

Investigating Iraqi EFL University Students' Productive Knowledge of Grammatical Collocations in English

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Abstract : Grammatical collocations (GCs) are word combinations containing a preposition or a grammatical structure, such as an infinitive (e.g. *smile at, interested in, easy to learn,* etc.). Such collocations tend to be difficult for Iraqi EFL university students (IUS) to master. To help address this problem, it is important to identify the factors causing it. This study aims at investigating the effects of L2 proficiency, frequency of GCs and their transparency on IUSs' productive knowledge of GCs. The study involves 112 undergraduate participants with different proficiency levels, learning English in formal contexts in Iraq. The data collection instruments include (but not limited to) a productive knowledge test (designed by the researcher using the British National Corpus (BNC)), as well as the grammar part of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The study findings have shown that all the above-mentioned factors have significant effects on IUSs' productive knowledge of GCs. In addition to establishing evidence of which factors of L2 learning might be relevant to learning GCs, it is hoped that the findings of the present study will contribute to more effective methods of teaching that can better address and help overcome the problems IUSs encounter in learning GCs. The study is thus hoped to have significant theoretical and pedagogical implications for researchers, syllabus designers as well as teachers of English as a foreign/second language.

Keywords : corpus linguistics, frequency, grammatical collocations, L2 vocabulary learning, productive knowledge, proficiency, transparency

Conference Title : ICALTMI 2019 : International Conference on Applied Linguistics, Transnationalism, Multilingualism, and Identity

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : September 19-20, 2019