

# Idioms and Collocations in English

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper focused on both idioms and collocations as well as the differences and similarities between them. The main aim of this paper was to survey totally different linguistic attitudes towards these phenomena and their categorizations, showing the definition, importance, characteristics, types of collocations and idioms as well as the similarities and differences between them. The term idiom simply was that an expression that functions as one unit and whose meaning cannot be found out from its separate components. On the other hand, collocation was referred to as a set of words that regularly seem within the same context. This paper is composed of three sections. Section one sheds light on the concept of idioms in general and outlines its own syntactic & semantic overview of its different types, characteristics and the importance behind learning. Section two tackles the concept of collocation as far as its types, degrees and characteristics are concerned, and the benefit of learning and teaching collocations. Section three overviews the differences and similarities between Idioms and Collocations, and draws a comparison between them. Finally, the paper is rounded off with some concluding remarks. This study found that idioms differ from literal meaning, and the connotative meaning. They reflected the culture of the society. While collocation was to enhance the meaning as well as the talking to help us memorize and enrich our mental dictionaries.*

**Keywords:** idiom, collocation, noun, verb, adverb, adjective, similarities, differences

## INTRODUCTION

This research addresses idioms, collocations and the similarities and differences between them. An idiom is often a phrase in which the words jointly give a meaning that differs from the lexicon definitions of words. Collocation is a style where certain words are frequently utilized jointly, and seem normal together. There are many types of collocations and pose problems and difficulties to both learners and users native or non-native. The research aims at showing the definition, importance, characteristics, and types of collocations and idioms as well as the similarities and differences between them. This paper tries to investigate the general overview of idioms and collocation with their types, importance behind their teaching, characteristics and the similarities and differences between them.

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**Section Two:** tackles the concept of collocation as far as its types, degrees and characteristics are concerned, and the benefit of learning and teaching collocations.

**Section Three:** overviews the differences and similarities between idioms and collocations, and draws a comparison between them. Finally, the paper is rounded off with some concluding remarks.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Idioms and Collocation

#### Idioms

According to Leven (2019:20), idioms are defined as a word or, more commonly a phrase in which the figurative meaning differs from the literal meaning of the word from which it is composed of. There are approximately 25,000 idioms. English learners often have difficulty with Idioms in realizing the actual meaning without referring to an English dictionary of idioms.

For example:

My son was sick yesterday, and now I'm feeling a bit under the weather. Which means when a sailor became ill, he would go beneath the bow, the front part of the boat. This would hopefully protect him from adverse conditions, as he was literally in the middle of a storm that could make him sicker. As a result, a sick sailor could be described as "under the weather". It's also an expression in a language's usage that is unique to itself, either in terms of having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meaning of its elements or in its grammatically having a typical use of words.

Such as:

Kill two birds with one stone. Means get two things done with a single action.

#### Importance of idioms

According to Eva (2019:2), idioms are always unique in relation to any language. They establish certain distinguishing characteristics that distinguish one language from another. Furthermore, idioms reflect some cultural habits and reveal the national character. They are not a separate part of the person's selected language to be used or ignored. Rather, they are an important part of the English general vocabulary. And the language vocabulary is growing and changing over time, with old idioms and new ones that must be put into context, which can be done. This expanding and changing vocabulary in the language is described.

#### Syntactic Overview of Idioms

Idioms reflect a language's national spirit and are always rich in cultural connotation and national flavor. Idiom word formation is patterned

after a definite universal, which is dictated by the word building norms of the given language. An English head -verb constituent is frequently placed first in an idiomatic phrase. (Hovhannisyan & Ghazaryan, 2018 :24).

Moreover, Idiom or idiomatic phrase from its syntactic overview is a phrase whose meaning cannot be deduced from its component parts. The idiomatic meaning of the entire sentence does not follow from the meaning of words making up its sentence. (Everaert, 2010: 13)

For example: John kicked the bucket.

#### Semantic Overview of Idioms

Nikitkova (2013: 111) provides us with different semantic types of idioms, their unusual semantic features are shown below:

1\_ Pure Idioms, 2\_Figurative Idioms, 3\_Semi\_Idioms, and 4\_Idioms with Non-words.

#### Types of Idioms

Several types are mentioned by Antana and Sidney (2010:2) and they can be listed as follows:

1\_ Pure Idioms, 2\_Binomial Idioms, 3\_Partial Idioms, 4\_Prepositional Idioms, 5\_Proverbs, 6\_Euphemisms, and 7\_Clichés.

#### Characteristics of Idioms

1\_An idiom is sometimes considered a phrase whose meaning is not the same of its constituents' meaning.

2\_Another feature is its syntactic fixity; in the case of kick the bucket, for example, the noun cannot be pluralized or changed by adjectival phrases, the word-order cannot be changed, and the verb can take a variety of inflected forms but cannot be changed.

3\_The meaning of an idiom is metaphorical rather than literal. It is not a result of the compositional function of its parts

#### Collocation

O' Dell and Mc Carthy (2017: 20) define Collocation as a natural word association; it refers to

the way English words are closely associated with one another.

For example:

Dead serious

Which means one is absolutely serious and is not joking.

Collocation is considered an arrangement or juxtaposition of words or other elements, particularly those that frequently occur together, (Bond, 2016:1).

Such as:

Bosom buddy

Which means a very close or intimate friend.

### Importance of Collocations :

Understanding collocations is essential for mastering a language especially for EFL learners. In addition to other issues associated with the foreign language learning process, EFL/ESL students face interference as a result of their mother tongue. As a result, teachers must understand how to introduce the topic of collocations.

### Degrees of collocations

Strong Collocations, Fixed Collocations, and Weak Collocations.

### Types of Collocations

1\_Adverbs and Adjectives, 2\_Adjectives & Nouns, 3\_Nouns & Nouns, 4\_ Nouns & Verbs, 5\_Verbs Collocations, 6\_Verbs & Prepositions, 7\_Verbs & Adverbs, 8\_Nouns & Prepositions, 9\_Adjectives & Prepositions.

### Characteristics of Collocations

1\_\_Collocations are unpredictable: the institutionalization of a collocation as a ready-made unit is not based on clear linguistic reasons, that collocation cannot be predicted. First, the affinity of a word for a specific collocate, which is strongly preferred over different words from the same synonymy set, cannot be predicted. Second, the morpho-syntactic properties of collocation cannot be based on the properties of participating Words.

2\_\_Collocations are recurrent: because collocations are frequently used, their repetition

allows for their recognition and learning-supported expertise.

3\_\_Collocations are made up of two or more words: while the practical work focuses almost entirely on collocations made up of exactly two lexical items, There is no length limitation for collocations in theory. In fact, the majority of definitions state that collocations can include more than two items.

Such as ; major turning point.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Comparison between Idioms and Collocations

#### Differences between Idioms and Collocations :

The term idiom simply refers to an expression that functions as a whole and whose meaning cannot be deduced from its constituent parts.

Such as ;

pass the buck

Which means putting the responsibility of a problem on other people.

Collocation is how to combine words or terms in any language to generate the usual speech and writing.

Such as:

I felt deliriously happy.

Which means extremely happy

According to Wouden (2009: 38), collocations have been demonstrated to be the most difficult; (i.e.), the treatment of collocations has been a critical drawback for the lexicographer. It has been much more difficult to identify them than idioms or perhaps compounds, and as a result, their inclusion in dictionaries have been erratic. He contends that a clear distinction exists between idioms and collocations in that the semantic aspects of idioms are perpetually expressed, whereas the semantic aspects of collocations are only subject to idiomaticity in terms of generation.

### Similarities between Idioms and Collocations

With the aid of a dictionary and grammar, Collocations commonly used in everyday situations are frequently idiomatic in the same sense. There may be several ways to invent in order to convey a specific idea, but only one or two in general that may be used among English speakers, and they should be well acquainted with them in order to speak or write in a natural manner. In other words, there's overlap and mixing between Idioms and Collocations in meaning, the first one (Idioms) can appear as part of the other (collocations).

Such as:

Sorry I kept you waiting.

Which means more natural and correct than sorry I made you wait.

Idioms and Collocations are similar in that they are both related to grammatical generalizations and cross syntactic categories.

Idioms:

Such as:

kick the bucket

Collocation:

For example:

play tricks

### CONCLUSION

Learning and teaching idioms form a great difficulty to English learners and teachers, chiefly because they have no information about the culture and history of English idioms. This is the reason behind the learners' use of idioms in the wrong or improper way with the position. In fact, learners of English language use idiomatic phrases or expressions in a very cautious way for they fear utilizing them incorrectly and thus the people misunderstand them. In the same sense, studying idioms poses a particular problem in language among all learners of language due to the unpredictability of figurative meaning.

Collocations perhaps look natural to natural native English speakers and writers. Yet they are not clear to non-native English speakers. There are certain collocations that are fixed or very strong.

It has been noticed that the results of the current paper involved two of the problematic, grammatical and semantic areas for English learners, e.i, idioms and collocations. However, the very fact can be summarized as follows:

1\_Regarding idioms, the subsequent points are noticed:

a\_The idiom is an expression that functions as one unit and whose meaning cannot be discovered from its separate components.

For example; kick the bucket.

b\_As for classification, seven types of idioms can be distinguished: pure, binomial, partial, Prepositional, Proverbs, Euphemisms and clichés idioms.

As for features of idioms, they can be summarized as follows:

i. The entire meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of the – individual components.

Like;

To have a crush on someone (to be loving with someone”).

ii. The substitution of single components does not induce modification of meaning (which is not true of non-idiomatic syntagms),

Such as ;

\*to have a smash on someone.

c. A literal reading leads to a homophonic non-idiomatic variant, so that conditions (a) and (b) no longer apply (metaphor).

2\_As far as collocations are concerned, it can be all over the following:

a\_Collocation refers to a bunch of two or a lot of words that typically go along.

b\_Collocation restrictions show how words can be used together, like prepositions are used with explicit verbs, or which verbs and nouns are used together.

c\_Collocational variety of expression is the set of contexts in which it can occur (its collocations).

d\_They may be classified into nine types that are: adverbs and adjectives, adjectives & nouns, nouns & nouns, nouns & verbs, verbs collocations, verbs & prepositions, verbs & adverbs, nouns & prepositions, and adjectives & prepositions Collocations.

e\_They manifest several characteristic options that form its realization in the wide spectrum of language that are prefabricated, arbitrary, recurrent, unpredictable and two or more than two collocations.

3\_With regard to variations and similarities, like idioms, collocations are sets of lexical items which repeatedly or generally co-occur, however, in contrast to idioms, their meanings will usually be deduced from the meanings of their parts. To sum up, the distinction between idiom and collocation is often difficult to draw.

In conclusion, we can say that the total collection of idioms and their great occurrence in conversation turn them to be generally a vital and significant feature of acquiring vocabulary & learning language. One of the definitions and approaches of this linguistic phenomenon confirms that an idiom is a natural speaking manner to native speakers and non-natural to non-native speakers. This means that just the ones who are very good in speaking English can utilize idiomatic expressions in their talk. English is a language that has an infinite idiomatic basis, which makes learning very stimulating and fascinating, hence, knowing and understanding the utility of idioms is an indispensable part of English learning.

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