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THE TEACHER AS FACILITATOR IN DATA-DRIVEN COLLOCATION LEARNING AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract
The paper discusses how the role of the English teacher changes when collocations are taught through data-driven learning in secondary schools, and identifies the main functions of the teacher as facilitator.

Keywords: Data-driven learning, teacher's role, facilitator, collocation, corpus, secondary school.

Introduction

In traditional vocabulary teaching, the teacher is the main source of knowledge: he or she presents words, explains their meaning and corrects learners' errors. Data-driven learning (DDL) changes this distribution of roles. In DDL, learners examine corpus evidence and discover patterns themselves, while the teacher organises and guides the discovery process (Johns, 1991). This change is often described as a move from "sage on the stage" to "guide on the side".

Research shows that DDL is effective for vocabulary and collocation learning (Boulton & Cobb, 2017), but its success depends heavily on the teacher. Gabrielatos (2005) and Gilquin and Granger (2010) stress that corpus work must be carefully prepared, and Römer (2011) notes that teachers themselves need corpus literacy. With secondary school learners aged 14–15, the facilitating role of the teacher is even more important than with university students, because younger learners have less experience of independent research and may draw incorrect conclusions from limited data. Based on our experience of implementing a corpus-based methodology in grade 8–9 classes in Bukhara region, five main functions of the teacher as facilitator can be identified.

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1. Selecting. The teacher chooses key words and collocations from the textbook unit, checks them in SkELL and COCA, and selects examples suitable for the learners' level (Kilgarriff et al., 2015; Davies, 2008–).

2. Designing. The teacher prepares guiding questions and tasks that lead learners step by step from observation to generalisation, rather than leaving them alone with the corpus.

3. Modelling. Before learners work independently, the teacher demonstrates a search on the screen and "thinks aloud" about the results.

4. Monitoring. During the task, the teacher moves around the class, asks questions, helps learners who are lost and notes typical difficulties.

5. Summarising and correcting. At the end of the task, the teacher collects learners' conclusions, confirms correct generalisations and corrects over-generalisations.

In schools with limited internet access, the teacher also acts as a mediator between the corpus and the learners, preparing printed concordances in advance. Boulton (2010) demonstrated that such paper-based materials can be at least as effective as traditional reference resources, even for lower-level learners.

In conclusion, data-driven collocation learning does not reduce the importance of the teacher but changes the nature of the teacher's work. The teacher becomes a selector, designer, model, monitor and summariser of learners' discoveries. Teacher training courses should therefore include practical training in corpus tools such as SkELL and COCA.

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