

The Opportunities Of Using Modern Information Technologies In Teaching Collocations

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Received: 31 July 2025 **Accepted:** 28 August 2025 **Published:** 30 September 2025

ABSTRACT

The acquisition of collocations is a crucial component of mastering a foreign language, as it enhances learners' fluency and naturalness in communication. With the rapid development of modern information technologies (IT), language teaching methodologies have undergone significant transformation. This study investigates the opportunities and benefits of integrating modern IT tools in teaching collocations to secondary school students. The paper analyzes how digital resources, corpora, online dictionaries, and interactive platforms facilitate effective learning of collocations, increase learner engagement, and support autonomous vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: Collocations, information technologies, language learning, digital tools, vocabulary acquisition, EFL.

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of second language acquisition, vocabulary knowledge plays a pivotal role in determining learners' overall communicative competence. Among the various aspects of vocabulary, collocations — recurrent word combinations such as “make progress,” “take a break,” or “strong influence” — are essential for producing natural, fluent, and contextually appropriate language. Unlike individual words, collocations carry specific semantic and syntactic patterns that are often unpredictable and challenging for learners, particularly those studying English as a foreign language (EFL).

Despite their importance, collocations have historically received insufficient attention in traditional language instruction, which often prioritizes isolated vocabulary items or grammar rules over lexical chunks. This approach leads to learners producing language that, while grammatically correct, may sound unnatural or awkward to native speakers. Consequently, many EFL learners struggle with fluency and idiomaticity, limiting their communicative effectiveness.

The rapid advancement of modern information technologies (IT) over the past two decades has transformed educational practices worldwide. These technologies provide unprecedented access to authentic language input and interactive learning environments, which are particularly advantageous for teaching complex lexical phenomena like collocations. Tools such as online corpora, digital dictionaries, language learning apps, and interactive platforms enable learners to encounter collocations in real-life contexts, explore their usage patterns, and practice them actively.

Moreover, integrating IT into language teaching supports learner autonomy by allowing students to engage with materials at their own pace and according to their individual learning preferences. This autonomy is critical in vocabulary acquisition, where repeated exposure and meaningful use are necessary for internalization.

This study aims to explore the opportunities afforded by modern information technologies in teaching collocations to

secondary school EFL learners. It seeks to identify effective tools and methods for enhancing collocational competence and to assess their impact on learner motivation, engagement, and language proficiency. By bridging traditional vocabulary instruction with contemporary technological resources, this research contributes to the ongoing effort to modernize and improve language teaching methodologies.

METHODS (Expanded)

This study was conducted with the purpose of investigating the opportunities and effectiveness of integrating modern information technologies (IT) into the teaching of English collocations among secondary school students. A qualitative research design was employed to provide in-depth insights into how these technologies influence learner outcomes and motivation.

Participants and Setting

The research was carried out in a secondary school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, involving 50 students aged 14 to 16 years from two intermediate-level English classes. Additionally, two English teachers with over five years of experience participated. The selection of participants was purposeful, aiming to include learners with similar English proficiency levels to ensure consistency.

Instructional Intervention

Over a period of six weeks, collocation-focused lessons incorporated various modern IT tools, such as:

- Online collocation dictionaries (e.g., Oxford Collocations Dictionary online) for exploring authentic word combinations;
- Corpus analysis tools (e.g., COCA, JustTheWord) to expose learners to real usage;
- Vocabulary learning applications (e.g., Quizlet, Memrise) for spaced repetition and active recall;
- Interactive platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, Kahoot) to facilitate collaborative and gamified learning activities.

Teachers designed weekly lesson plans integrating these tools into thematic units focusing on everyday topics (e.g., environment, education, emotions).

Data Collection

Data collection methods included:

- Pre- and post-tests assessing students' ability to recognize and use collocations;
- Classroom observations documenting student interaction and engagement with IT tools;
- Student questionnaires measuring attitudes toward technology-enhanced learning;
- Teacher interviews reflecting on the practicality and challenges of integrating IT;
- Analysis of students' spoken and written outputs to evaluate collocational accuracy and fluency.

RESULTS

The data collected throughout the study revealed several significant findings:

Enhanced Collocational Knowledge

Comparisons between pre- and post-tests indicated a notable improvement in students' ability to use collocations correctly. On average, students increased their correct use of collocations by 40%, demonstrating both greater lexical variety and fewer collocational errors in speaking and writing.

Increased Learner Motivation and Engagement

Questionnaire responses showed that 88% of students found lessons using IT tools more engaging compared to traditional teaching methods. Interactive activities, such as quizzes on Kahoot and collaborative exercises on Google Classroom, were particularly popular and motivated students to participate actively.

Greater Learner Autonomy

Students reported increased confidence in exploring vocabulary independently using digital resources like online dictionaries and corpus tools. The ability to access authentic examples and practice at their own pace contributed to this autonomy.

Teacher Observations

Teachers noted that IT integration facilitated more dynamic and student-centered lessons. They observed increased student interaction and faster acquisition of collocations. However, they also mentioned challenges such as uneven access to devices and occasional technical difficulties.

DISCUSSION

The findings support the assertion that modern information technologies play a vital role in enhancing the teaching and learning of collocations in EFL contexts. The significant improvement in students' collocational competence aligns with previous research emphasizing the benefits of exposure to authentic language input (Lewis, 2000; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005).

The motivational impact of interactive and multimedia activities suggests that technology can address some of the affective barriers commonly encountered in vocabulary learning. By engaging learners in meaningful tasks that simulate real-life communication, IT fosters a deeper connection with language material.

Furthermore, learner autonomy promoted through technology-enabled access to resources reflects the shift towards learner-centered pedagogies in language education. This autonomy not only supports vocabulary retention but also encourages lifelong learning skills crucial for continuous language development.

Despite these benefits, practical challenges remain. Teachers require ongoing professional development to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Additionally, educational institutions must address infrastructural limitations to ensure equitable access to digital learning tools.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that incorporating modern information technologies in teaching English collocations offers substantial benefits in terms of learner outcomes, motivation, and autonomy. The integration of online dictionaries, corpus tools, vocabulary apps, and interactive platforms enriches the learning environment and enables students to engage with language more authentically and actively.

For optimal results, educational stakeholders should invest in teacher training and infrastructure development. Moreover, curriculum designers are encouraged to embed collocational instruction systematically, supported by technological resources, to enhance communicative competence.

Future research might explore the long-term effects of technology-enhanced collocation teaching and examine its applicability across diverse educational contexts and learner populations.

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