

## Collocation Types in Interchange Series and High School Books

Saiedeh Ahangari, Fatemeh Zununi Vahed

Department of English Language, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

---

### ABSTRACT

Collocational knowledge is at the heart of vocabulary learning and enables language learners to produce flawless language. This research has aimed at comparing two sets of language books namely, Interchanges books and Iranian high school books in order to investigate the types of collocations used in each and the differences between the two regarding these types. Therefore, the collocations used in the eight books were organized into six types according to their classification by McCarthy (2005). As the results revealed, the four Interchange books abound with collocations specially the verb- noun pairs considering their frequency. The high school books also contained collocations, though insufficient especially in grade one and two and the results showed that the adjective-noun pairs rated the first according to their frequency. The adverb-adjective pairs were sparsely used in both set of books. The findings might have crucial implications for teachers and syllabus designers since it seems that the high school books which prepare all Iranian students for university entrance exam along with other standardized tests, fail short in equipping the learners for such purposes but Interchanges have a better role enabling them acquire the necessary elements of English language learning, in this case collocations.

**KEYWORDS:** Collocations, Collocation types, Collocation frequency, Compound structures.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language, in this case English, requires learning its lexis, grammar, how words are arranged in sequences and the most important of all how grammar and lexis rationally assemble together to create a meaningful piece of writing or speech. But yet mastery of these does not indicate one can produce a natural flow of language. In most cases a piece of language produced or uttered could be grammatical but not necessarily correct. This is true for lexis, too. There are thousands of words in English and no one can claim to have mastered them, though it is possible to have a good command of its vocabulary. How these words should be aligned around also matters; not every word can be paired with the other. So for a better communication which is natural, all aspects of arrangements should be taken into account. English language with all its subtlety is a prevalent language all around the world and lots of schools and institutes worldwide attempt to equip their learners with this mighty asset. While its grammar could be partially mastered, mastery of its lexicon or vocabulary load needs a greater effort. Learning vocabulary and knowing which words are better neighbored than the others are a strategy few can capture and thus distinguish themselves.

Traditionally, the teaching of vocabulary above elementary levels was mostly incidental, limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or sometimes listening texts. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion (Moras, 2001). Nowadays it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus, and taught on a well-planned and regular basis. Some authors, led by Lewis (1993) argue that vocabulary should be at the center of language teaching, because language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar. Grammar in turn, helps us know which words can be adjoined like “a good girl”, an article, adjective and a noun. However, there are situations in which grammatical knowledge fails short and another area steps in. Taking an example will clear this. For example we all have heard expressions like “go hiking”, “do homework”, “give speech” and “deliver a message” (McCarthy, 2005).

Taking in to account the significance of this issue, this paper has aimed to investigate the presence and types of the collocations in some text books written for students whose native language is not English. For this purpose, collocation types and their use were investigated in *High school text books of English* taught in Iran and the *Interchange* series by Jack.C.Richards from a beginner level to an upper-intermediate one, so that we can come into grip with the pedagogical implications of the type of collocations employed in each book (or level) and therefore have a better understanding of the feasibility of each collocation type taught within the books mentioned above. At the same time the two sets of books were compared to each other for the purpose of understanding the efficiency of the books and to reckon which ones may be a better asset preparing the learners for a better learning end. This will

also help us to know why the authors have preferred some types over the others and utilized some types more than the others in the Interchange books and the high school books for Iranian students.

Fluency, accuracy and natural flow of speech are indicative of the mastery of English language. Gaining greater confidence in collocations and learning well which words are frequently paired with each other will help one have a good command of English. Native speakers of English have no problem pairing collocations but when it comes to non-natives and the students learning it as a foreign language, (in Iran English is considered as a foreign language) they struggle hard to communicate through collocations and thus make mistakes which would not block communication but make their speech sound poor and broken. This study would highlight the significance of collocations even more than before and open new areas of research and better methodology for teaching them. The researcher has chosen Interchange series because they are communicative in nature and very popular with students who have always feared learning a foreign language like English which is too difficult and ends in failure; but these series have proven them wrong and in most widely recognized institutes and schools (in Germany) these series seem to be promising and successful. Besides, the author professor Jack Richards is an internationally recognized applied linguist, teacher, educator and textbook author, whose classroom texts and professional books are used by teachers and students all around the world. The high school English text books for Iranian students are chosen because these books prepare the Iranian students for university entrance exam and their future university courses and therefore jobs.

### MATERIALS AND METHOD

In this study four Interchange books written by Jack.C.Richards (2005) and four high school English books for Iranian students written by Birjandi (2005, 2009) were used so that collocation pairs and their types would be investigated. It is worth noting that the latest versions of the books were used in this study and that their content would not change until the end of 2013 of school year. For the listening parts of Interchange books, the teacher's manual book was also employed so that the data gathered would be valid and reliable accounting for the mistakes one might make in differentiating sounds and words they hear.

In order to gather data, twelve tables were designed so that they would correspond to the collocation categorization and classifications. These tables manifest the collocation types for both Interchange and high school books, designed in six columns or groups that correspond to six collocation types in English language as shown in Table 1. Furthermore, in order to make sure if a word phrase or neighboring structures were considered to be a collocation or, for example compound noun or adjective, *Oxford's Dictionary of Collocations* (2009) and *McCarthy's English Collocations in Use* (2005) book were used.

Table 1: **The classifications of collocations into six different types (Interchange three)**

<i>noun-noun</i>	<i>verb-noun</i>	<i>adjective-noun</i>	<i>adverb-adjective</i>	<i>verb-noun-preposition</i>	<i>verb-adverb</i>
Leadership quality	Lead people	Casual acquaintance	Least likely	Brag about accomplishments	Laugh hysterically
Earning potential	Make a decision	Positive description	Most likely	Treat to dinner	Arrive early
Sense of humor	Leave a deposit	Negative description	Easily annoyed	Listen to problems	Dress casually
AIDS vaccine	Make noise	Similar opinions	Visually impaired	Ask for money	Talk loudly
Homemaking ability	Provide companionship	Immediate effect	Designed attractively	Set up projects	Feel Strongly
Fashion sense	Provide support	Negative words	Totally independent	Take in oxygen	Change permanently
Volunteer organization	Meet people	Positive words	Morally wrong	Blurt out an answer	Benefit unfairly
Problem solver	Have a partner	Strong ideas	Highly respected	Bring to attention	Feel strongly

**Procedure**

In order to investigate the collocation types employed in Interchange series and English books for high school students, the four books of Interchange books starting from an elementary level to an upper-intermediate level were studied in depth and phrases or the word combinations were written down according to what collocation type they were. The four Interchange books are namely: Interchange Intro, which is an elementary level book designed in three copies; the student book, the work book and the movie book. In this research only the student book was analyzed since the two other books are the replicates of the first one regarding the introduction of new words or grammar points with the only difference being the type of exercises used, in order to reinforce the items introduced in student books. The three other Interchange books include Interchange one, Interchange two and Interchange three designed for pre intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate levels, respectively, noting that the work and movie books also have the repeated topics and therefore vocabulary.

The presence of the collocations and word combinations or structured were gathered from each section and the data were separately categorized into six categories differentiating collocation types. There were some word structures that could not be categorized under heading of “collocation” where there were structures like “traffic light”, “bicycle lane” which are considered to be compound nouns and not noun-noun collocations or structures like “set up”, “get along”, since they are phrasal verbs and not collocations.

There were also four high school English books from first grade level of proficiency in high school to pre-university level, which is considered to be an upper level of proficiency and one of the main sources of English proficiency exam required for university entrance exam. These four books were chosen because as stated before, they are used in all Iranian high schools and written by non-native authors. Tables were used to classify collocation types.

The collocation pairs found in high school books were scattered in readings, questions and vocabulary reviews and there was not any specific section that mainly contained collocations.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

In order to compare the two sets of Interchange and high school text books, eight books were analyzed separately and the results were represented in two tables. Table 2 demonstrates the results of analysis for Interchange series. As it is shown in this table, the verb-noun pairs seem to rank first with regard to their frequency of appearance in the four Interchange books. Of the 1502 collocations used in all these four books, 750 types were of verb-noun types while a few collocations were categorized under the adverb-adjective or verb-noun-preposition types. A tangible comparison is illustrated in Figure 1 which in turn clarifies this significance.

**Table 2. Collocation types in all Interchange books**

Collocation types		Level				Total
		interchange intro	interchange one	interchange two	interchange three	
noun-noun	Count	7	40	25	70	142
	Expected Count	7.3	25.1	38.6	71.1	142.0
	% within level	9.1%	15.1%	6.1%	9.3%	9.5%
verb-noun	Count	47	109	233	361	750
	Expected Count	38.4	132.3	203.7	375.5	750.0
	% within level	61.0%	41.1%	57.1%	48.0%	49.9%
adjective-noun	Count	22	105	127	269	523
	Expected Count	26.8	92.3	142.1	261.8	523.0
	% within level	28.6%	39.6%	31.1%	35.8%	34.8%
adverb-adjective	Count	0	2	4	15	21
	Expected Count	1.1	3.7	5.7	10.5	21.0
	% within level	.0%	.8%	1.0%	2.0%	1.4%
verb-preposition-noun	Count	0	0	0	12	12
	Expected Count	.6	2.1	3.3	6.0	12.0
	% within level	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.6%	.8%
verb-adverb	Count	1	9	19	25	54
	Expected Count	2.8	9.5	14.7	27.0	54.0
	% within level	1.3%	3.4%	4.7%	3.3%	3.6%
Total	Count	77	265	408	752	1502
	Expected Count	77.0	265.0	408.0	752.0	1502.0
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As Figure 1 illustrates, the four Interchange books are compared with regard to the collocation type used in each. Among the six collocation types, as it is shown the verb- noun pairs have the highest frequency in all four books. The adjective- noun pairs are also prevalent in the four books, especially Interchange three book. Then the noun-noun pairs rate the third in the series and the other three types, namely verb-adverb, adverb-adjective and verb-preposition-noun pairs seem to be meagerly employed in the Interchange series.

Therefore, it could be concluded that in Interchange series the verb- noun pairs rated the first and the verb-preposition-noun rated the last considering the collocation types, being employed in each book (Figure 1).



As Figure 2 below illustrates, among the four high school books, the adjective-noun pairs rated the first in all the four books, especially in the pre-university book. Then the verb-noun pairs had the majority of collocations. Once again, the verb-preposition-noun pairs were scarcely used in the four high school text books.

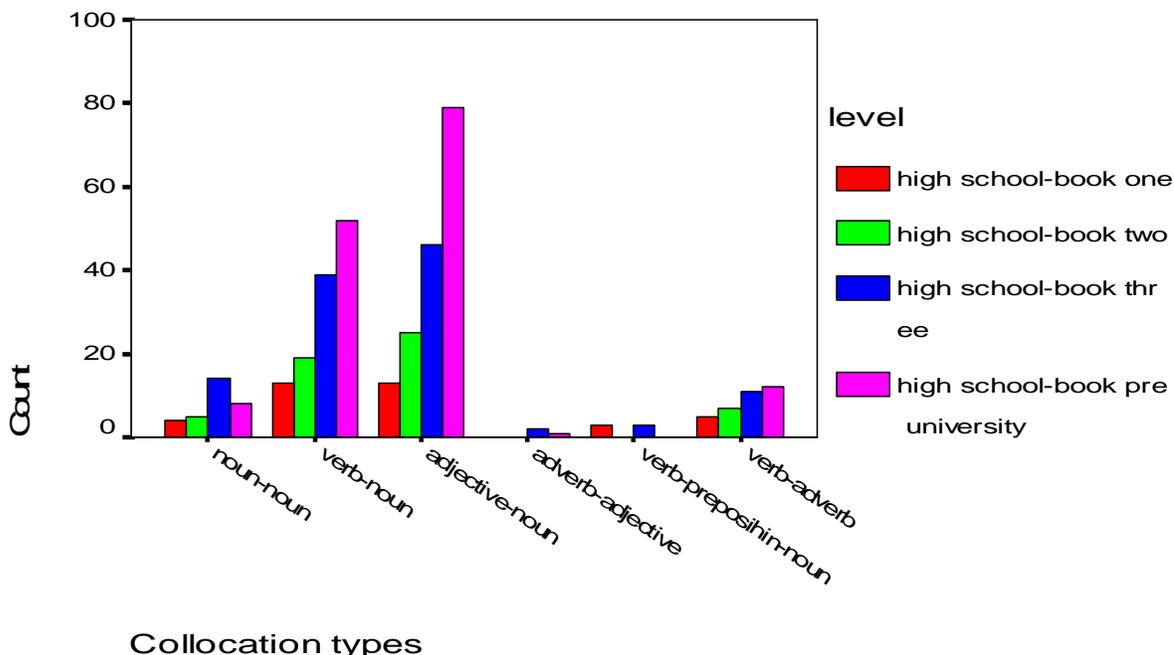


Figure 2. Collocation types in high school books

It would be worthy to compare the results of these two series with each other to see if there were any differences between them regarding the collocation types employed in each series; therefore, Table 4 compares the results of the two series and as it indicates, since the variables were descriptive in nature, for comparing them a chi-square test was administered. And according to Table 5 the significance level of the test is  $p = 0.000$  and since it is under 0.05, the difference is significant and it could be concluded that there is a significant difference between the two sets of books in regard to the types of the collocations used. According to Table 6, Cramer’s V value is about 0.11 ( $V = 0.11$ ) which in turn is significant and implies that the Interchange series contain more collocations and the majority of them are verb-noun pairs while in high school books the majority of the types are adjective-noun pairs. Figure 3 provides a clear understanding of the matter.

Table 4. Comparison of the two sets of books concerning the types of collocations used in each

Collocation Types		Level		
		Interchange	high school	Total
noun-noun	<b>Count</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>173</b>
	Expected Count	139.5	33.5	173.0
	% within level	9.5%	8.6%	9.3%
verb-noun	<b>Count</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>907</b>
	Expected Count	731.2	175.8	907.0
	% within level	49.9%	43.5%	48.7%
adjective-noun	<b>Count</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>686</b>
	Expected Count	553.1	132.9	686.0
	% within level	34.8%	45.2%	36.8%
adverb-adjective	<b>Count</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>
	Expected Count	19.3	4.7	24.0
	% within level	1.4%	.8%	1.3%
verb-preposition-noun	<b>Count</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>
	Expected Count	14.5	3.5	18.0
	% within level	.8%	1.7%	1.0%
verb-adverb	<b>Count</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>55</b>
	Expected Count	44.3	10.7	55.0
	% within level	3.6%	.3%	3.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>1502</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>1863</b>
	Expected Count	1502.0	361.0	1863.0
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5. Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	24.981(a)	5	.000
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	30.103	5	.000
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	.013	1	.910
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	1863		

a 2 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.49.

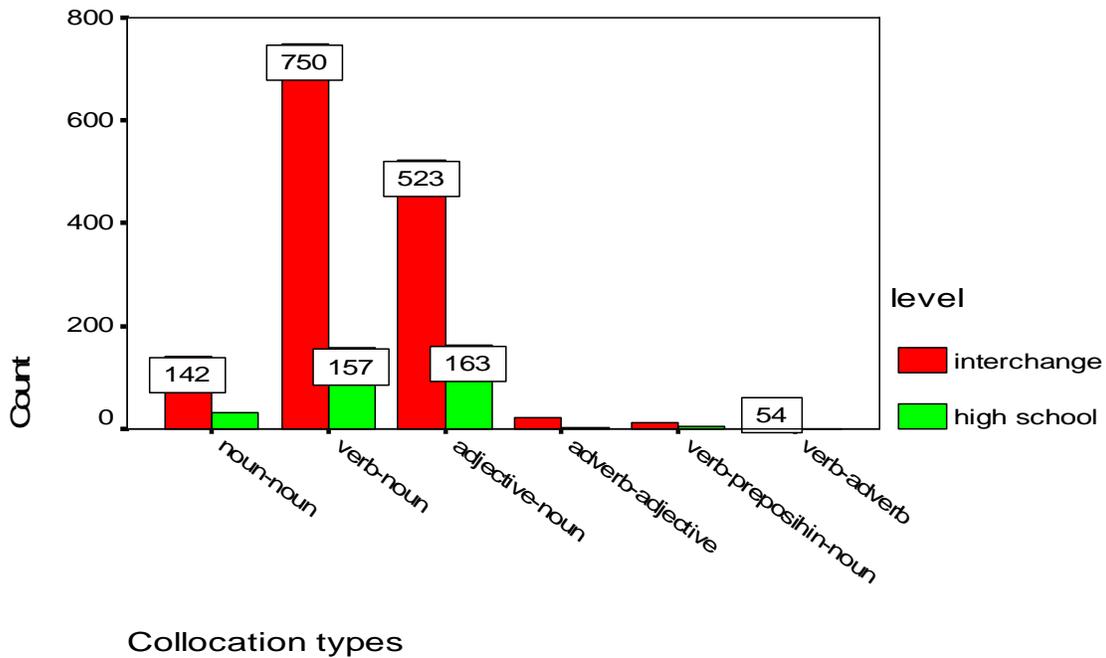
**Table 6. Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
<b>Nominal by Nominal</b>	Phi	.116	.000
	Cramer's V	.116	.000
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>		1863	

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

As Figure 3 show, in Interchange books 750 collocations are verb-noun pairs and have the highest frequency of all types in the two series. 163 adjective-noun pairs belong to high school text books which have the highest frequency just among the types and not between the series. As it is clear, there are more collocations, regardless of their types, in Interchange series than the high school series (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Comparison of the two sets of books**

As the results revealed, collocations were partially employed in each book but their frequency of usage in each book and each series varied. According to the results of this research, the verb-noun pairs were preferably used in Interchange books more than the other types and the adjective-noun pairs abounded in high school text books. Surprisingly, the adverb-adjective pairs were the least used in the all eight books. Also, the verb-preposition-noun pairs were overlooked and there were only few examples of this type. This might be a good explanation for the deficiency of language learners in understanding which prepositions can precede a verb or how one can modify an adjective, or which adverb can modify it while they usually (not always) have no problem pairing nouns with adjectives or verb with nouns.

As the data and their analysis showed, it seemed there was a great difference between the two series concerning the collocation pairs and types introduced in each; Interchange series abounded with collocations(1502 collocations) and there were parts in the books where the term was clarified accompanied by noticeable and tangible examples while in the high school books series there was no sign of directly introducing such terms , except in the pre-university book that laconically (in less than a line) attended to them ( totally there were 361 collocations in high

school books); however collocations were scattered throughout the sections and readings in small scale. Since the two series were comprehensively compared to each other, the chi-square test was used and the result revealed the significant difference; i.e.  $p=0.000$  which is an indicative of significant difference (Table 4, 5, 6 and Figure 3).

What might be concluded from this research is that collocations are indispensable part of English language learning and mastery of them is a painstaking at the same time rewarding process that equips learners with a mighty asset and that is to use the correct words and word combination and avoid making awkward mistakes and wrong language use from a non-native speaker and frustration or boredom felt by a native listener. Consequently, where the content of a text book lacks such an important element, that book would not be considered to educate a learner as it is expected to. On the other hand, when the text book writers are aware of this phenomenon and carefully nourish their books with collocations-directly or indirectly- a pleasant and satisfying outcome would be embraced and resulted. This might also pave way to better understanding why after four successive years of English language instruction, Iranian students still lack an accepted level of proficiency in English language and have no idea of what a “do your homework” structure might be called and if all other nouns can be paired with the verb “do”. Of course it does not mean that any English language learner who will study the Interchange series would be proficient and well-expressing in English; there are thousands of different factors that are not directed in this study but everything being fair and same, this collocation knowledge plays a premium role in this regard and for a better and more efficient education system concerning English language teaching and learning such knowledge is essential.

As stated earlier, correct production of language, whether written or spoken, is the aim of any language learning and in this respect not only it is essential to tap collocation knowledge for a better communication end in, but it is also vital to perform well in written exams like university’s entrance exam and other standardized tests like TOLIMO, MCHE, TOEFL, IELTS, etc. because this knowledge is also tested in these examinations. (McCarthy, 2005)

### DISCUSSION

Statistically speaking, of the 1502 collocations taken from the four Interchange books, verb-noun and adjective-nouns contained approximately 50% (750 pairs) and 35% (523 pairs) of the whole population, respectively. Similarly, in the four high school books and out of 361 collocations, adjective-noun and verb-noun pair contained approximately 46% (163 pairs) and 34% (123 pairs) of the whole population. These two findings in turn are in harmony with McCarthy, (2005); Halliday, (1966); Sinclair, (1966) and Firth, (1957).

As with any research or study, there would be some shortcomings as well as findings that pave the way to other criteria and new topics which could be triggered in the mind of the readers. This study was not a large-scale research but aimed to shed light on collocation knowledge and collocation types so that in designing any English text books, this knowledge would fortify and strengthen the ability to perform well when the language in question is spoken, tested or produced.

It is hoped that in near future the high school texts books, which for some students are the only English books they have studied or would study, are revised and refined so that the aim of the English text books would not be just introducing a grammar points and asking the students to parrot them but rather taking a more communicative approach and introducing the collocations, therefore raising an awareness about their use and pairs so that we all witness a prolific and fruitful system of education.

In the end, it is hoped that this study be of any help to other researches who are interested in collocations and curriculum developers who take and ordeal in designing text books and materials or anyone who wants to boost his or her knowledge of English taking a comprehensive approach where there is room for collocations in vocabulary learning.

### REFERENCES

- Benson, M. (1990). Collocations and general purposes dictionaries. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 2, 1-29.
- Benson, M., Benson, E. & Ilson, R. (1986). *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam
- Birjabdi, P. & Annani, M. (2008). *English for Grade One High School Students*. Iran Book Publication
- Birjabdi, P. & Annani, M. (2008). *English for Grade Two High School Students*. Iran Book Publication
- Birjabdi, P. & Annani, M. (2008). *English for Grade Three High School Students*. Iran Book Publication
- Birjabdi, P. & Annani, M. (2008). *English for Pre-university Students*. Iran Book Publication
- Carter, R. (1987). *Vocabulary. Applied Linguistic Perspectives*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1991). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, Heinle & Heinle Publishers

- Collins COBUILD Advanced Learners' of English Dictionary CD. (2003). HarperCollins
- Firth, J.R. (1968) A Synopsis of Linguistic Theory 1930-55. Selected Papers of J.R. Firth 1952-59 (ed. Palmer, F.R.) London: Longman.
- Firth, J.R. Modes of Meaning. Papers in Linguistics 1934-51, (1957) pp. 190-215. Oxford University Press.
- Howarth, P. (1998). Phraseology and second language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 19 (1), 24-44.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1961) Categories of the Theory of Grammar. *Word*, 17, 241-92
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1966) Lexis as a Linguistic Level. In Memory of J.R. Firth, pp.148-63 (ed. Bazell, C.E. et al) London: Longman.
- Hill, J. & Lewis, M. (1997) LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations, Language Teaching
- Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In
- Hill, J. 1999. Collocational Competence, ETP April 1999 Issue 11
- Lewis, M. & Hill, J. (1997). *A dictionary of selected collocations*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. (1996) "Implications of a lexical view of language" IN: Challenge and Change.
- Lewis, M. (2000). *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach*. Hove, UK: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lewis, M. 1994. *The Lexical Approach. The State of ELT And A Way Forward*, Language Teaching Publications.
- McCarthy, M. (2005). *English collocations in use*. Cambridge University Press
- McCarthy, M. & O'Dell, F. (2005). *English vocabulary in use*. Cambridge University Press
- Nesselhauf, A. (2003). *The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching*. Oxford University Press
- Nesselhauf, A. (2003). Collocations in a Learner Corpus. *Studies in Corpus Linguistics* 14. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange Intro student book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange Intro work book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange one student book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange one work book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange two student book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange two work book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange three student book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (2005). *Interchange three work book 3th edition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Runcie, M. (2005). *Oxford collocation dictionary*. Cambridge University Press
- Sinclair, J. (1966). *Beginning the Study of Lexis*, w C.E. Bazell, J.C. Catford, M.A.K. Halliday and R.H. Robins (Eds.): *In Memory of J.R. Firth*, Longman.
- Sinclair, J. M. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.