The Effects of the Use of Module-based Concordance Materials and Data-driven Learning (DDL) Approach in Enhancing the Knowledge of Collocations of Prepositions among Malaysian Undergraduate Law Students

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Abstract: Computer technology has revolutionised English Language Teaching and Learning (ELLT) with the advent of Corpus Linguistics. The application of Corpus Linguistics in classrooms, in the so-called Corpus (Data)-Driven Learning (DDL) approach, makes use of ‘real-life’ concordance data, and the concordance tools train learners to perform hands-on concordancing. It also trains learners to derive at linguistic rules and meanings based on observations of repetitive words or collocation patterns as the KWIC (Key-Word-in-Contexts) in the concordance lines. While many have criticised the application of independent (‘hard’) DDL, as it lacks teacher supervision and increases learners’ cognitive load, this paper aims at investigating the effectiveness of the use of both paper-based (scaffolded) concordance materials (‘soft’) DDL and (‘hard’) DDL (independent online searching) in enhancing the knowledge of collocations of prepositions among law undergraduates at UniSZA (University of Sultan Zainal Abidin), Malaysia. 40 law undergraduates were involved in this 10-week experimental study, where 20 students were placed in the experimental group and treated with module-based DDL, and the other 20 were put in the comparison group and treated with the conventional approach. The findings showed that the students in the DDL group performed significantly better than the students in the comparison group in the sentence-completion and in determining the semantic function tasks. This study recommends explicit teaching of collocations of prepositions via ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ DDL instructions as opposed to independent or ‘hard’ DDL.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics, Data-driven Learning, Concordancers, Collocation of Prepositions, Paper-based DDL

Introduction

In this digital era, the role of computer technology as a resource for instruction of foreign language learners is increasing as educators recognise its ability to produce both independent and collaborative learning environments (Kern, 2006). Computer technology used in Corpus Linguistics has revolutionised the fields of linguistic research (descriptive linguistics) and applied linguistics (language teaching and learning) in these recent decades. Corpus Linguistics, a systematic analysis of the actual (real) production of language (either spoken or written) as opposed to intuition¹, analyses language using a tool

¹ Intuition refers to a native-speaker’s perceived accuracy and acceptability of language use.
called a concordance, where a large number of actual instances of the searched data, called patterns consisting of the Key-Word-in-Contexts (KWICs) or the nodes and their co-texts are shown on the screen once typed. Though Corpus Linguistics has contributed tremendously in extending or deepening knowledge of existing language items, i.e. distinguishing close synonyms, detecting patterns of usage, collocation and colligation (phraseology), etc. the largest contribution of Corpus Linguistics is in ELLT, particularly in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Corpus Linguistics enables ESP learners to experiment the data derived from specialised corpora directly by themselves and are given the opportunities to explore and work out with the concordance data (hands-on learning) to perform various language activities including, for instance, checking the correct usage of words and grammar of their written tasks in the corpus-driven approach to language learning known as ‘classroom concordancing’ or DDL (Data-Driven Learning)², an approach proposed originally by Tim Johns (1991a) using the techniques, namely, Identify-Classify-Generalise, an inductive approach where, in his words “…language-learner is also, essentially, a research worker” (p. 2).

Statement of the Problem and Literature Review

Prepositions (e.g. on, in, at, etc.) are always considered as the hardest grammatical element to be acquired even with advanced ESL adult learners (Taylor, 1993; Celce-Murcia and Freeman, 1999; Lindstromberg, 1998). They are notoriously difficult for the semantics and functions (uses) of English prepositions, which are largely arbitrary and difficult to characterise (Frank, 1972; Bloomfield, 1933; Chomsky, 1995). In addition, the negative interference of learners’ L1, known also as interlingual interference, hinders full acquisition of English prepositions among ESL learners. Besides, prepositions are also problematic because they are found to combine strongly with other word classes (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) to form collocations³ of prepositions (Jabbour-Lagocki, 1990). They are the grammatical collocations (colligations), as opposed to lexical collocations that ESL students have unfamiliarity with since the combinations or patterns convey different meanings, which, most of the time, differ totally from the original forms, i.e. in the case of idiomatic expressions such as phrasal verbs (particles). The meanings of the phrases run into and look into consecutively mean meet someone accidentally and investigate. This very fact imposes a serious problem on ESL learners, even with the advanced ones, due to their lack of collocational knowledge (Brown, 1974; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Howarth, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2003; 2005) and the type of instructions they have received before (the conventional or structural approach which have focused only on the accuracy of prepositional forms and suggested memorisation as the best strategy, i.e. through drills and rote learning techniques).

Law students in tertiary education need to master collocation (not only to know, but also to use them in their writings) since legal texts are pervasive with complex prepositional patterns, a combination of prepositions with nouns (Beasley, 1993; Gibbons, 1994; Tiersma, 1999; Cotterill, 2003; Bhatia, 1983; 1993; 1998), as evident in legal corpora (Gozdz-Roskowski, 2003; 2004; Vedralova, 2008). Bhatia (1993, 1998); Swales & Bhatia (1982) mentioned the pervasiveness of complex prepositional phrases in all legal genres (e.g. contract

² Corpus-driven and DDL will be used interchangeably in this thesis to mean the same.
³ Collocation is defined as the company a word keeps (Firth, 1951). In this thesis, the collocations of prepositions are the words which frequently come together with the prepositions, i.e. aware (adj) + of (preposition).
law, constitutional law, criminal law, etc.), for example, in pursuance of, by virtue of, the provisions of, etc. They are so prevalent in legal texts (i.e. acts, statutes, reports, academic textbooks, etc.) that more often there are more than five complex prepositional phrases within a sentence. According to Bhatia (1993), the frequent presence of complex prepositional phrases, instead of the simple ones in legal texts is to avoid ambiguity and lack of clarity of the text.

While complex prepositional phrases are found to be prevalent in legal texts, prepositions may also combine with semi-technical and technical law vocabulary to form collocations of prepositions. While the term case can mean both a particular situation or a problem and a container in general English, a case in legal discourse means a question or problem that will be dealt with by a law court. When this type of vocabulary combines with prepositions, they may form a combination whose meaning is totally different from the meaning of the combination in general English. For instance, the combination of a common word (i.e. provide) and a preposition (i.e. for), forming a collocation of preposition provide for, gives the meaning to prescribe a law in this legal statement: The concluding words of Section 18(1) of the Bankruptcy Act 1914 provide for the consequence of an adjudication in these terms “and thereupon the property of the bankrupt shall become divisible among his creditors and shall vest in a trustee.” (British National Corpus (BNC) for law, available at: http://www.concextutor.ca). This meaning is different from its original meaning in general English, which is to give something (e.g. food) to the needy.

The conventional approaches and methods, i.e. the Direct Method (DM) and Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which adopt the Structural syllabus and a few modern approaches to teaching prepositions, such as the Cognitive Approach and the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a functional grammar that is popularised by Halliday (1994) have been claimed so far as not very effective in teaching collocations of prepositions (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Both DM and ALM have still favoured drilling activities for practicing prepositional items in dense contexts, retaining the behaviourist approach to language learning. The challenge with these methods is that prepositions are taught in isolation (focusing only on forms), but not on their collocations and meanings through exposures to multiple contexts (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Moreover, the traditional grammar textbooks do not give special attention on collocations of prepositions that learners can easily refer to (Schmied, 2001). Paying attention only to the aspect of forms often results in semantic and usage errors for failure to observe language facts in contexts (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Meanwhile, the modern approach, such as the Cognitive Approach, cannot distinguish the semantics of the prepositions, which are overlapped or bound with collocations, especially those which are abstract, idiomatic and metaphorical (e.g. once in a blue moon) due to the complexity in conceptualising the images of the preposition.

Thus, the DDL approach has been suggested by the researchers as the best approach since it has the potential to describe collocations of prepositions, their semantics and functions through repeated exposures to the patterns in much richer and authentic contexts (Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006; Someya, 2000; Gaskel & Cobb, 2004; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Danielsson & Mahlberg, 2003; Durrant, 2009; Cobb, 1997) especially in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses (Gavioli, 2005; Lewis, 2000). DDL involves exposing learners to large quantities of authentic data—‘special purpose corpora.’ In this way, learning prepositional rules involve exploring and detecting the patterns among a large collection of data displayed on screen or as paper-based outputs in constructive and communic-
ative learning strategies. DDL is claimed as being capable of categorising the collocations of prepositions (bound prepositions) and their semantics and functions neatly (Danielsson & Mahlberg, 2003). This is in contrast to the traditional method of learning prepositions, where the rules are overtly prescribed by teachers and learners, and students are required to memorise and reproduce them as fluently as possible.

However, the DDL itself is not without its limitations (Boulton, 2007a; 2007b; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d; 2009a; 2009c; 2010). Direct use of DDL may harm students in so many aspects. Tim Johns (2002) admits that “The direct use of concordance data poses a number of challenges: technical, linguistic, logistic, pedagogical and philosophical” (p.1). According to Boulton (2009b; 2010); Gaskell & Cobb (2004), DDL challenges both teachers and learners since technology-driven approach (hands-on concordancing) is now taking over a pedagogically-driven approach. Some teachers and learners may feel that the technical aspects are too daunting for them (Boulton, 2010) and may drive these ‘technophobic’ teachers and students away from gaining benefits from the DDL approach (Bernardini, 2002; Boulton, 2008b; 2008c;2009b). Besides, according to Farr (2008), learners interacting with the corpora directly on the computer sometimes feel demotivated and frustrated with the difficult tasks that they have to go through, for example, choosing relevant corpora, interpreting the results, and refining their queries in subsequent searches. Moreover, training teachers and learners to employ the tasks is laborious and time-consuming, and since online concordancing requires the use of the Internet, the possibility for the Internet to crash is very high.

Besides, there is a laudable issue raised by many DDL proponents like John (1991a; 1991b; 1993; 2002); Boulton (2007b; 2007c; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2010); Flowerdew (2009); and Whistle (1999) who believes the true spirit of DDL is scaffolding (teacher intervention), not independent concordancing. ‘Instructional scaffolding’ (Le, 2010:19) or ‘search skills’ (Woolard, 2000: 33), defined as a temporary support given to a learner to perform a task (a problem-solving activity in DDL), is some form of training or guidance given to learners to provide them with the skills to work with concordancers and language corpora (Le, 2010) before they reach the potential to perform independent, hands-on learning. As claimed by Johns (1991a; 1991b; Johns, 1993; Boulton, 2010), paper-based concordancing is the true origin of the scaffolded DDL since it offers help to learners to investigate the data in a more deductive, manageable and simplified manner (Johns, 1991a; 1991b; 1993), assimilating more teacher led paper-based grammar rules used in the traditional approach (Smith, 2009; Tian, 2008, Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006). Learners should work initially with plenty of practice with paper-based exercises in order to get used to inductive reasoning before they are asked to cope with the additional burden of manipulating a piece of software (Lamy & Klarskov Mortensen, 2007). Thus, there should be a gradual process moving from ‘soft’ to ‘hard’ DDL (Gabrielatos, 2005) or, as claimed by Cresswell (2007), moving from ‘deductive DDL’ (i.e. starting with teacher-led exercises) to fully ‘inductive DDL’ (i.e. starting with the data on their own).

To sum up, the introduction of paper-based materials with prepared concordances and exercises may benefit ESL learners in so many ways: they may ease learners’ learning burden by reducing the amount of data to be mined and, thus, limiting the range of possible answers (Thompson, 2006); they may be used as reference at a later date; and finally, they may reduce technical, logistical, and financial obstacles (Boulton, 2010) and reduce the fears in the learners who are used to the traditional teaching method for decades (Boulton, 2009b). Due to lack of research on the use of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ DDL to teach law students (with a few ex-
ceptions by Hafner and Candlin, 2007 and Gozdz-Roskowski, 2004), this study purports to investigate the effects of the use of paper-based concordance materials and online DDL approach on the knowledge of the forms and semantic functions (meanings) of collocations of prepositions among law undergraduates in Malaysia. This experimental study design attempts to answer two research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences in the gain scores of the posttest between DDL and CA groups in the sentence-completion, and error-identification and correction tasks?
2. Is there any significant difference in the gain score of the posttest between DDL and CA groups in the semantic function task?

Research Procedures

The Subjects

This study was conducted at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Malaysia, previously known as University Darullman Malaysia (UDM), one of the main public universities in the East Coast of Malaysia. The participants were 40 semester three undergraduate law students at the Faculty of Law and International Relations (FLAIR), UniSZA, Malaysia. They aged between 19 to 21 years old. They had already completed the Law of Contract I and the Law of Contract II courses offered in semesters one and two, consecutively. Since this study implemented an experimental study design, the students were divided into two groups: 20 students (6 males and 14 females) were placed in the treatment (experimental) group and were treated with the DDL approach, making use of paper-based concordance module and online DDL, while the other 20 students (6 males and 14 females) were placed in the comparison group and were treated with the Conventional (CA) approach, making use of the structural syllabus-based module.

Data Collection

The main instrument used for collecting the data was the test, consisting of 10 items of the sentence-completion task, 10 items of the error-identification and correction task, and 5 items of the determining the semantic function task. The pretest and posttest (of a similar one) was given to the students before and after the experimental course (see Appendix A for the sample test). The test items were chosen based on the most frequent errors that they had made in the essay test (Problem Question (PQ) essays of the Law of Contract genre) conducted prior to the course. The rationale for using the most frequent errors as the test items was due to the assumption that these items constitute the collocations of prepositions that the students have had the most difficulty with.

The Experimental Course

The experimental course spanned 10 weeks, which started in January, 2010 and ended in March, 2010. The actual teaching period was 6 weeks, with 2 hours each week dedicated to each group. The students in the experimental group were given the computer training course
for two hours in the first week, where they were introduced to the concordance data online. The pretest was conducted before the course began, and the rationale for doing this was to equate them, as to avoid biases in the end of the experimental course since they might differ in their collocational competence at the beginning of the course (they would have pre-existing knowledge about collocations of prepositions). The course was held in the lab and alternately in the classroom for the experimental group, while the comparison group was placed in the conventional classroom the whole time. Since the result showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pretest (Sentence-Completion, p = 0.123; Error-identification and Completion, (p = 0.784; Semantic-Function, p = 0.384), it was concluded, therefore, that the two groups were at par with each other at the beginning of the course.

**The Modules**

The main materials used in teaching the two groups were the modules which were compiled prior to the course. The modules consisted of 6 units, comprising three to four collocations of prepositions in each. The collocational items chosen in the modules were selected from the most frequent erroneous patterns that the students had produced in the PQ (problem question) essays. The modules prepared for these groups of students differed only in terms of the module layouts and approaches to teach the items. The DDL (experimental group) were prepared with the concordance-based materials, consisting of multiple concordance lines of chopped sentences (incomplete sentences) and the searched words located in the centre, which is called KWICs (Key-Word-in-Contexts), and was taught using the inductive approach. In this approach, students were asked to derive at linguistic rules (to make generalisations of the rules through condensed exposure to the concordance data based on learners’ intuitions, an emphasis on learner-centred task and the teacher-researcher’s role to function as the facilitator). Meanwhile, the students in the comparison group (CA group) were prepared with the module, containing similar erroneous patterns with those in the DDL module with the only exception being that the sample sentences supplied were fewer, and they were complete sentences compared to those in the DDL module. Besides that, the students in the CA group were taught using the Conventional approach; that is, the teacher-researcher dominated the classroom, and the students were supposed to listen to the teacher-researcher’s explanations, assimilating the PPP techniques (Presentation-Practice-Production).

**Corpora**

The main materials used in the modules were the concordance data derived from the two corpora used in the study. The first one was the 260,000-word Law of Contract Corpus (LCC), which was compiled by the researcher herself, based on the law of contract academic textbooks and books of cases used by the students in the Law of Contract courses. The second corpus used was the British National Corpus (BNC) for Law available online at http://www.lex-tutor.ca/. Though consisting of other genres, and not only the law of contract genre, this corpus is very useful for increasing students’ motivation and attracting students to perform their concordance search online, besides using the module-based concordance lines.
Data Analysis

The data gathered from the pretest and posttest was analysed using the Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric test operating similar to an independent sample t-test (a parametric test) to measure the difference in the mean scores between the two independent groups. I made use of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 14.0 for this purpose.

Findings

The study findings showed that there was a significant difference between the DDL and CA groups in the sentence completion task (U = 120.5, Z = -2.209, p = 0.027, significant at p < 0.05). This clearly indicated that the DDL group performed significantly better than the CA group in this task. See the table below.

Table 4.1: Between Group Score (Sentence-Completion Task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U value</th>
<th>Z value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Completion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>DDL</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td>120.5</td>
<td>-2.209</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant at p < 0.05

A significant difference was also found between the two groups in the error-identification and correction task (U = 124.5, Z = -2.209, p = 0.027, significant at p < 0.05). Based on the result, it was evident that the DDL group performed significantly better than the CA group in this task. See Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Between Group Score (Error-Identification & Correction Task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U value</th>
<th>Z value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Error Task</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>DDL</td>
<td>24.28</td>
<td>124.5</td>
<td>-2.070</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant at p < 0.05

The data also revealed that there was a significant difference in result observed between the two groups in the semantic function task. It was evident, therefore, that the DDL group performed significantly better than the CA groups in this task. See the tables below.

Table 4.3: Between Group Score (Semantic–Function Task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>U value</th>
<th>Z value</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Function</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>DDL</td>
<td>24.75</td>
<td>115.0</td>
<td>-2.413</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>16.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant at p < 0.05
Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

What can be concluded from the findings is that the DDL approach is more effective than the CA approach in increasing the knowledge of collocations of prepositions in the law students who are even at the intermediate English proficiency level. These study findings confirm several findings by Cobb (1997); Koosha and Jafarpour (2006); Tian (2009); Boulton (2007c; 2008c; 2009c; 2010); Yanhui (2008), and Nikoletta (2010), who reported similar success with DDL compared to the traditional approach with lower English proficiency learners. Koosha and Jafarpour (2006), for example, found that the DDL approach was more effective than the Grammar Translation Method in increasing the knowledge of collocations of prepositions among lower, intermediate, and advanced EFL Iranian university students.

This success is possibly due to several reasons. The first, and foremost, reason is due to the power of contexts. DDL allows greater opportunities for the subjects to observe the patterns of collocations, which are presented in numerous and huge contexts through concordances. The fact that contexts or word environments play a significant role in informing the rules and lexical meanings confirms the Neo-Firthians’ claims that texts are something to be trusted (cf. Sinclair, 1991; 2004), for texts inform readers about the environments of a specific word, of word patterns (Hunston, 2008), and of word ‘priming’ (Hoey, 2002), i.e., how a small word like a preposition even chooses some words, but not others, to form meaningful patterns. Word ‘priming’ has a psychological impact on learners as they, now, could observe that a word, in fact, chains or relates to some but more restricted partners (ibid). By exposing learners to condensed contexts in corpora, they were given the opportunity to study the rules and meanings of the assigned preposition patterns. In this study, the students were presented with genuine legal contexts via the academic texts used in their disciplines, introducing them to the massive contexts of prepositions and their patterns, which were ‘repeated’ and ‘renewal’ in their ‘environments’ (concordance lines) (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). As legal texts consist of many collocations of prepositions (Bhatia, 1993), meeting them in multiple contexts in massive concordance lines had many advantages for the learners.

The efficiency of DDL over the CA approach in enhancing learners’ collocational knowledge can also be described in the second related effect of the power of contexts—an increased focus or enhanced retention of collocation patterns in learners’ memory (Cobb, 1997). Learning words through chunking (collocations) is indeed a short-cut approach to language learning (Lewis, 1997; 2000). Learners would not learn the forms of lexical items as discrete ones and devoid of meaning, but they, now, can perceive the connective links between grammar and vocabulary or the marriage between the forms and functions (meanings) of words (lexical items). The traditional separation between lexis and grammar cannot be upheld, for language cannot simply be described in terms of a slot-and-filler model, where text is created by the interplay of grammatical rules and lexical choices, enabling a series of slots to be filled from a lexicon (cf. Sinclair 1991: 109). Linguistic choices are often characterised by ‘co-selection’, i.e. certain combinations of words selected as groups, patterns, or units of meanings larger than a single word form (Danielsson & Mahlberg, 2006).

Besides, the effectiveness of the DDL over the CA in enhancing the students’ knowledge of collocation meanings can also be discussed in terms of exposure to the authentic data in the concordance lines. Exposure to the massive repetitive patterns, which recur in the middle of the concordance lines (Key-Word-in-Contexts), provides a great opportunity for the learners to deduce the meanings of collocation patterns as opposed to the supplied model sentences
given by teachers in the traditional approach (Danielsson & Mahlberg, 2006). The students did this by studying the concordance lines, observing the patterns surrounding the prepositions, and leading to drawing conclusions to the meanings of the patterns. Also, with the help of concordances, the learners were better capable of deducing the meanings since the concordances under observations were indeed of legal genre.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the DDL approach can be explained in terms of mixed approaches used (Gabrielatos, 2005): (1) the deductive approach (i.e. categorizing the concordance lines according to rules and meanings as appeared in the module), and (2) the inductive approach (i.e. asking learners to come with their own categorizations or to answer questions based on the concordances-searching the concordance lines online). Both types of DDL (‘soft’ and ‘hard’), or teacher scaffolding, reduced the cognitive burden of the learners in deducing the rules and meanings of the patterns from the raw data. These students were able to see the meaningful associations between words through the selection of ‘procedural or enabling vocabulary’ or collocations to form a series of meaningful chains between words forming nominalised and ‘compacted’ expressions, i.e. *come into existence, come to the knowledge of, subject to the approval of*, etc. which were claimed as the most difficult aspect of legal discourse (Jones & McCracken, 2006).

There are several implications of this study. First, it shows teachers and ELT practitioners that collocations of prepositions should be explicitly taught, as these patterns constitute “a system of preferred expressions of knowledge” (Stuart & Trelis, 2006, p. 239) in the academic and professional legal field. Collocations of prepositions are indeed the most essential aspects of language in legal discourse and are worthy to be seriously taught. Second, ESP practitioners teaching students with specialised courses, i.e. law courses, can now observe that the students should not be left alone to acquire the patterns without any guidance, especially those who are used to the traditional teaching approach. Law students definitely need the ESP experts to increase their awareness of collocations of prepositions, the most essential features in legal texts (Bhatia, 1993; Gozdz-Roskowski, 2004; Jones & McCracken, 2006).

Third, ESP practitioners may now learn that the DDL approach should be included in all teaching courses, especially in teaching specialised courses, i.e. English for Law courses, for several reasons. First, the learning and teaching of collocations of prepositions could be made easier through ‘condensed exposure’ to the lexico-grammatical patterns prevalent in legal texts. Students will have the opportunity to be exposed to huge samples of collocation patterns from the authentic texts, compiled according to the specific legal genres and the linguistic demands of the students.

**Further Research**

In summary, DDL deserves a place in the language classroom in the teaching of collocations (especially with the aid of scaffolded DDL-paper printouts). DDL is full of promise in many areas, but empirical support is distinctly lacking. There is very little research to date with less advanced learners and using paper-based concordance materials. Thus, more studies in the future need to look at this area for more answers.
References


APPENDIX A

PRETEST-POSTTEST

Matric Number: ___________________________ Semester: ________________

Instructions: Answer all the questions below.

Section 1: Sentence-Completion Exercise

Instructions: Fill in the blanks with correct prepositions. Write an (X) in the blanks if prepositions are not necessary.

1. The letter did not constitute a contract binding ____________ law but was only a record of terms.

2. There was an unresolved discussion ____________ the case as to whether the lessee continued liable for the entire rent or merely for an apportioned part of it.

3. In the absence of fraud and misrepresentation, a person is bound ____________ a writing to which he has put his signature.

4. Notice of the withdrawal must be given and must reach ____________ the offeree before the stated date.

5. It was unnecessary for the House of Lords to discuss ____________ the meaning and effect of fundamental breach.

6. The court will then look ____________ the entire course of the negotiations to decide whether an apparently unqualified acceptance did in fact conclude the agreement.

7. His words were quoted with considerable approval ____________ Lord Pearce in Beswick v. Beswick.

8. It has, however, recently been held in Farley v. Skinner that it suffices that the provision ____________ peace of mind, or the prevention of distress is ‘an important object’ of the contract.

9. The promisee may provide consideration ____________ giving up a job or the tenancy of a flat, even though no direct benefit results to the promisor from these acts.
10. It was a condition of the agreement that the sale should be subject to the approval of the Foreign Investment Committee.

(30 marks)

Section 2: Error Identification and Correction

Instructions: Identify whether the word in bold in each of the phrases underlined below is correct or wrong. If it is correct, write (C), and if it is incorrect, write (I) to replace IN the space provided next to the sentence. Then, make corrections to the errors you have identified earlier in the space below. Write an (X) in the space if the answer is correct. See examples 1 and 2.

Example 1. The plaintiff needs to rely on private investigators for information. C

Correction: X

Example 2. The plaintiff needs to depend at private investigators for information. I

Correction: on

(1). The language in the Contracts Act 1950 appears to confine ‘proposal’ to an offer to be legally bound to a promise.

Correction: 

(2). If they were not offers, then no contract could come to existence between the parties at the moment when the appellants’ printing orders were issued.

Correction: 

(3). In the case of Schawel v Reade, the defendant interrupted the plaintiff from examining the horse by saying, ‘You need not look for anything, the horse is perfectly sound’.

Correction: 

(4). Section 8(2) of the Sale of Goods Act provides that silence as to the price, and will not apply where an agreement states that the parties will subsequently agree the price to be paid.

Correction: 
(5). If the terms or the circumstances of the offer do no more than suggest a mode of acceptance, it seems that the offeree would not be bound to this mode. 

Correction: 

(6). A written agreement was drawn up whereby the defendant agreed to take a lease of a house for a definite period and at a fixed rent, but ‘subject to the preparation and approval from a formal contract’. 

Correction: 

(7). It is undoubtedly true that every man is by the law of nature bound to fulfil his engagements. 

Correction: 

(8). If the contracts are not continuous in their operation, they are not binding towards the minor unless he ratified them within a reasonable time after attaining majority. 

Correction: 

(9). The first problem is whether the offeree has at this stage accepted the offer, and the second is whether he has provided consideration for the offeror’s promise. 

Correction: 

(10). As it is impossible for the offeror to ensure that the notice of withdrawal comes to the attention of everyone who knew of the offer, it seems to be enough for him to take reasonable steps to bring the withdrawal to the attention of such persons. 

Correction: 

(20 marks)
Section 3: Determining the Semantic functions of the Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

Instructions: Provide the semantic functions of the prepositions and prepositional phrases in bold in the underlined phrases below. See example 1.

Example 1. That the parties eventually agree on the rent does not make a concluded agreement. concerning/about

(1) The provisions of the Marine Insurance Act offer an obvious example of terms implied by statute as the culmination of a long process of development.

(2) There was much academic discussion on the nature of the doctrine and puzzlement as to its content.

(3) In general, the parties are entitled to provide for the exclusion of terms which would otherwise be implied.

(4) The plaintiff agreed with X to buy a plot of land from him subject to the approval by the plaintiff’s solicitor ‘of title and restrictions’.

(5) We confess we cannot see any difference between this condition and the requirement for FIC approval in the case under the present appeal.

(10 marks)
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Kamariah Yunus is a lecturer at UniSZA, Malaysia and has been teaching EAP and ESP courses for more than 15 years. She graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso, Texas, USA in 1991 in linguistics and obtained her Masters degree from Newcastle University, UK, in linguistics for TESOL in 1997. She is now reading for a PhD degree at the University of Malaya, Malaysia and her research title is: The Effects of Data-Driven Learning in Enhancing the Knowledge of Collocations of Preposition of Law Students at UniSZA.

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