (Burns, 1997). Since this research aimed to study the phenomena in Thanh Hoa city in particular and consequently provide valuable implications to improve the teachers' awareness about the fundamental role of collocation, qualitative approach was guaranteed to be suitable.

Among a number of qualitative approaches, a case study approach was chosen as its nature fits what the research demands. For a detailed definition of a case study, Sagadin (1991) stated that

> "a case study is used when we analyse and describe, for example each person individually (his or her activity, special needs, life situation, life history, etc.), a group of people (a school department, a group of students with special needs, teaching staff, etc.), individual institutions or a problem (or several problems), process, phenomenon or event in a particular institution, etc in detail." (p.31).

Since the research participants are a particular group of people, specifically high school English teachers in Thanh Hoa, the case study approach is proved to be appropriate. Stake (1978) asserted that the case study is ideally suited to research where the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction in that which is known" (p.6). Additionally, Yin (2003) affirmed that the case study approach is suited to deal with "how" and "why" questions. As was clearly stated from the start, the main aim of the study is to gain further understandings into the matter of teachers' perceptions of collocations by solving two research questions, one of which begins with "how". Thus, it undoubtedly shows the defining characteristics of a case study.

Therefore, based on the setting, the aims and research questions of the study, it could be categorized into the research design of a case study.

## 2. Research site

The study was conducted in Thanh Hoa city - the capital of Thanh Hoa province, which is situated in the North Central Coast region of Vietnam. The reason behind the researcher's decision to conduct study in the context of Thanh Hoa city is that compared with EFL teachers in the modern cities such as Hanoi

or Ho Chi Minh city, teachers in a developing province like Thanh Hoa have much less exposure to progressive views about language teaching and learning. Thus, their perceptions are worth exploring.

## 3. Research participants

The participants in the current research include all the high school English teachers from five public schools in Thanh Hoa city. The reason for choosing these participants is that public schools in Thanh Hoa city are widely acknowledged and proven by accomplishments of their students to be of better quality than private schools. Therefore, teachers' attitudes towards teaching in those schools are undoubtedly more serious and dedicated, which is believed to ensure the objectiveness and creditability for the research. In total, there are 30 teachers whose age ranges from 24 to 55 and females remarkably outnumber males with the ratio of 9 to 1.

## 4. Data collection
### 4.1. Data collection instruments

This study employed two main data collection instruments, namely a questionnaire and interviews.

**The Questionnaire**

Regarding the first instrument, the means of surveying by a questionnaire was chosen because the researcher desired to thoroughly investigate Thanh Hoa high school teachers' perceptions about collocation and collocation teaching in a large scale. A questionnaire as a data collection tool helped the researcher gather information from the total 30 teachers in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way. Moreover, when completing the questionnaire, the participants could be guaranteed that their private information such as name or work address would not be mentioned in any discussion of the data. Therefore, they might feel more comfortable to answer according to their true feelings and understandings about the subject of research, which would raise the reliability of

the study. Answers from the questionnaire serve to provide valuable insight into the two research questions:

**1. How do Thanh Hoa high school teachers perceive collocation?**

**2. What are their perceptions of teaching collocations at high school?**

In total, the questionnaire consists of 6 main questions. Questions 1 – 3 serve to give answer for the first research question, while the rest examine participants' views about the second research question.

- Question No.1 is a multiple-choice question which has three options. It asks participants to choose among the options the one which best describes the definition of collocation. The model of Benson et al (1986b), which clearly distinguishes collocations with other combinations of words, was employed in designing this question.

- Question No. 2 is a checkbox question. It asks participants to put ticks on three options that are collocations. There are in total 14 options given, all of which are taken from examples of five types of word combinations in the model of Benson et al (1986b).

- Question No.3 is a True-False question. It asks participants to decide whether 5 statements given are true or false. All of the statements were written based on Benson et al.'s categorization of collocations.

- Question No. 4 is a ranking question. It asks participants to rank the aspects when teaching a new vocabulary item in the order of attention priority. There are 7 aspects in total, all of which were selected based on the framework of Nation (2001) about "what is involved in knowing a word" (p.27).

- Question No. 5 is a likert-scale question with a five-point agreement scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There are in total 13 statements for rating, all of which revolve around the importance of developing collocational knowledge. All items in the question were drawn from the review of literature with the main reference to the framework of Farrokh (2012).

- Question No. 6 is also a ranking question. It asks participants to rank five methods of teaching collocations in the order of effectiveness. All of the given methods were well explained and thoroughly discussed in the review of literature.

**Interviews**

The second instrument employed to collect data is the semi-structured interview. A set of open-ended interview questions was designed to explore the perspectives of participants from multi aspects. Thus, the in-depth interviews could assist the researcher to fulfill the aim of acquiring insightful data, which was later used to back up and moreover provide additional information for the data collected from the questionnaire. All of the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, which means that it is the task of the researcher to transcribe speech of the teachers into English for the later stage of data analysis.

The interview questions were organized into two main parts, namely "perceptions about collocation" and "perceptions about collocation teaching". In the first part, participants were asked to share about how they define collocations in their own words. The researcher also aimed to explore their views about the differences among collocations, idioms and compounds; and the way they often group types of collocations. In the second part, participants are asked to share about their collocation teaching experience as well as how they view the impacts of learning and teaching collocations on learners' language competence. Besides, the interviews attempt to reveal the possibilities and difficulties that teachers might face when integrating collocational knowledge into high school syllabus. Moreover, participants are asked to recommend some supplementary materials for learning and teaching collocations that they find useful.

**4.2. Data collection procedure**

The data collection procedure consists of three main stages. It begins with the stage of instrument design in which the researcher constructed a questionnaire and a set of interview questions with the reference to conceptual framework from literature review. The procedure then continues with the stage of

instrument piloting. After sketching the questionnaires and interview questions, she asked 3 teachers from two high schools to give her comments on the clarity and appropriateness of the questions. Then, the questionnaire and the interview were revised and necessary changes were made. When the final versions of the instruments were produced, they were used for data collection. In the period of 2 weeks, the questionnaires were delivered to 30 participants who were high school English teachers in Thanh Hoa city. Based on the results collected from the questionnaires, the researcher conducted interviews with 9 chosen participants who showed above-average understandings about the topic of research at their convenience. Each interview lasted for roughly 20 minutes.

## 5. Data analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire was the main source of information to answer the two research questions, while the interviews served the purpose of providing additional insight into the problems of research.

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed statistically. To clarify, the specific statistics used for data analysis was produced by means of mechanical counting. For the first three items in the questionnaire, namely the multiple choice, check box and true – false questions, the number of participants choosing correct answers was counted and later converted into percentage. The data was also illustrated in bar charts, as the statistics would manifest itself more clearly through graphs. In addition, graph illustrations make it easier for the researcher to make further comments. Regarding the ranking questions (the fourth and sixth items), the frequency of distribution which was shown via the percentage of the same answers was calculated so as to find out the order of ranks. For the five-point likert-scale question (the fifth item), the researcher employed likert-scale data analysis method in which Mean and Standard deviation were calculated in the first stage so that the researcher could base on to make interpretations.

Along the way that the data from the questionnaire was brought into analysis, the answers from the interviews were transcribed and classified into

categories as in the questionnaire. In such categories, emerged data were clustered into themes for effective analysis.

# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, all data collected from the questionnaires and interviews are analyzed and discussed to provide the answers to the two research questions. The study's results are presented under two major headings, namely 'teachers' perceptions about collocation' and 'teachers' perceptions about collocation teaching'. Furthermore, the findings of this study are thoroughly discussed in relation to literature in order to provide insights into the ways Thanh Hoa high school teachers perceive about collocation and collocation teaching.

## 1. Teachers' perceptions of collocation

### 1.1. Teachers' recognition of the nature of collocation

The perception of teachers about the definition of collocation could be explored by examining their answers for the first question in the questionnaire. As discussed in the previous chapter, the question was developed with the reference to the framework of Benson et al (1986b), which clearly distinguishes collocations with other combinations of words. In this multiple-choice question, teachers had to select the definition of collocations among the three given options which are the definitions of collocations, idioms and compounds.

In general, only a small number of the teachers offered accurate understanding of collocations. The distribution of answers from participants is illustrated in the pie chart below.
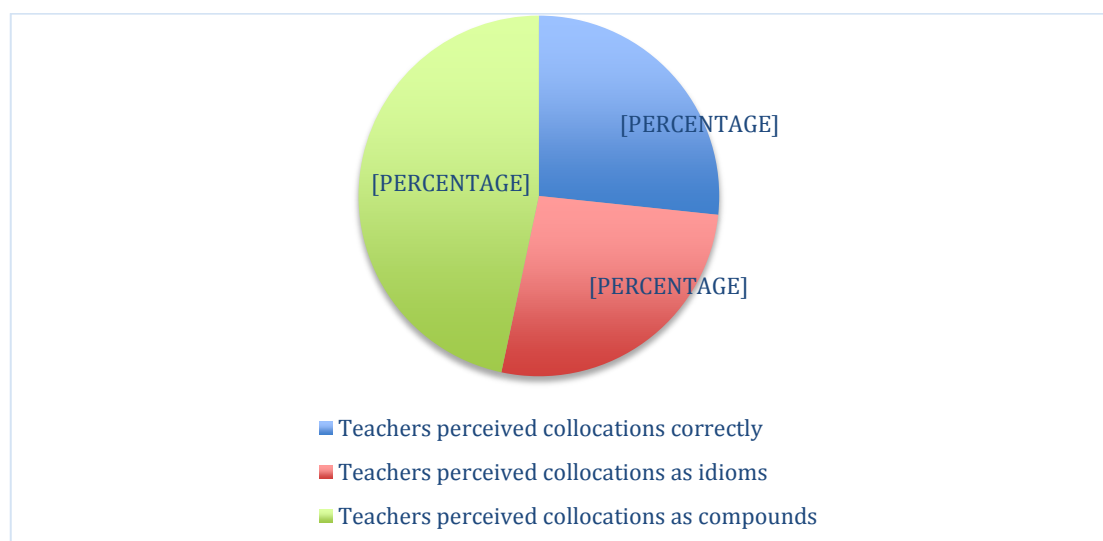


**Figure 4.1: A summary of teachers' perceptions of the nature of collocation**

As can be clearly seen from the chart above, only 27% of the participants gave the correct answer when answering the question about the definition of collocations. A similar number of participants mistook the definition of idioms for that of collocations. Noticeably, the majority of the teachers, precisely 46%, held the wrong assumption that the alternative of compounds' definition describes features of collocations.

The underlying reason why only one fourth of the population being surveyed showed the accurate understandings about what collocations are can be explained by a possible reason. To be specific, the main difference among the three given options lies in the degree of fixedness of those types of word combinations. Compared to the other two alternatives, option A which is the definition of collocations emphasizes the opinion that this type of word combination is loosely fixed while idioms' definition highlights that they are relatively frozen expressions and compounds' definition puts stress on their characteristics of complete fixedness. Therefore, the prevalent misunderstandings might have been caused by the wrong perception that collocations are fixed or even frozen expressions. 73% of the participants who failed to correctly recognize the nature of collocations might have been unaware of collocations' arbitrary nature.

This inaccurate perception is also clearly shown in the answers from the interviews. A certain number of teachers shared their belief that collocations are considerably fixed word combinations. For example, Teacher 2 reported that "collocations are fixed phrases, which are used as a habit of native speakers." Later in the interview, she added that "The similarity between collocations and idioms are their fixedness … The combination of words in collocations cannot be explained, we just imitate the way native speakers combine words". Sharing similar views, Teacher 4 stated that "Collocations are groups of words that have to go together. For example, it has to be 'make progress' but not 'take progress'."

As is indicated in the above quotations, some participants held the belief that the combinations between words in collocations are presented in strict rules which are set by native speakers and thus no variations are allowed. Therefore, it

could be restated that the cause for the misunderstandings about the definition of collocation is attributable to the failure to recognize that combinations between words in collocations are loosely fixed rather than relatively fixed or frozen.

## 1.2. Differences between collocations and other word combinations

The teachers' ability to differentiate collocations with other word combinations is clearly reflected in their answers for question number 2 in the questionnaire. This question required participants to pick out 3 options which were collocations among the total of 14 options. Examples of other types of word combinations which were integrated to confuse the teachers are compounds, idioms, transitional combinations, and free combinations. All of the alternatives presented in the questions were taken from the model of Benson et al (1986b). The proportions of number of correct selections of collocations is demonstrated in the pie chart below
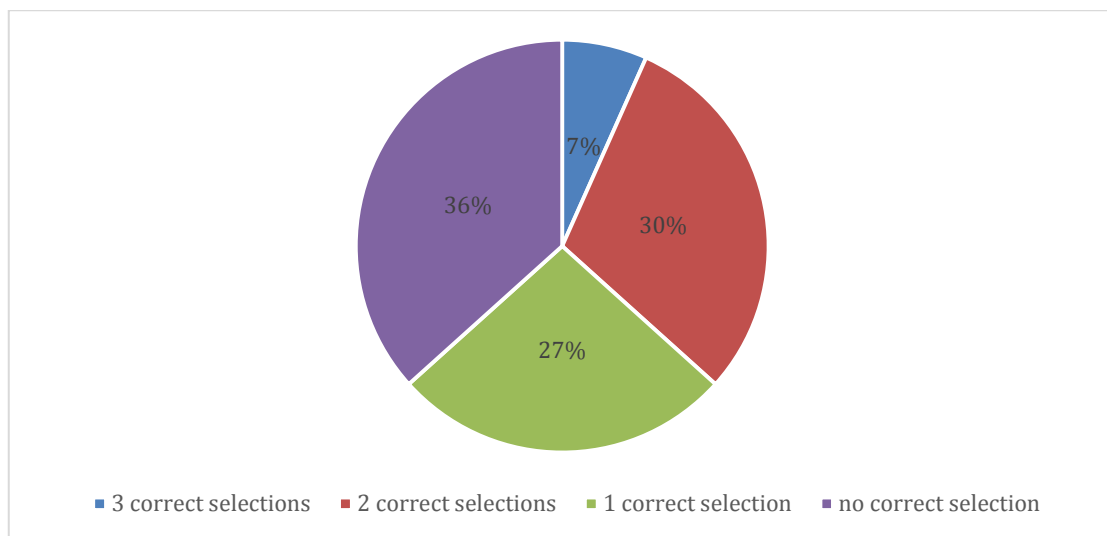


**Figure 4.2: A summary of teachers' perceptions of differences between collocations and other word combinations**

As is clearly shown in the chart above, the percentage of participants who managed to pick all 3 correct options is the smallest while that of those who selected all wrong options is the greatest. To be specific, only 7% of the teachers (2 out of 30) could recognize all the collocations given in the question, while the percentage of the group with no correct selection is over 5 times higher, namely 36%. The second largest proportion belongs to the group having 2 correct

selections which takes up exactly 30%, and those who account for 27% of the total proportion picked 1 correct option.

The main differences among the chosen types of word combinations lie in the degree of fixedness in the connection between words and the ability to reflect the meaning of the compositional elements in the phrases. As previously discussed, the participants of research might fail to recognize that compared to other 4 types of word combinations, collocations are only more fixed than free combinations and more variable than transitional combinations, idioms and compounds.

Regarding the teachers who picked more than 1 incorrect option, they often mistook collocations for idioms and compounds. The evidence could be drawn from their selections; as some of their frequent picks are "to spill the beans", "to kick the bucket", "to kill two birds with one stone", "floppy disk" and "aptitude test".

To discover the underlying reason for the misunderstandings, 9 teachers were asked to clarify the differences between collocations and other word combinations – idioms and compounds – in the interviews. Although the large percentage of wrong answers in the questionnaire made the research presume that the participants lacked understandings about the differences between collocations – idioms and collocation – compounds, the findings from the interviews turned out to be contradictory.

**1.2.1 Understandings of the difference between collocations and idioms**

It is notable that all of the participants being interviewed realized the most distinctive feature that distinguish collocations from idioms.

Almost all of them mentioned about the role of compositional elements in contributing to the meaning of the whole phrase when comparing idioms and collocations. It became clear from an interview with Teacher 3 that "The difference between collocations and idioms is in the meaning. Normally, in idioms we cannot guess the meaning of the whole phrase based on the meaning of compositional words, but with collocations we can".

In the interview with Teacher 4, the idea was elaborated, as she shared that "Idioms are groups of words that refer to other meanings. For example, the idiom 'it rains like cats and dogs' means that it rains heavily or 'as different as chalk and cheese' means that there is a fundamental difference. Meanwhile, collocations show the close connection between the meaning of component words and that of the whole phrase".

Sharing the same viewpoint, Teacher 7 stated that "In collocations, we combine dominant words to make a meaningful phrase whose component words reveal the meaning of the whole … Meanwhile, we cannot guess the meaning of idioms based on the forming words. For example, 'the pot calling the kettle black' is too hard to guess meaning."

Therefore, the findings from the interviews confirm what was claimed by Benson et al. (1986b) and Bahns (1993), who asserted that what distinguishes collocations from idioms is their ability to reflect the constituent parts.

Another difference between collocations and idioms that was pointed out in the interview with Teacher 1 is the distinction of connotation. She believed that "They are different in connotation. For example, some collocations have academic meaning while most of idioms are informal." Although this discovery sounds true to some extent, it has not been backed up by any research of recognized scholars.

**1.2.2 Understandings of the difference between collocations and compounds.**

When it comes to the question of how collocations differ from compounds, the majority of interview participants stated that compounds are more fixed than collocations. However, their understandings about compounds seemed to be limited as they could only give very brief answers about the topic and failed to give further details when being asked by the researcher.

Talking about compounds, Teacher 6 could only share that "Compounds are quite fixed and they need to be learnt by heart.". Holding the same view, Teacher 4 defined compounds as "The combinations of two nouns and the connection between words is quite fixed compared to collocations.". Similarly,

Teacher 3 provided additional details: "Regarding compounds, we can also guess meaning from the component words but the connection between words in collocations is looser than in compounds.".

These answers suggest that all of the interview participants showed the accurate perception that compounds are fixed. However, they could not elaborate on how fixed compounds are compared to other types of word combinations. In fact, according to Benson et al. (1986b), compounds are the most fixed word combinations and what needs to be highlighted is that they are completely frozen to the point that no variations are possible.

It is noteworthy that some teachers failed to provide answers regarding the distinctions between collocations and compounds and one teacher even reported that she could not differentiate collocations from compounds, she said, "When comparing compounds and collocations, I feel quite confusing, because even a teacher like me often mistakes the two types of word combinations."

The feelings of this teacher might be shared among a number of research participants, especially those who mistook compounds with collocations. This confusion is understandable, because there is a type of collocations which requires two nouns to form just like in compounds.

## 1.3. Categorizations of collocations

As teachers' perceptions can greatly affect their teaching attitudes, styles and techniques (Mutlu & Kas☐liog☐lu, 2016), it is worth exploring how much the teachers understand about types of collocations and how they often categorize collocations. Findings about this issue can be gained from answers for the 3rd question in the questionnaire. In the question, five statements relating to Benson et al.'s categorization of collocations were presented in form of True-False questions. Generally, the teachers showed limited understandings about the categorization of collocations. The proportions of number of correct answers for the question is illustrated in Figure 4.3.
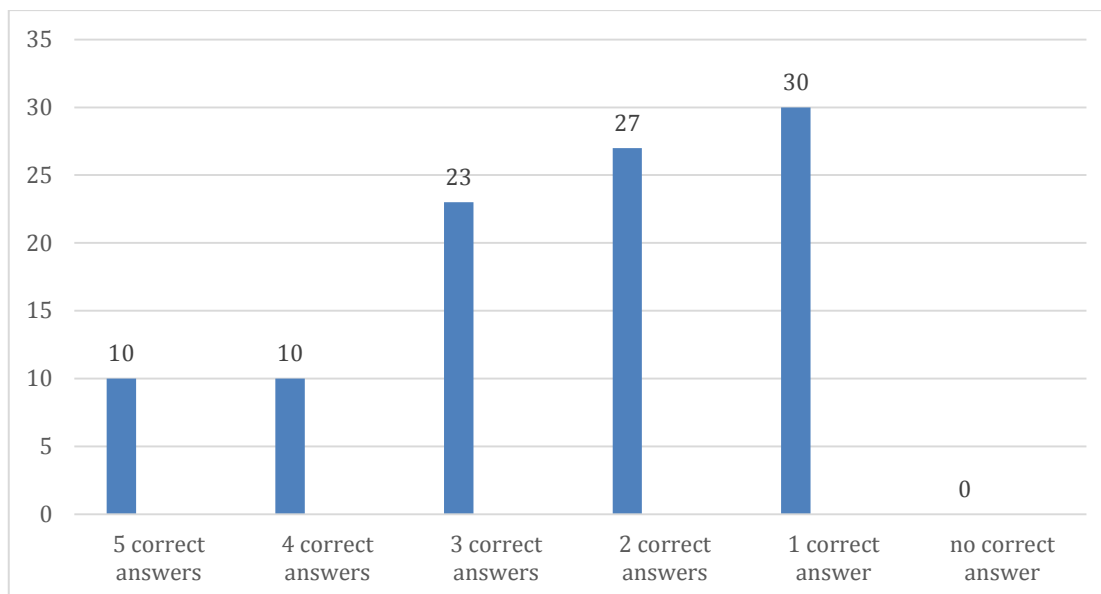
**Figure 4.3: A summary of teachers' perceptions of collocation categorization**

As can be seen, all the teachers had at least 1 correct answer. To clarify, while only a small number of the teachers provided 4 and 5 correct answers (10% each), the figures of the teachers having 2 and 3 correct answers are significantly greater, which reach 27% and 23% respectively. It is also noticeable that the largest group of teachers (30%) gave only 1 correct answer.

The fact that well over half of the research participants had only 1-2 correct answers revealed their little understandings about the categorizations of collocations. The interviews with 9 teachers also gave evidence for this finding. Teacher 2 confessed that "I do not have the habit of grouping types of collocations as I do not know much about the categorizations of collocations.". Sharing the same confusion, Teacher 3 said "I am not sure about the types of collocations".

As discussed in the literature chapter, collocations could be classified into two main groups, namely lexical collocations and grammatical collocations (Benson et al., 1986a). The analysis shows that only half of the research participants had awareness about this issue. The sections below will provide a detailed analysis of the teachers' understanding of collocations.

### 1.3.1. Understandings of lexical collocations and grammatical collocations.

In the 3$^{rd}$ question in the questionnaire, the last 3 sub-questions aim to investigate how far the teachers understand about lexical and grammatical collocations. It is noticeable that the majority of the teachers got correct answers for the questions about lexical collocations, while only a small number of them (17%) correctly perceived grammatical collocations. This indicates that the research participants are more knowledgeable about or at least more familiar with lexical collocations than grammatical collocations. This finding was also supported by the interview data. Among those teachers interviewed, besides some of them who replied that they did not have the habit of classifying collocations, others mentioned about how they grouped collocations by putting phrases with the same root word together. For example, Teacher 7 said that "Sometimes, I categorize collocations by the root words, for example, I put words that can go with "make" or "do" together". Likewise, Teacher 6 shared that "I often group types of collocations according to what can go with the common verbs like "make", "do"." Remarkably, in the interview with Teacher 5, she could go further to show more understandings about lexical collocations, as she reported that "the way I often group types of collocations depends on the combination between types of dominant words. For example, Adjective + Noun, Verb + Adverb, Noun + Noun.".

What needs to be highlighted is that none of them except for one interview participant referred to the matter of grammatical collocations. Among the participants, Teacher 1 stood out to show the most understandings about this matter, as she said that "I often categorize collocations into two groups, namely lexical and grammatical collocations. Lexical collocations relate to combinations of dominant words like Adj + N or V +N, while grammatical collocations relate to grammar structure like SVO or SVOO."

Thus, through the evidence collected from both data instruments, it is clear that participants of research are somehow still kept in dark about the matter of grammatical collocations.

## 1.3.2 Categorizing collocations according to themes

Although research participants did not have a systematic way of categorizing collocations like what Benson et al. (1986a) did in his legendary work, they make use of another way which they find more suitable for their teaching in class. Instead of classifying collocations into lexical and grammatical types, some teachers in the interviews choose to group them in topics which cover phrases of the same theme. This is also the way that O'Dell & McCarthy organized the content in their renowned work named "English collocations in use". This was made clear in the sharing of Teacher 4, as she said "I do not group types of collocations. I often teach collocations according to the topic of vocabulary or topic of units in textbooks.". Having the same teaching habit, Teacher 8 elaborated that "I do not categorize collocations in types, but I group them according to the topics that they relate to, for example 'career' or 'environment'". Likewise, Teacher 9 shared that "I only group collocations in terms of topics that they refer to, for example topics about family or friends."

In short, the interviewed teachers favored the method of grouping collocations according to themes over classifying them into lexical or grammatical categories. Considering the fact that this method can become an ideal alternative, it should be spread to the teachers who are still struggling to find an effective way to categorize collocations.

## 2. Teachers' perceptions of collocation teaching

## 2.1. The position of collocations in vocabulary teaching

To uncover how the research participants view the position of collocations in vocabulary teaching, the $4^{th}$ question in the questionnaire was designed with reference to the framework of Nation (2001) about "what is involved in knowing a word" (p.2). Regarding the seven aspects of vocabulary which are available for ranking in this question, 2 aspects of a word are involved with "meaning" (meaning and synonyms & antonyms), 2 aspects are related to "form" (spelling and pronunciation), and the rest including collocations, parts of speech, and connotation are referred to "use".

Generally, the teachers' responses in this question indicate that they viewed collocations as a less important aspect in knowing a word compared to others. The following table provides a summary of the teachers' perspectives regarding this matter.

| Aspects | Mean | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Meaning | 1.93 | 1 |
| Spelling | 2.3 | 2 |
| Pronunciation | 2.53 | 3 |
| Parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) | 3.47 | 4 |
| Connotation (formal, informal, positive, negative) | 5.97 | 6 |
| Synonyms, antonyms, etc. | 5.7 | 5 |
| Collocation | 6.03 | 7 |

**Table 4.1**: **7 aspects of a new vocabulary item ranked in terms of attention priority by teachers**

The table above presents that meaning, spelling and pronunciation are the top three priorities that teachers in the research pay attention to when they teach vocabulary. It appears that in the perceptions of teachers, aspects related to *use* are not as important as those involving *meaning* and *form*. Evidently, parts of speech, connotation and collocations, which are 3 aspects of word use, rank 4th, 6th and 7th respectively. It is remarkable that collocation was ranked bottom in the attention priority when being put in comparison with the other 6 aspects of vocabulary by the participants. This could reveal that the position of collocation in vocabulary teaching is still depreciated.

## 2.2. The importance and benefits of teaching collocations

As being thoroughly discussed in the chapter of literature review, there are a number of reasons why collocations play a crucial role in English language and thus need to be introduced to English learners so that they could gain great benefits in their learning path. To explore teachers' viewpoints on this matter, it is essential to study how far they agree with the statements about the importance and benefits of teaching collocations which were extracted from the chapter of

literature review. The 5<sup>th</sup> question in the questionnaire designed in form of a likert-scale question with a 5-point agreement scale is a means to make findings on the issue. With 13 statements, four main arguments were constructed, which are "language knowledge requires collocational knowledge", "efficient language acquisition requires collocational knowledge", "fluent language use requires collocational knowledge" and "teaching collocation is necessary".

## 2.2.1 Language knowledge requires collocational knowledge

The first part of the likert-scale question aims to study how teachers view the role that collocations play in English language. From the attitude of the respondents, it can be concluded that teachers widely acknowledged the extensive coverage of collocations in English language. The perspectives of the teachers are reflected in the figures from the table below.

| | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Collocations appear densely in English language | 3.87 | .994 |
| 2. Collocational knowledge is a fundamental part of language knowledge | 3.94 | 1.072 |

**Table 4.2: Teachers' views toward the position of collocations in English language**

The data analysis shows that the respondents generally agreed that collocations take a great proportion in the language and thus collocational knowledge is one of the prerequisites for the accomplishment of language knowledge. As can be seen from Table 4.2, the mean of both statements nearly reaches the point of 4 which is equivalent to "agree" in the likert-scale.

## 2.2.2 Efficient language acquisition requires collocational knowledge

The next two statements revolve around how the ability to chunk words can promote efficient language acquisition. Responses from questionnaire takers reveal that they think highly of the role of collocations in facilitating the acquiring of English language. Table 4.3 presents a summary of the teachers' views.

| | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Language acquisition happens more efficiently when words are learned in chunks | 3.83 | .685 |
| 4. Only when learners can chunk language successfully do they truly understand how language works | 3.93 | .583 |

**Table 4.3**: **Teachers' views toward the role of collocations in facilitating language acquisition**

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the mean of 3.83 indicates that most of the teachers agreed on the ideas that learning words in chunks makes language acquisition happen more efficiently. Moreover, they showed an agreement with the belief that the success in chunking language can lead to the true understandings about the way language works, since the mean of 3.93 nearly arrives at 4 which means "agree". While the answers regarding the position of collocations in English language are varied (SD ≈ 1), the teachers shared more similar views about the role of collocations in promoting language acquisition (SD ≈ 0.6). This sense of agreement was also reflected in the answer of Teacher 6 in the interview, as she advocated one of the benefit of teaching collocation is that "The logic in English linguistics of students may be greatly developed".

**2.2.3 Fluent language use requires collocational knowledge**

In the next 6 statements, the positive impacts of collocations on learners' language proficiency, especially on four language skills, are emphasized. In general, the data show teachers recognized the benefits of learning collocations in learners' language development. Table 4.4 presents a summary of teachers' perceptions of collocations' role in developing language proficiency.

|  | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 5. Collocational knowledge can improve learners' language fluency | 4.27 | .868 |
| 6. Collocational knowledge can improve learners' language accuracy | 3.87 | .973 |
| 7. Collocation can be one of the most noticeable aspect to differentiate between native speakers and non-native speakers | 4 | 1.082 |
| 8. Collocations play an essential role in reading competency | 3.91 | .98 |
| 9. Collocations play an essential role in listening competency | 3.93 | .948 |
| 10. Collocations play an essential role in writing competency | 4.39 | .586 |
| 11. Collocations play an essential role in speaking competency | 4.07 | .759 |

**Table 4.4: Teachers' views toward the role of collocations in improving learners' language proficiency**

Data from Table 4.4 indicates that despite the variation in the answers, the teachers shared the belief that collocations can help to make improvements on learners' language fluency and accuracy, especially fluency whose mean is well above 4. The answer from the interview with Teacher 3 provided more insight into this perception, that is, "When students are master at collocations, they can produce the language more quickly. They do not have to think in Vietnamese and then translate into English".

Furthermore, they came to the agreement with the idea that the mastery of collocations can be the sign that helps distinguish native and non-native speakers, although the SD of above 1 shows the diversity in opinions of the teachers about this matter. This idea was also mentioned in the answer of Teacher 9 in the interview, as she believed that the conventional errors in applying Vietnamese thinking in using English could be prevented by equipping oneself with more

English collocations. She said "learners with sufficient knowledge about collocations can produce language in a more native-like way and thus avoid using Vietlish."

As far as the roles of collocations in enhancing the four language skills are concerned, the respondents generally reached a consensus on the idea that collocations greatly benefit the development of those skills. Remarkably, the data from Table 4.4 discloses that their acknowledgement with the impacts of collocations on productive skills is greater than with those on receptive skills. To clarify, the figures of mean of the statements advocating the positive influence on receptive skills are just under 4 while those arguing for productive skills are well over that number.

Notably, the highest mean of 4.39 coupled with the lowest SD of 0.586 make it clear that the effect of collocations on writing skill is the most recognizable to the teachers. Some of them shared that viewpoint in the interviews. Teacher 2 also believed that "Collocations have the greatest impact on students' writing competency. Students who are good at collocations are often proficient in writing skill.". Adding to this idea, Teacher 5 stated that "the effects of teaching collocations on the writing skill is the most noticeable. Students have the better word choice in writing after being taught collocations.".

Besides writing skill, speaking competency is the second most recognized area that collocations can pose effects on. According to Teacher 5, after learning collocations, students can "produce chunks of words more quickly in speaking" and thus their fluency is improved significantly.

In terms of listening competency, the teachers also noticed some positive impacts of collocations on this skill of English language. Later in the interview with Teacher 5, she showed the belief that "Students who are equipped with collocational knowledge can catch more words and understand the content better". Sharing the same stance, Teacher 4 acknowledged that learning collocations helps students listen more effectively, because "they can guess the whole phrase by catching even only a single word".

### 2.2.4 Teaching collocations is necessary

The last two statements in the likert-scale question involve the necessity to prioritize collocation teaching. What could be learnt from this part is that while the teachers are uncertain about whether knowing more collocations or knowing more new words is more advantageous, they showed acknowledgement for the importance of teaching collocations. The following table presents the teachers' perceptions of the issue.

| | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 12. Obtaining more new and rare words is less beneficial to leaners than transforming already-known words into a great number of collocations | 3.03 | 0.69 |
| 13. The more frequently learners are taught English collocations, the more accurately they can use collocations | 4.23 | 0.728 |

**Table 4.5: Teachers' views toward the necessity of teaching collocations**

What data from Table 4.5 reveals is that teachers kept a neutral stance towards the belief that turning the vocabulary resources into numerous collocations is more beneficial than acquiring more new and rare words. However, the mean of 4.23 proved that they reached high agreement with the opinion that the frequent teaching of collocations can result in learners' more accurate use of this part of language. Data from the interviews also reflect this sense of agreement. Teacher 7 made a very interesting comparison when stressing the need to teach collocations, as he said "It is very important to teach collocations at high school, as it is definitely an integral part in English language. If we only teach single words, it is like putting bricks separately. Meanwhile, teaching collocations is like putting bricks together to make a firm wall."

### 2.3. Methods of teaching collocations.

After discovering how the research participants perceive about collocations and the importance of collocation teaching, it is worth exploring

what methods of teaching collocations they found effective and often utilize in class. Answers to the last question in the questionnaire and data from the interviews could be used to shed light on this issue.

The following table illustrates how the teachers perceive the effectiveness of 5 methods of teaching collocations which were already discussed in the literature review chapter.

| Methods | Mean | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Explicit teaching | 1.77 | 1 |
| Concordances | 3.7 | 5 |
| Dictionaries | 3.6 | 4 |
| Input enhancement | 2.83 | 2 |
| Output enhancement | 3.1 | 3 |

**Table 4.6: 5 methods of teaching collocations ranked in terms of effectiveness by teachers**

As is clearly shown in the table above, according to the perspectives of teachers in the research, explicit teaching is the most effective method. Next comes the input enhancement which is followed by the output enhancement. Teaching by means of dictionaries stands at the fourth rank. Notably, using concordances is the method that was rated as the least effective among the five. This is explicable because using concordances, a method of analyzing language by studying structures and lexical patterns found in digital database, in teaching might be a novel concept to teachers in less developed areas like Thanh Hoa city. Due to the fact that a number of teachers in such areas are not very willing to apply information and communication technology into teaching practice, using concordances in introducing collocations might be unpopular among those teachers.

The result from the questionnaire resembles what interview participants replied when being asked about the methods they often apply in their class when teaching collocations. Overall, the majority of them answered that they teach collocations explicitly along the way they introduce new words. Besides, many of them highlight the useful and worth-learning collocations in reading texts for

students as a method of input enhancement. For example, Teacher 9 reported in the interview that "When teaching new words, I explicitly introduce their collocations and ask students to learn by heart. … Besides, when analyzing a reading text, I ask students to underline certain collocations and ask them to guess the meaning of those phrases. After that, I explain their usage". Having the same methods, Teacher 8 always introduced some of the common partner words when teaching a new item of vocabulary and also point out collocations in reading texts before giving further explanation about their meaning and usage. Later, she asked students to make sentences to check their comprehension.

It is understandable why the two methods become the favorite of the research participants. The underlying reasons might come from the fact that they are both time-saving and resource-saving. Moreover, those teaching methods are not too demanding for the English level of high school students.

Another less favored method used by a few of participants to facilitate the learning of collocations is through writing and speaking or output enhancement in other words. For example, Teacher 3 used paragraph writing as a way for her students to apply collocations into practice, as she said "I can ask students to write a paragraph about certain topic in which they use the newly learnt collocation". Besides, the teacher encouraged her students to apply learnt collocations in speaking as well, but she also admitted that there was not much time for speaking session in class.

## 2.4. Perceived difficulties when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school

All of the interviewed teachers agreed on the fact that it is necessary to teach collocational knowledge in English classes at high school or even as early as secondary school. However, there come some challenges that both teachers and students might encounter when collocations become an integral part of syllabus for English classes. First of all, the teachers reported that time was a problem. The matter of time restriction could be possibly explained by the sharings of some teachers, that is, there are only 3 periods for English lessons per

week at school and each period lasts for only 45 minutes. With that limited amount of time, the fact that there is a great deal of knowledge to cover renders it difficult for teachers to add more teaching content about collocations into their lessons. Teacher 3 reported that "For normal classes at school, teachers do not have enough time to introduce collocations, so they need extra time to help students with this". Facing the same difficulty, Teacher 4 shared that "There might be a lack of time in formal classes, as teachers need to teach a lot of things and also prepare students for the exams in a 45-minute class.". Teacher 7 also agreed with the idea, as he stated that there would be a challenge for teachers to dig deep into collocational knowledge in a 45-minute class.

The second problem is the insufficient understandings of collocations of high school teachers. Some of them admitted their lack of understandings about the nature of collocations in the interviews. They also revealed that many of high school teachers in less developed areas might not even be aware that there is a part of English language called "collocations". In the interview with Teacher 2, she said "As I notice, there are quite a lot of questions about collocations in the mock tests for entrance exam to university these days and teachers do not know how to explain these questions and just directly give students the answers. Many teachers are not aware that in English language there is a great part about something called 'collocations'".

Noticeably, there are many of those who did not have clear concept of collocations and this resulted in their failure in distinguishing this type of word combinations with others. This problem might make it more challenging for teachers to effectively deliver insightful lessons about collocations and stimulate the interest in learning collocations from the part of students. Answers from Teacher 9 in the interview reflected this fact, as she said "A great number of high school teachers are confused about this concept. Therefore, they need to be trained more about this issue of language so as to ensure that what they will deliver to students is accurate".

Another challenge when it comes to incorporating collocational knowledge into English classes at high school is the teachers' wrong assumption

that collocational knowledge is only suitable for students of high level in English. Some teachers stated in the interviews that collocations are regarded as advanced knowledge that requires a good command in English to comprehend. For example, Teacher 6 believed teaching collocations in a class of varied language proficiency would be very difficult because collocational knowledge was more comprehensible to advanced learners. Therefore, students who are not well-equipped with a sufficient amount of knowledge about the English language might find it quite overwhelming for their comprehension. Answers from the interview with Teacher 8 also show the same opinion, as she stated "Teaching collocations for students of Group A1 and D may not face any difficulties but for those of non-English major they may find it difficult to comprehend."

Besides, in the interview with Teacher 5, she reported that the students who do not need to take English test in the entrance exam to university might feel reluctant to learn collocational knowledge because they believe that learning single new words is enough to suffice their needs.

In short, the three challenges that might become obstacles when integrating collocational knowledge into high-school syllabus are time restriction, the teachers' inadequate understandings about the concept, and their inaccurate assumption that collocations are for advanced learners.


**2.5. Recommended materials for teaching collocations**

The interview teachers all agreed on the opinion that high school textbooks need to put more focus on the issue of collocations. The teachers mentioned that the only section that they can exploit to provide students with collocational knowledge is the reading text in each unit. Thus, it depends on the part of teachers to find out more teaching materials to realize the aim of putting more emphasis on collocations in English classes at high school. In the interviews, all of the participants were asked about their recommendations for supplementary materials that they frequently used or found useful. Answers from the teachers vary. Nevertheless, they all agreed upon the idea that Oxford

Advanced Learner's dictionary and Oxford Collocations dictionary are advisable sources. Other materials that were suggested by the majority are Cambridge Advanced Learner's dictionary, English collocations in Use (Intermediate and Advanced) by O'Dell & McCarthy, and Destinations (B1, B2 and C1&C2) by Macmillan. As can be clearly seen, it is undeniable that English dictionary and Collocations dictionary from Oxford and Cambridge University Press gain credibility from all the teachers of research, and thus become the highly recommended teaching materials. Due to the fact that those dictionaries are highly available in forms of both printed books and online websites, they are always at hands of the teacher. Therefore, they should take full advantages of those dictionaries in their teaching so as to bring the most benefits to learners.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter reviews the most notable research findings that have been discussed in Chapter 4. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications are drawn to provide teachers of English with feasible solutions for the remaining problems. In addition, suggestions for further studies are offered after the discussion of some limitations of the study

## 1. Major findings of the study

In response to the first research question of how Thanh Hoa high school teachers perceive collocations, it could be generally concluded that their understandings of collocations remains surficial. In other words, they showed the lack of adequate knowledge about this fundamental part of English language. Collocations were perceived by the teachers as a type of word combinations that has the ability to reflect the meaning of their component parts, which is an accurate understanding. However, an important aspect that they failed to realize is the arbitrary nature of collocations which consequently leads to their failure in clearly distinguishing collocations with other types of word combinations such as idioms or compounds. Besides, the findings of the research revealed the understandings of the teachers about other types of word combinations. While the teachers showed a quite firm understanding about the fixedness of idioms, they appeared to be kept in dark about the fact that compounds are completely frozen (Benson et al., 1986b).

With regards to the perception about types of collocations, although there exist two types of collocations, namely lexical and grammatical collocation (Benson et al., 1986a), research participants only exposed their limited understandings about the former type and evidently nothing about the later. Nevertheless, some of them revealed that the way they often group collocations is by means of the topics they relate to.

Regarding the second research question about the teachers' perception about teaching collocations at high school, their attitudes toward this matter were generally positive. Teachers in the study widely acknowledge the prevalence of

collocations in the English language and their role in facilitating language acquisition. In addition, they showed great recognition for the importance of learning collocations in enhancing four language skills, especially for writing skill. Although an overall agreement on the need to prioritize collocation teaching was found among the teachers, collocation was still ranked bottom in terms of attention priority in their teaching when being put in comparison with other aspects of vocabulary.

When it comes to effective methods of introducing collocational knowledge, explicit teaching and input enhancement were favored by the majority of the teachers. The findings show that collocational resources in reading texts are often exploited by teachers to provide students with useful collocations. Although there is no denying that collocational knowledge should be integrated into the English syllabus at high school, there remains three challenges including time restriction, teachers' inadequate knowledge about the concept, and teachers' wrong assumption that collocations are advanced language knowledge.

## 2. Pedagogical implications

Based on the previously discussed findings, pedagogical implications are provided to deal with the existing problems.

To mitigate the negative impacts that the teachers' insufficient understandings of collocations and their related issues may cause, there is an ultimate need for further professional training for high school teachers in Thanh Hoa city in particular and high school teachers in less developed areas in Vietnam in general. Besides, textbook designers and syllabus designers should take the issue of collocation teaching into consideration accordingly. They need to include more practice exercises and in-class activities involving collocations. Secondly, despite the wide acknowledgement about the necessity of collocation teaching, teachers in Thanh Hoa city still paid inadequate attention to collocations in their teaching practice. Thus, there is an urge to raise the teachers' awareness about giving more priority for collocation teaching in formal English classes at high school, because it can help students to become efficient language learners and fluent language users.

Additionally, as some teachers held the wrong assumption that collocations are the advanced knowledge which is more suitable for students of high proficiency level, the teacher training programs need to guide the teachers to sort out ranges of collocations according to degree of difficulty for teaching materials, which are compatible to different levels of learners. Therefore, teachers can make appropriate selections of familiar and practical groups of collocations to teach in class for students of a lower proficiency level.

## 3. Limitations and suggestions for further studies

Due to the lack of time and resources, the study is subject to some limitations and gaps for further studies.

The first drawback of the research is that it could not investigate the English language proficiency level of the teachers before studying their perceptions of collocations. Although the researcher was aware that these two factors could interrelate with each other, she did not have the authority to test the English proficiency level of the teachers. In addition, the information about this matter was not revealed to the researcher. Therefore, it is suggested that the research investigating the relationship between the level of language proficiency and level of perceptions of collocations is encouraged.

Another shortcoming of the study lies in the lack of focus on the age groups of the teachers. It is possible that different age groups may have different perceptions of collocations. However, the time constraint rendered it difficult for the researcher to put focus on this issue. Further studies can explore the relation between the age groups and the differences in the ways they perceive about collocations.

Besides, one of the limitations of this study is related to the lack of comparison between teachers of gifted high school and those of mainstream schools. Although the participants of the research are an integration of teachers from both gifted and mainstream high schools, the study did not investigate how their perceptions differ. Thus, this can be a topic for further studies aiming to discover the difference between the level of perceptions of teachers from gifted high school and those from mainstream high schools.

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## A QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS AND COLLOCATION TEACHING

I am Le Linh Huong from class 13E2, faculty of English Language Teacher Education, University of Languages and International Studies. This survey questionnaire is designed for my study entitled "**Thanh Hoa high school teachers' perceptions of collocation and collocation teaching**". Your assistance in responding the following questions would make a great contribution to the completion of my graduation paper. You can be assured that your name will not be mentioned in any discussion of the data. Please feel free to respond according to your true understandings and feelings. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

**1. Which is the definition of collocation?**

A. loosely fixed, arbitrary recurrent word combinations and the meaning of the whole do reflect the meaning of the parts.

B. relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the meanings of their component parts.

C. fixed word combinations, completely frozen, and no variations at all are possible.

**2. Put a tick on the options that are collocations (Only three of the options below are collocations)**

☐ *floppy disk*                     ☐ *to be in a tight spot.*

☐ *to spill the beans*              ☐ *close attention*

☐ *to kick the bucket*             ☐ *to recall an adventure*

☐ *to kill two birds with one stone*   ☐ *the facts of life*

☐ *aptitude test*                   ☐ *to analyze a murder*

☐ *pure chance*                         ☐ *for old time's sake*

☐ *to commit murder*                     ☐ *break through*


**3. Write T if the statement is true, F if the statement is false**

1. Collocations can be categorized into two groups, namely lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. ☐

2. Collocations can be formed of dominant words, such as a noun, an adjective, or a verb, and a preposition or grammatical structure like an infinitive or a clause. ☐

3. Phrases with the pattern "Noun1 of Noun2" such as "A school of whales" and "a colony of bees" are not collocations. ☐

4. Phrases with the pattern "Preposition + Noun" such as "In advance" and "At anchor" are not collocations. ☐

5. Sentences with the pattern "SVOC" such as "She dyed her hair red" are not collocations. ☐


**4. When teaching a new vocabulary item, what are the aspects that you pay attention to? Please rank the following aspects in terms of attention priority**
(*With 1 indicates top priority -> 7 the least priority*)

☐ Meaning

☐ Spelling

☐ Pronunciation

☐ Parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.)

☐ Connotation (formal, informal, positive, negative)

☐ Synonyms, antonyms, etc.

☐ Collocation


**5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please put a tick in the box that best indicates your opinion.**

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Collocations appear densely in English language | | | | | |
| 2. Collocational knowledge is a fundamental part of language knowledge | | | | | |
| 3. Language acquisition happens more efficiently when words are learned in chunks | | | | | |
| 4. Only when learners can chunk language successfully do they truly understand how language works | | | | | |
| 5. Collocational knowledge can improve learners' language fluency | | | | | |
| 6. Collocational knowledge can improve learners' language accuracy | | | | | |
| 7. Collocation can be one of the most noticeable aspects to differentiate between native speakers and non-native speakers | | | | | |
| 8. Collocations play an essential role in reading competency | | | | | |
| 9. Collocations play an essential role in listening competency | | | | | |
| 10. Collocations play an essential role in writing competency | | | | | |
| 11. Collocations play an essential role in speaking competency | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Obtaining more new and rare words is less beneficial to leaners than transforming already-known words into a great number of collocations | | | | | |
| 13. The more frequently learners are taught English collocations, the more accurately they can use collocations | | | | | |

**6. When teaching collocations, which methods do you find effective? Please rank the following methods in terms of effectiveness**

(*With 1 indicates the most effective -> 5 the least effective*)

☐ Explicit teaching (to teach new words with their partner-words)

☐ Concordances (a method of analyzing language by studying structures and lexical patterns found in digital database)

☐ Dictionaries (to have students using dictionaries in class activities or to provide students with independent learning strategies)

☐ Input enhancement (such as underlining, bolding or highlighting)

☐ Output enhancement (to have students producing target language both vocally and silently)

# APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## I. Perceptions about collocations

1. Can you define collocations in a few words from your own perspective?

2. How are collocations different from idioms or compounds?

3. Do you often group types of collocations? If yes, how do you group them?

## II. Perceptions about collocation teaching

4. Do you often attempt to introduce collocations when teaching vocabulary?

If yes, how do you often teach collocations and how learners receive and apply that collocational knowledge?

If no, why not?

5. What might be the effects of teaching collocations on leaners' language competence (in terms of receptive & productive skills and language fluency & accuracy)?

6. Do you think it is necessary to teach collocations in English class at high school?

7. Are there any difficulties when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school? If yes, what are they?

8. Do you think high school textbooks place sufficient focus on the issue of collocations? What kind of supplementary materials can be used?

# APPENDIX C: ANSWERS FROM INTERVIEWS

**Teacher 1**

**Date: 11/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are combinations of words and the meaning of the individual words can reflect the meaning of the whole."

2. "They are different in connotation. For example, some collocations have academic meaning while most of idioms are informal. Besides, words in collocations are loosely connected. Meanwhile, idioms are fixed and the meaning of component words does not reveal the meaning of the whole."

"Compounds are also fixed."

3. "I often categorize collocations into two groups, namely lexical and grammatical collocations."

"Lexical collocations relate to combinations of dominant words like Adj + N or V +N, while grammatical collocations relate to grammar structure like SVO or SVOO."

4. "I often integrate collocations into my lessons especially for students with higher level because it involves the proficiency in English language."

"The way I teach collocation is when introducing a word, I ask students to think about other words which can go with it to form a meaningful phrase. After that, I point out which collocations are correct and which are wrong. Besides, I can ask students to write a paragraph about certain topic in which they use the newly learnt collocations.

Another way to teach collocations is to highlight collocations in reading text and then ask students to apply that knowledge into practice"

"Students can apply collocational knowledge if I teach or put emphasis on it. However, because of the effects of Vietnamese logic, students usually make mistakes when using collocations. For example, many students use "take/ create/ do progress" instead of "make progress"."

5. "Teaching collocations will have a great impact on learners' language competence. If students are good at collocations, they can significantly improve their language proficiency."

"Collocations has the utmost importance in writing skill, because writing in simple language will not be highly appreciated especially in English contests."

6. "I think it is necessary to teach collocations in English class at high schools. We can adjust the level of difficulty of collocations according to the level of students. If we do not teach collocational knowledge, students will produce both spoken and written English in an inaccurate way."

7. "I do not think there are any difficulties because in reading passages in textbooks there are a lot of collocation and thus it depends on the way teachers exploit this source."

"A lot of teachers often confuse collocations with idioms and compounds, and thus they could not instruct students effectively."

8. "Collocational knowledge only appears in reading passages in high school textbooks. There is no separate part focusing on this knowledge."

"There are a lot of supplementary materials that teachers can use. For example, Oxford collocation dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, Collocation in use (Cambridge), English advanced vocabulary and structure practice."

**Teacher 2**

**Date: 12/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1 "Collocations are fixed phrases, which are used as a habit of native speakers."

2. "The similarity between collocations and idioms are their fixedness. The difference is that the meaning of idioms often involves metaphors while the meaning of collocations can be clearly deduced from their component words. However, the combination of words in collocations can not be explained, we just imitate the way native speakers combine words. Regarding compounds, nouns are freely combined depending on the purpose of word usage."

3. "I do not have the habit of grouping types of collocations as I do not know much about the categorizations of collocations."

4. "My collocation teaching depends on the level of learners. I introduce collocations for learners who have good command of English while for learners of primary level I only introduce single words and some regularly used collocations."

"When teaching a collocation, I often give examples for students to demonstrate how it works in sentences. Besides, I point out collocations in reading texts for students to note down. Sometimes, my students ask me about the collocations which they see somewhere."

"Advanced learners can comprehend the collocational knowledge very well, but lower level learners often wonder why words combine in that way but not other ways. Advanced learners really pay attempts to apply the learnt collocations into practice."

5. "Collocations have the greatest impact on students' writing competency. Students who are good at collocations are often proficient in writing skill. They also respond more quickly in speaking. However, my students use much fewer collocations in speaking than in writing."

6. "Because collocational knowledge is so extensive, we can only teach collocations through reading and listening, or in writing and speaking lessons

when students get stuck finding proper expressions we can give some suggestions."

7. "There would be difficulties from the part of teachers when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school. As I notice, there are quite a lot of questions about collocations in the mock tests for entrance exam to university these days and teachers do not know how to explain these questions and as a result just give students the answers. Many teachers are not aware that in English language there is a great part about something called "collocations"."

8. "Mainstream English textbooks do not show much focus on collocations but advanced English textbooks do have sufficient focus."

"The book that I used most often is collocation dictionary."

**Teacher 3**

**Date: 12/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "I think collocations are combinations between certain words and we can guess the meaning of collocations based on the meaning of these words."

2. "The difference between collocations and idioms is in the meaning. Normally, in idioms we can not guess the meaning of the whole phrase based on the meaning of compositional words, but with collocations we can. For compounds, we can also guess meaning from the component words but the connection between words in collocations is looser than in compounds."

3. "I am not sure about the types of collocations"

4. "Whenever I know any collocations related to the word that I am teaching, I will introduce to my students."

"When introducing new collocations, I give examples. Sometimes, I encourage my students to apply the learnt collocations in writing and sometimes in speaking, may be because there is not much time for speaking session in class."

"I also introduce collocations in reading class by asking them to find collocations in reading texts."

5. "If students are good at collocations, they will use English accurately. Thus, teachers do not have to spend much time correcting their mistakes in speaking and writing. They also use English more naturally and learn to avoid using English in Vietnamese way. Moreover, when students are master at collocations, they can produce the language more quickly. They do not have to think in Vietnamese and then translate into English"

6. "It is definitely necessary to teach collocations in English class even from secondary school, because if we provide students the correct input at the beginning they can produce correct output. Therefore, it does not matter at which level we should start teaching collocations."

7. "Integrating collocation teaching into syllabus at high school requires teachers to enrich themselves with more collocational knowledge so that they can be sure

of what they provide students. For example, before class, teachers need to check dictionary carefully."

"Furthermore, it takes time. For normal classes at school, teachers do not have enough time to introduce collocations, so they need extra time to help students with this."

8. "I do not think high school textbooks have sufficient input into collocational knowledge, because the time is limited. There are only 3 periods per week, so the curriculum design to fit that amount of time can not make much room for collocation teaching."

"I always try my best to exploit the textbooks, but in case that requires reference books I often use "destinations", "language practice" or "Oxford dictionary"."

**Teacher 4**

**Date: 18/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "From my perspective, collocations are groups of words that have to go together. For example, it has to be "make progress" but not "take progress"."

2. "Regarding the difference between collocations and idioms, idioms are groups of words that refer to other meanings. For example, the idiom "it rains like cats and dogs" means that it rains heavily or "as different as chalk and cheese" means that there is a fundamental difference. Meanwhile, collocations show the close connection between the meaning of component words and that of the whole phrase. In terms of compounds, they are combinations of two nouns and the connection between words is quite fixed compared to collocations."

3. "I do not group types of collocations. I often teach collocations according to the topic of vocabulary or topic of units in textbooks."

4. "I do introduce collocations when teaching vocabulary because if students want to use English accurately and proficiently, they need to have the correct word choice in order to avoid mistakes. Therefore, learning collocations is a good way to perfect their language."

"When teaching collocations, I often list out, for example which words can go with "make" or "do". After that I ask them to learn by heart and practice by doing exercises."

"Most of my students apply that collocational knowledge not very well."

5. "If students are provided with the correct input, they can produce the correct output. They can improve their speaking and writing skills thanks to the better word choice. Besides, they can listen more effectively because they can guess the whole phrase by catching even only a single word."

6. "It is very important to teach collocations in English class at high school, because collocational knowledge not only appears in exams but also in English daily conversations and news. Therefore, having a good command of collocations makes students be more native-like and confident when using

English language. Moreover, collocations help students understand how the language works."

7. "There would be several difficulties. We as teachers need to find the teaching materials by ourselves, because the curriculum at high school is boring. We need to read many reference books to choose what to teach. Besides, there might be a lack of time in formal classes, as teachers need to teach a lot of things and also prepare students for the exams in a 45-minute class."

8. "We could only find collocational knowledge in reading texts in textbooks but there is no focused section for it. If I want to add it into my lesson, I have to find from other sources such as Oxford dictionary, collocation dictionary or Destinations B2, C1 and C2."

**Teacher 5**
**Date: 18/ 2/ 2017**
**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are combinations of words."

2. "While the meaning of collocations can be guessed from the meaning of the component words, idioms are quite fixed and we have to depend on the cultural aspects to understand the meaning."

3. "The way I often group types of collocations depends on the combination between types of dominant words. For example, Adjective + Noun, Verb + Adverb, Noun + Noun."

4. "When teaching new words, sometimes I introduce the collocations that are often used in English language or regularly appear in exams. The way I teach collocations is to make sentences with the phrases so that my students understand how to use them."

"Students of higher level in English really like learning collocations because they can apply the collocational knowledge to improve their writing and speaking."

5. "The effects of teaching collocations on the writing skill is the most noticeable. Students have the better word choice in writing after being taught collocations. Besides, they can produce chunks of words more quickly in speaking, and thus their fluency is improved significantly. Regarding listening skill, students who are equipped with collocational knowledge can catch more words and understand the content better."

6. "We should teach collocations in English class even from secondary school, because it helps students have accurate expressions and avoid using Vietlish."

7. "The problem when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school is that for many students who are non-English major and do not need to take English test to pass the entrance exam to university, they feel like remembering single words is enough for their learning. They are kind of unwilling to learn "advanced" language like collocations."

8. "The textbooks at high school mainly focus on developing learners' competency in four skills, and thus there is no separate section teaching new words and their related collocations. If I want to introduce collocations in my lesson, I need to resort to supplementary materials from the Internet or Oxford collocation dictionary."

**Teacher 6**

**Date: 19/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are combinations between words (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs)."

2. "Compared to idioms and compounds, the combinations between words of collocations are much more diverse. Idioms and compounds are quite fixed and they need to be learnt by heart."

3. "I often group types of collocations according to what can go with the common verbs like "make", "do". However, I do not explain for students that they are collocations because the concept is kind of vague for non-majored students. Besides, even teachers like me sometimes do not understand the nature of collocations."

4. "I rarely introduce collocations in my lessons, because I think the amount of vocabulary in formal classes at school is enough for non-English major students. Adding collocational knowledge is kind of overwhelming for them."

5. "The effect of teaching collocations on learners' language competence is more than positive. Firstly, it helps enrich the sources of vocabulary and expressions of students. Besides, the logic in English linguistics of students may be greatly developed. The greatest impact that could be noticed is on writing skill. Students can write more accurately, logically and naturally. Another positive effect could be seen in the improvement of fluency in speaking skill. Moreover, the ability of guessing meaning in listening skill could also be improved."

6. "Teaching collocations in English class at high school is very important, because it helps facilitate the progress in learning English language of students. For non-English major students at high schools, we can let them learn collocations by doing multiple choice or gap-fill exercises."

7. "There are two challenges when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school. The first one is that students in a class are not in the same level of language proficiency while collocations can be considered as advanced

knowledge. The second challenge is that it requires more efforts from the part of teachers as they need to enrich their knowledge about this aspect of language. Besides, teachers have to search for additional teaching materials and sources of exercises for students to practice."

8. "High school textbooks do save space for teachers to teach collocations, but the amount of collocational knowledge that can be delivered to students depends on the way teachers exploit the materials. However, it could be stated that there is no focused section for collocations in textbooks."

"Some of the supplementary materials that I use are mock tests for entrance exam to university, English books of "Vinh Ba", Oxford dictionary and collocation dictionary."

**Teacher 7**

**Date: 19/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are word combinations."

2. "In collocations, we combine dominant words to make a meaningful phrase whose component words reveal the meaning of the whole. For example, we combine Verb + Noun, Noun + Noun or Adjective + Noun (well-paid job). Meanwhile, we can not guess the meaning of idioms based on the forming words. For example, "the pot calling the kettle black" is too hard to guess meaning."

"In compounds, the way we combine nouns is more restricted than in collocations, but the meaning of a compound can also be guessed from its component words."

3. "I do not group types of collocations. Sometimes, I categorize collocations by the root words, For example, I put words that can go with "make" or "do" together."

4. "Sometimes, I introduce popular collocations for students. For example, when teaching the word "mistake" or "progress", I will also introduce the phrases " make mistake" and "make progress" so that students could know what word is missing when doing gap-fill exercises."

"The ways I introduce collocational knowledge are to teach explicitly and to highlight them in reading texts. My students could receive this knowledge quite well as they give correct answers in multiple choice and gap-fill exercises if the collocations have been taught."

5. "I believe that teaching collocation can benefit learners' productive skills. As their sources of vocabulary is more diverse, they can find better ways to express their ideas. Besides, listening skill may be improved, because they can understand better when catching the collocations in tapes."

6. "It is very important to teach collocations at high school, as it is definitely an integral part in English language. If we only teach single words, it is like putting

bricks separately. Meanwhile, teaching collocations is like putting bricks together to make a firm wall."

7. "I think the only challenge when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school is the time restriction. Each lesson lasts for only 45 minutes, and thus it is difficult for teachers to dig deep into this issue."

8. "There is no separate part in high school English textbooks to teach collocations. Therefore, teachers need to refer to reference books when finding materials to teach. The book I use most often is dictionary (both Vietnamese-English and English-English dictionary)."

**Teacher 8**

**Date: 25/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are word combinations."

2. "While the combination between words in collocations is quite loose and we can guess their meaning by looking at the component words, idioms and compounds are so fixed that we can not learn them word by word but rather learn by heart."

3. "I do not categorize collocations in types, but I group them according to the topics that they relate to, for example "career" or "environment"."

4. "When teaching new words, I also introduce some of their popular partner words and then ask students to make sentences. Another way to teach collocations is to point them out in reading texts, explain their meaning and usage and then ask students to make sentences to check their comprehension."

"As long as the amount of knowledge about collocations being taught in a lesson is not overwhelming, my students can remember them very well and apply in doing mock tests that prepare for entrance exam to university."

5. "In the case of non-English major high school students, they do not put much focus on developing language skills, as their only aim in learning English is to pass high-stake exams like entrance exam to university. Therefore, after being taught collocations, I only notice that they can apply them in dealing with multiple choice and gap-fill exercises in mock tests very well."

6. "It is absolutely necessary to bring collocational knowledge into formal English classes at high school. However, the priority should be placed behind grammar and reading skill, because they are what students need more to prepare for high-stake exams."

7. "Teaching collocations for students of Group A1 and D may not face any difficulties but for those of non-English major they may find it difficult to comprehend."

8. "I do not think that high school textbooks lack focus on this part of language. Teachers can search for supplementary materials on the Internet or exploit mock tests for entrance exam to university which have quite a lot of questions about collocations."

**Teacher 9**

**Date: 26/ 2/ 2017**

**Duration: 15 – 20 minutes**

1. "Collocations are phrases consisting of two words or more, which go together in a certain order. The combination between words is not fixed."

2. "The fundamental difference between idioms and collocations is that idioms do not reflect the meaning of their component words while collocations do. When comparing compounds and collocations, I feel quite confusing, because even a teacher like me often mistakes the two types of word combinations."

3. "I only group collocations in terms of topics that they relate to, for example topics about family or friends."

4. "When teaching new words, I explicitly introduce their collocations and ask students to learn by heart. In the next lesson, I would ask my students to go to board to write down the collocations learnt in the previous lesson."

"Besides, when analyzing a reading text, I ask students to underline certain collocations and ask them to guess the meaning of those phrases. After that, I explain their usage. My students from science classes can comprehend the collocational knowledge very quickly, while students from social classes have more difficulties in reception."

5. "Teaching collocations help learners develop their language competence from multiple aspects. The most important impact is on learners' linguistic logic. Besides, in terms of productive skills, learners with sufficient knowledge about collocations can produce language in a more native-like way and thus avoid using Vietlish."

6. "Teaching collocations in English class at high school is very important because students who move from secondary school to high school are often kept in dark about this part of language. To raise the learning interest from the part of students, we should teach collocations according to useful vocabulary topics. It is also easier for learners to apply the knowledge after lessons."

7. "There are several challenges when integrating collocational knowledge into syllabus at high school. The first one is time restriction. The second is that a great number of high school teachers are confused about this concept. Therefore, they need to be trained more about this issue of language so as to ensure that what they will deliver to students is accurate."

8. "English textbooks at high school do not support teachers much with the teaching of collocational knowledge, and thus teachers need to search for supplementary materials by themselves. Some of the reference books that I am using are Oxford dictionary, English Collocation in use and Destinations. I also spend time adapting collocation exercises from the Internet."