

Exploring Collocational Awareness in Teaching Turkish as a Second Language: A Narrative Inquiry with Instructors

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates collocational awareness among instructors of Turkish as a Foreign/Second Language (TFSL), focusing on how regular collocation-focused activities influence their teaching practices. While the study was conducted in the Teaching Turkish as a Second Language (TSL) context at a private university in Türkiye, the term TFSL is employed as an inclusive designation, encompassing both foreign and second language learning contexts. Although collocations are critical for fluency and idiomaticity, limited research has investigated how TSL instructors conceptualize and integrate them into classroom instruction. Using a narrative inquiry design, data were collected from three instructors through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. Over a four-week period, participants implemented collocation-based activities such as matching, substitution, and contextual exercises in their classes. Thematic analysis with MAXQDA, supported by triangulation across data sources, revealed that instructors initially treated collocations incidentally, but systematic integration led them to perceive improvements in students' vocabulary breadth, fluency, and motivation. Participants also reported greater awareness of their own pedagogical practices, recognizing collocations as requiring different instructional approaches than single-word vocabulary teaching. While all expressed commitment to sustaining collocation-focused teaching, their varying practices underscored the absence of a standardized framework for collocational pedagogy in TFSL contexts. The study concludes that collocation-oriented activities benefit both learners and instructors, though findings remain exploratory due to the small sample.

Keywords: Collocational awareness, Teaching Turkish as a Foreign/Second Language (TFSL)

Vocabulary instruction, Narrative inquiry, Instructor perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is traditionally divided into three categories, which are skills teaching, grammar teaching, and vocabulary teaching. While teaching skills and grammar are usually prioritized, vocabulary teaching is usually neglected (Amiryousefi & Dastjerdi, 2010). According to DeCarrico (2001) the reason behind this is the widespread belief that vocabulary learning could be handled on its own. However, the majority of a language's meaning is contained in its lexicon (McCarthy, 1988) and vocabulary teaching itself can result in a notable increase in language competency (Nunan & Carter, 2001). Manangkari (2018) asserts that vocabulary learning may present some problems for language learners. When learners try to expand their vocabulary in target language, the number of words that need to be learned might be discouraging for them. Additionally, Willis and Willis (2006) state that learners that only learn individual words will find it far more difficult and time-consuming to express themselves which might be one of the reasons why the lexical approach prioritizes introducing the words in linguistic chunks rather than separately.

Chunks are words that operate as one unit (Altuwairesh, 2017) and teaching words in chunks can significantly increase the vocabulary one can use while negotiating meaning (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). Moreover, chunks help learners to sound more native-like since they are thought to be related to how native speakers store vocabulary, as chunks as well as individual words (Rahimi & Momeni, 2012). It can be said that a language classroom in which chunks are utilized during vocabulary teaching have a better chance to make the learning process faster and lasting. Thornbury (2002) claims that the most fundamental chunks of language are phrasal verbs, idioms, and collocations. The difference between idioms and collocations is sometimes overlooked and they might be thought to be the same thing, but this is not the case. However, the border between idioms and collocations is not rigid (Nesselhauf, 2003). One way to make the distinction is to know that the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from the meanings of individual words (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2008) as the literal and figurative meanings of an idiom are completely different (Bui, 2021). In other respects, a collocation is a combination of two or more words that occur together in a predictable way to describe a situation (Rao, 2018). For example, in Turkish, collocations such as "*ağır ceza*" (heavy penalty) or "*karar almak*" (to make a decision) are semantically transparent and can be understood from the meanings of their individual words. Idioms, however, work differently: their figurative meaning cannot be deduced from the literal meaning of the components. For instance, "*pabucu dama atılmak*" (literally "to have one's shoe thrown onto the roof") actually means "to lose

importance or value,” and “*etekleri zil çalmak*” (literally “for one’s skirts to jingle”) means “to be very happy.” Thus, while collocations support learners’ fluency through predictable combinations, idioms require separate cultural and semantic explanation.

The Latin origin of the term ‘collocation’ can give us a clue about the concept. The term was derived from ‘col-’ which means together, and ‘locare’ which means to place. So, it is fair to say that collocations are a group of words that have been placed together to express a certain situation. A significant characteristic of collocations is their arbitrariness. It appears that there is no logic behind why some words collocate with some and not with others (Farrokh, 2012). Due to this arbitrary nature it is neither possible nor practical to predict which words collocate with which since it will lead to failure and unusual word combinations (El-Dakhs, 2015). That is why it is unlikely for learners to achieve collocational competence unless collocations are introduced in the language classroom with special care. McCarthy (1988) draws attention to the point by likening teaching vocabulary without collocations to exhibiting an unfinished painting. In consequence, teaching collocations ought to be a major component of our teaching from the very first lesson since they constitute 70% of our utterances (Hill, 2000) and they are the most prevalent and outstanding examples of English multi-word expressions (Lewis, 2000). Furthermore, using collocations correctly increases fluency by enhancing learners’ comprehensibility (El-Dakhs, 2015) and contributes to their idiomaticity (James, 1998) all of which leads to enhanced nativelikeness Nation (2001) states that collocational competence is required for appropriateness and fluency in a language. Similarly, Duan and Qin (2012) claim that learners can gain a deeper understanding of a word’s meaning and expand their vocabulary by using the context and intentional associations, such as collocations, to make connections. The collocation-based word learning approach allows learners to apply the appropriate words at the appropriate time and place while simultaneously providing a hint for memorization of new words.

In Teaching Turkish as a Foreign/Second Language (TFSL)¹, collocations are especially crucial due to Turkish’s agglutinative morphology and syntactic complexity. Corpora and pedagogical materials underscore the prevalence of light verb + noun constructions (e.g., *karar al*, *yardım et*) and case-marked collocations (e.g., *-A + dikkat et + -A + ihtiyaç duy*). Corpus-based analyses and teaching resources, such as those developed by Karadağ (2018), emphasize the instructional value of collocation-focused word lists derived from authentic Turkish usage, reinforcing semantic naturalness and communicative competence. Research drawing on TS Corpus and the Turkish National Corpus has shown that collocations are among the most frequent and essential lexical units in Turkish (Çetinkaya, 2017; Sezer, 2017). For learners, mastering these structures is critical for achieving fluency, yet collocational competence is not always given systematic emphasis in TSFL classrooms.

In Turkish linguistics, significant efforts have been made to document and analyze collocations. Özkan (2010) compiled *Türkçenin Öğretiminde Sıfatların Eşdizim Sözlüğü: Yöntem ve Uygulama* (A Collocations Dictionary of Adjectives in Teaching Turkish: Methodology and Practice), providing one of the first systematic resources in this field, and later introduced the *Türkiye Türkçesinin Eşdizim Sözlüğü* (A Collocations Dictionary of Turkish), a large-scale, corpus-based resource that maps collocations across verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs (Özkan, 2012). Research has also highlighted the challenges learners face in acquiring collocational competence. Doğan (2019) observed that TFSL learners frequently rely on literal translations or transfer collocational patterns from their first language, a difficulty attributed to the limited treatment of collocations in existing textbooks. Similarly, Çetinkaya (2017) emphasized that collocational competence is critical for semantic naturalness and fluency in Turkish, yet teaching materials rarely present collocations as central lexical units. Supporting this view, Erten and Özer (2019) documented common learner errors such as overgeneralization and L1 transfer, concluding that explicit and systematic collocation-focused pedagogy is necessary. Finally, Karadağ (2020) noted that over 70% of both spoken and written Turkish consists of fixed expressions, arguing that collocations should be embedded directly into CEFR-based word lists to ensure learners’ fluency and idiomaticity.

Despite the considerable research on collocations in general, there is a noticeable gap in studies concerning collocational awareness among TFSL instructors. While previous studies often focused on learners’ knowledge and production of collocations (Biskri, 2012; Gençer, 2004; Putrawan, 2015; Soleimani et al., 2013), much less is known about how instructors conceptualize and teach collocations in Turkish. Without adequate instructor awareness, learners may not receive sufficient exposure to these structures, which are central to fluency and idiomatic expression. Therefore, research examining the collocational awareness of TFSL instructors and exploring how collocation-focused activities influence their teaching practices is needed.

¹ In this study, the term Teaching Turkish as a Foreign / Second Language (TFSL) is employed as an inclusive designation, encompassing both foreign and second language learning contexts. This usage ensures terminological consistency while recognizing that pedagogical frameworks and learner profiles frequently intersect across these domains.

In line with this, the present paper aims to investigate the collocational awareness of TFSL instructors and the effect of regular implementation of collocational activities on their vocabulary teaching. The research questions are as follows:

1. What is the level of collocational awareness among TFSL instructors?
 - a) How do TFSL instructors define collocation?
 - b) How often do they teach collocations?
 - c) How do they integrate collocations into their lessons?
 - d) What is the importance and necessity of teaching collocations according to their self-perception?
2. How does implementing collocation activities regularly contribute to TFSL instructors' collocational awareness?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in narrative inquiry to explore instructors' perspectives on collocational awareness in TFSL. Data collection and analysis were structured to capture both spoken and written reflections of the participants, ensuring depth, validity, and triangulation. The following subsections detail the participants, data collection procedures, and analytical framework adopted in the study.

Research Design

Qualitative research aims to discover ideas, understandings, and perspectives by conducting thorough fieldwork and evaluations, typically using small sample sizes to perform comprehensive analyses of the research topics being investigated (Patton, 2005). Within the narrative inquiry approach, participants are anticipated to articulate and convey their experiences, while it is incumbent upon the researcher to decipher the significance within the data to address the research questions at issue (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). Given that the research questions of this study necessitate detailed information from participants and an in-depth examination of the gathered data (Creswell, 2009), this study has been structured as a qualitative narrative inquiry to reveal new insights and gain a complete understanding.

Participants

The participants were three TSL instructors affiliated with a private university in Türkiye. The selection of instructors was intentional, as it aimed to capture perspectives shaped by diverse teaching experiences within the second language context, thereby offering exploratory insights into the topic rather than broad generalizability. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, following non-random criteria aligned with the study's objectives. All participants were Turkish nationals, a deliberate choice to examine collocational awareness among educators teaching their native language to international students in Türkiye. The detailed demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of Participants

Participant	Experience	Language They Teach	Level They Teach
P1	3 years	Turkish	A2
P2	2 years	Turkish	B1
P3	6 years	Turkish	B2

Data Collection

The data collection process lasted for four weeks. Since the research questions required personal experiences of the participants, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were realized with the participants both prior to and after the study. The data from the first interviews, which were held prior to study, were employed to answer the first research questions and its sub-questions.

In the following four weeks, the participants employed the collocation activities in their classes which were shared with them weekly by the researcher. These collocations were carefully prepared by the researcher in accordance with the subject, theme, and pedagogical aim of the observed week. The activities included tasks such as replacement exercises in which students substituted words with given collocations; fill-in-the-blank questions requiring students to complete sentences with appropriate collocations; matching collocations with definitions or statements; and identifying errors within provided sets. Additionally, students were supposed to find the incorrect collocation; choose correct collocations to fit sentences or contexts; or put words in the correct order to form sentences with collocations for some of these tasks. Multiple-choice exercises for selecting appropriate collocations and open-ended questions with relevant collocations were also included in the activities. These tasks were implemented with students to assess their proficiency in understanding and using collocations effectively. The data from the second interviews, which were held after the data collection process ended, were employed to

answer the second research question. After all interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

In addition to the interviews, participants kept reflective journals on the activities they applied in the classroom weekly, which enabled them to thoroughly assess the activities and their results. The reflective journal included two sections, the first section required participants' reflection before implementing the activities in the class and the other required reflection after implementing the activities. The former section included topics of *Expectations from the activities*, *How to implement the activities*, *Anticipated problems regarding the activities and their possible solutions* and the latter included topics of *Outcome*, *How to modify the activities to enhance their effectiveness in the future*, *My reflection on the contribution of the collocation activities to my vocabulary teaching*, respectively. A total of 12 reflective journals were received from the participants, four from each participant. The data from the reflective journal entries were also employed to strengthen the findings from the second interviews to answer the second research question.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted through MAXQDA 2020, with codes and themes emerging throughout the analysis phase. Since the interviews were designed as semi-structured and pre-determined questions were asked during interviews to elicit specific answers that were hoped to answer the research questions in hand, the researcher analyzed and coded the data collaboratively. Once the codes were created, the reflective journal entries from each participant were examined and the parts that can be related to their answers in the interviews were determined. Since personally kept written documents are another typical data collection for narrative inquiry, such parts were used to triangulate the already obtained data with the aim of strengthening the findings.

3.RESULTS

Findings Regarding the 1st Research Question

The first interviews were analyzed via thematic analysis to answer the 1st research question and its sub-questions. These interviews were structured as semi-structured sessions, entailing the administration of predetermined questions to all participants. However, the nature of the semi-structured design allowed for the emergence of additional themes throughout the course of the interviews. The findings regarding the 1st research question and its sub-questions are presented below. The hierarchical code-subcodes map regarding the 1st research question can be seen in Figure 1.

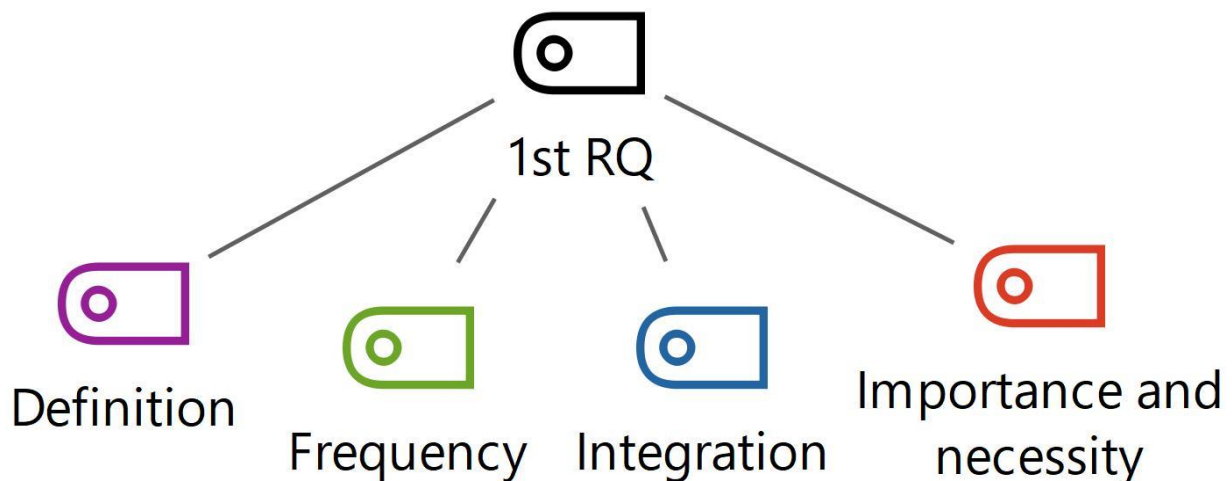


Figure 1: The Hierarchical Code-Subcodes Model Map Regarding 1st Research Question

Collocational Awareness

Two sets of codes were generated in order to find out the participants' collocational awareness, which are *definition of collocation* and *kind of collocation activities*. While the former is related to how they define collocation, the latter is related to the types of collocation activities they implement in the classroom. The findings from the aforementioned codes are presented separately in the following paragraphs to ensure a clear understanding.

Definition of Collocation

When they were asked how they defined collocation, all of the participants defined collocation correctly. P1 said "Collocation is the juxtaposition of two or more words together to gain a new meaning." Similarly, P3 said

“Collocation is using the words in a connected way.” The definitions of P2 was also in line with the definitions in the literature.

Kind of Activities They Implement

Next, the participants were asked what kind of collocation activities they use in vocabulary teaching, if any. It was seen that instructors all preferred activities that are suitable to teach vocabulary in the collocations separately, rather than in chunks.

P1 stated that she pays attention to giving multiple examples that can be related to real life by saying “I always give authentic examples such as song lyrics, quotes from movies or books, etc. to help my students to internalize collocations.” P2 stated that she prefers a game-like approach to teaching collocations. She also said “I usually give the words separately and ask my students to match the words to form collocations, then we do various exercises with those collocations once they have matched them.” P3 asserted that he favors individual exercises rather than group work. He said “When I teach collocations, I always try to give multiple examples, for instance, if the collocation includes a verb, I give other collocations that include the same verb to help my students comprehend it better.”

The activity preferences of participants differed. P1 stated that she prefers teaching the meanings of the words separately, “First of all, if they don't know the meanings of the words individually, I divide the collocation into pieces and teach them separately. Then I try to teach it as a collocation.” In line with her approach, P2 asserted that when she teaches an individual word, she mentions different collocations that include that word so that students would learn that single word better. “When a word pops up in a text that the students do not know, I teach the meaning of that word by giving collocations.” P3 stated that she prefers a game-like approach to teaching collocations. She also said “I usually give the words separately and ask my students to match the words to form collocations, then we do various exercises with those collocations once they have matched them.”

How Often Do They Teach Collocations

When the participants were asked about their frequency of teaching collocations, two patterns were observed. P1 asserted that she tries to teach collocations almost every day, whereas P2 shared that collocation teaching takes place in her lessons randomly. On the issue, P3 said “There is no specific frequency, it completely depends on the topic.”

Importance and Necessity

Participants unanimously believe that it is highly important to include collocation activities in vocabulary teaching, additionally, they all believe that collocational knowledge is necessary for both fluency and proficiency in Turkish. Regarding the importance and necessity of teaching collocations P1 said “I think that the more contextual the word connections created by the brain, the stronger the collocations are, the more memorable they are.” In accordance, P2 and P3 said “I think that teaching collocations is for the benefit of the students both in daily life and academically. Due to their frequent usage in daily life, as well as in academic contexts.”

Findings Regarding the 2nd Research Question

The second interviews were analyzed via thematic analysis to answer the 2nd research question, following the data collection process. In addition to the data from second interviews, some parts of first interviews and reflective journal entries were also employed to help to answer the question in hand. The hierarchical code-subcodes map regarding the 2nd research question can be seen in Figure 2.

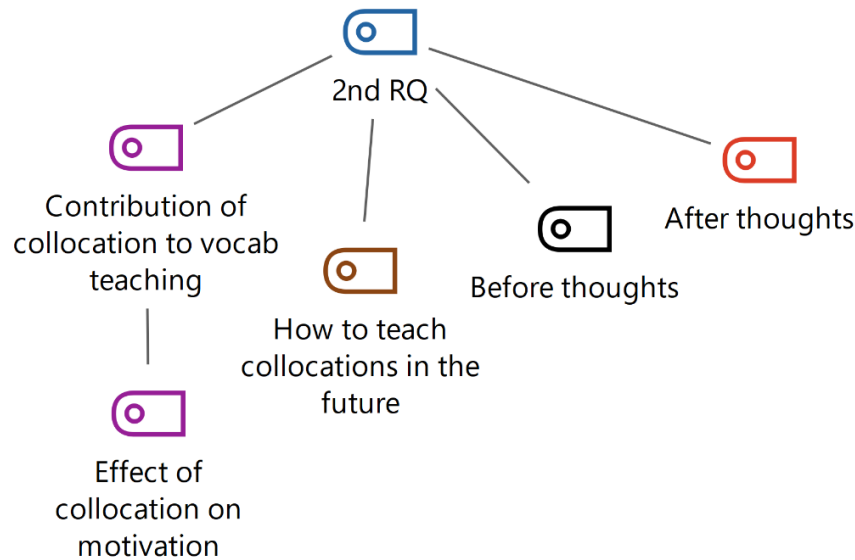


Figure 2: The Hierarchical Code-Subcodes Map Regarding The 2nd Research Question

Contribution of Collocation to Vocabulary Teaching

Regarding the effect of vocabulary teaching through collocation, participants unanimously stated that they perceived it helped their students to broaden vocabulary knowledge and fluency, which they believed contributed to overall proficiency in Turkish. “I believe it affected their vocabulary development in a really positive way since they have learned multiple words at the same time.” said P1. Similarly, P2 said “In the speaking tasks, it was clear that they had learned a lot regarding vocabulary. They had learned new vocabulary in a simpler way, and I realized that they benefited a lot from it. Their speaking skill was affected positively thanks to collocations since they used multiple words together, which led to speaking more fluently. Also the knowledge was lasting due to the lack of confusion which resulted in improvement in their speaking.” P3 also pointed out that since collocation are commonly used in daily speech, teaching them helped students to be exposed to authentic language which she believes enabled her students for the language outside of the classroom.

Effect of Collocation on Motivation

All three participants reported perceiving an increase in their students’ motivation towards Turkish as a result of collocation activities. P1 said “The students were really eager to learn more and always asking me to share the collocation activities with them after the lessons.” P2 said “When I taught collocations, I always gave multiple contexts which helped students to internalize what they have learned. As a result, they perceived improvements in proficiency, which they believed supported reading skills, as texts seemed more understandable to students. In accordance, P3 asserted “They gained self-confidence in Turkish and when students’ self-confidence increases, their motivation also increases. In addition, diversifying vocabulary teaching with collocation activities also had a positive impact on students’ motivation.”

Before Thoughts

When the participants were asked about what they anticipate from the process of implementing collocation activities on regular, various answers were received. P1 anticipated some problems regarding the process by saying “They can feel perplexed when they see that individual words have different meanings when they are uttered as a collocation, and this might hinder their vocabulary learning.” P2 expected an enhancement in her students’ vocabulary knowledge. In addition to vocabulary and grammar knowledge, P3 stated that she expected improvements in her students’ confidence and Turkish culture awareness. She said “I think they will be more confident in Turkish which is the most important thing. They will have more ways to express themselves and they will also be more eager to learn about Turkish culture as well as the language.”

After Thoughts

When the participants were asked about if their perception has changed regarding employing collocation activities, they unanimously stated that they realized, in their perception, that teaching collocations systematically differs substantially from teaching words individually. Regarding her thoughts, P1 said “I used to teach collocations when I felt like it, but I have discerned that it is needed is to allocate a whole lesson to solely teach collocations. As it necessitates various activities and exercises to help students fully comprehend them.” P2 made a self-criticism by saying “I have realized that by simply following the curriculum and teaching collocations only when

I must was a mistake. It is simply not enough as it requires more time and attention to ensure students actually learn collocations.” In line with this statement, P3 said “During the process I realized that I hadn’t been teaching collocations before. The process has made me reflect on my teaching of collocations and notice what I lack which will help me tailor the exercises and activities I use to teach collocations in the future.”

How to Teach Collocations in the Future

All of the participants expressed their willingness to keep teaching collocations after the study. P1 asserted that she plans to teach collocation in more authentic contexts by saying “I plan to create certain scenarios and situations they might experience in real life and teach collocations in such contexts. I also plan to integrate collocations teaching in writing activities.” P2 said she also intends to keep teaching collocations by saying “Turkish is a really rich language in which collocations are used frequently. The more collocations my students know, the more proficient they will become in the language.” Lastly, P3 stated that with the awareness she has gained from the study, she will insert more collocation activities in her teaching. “I will definitely integrate collocations more in my teaching starting from A2 level. I will expect my students to have a certain level of collocational knowledge especially in the advanced levels, such as B1 and B2, from now on.”

4. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the collocational awareness of TFSL instructors and to examine how regular implementation of collocation activities shaped their perceptions and teaching practices. Data from interviews and reflective journals provided insight into four aspects of collocational awareness: definitions of collocation, frequency of instruction, integration of collocations into lessons, and perceptions of importance and necessity.

Defining Collocation

The instructors demonstrated an accurate understanding of collocation, defining it in ways consistent with the literature. Nation (2001) emphasizes that conceptual awareness is a prerequisite for effective integration of collocations into teaching, and the findings suggest that the participants possessed this theoretical grounding. This foundation is essential, particularly in the TFSL context, where learners often encounter challenges related to Turkish’s agglutinative structure and case-marked collocational patterns (cf. Özkan, 2012; Doğan, 2019).

Frequency of Teaching Collocations

The study revealed variation in how frequently collocations were taught. While some instructors reported addressing collocations almost daily, others noted that their inclusion depended on the weekly lesson theme. This inconsistency reflects the absence of a standardized collocation-focused framework in TFSL classrooms. Hill (2000) stresses that collocations should be systematically integrated into teaching from the very beginning of instruction. The uneven practices observed here highlight the need for structured curricular guidelines to ensure consistent exposure.

Integration into Lessons

Instructors reported using multiple strategies to incorporate collocations, including authentic examples (e.g., song lyrics, quotations, dialogues), game-like matching exercises, and linking collocations to unknown words encountered in texts. However, many still tended to begin by teaching the individual words before combining them into collocations. While this approach provides learners with initial semantic grounding, Willis and Willis (2006) caution that teaching words in isolation may hinder learners’ ability to internalize collocational patterns. James (1998) similarly argues that fluency and idiomaticity are best achieved through teaching words as chunks rather than as separate units. Thus, while the participants demonstrated creative and context-based approaches, their reliance on individual word instruction suggests a partial, rather than full, adoption of chunk-based pedagogy.

Importance and Necessity of Collocational Teaching

All instructors emphasized that collocational knowledge is essential for vocabulary expansion, fluency, and natural language use. They highlighted that collocations are vital both for everyday communication and for academic language proficiency. Their views resonate with Lewis’s (2000) assertion that collocations are central to vocabulary development and with Karadağ’s (2020) finding that fixed expressions form a significant portion of Turkish usage. These perspectives reinforce the idea that systematic collocation teaching is not a supplementary practice but rather a core requirement for effective TFSL pedagogy.

In sum, the findings suggest that TFSL instructors are aware of the importance of collocations and are willing to integrate them into instruction, though their practices remain uneven and at times reliant on word-level teaching. This reflects broader gaps in collocation-oriented pedagogy within TFSL. Addressing these gaps may require the development of a Turkish-specific collocation framework to guide instructors and curricula in embedding collocations systematically into teaching practices.

The second research question focused on how regularly implementing collocation activities influenced TFSL instructors' collocational awareness and their teaching practices. Data were drawn from the second set of interviews, conducted after the four-week intervention, as well as reflective journals that documented instructors' evolving perceptions. Together, these sources revealed significant developments in the instructors' conceptualization and classroom practices.

Vocabulary Development and Fluency

All participants observed that systematic collocation activities led to clear gains in students' vocabulary breadth and fluency. They highlighted that collocation-based instruction exposed students to multiple lexical items simultaneously, accelerating their vocabulary growth while making retention more durable. Students demonstrated increased ability to retrieve and apply collocations in speaking tasks, which in turn enhanced fluency and reduced hesitation. These findings support Rahimi and Momeni's (2012) claim that collocational competence directly strengthens communicative performance and reduces learner errors. In the TFSL context, this is particularly significant given the high frequency of collocational patterns in Turkish, such as light verb + noun constructions or case-marked phrases, which are central to idiomatic usage.

Motivation and Confidence

Participants unanimously reported that students' motivation increased as a result of collocation-focused instruction. The engaging nature of the activities—ranging from matching tasks to contextualized production exercises—appeared to make vocabulary learning more enjoyable. Students' greater ability to use collocations in authentic tasks contributed to a stronger sense of accomplishment and self-confidence, which in turn reinforced their willingness to engage in further language learning. These observations align with El-Dakhs's (2015) argument that collocations enhance comprehensibility and provide learners with accessible entry points into authentic language use, thereby supporting motivation and persistence in study.

Shifts in Instructors' Perceptions

A central outcome of the intervention was the shift in instructors' understanding of their own teaching practices. Prior to the study, participants often treated collocations incidentally, focusing on them only when they appeared in texts or when students raised questions. Through regular exposure to collocation-focused activities, instructors came to recognize that teaching collocations systematically differs substantially from teaching single words. Several reflected critically on their earlier reliance on word-level instruction, acknowledging that this approach underestimated the complexity of collocational learning. This change resonates with Duan and Qin's (2012) assertion that collocations must be taught through context-rich, pattern-based activities rather than as isolated lexical items.

Towards Systematic Pedagogy

By the end of the study, participants expressed strong commitment to incorporating collocations as a sustained focus in their teaching. They emphasized the need to design lessons specifically dedicated to collocations, to integrate collocations into both receptive and productive skills activities, and to expand the range of classroom tasks beyond substitution or matching exercises. Hill (2000) stresses that collocations should be deliberately foregrounded in language curricula to be effectively internalized, and the participants' reflections suggest that they came to similar conclusions through their practical experience. Importantly, they also recognized that collocation teaching should not be confined to advanced levels, but rather should begin early (e.g., at A2 level) to establish a strong foundation for later proficiency.

Overall, the findings from the second research question indicate that regular collocation-focused activities functioned as both a pedagogical tool for students and a professional development mechanism for instructors. On the one hand, students benefited in terms of vocabulary development, fluency, and motivation. On the other, instructors deepened their own awareness of collocations, critically reassessed their earlier practices, and articulated intentions to adopt a more systematic, contextually rich approach to collocation teaching. In this way, the study demonstrates that collocation-focused pedagogy serves not only to enhance learners' outcomes but also to recalibrate instructors' pedagogical orientations within TFSL.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated collocation awareness and teaching practices among instructors of TFSL and examined the effect of regular collocation-focused activities on their instructional practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals to enable an in-depth qualitative analysis. The findings revealed that instructors often approached collocations in isolation rather than through integrated and contextually rich methods. Among the three participants, practices differed: one instructor incorporated collocation activities

almost daily, while the others did so more sporadically. Overall, participants expressed a shared recognition of the importance of collocation instruction for enhancing learners' fluency and accuracy. The implementation of collocation activities on a regular basis was further associated with observable improvements in learners' vocabulary development, communicative fluency, and motivation. At the same time, instructors highlighted the need for more systematic and structured approaches, reflecting on past shortcomings and expressing willingness to adopt more effective practices in the future.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While the present study yielded meaningful insights, it is not without limitations. As is typical in qualitative research, the results are not intended to be generalizable. Expanding the participant pool to include instructors from diverse institutional and educational contexts may provide a broader understanding of collocation instruction in Turkish language teaching. Furthermore, the current study focused on the short-term and immediate effects of collocation-oriented activities. Future research should address this limitation by investigating the long-term and sustained impact of such practices, as well as by engaging with larger and more varied participant populations.

The findings suggest that a standardized training program aimed at enhancing collocational awareness could significantly benefit instructors of TFSL. Further research is also needed to design a comprehensive instructional framework or guideline that incorporates a wide range of collocation-focused activities and is adaptable across different teaching contexts.

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