

Text and Corpora: Collocations, Constraints, and the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to demonstrate collocation from a disaster-report article and how certain constraints in word-combinations influence collocability. These constraints are identified using corpus data followed by an enumeration of practical means of demonstrating these constraints vis-a-vis the teaching of vocabulary in the classroom. To achieve these, a 491-word online disaster-report on Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan was selected. From this article, 13 nodes (words) and their corresponding collocates were identified to form a Semantic Field or node-collocate combination. Two fixed expressions were also identified from the said article. In order to identify the constraints that influence how words collocate or combine with other words, the following verbs from the above-mentioned Semantic Field were identified, “lash”, “struck”, “knocked out”, “ripped”, as well as the fixed expressions: “in the wake of” and “faced with a scenario”. Using Carter’s (1998) constraints on word-combinations in English, the relevant constraints on word-combinations of the above verbs and fixed expressions were identified using corpus data from the following corpora: ICE – Philippines, ICE – New Zealand, and the Brown Corpus. Lastly, upon identification of the constraints vis-à-vis the use of corpus data, ways on how teachers can demonstrate these word combination constraints in the classroom were presented.

INTRODUCTION

According to Coulthard, M., Knowles, M., Moon, R., Deignan, A. and Walker, C. (2014), collocation is the tendency for words to regularly and predictably co-occur with other words. This tendency is explained as collocability which is the tendency for words to operate with other words in a particular lexical environment.

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When words co-occur or operate with other words, Sinclair’s Idiom Principle (1987) as cited in Coulthard et al. (2014) can be observed. This Idiom Principle explains that there are

constraints on which words typically combine with other words. For example, we can say that oil prices in the Philippines have the tendency to “go up”, “go down”, “increase”, “decrease”, “roll back”, “cut back”, or “bring down” but they certainly do not “vacillate”, “oscillate”, “go positive” or “go negative” as 16 occurrences of the node “oil prices” from the International Corpus of English (ICE) – Philippines corpus exemplify. From this simple examination, it becomes clear that certain constraints in the use of words vis-à-vis the node “oil prices” exist.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Idiom Principle is in contrast to the Open-Choice Principle also presented by Sinclair (1987) maintains that language users are free to choose any words that will fill in the “slots” in a particular text or utterance. While it can be argued that the Open-Choice Principle is applicable in written and especially in spoken language, it is still clear that there are words that have the tendency to co-occur with other words, as seen from the example of oil prices mentioned above, and the frequency with which these words have been used through time and in media has somehow established the character and acceptability of these word units especially among native speakers of English. With the Idiom Principle, it becomes evident then that words do not simply pair with just any other individual word. Other important factors such as grammar and lexis are also important as underscored by Benson (1985), Sinclair (1991), and Hunston, Francis, and Manning (1997).

The concept of collocability is further supported by Sinclair (2004) and Hoey’s (2005) Lexical Grammar and Lexical Priming, respectively, which generally explain that language structure is presented in “chunks” where grammatical, lexical, and collocation patterns work together to form language strings that become stronger, more fixed, and more frequently used over time.

Referring to Sinclair’s Idiom Principle (1987), a significant implication of collocations in the teaching of vocabulary can be initially drawn. That is, knowing and correctly using a word involves looking at the syntactic, semantic, stylistic, and collocational dimensions of such word. From a pedagogical point of view, the concept of collocation behooves language teachers to not just merely pick a new word from the dictionary, give its denotative meanings, and then ask students to construct sentences out of it. On the contrary, knowing collocation should make teachers realize that certain constraints on word-combinations exist and these constraints should influence how teachers and students alike might choose any vocabulary and then “use” it in a sentence.

Using Sinclair’s Idiom Principle as framework, Carter (1998) and Coulthard et al (2014) identified certain restrictions or constraints in word-combinations. These restrictions are listed below for purposes of showing how these restrictions can be demonstrated in classroom contexts:

- A. Unrestricted Collocation
- B. Semi-restricted Collocation
- C. Familiar Collocation
- D. Restricted Collocation
- E. Selectional Restriction

Unrestricted Collocation occurs when there is an open capacity for specific lexical items to pair with a wide range of items. Such happens especially with most “core” words and

includes structures with “core” verbs as shown in examples like “take a look”, “take a break”, and “take notice” and “run a business”, “run a basketball team”, or “run a shop” among many others. Semi-restricted Collocation is characterized by more determinable patterns where lexical items can be substituted in different syntactic slots. For example, one can harbor grudges, or doubt, or uncertainty. Familiar Collocation, in turn, refers to the regular combinations of words. This occurs among stock phrases and word-combinations with metaphoric usage. Restricted Collocations occur usually for word-combinations with fixed grammatical structures or multi-word items. Such grammatical structures are a result of very limited collocates for a node and the prevalence of fixed and more frequently used patterns. Lastly, Selectional Restriction is an example of the influence of Colligation (i.e. grammatical collocation) as shown by these phrasal verb combinations: “knock out”, “blow away”, and “pick up”.

Drawing from the aforementioned concepts of collocation and the word-combination constraints that influence the formation of collocates, this paper will address the following questions:

1. What are the collocations that can be derived from a sample text on disaster-reporting of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda?
2. Using corpus data, what are the constraints or restrictions (Carter, 1998) that can be identified as influencing the combinations of the earlier identified collocates?
3. How can teachers demonstrate these constraints in their teaching of vocabulary?

METHOD

To conduct this study, an online news article on natural disaster-reporting in the Philippines was selected. Using this text, the researcher identified nodes or words and their corresponding collocates. The researcher then selected four verbs, namely: “lash”, “struck”, “knocked out”, and “ripped”, and the fixed expressions: “in the wake of” and “faced with a scenario” from the earlier identified node-collocate combinations. Using Carter’s (1998) framework for identifying constraints on word-combinations in English, the relevant constraints that influence how the selected verbs and fixed expressions combine with other words in English were identified and discussed using corpus data from the ICE – Philippines, ICE – New Zealand, and the Brown Corpus. Lastly, the researcher discussed how these constraints on word-combinations in English can be demonstrated in classrooms.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

This paper begins with the identification of the node-collocate combinations and fixed expressions that are found in an online article that reported on Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan. This article was taken from a Philippine online news portal (i.e. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net>). Using these node-collocate combinations and examining them against corpus data, the constraints that affect how the verbs: “lash”, “struck”, “knocked out”, and “ripped” as well as the fixed expressions: “in the wake of” and “faced with a scenario” combine with other words in English are identified. In the end, classroom strategies that can help demonstrate these word-

combination constraints in ESL classrooms are also presented.

For this genre on disaster-reporting, an online news report on Typhoon Yolanda (internationally named as Typhoon Haiyan), which made landfall in the Philippines on November 7, 2013, was selected. Typhoon Yolanda holds an important historical significance to the Philippines because it is now considered the most powerful typhoon to make landfall anywhere in the world. With the Philippines being a country that perennially bears the brunt of an average of 20 typhoons that develop over the Pacific Ocean and considering how relevant a topic of this nature is to Filipino families across the social strata, an article that addresses this topic will always be relevant. From a teaching standpoint, disaster-reporting is relevant to Journalism, Communication Arts, and English Language Studies majors who would like to learn how to write and analyze genre-specific writing conventions.

This text is presented below with the collocates randomly identified in **bold-face type** and fixed expressions underlined.

One of world's strongest typhoons lashes Philippines

Associated Press 8:05 AM | Saturday, November 9th, 2013

Read more: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/523635/yolanda-one-of-worlds-strongest-typhoons-blasts-philippines#ixzz3IHlhubbc>

Typhoon ‘Yolanda,’ one of the strongest **typhoons** on record **struck** the Philippines, **forcing hundreds of thousands from their homes** and **knocking out power and communications** in several provinces. But the nation appeared to avoid a major disaster because the rapidly **moving typhoon blew** away before **wreaking** more damage, **officials said**.

Typhoon “Yolanda” (international name: Haiyan) **left** the Philippines early Saturday on a path toward Southeast Asia, the **U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration tweeted**. Forecasters said the **storm** was expected to **pick up** renewed strength over the South China Sea on its way toward Vietnam.

As of 11am, over 100 people are feared dead in the wake of “Yolanda’s” destruction, according to Capt. John Andrews, deputy director general of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

Nearly 750,000 people were **forced** to **flee** their homes.

Weather officials said ‘Yolanda’ had sustained winds of 235 kph (147 mph) with gusts of 275 kph (170 mph) when it made landfall. By those measurements, ‘Yolanda’ would be comparable to a strong Category 4 hurricane in the U.S., nearly in the top category, a 5.

Hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons are the same thing. They are just called different names in different parts of the world.

Because of cut-off communications in the Philippines, it was impossible to know the full extent of casualties and damage. At least two **people** were **electrocuted** in

storm-related accidents, one person was **killed** by a fallen tree and another was **struck** by lightning, official reports said.

Southern Leyte Gov. Roger Mercado said the **typhoon ripped** roofs off houses and **triggered** landslides that blocked roads.

The dense clouds and heavy rains made the day seem almost as dark as night, he said.

“When you’re faced with such a scenario, you can only pray, and pray and pray,” Mercado told The Associated Press by telephone, adding that mayors in the province had not called in to **report any major damage**.

“I hope that means they were spared and not the other way around,” he said. “My worst fear is there will be massive **loss of lives and property**.”

Eduardo del Rosario, head of the disaster response agency, said the speed at which the **typhoon sliced** through the central islands — 40 kph (25 mph) — helped prevent its 600-kilometer (375-mile) band of **rain clouds** from **dumping** enough of their load to overflow waterways. Flooding from heavy rains is often the main cause of deaths from typhoons.

“It has helped that the **typhoon blew** very fast in terms of **preventing** lots of **casualties**,” regional military commander Lt. Gen. Roy Deveraturda said. He said the massive evacuation of villagers before the storm also saved many lives.

The Philippines, which is hit by about 20 typhoons and storms a year, has in recent years become more serious about preparations to **reduce deaths**. Public service announcements are frequent, as are warnings by the president and high-ranking officials that are regularly carried on radio and TV and social networking sites.

Table 1 below presents the different collocates and fixed expressions that were randomly identified from the text.

TABLE 1

Nodes, their collocates, and fixed expressions

NODES	COLLOCATES (SEMANTIC FIELD)
typhoon/typhoons/Yolanda	lash/struck/forcing/knocking out/blew/left/ripped/triggered/sliced/moving/wreaking/hit
storm	pick up
rain clouds	dumping
knocking out	power/communications
forcing	hundreds of thousands from their homes
forced	flee
people/person	electrocuted/killed/struck
report	damage

loss	lives/properties
preventing	casualties
reduce	deaths
said	officials
tweeted	U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
FIXED EXPRESSIONS	
in the wake of	
faced with... a scenario	

As can be seen in Table 1, the word “typhoon” and its inflection “typhoons”, along with typhoon “Yolanda”, are collocated with a semantic field that portrays a certain kind of forceful action, e.g. lashed, struck, forced, knocked out, blew, ripped. This semantic field characterizes the use of personification where human characteristics are attributed to inanimate objects. This attribution of human characteristics to an inanimate object like a typhoon is further exemplified by the international practice of giving human names like Yolanda and Katrina to major weather disturbances.

In addition, other noteworthy collocations reveal that a storm “picks up” renewed strength, rain clouds “dump” water, power and communications get “knocked out”, people are forced to “flee”, lives and properties experience “loss”, damage is “reported”, casualties are “prevented”, and interestingly, officials “say” while a certain US agency “tweets”. As for fixed expressions, two were identified: “in the wake of” and “faced with... a scenario”.

From the collocates identified in Table 1, the following words: lash/struck/forcing/knocking out/blew/left/ripped/triggered/sliced/moving/wreaking/hit which specifically go with the nodes: typhoon/typhoons/Yolanda serve as springboard for demonstrating the constraints or restrictions on word-combinations. How then are these constraints on word-combinations demonstrated to students? One effective way of demonstrating to students the constraints on word-combinations in English is through the use of a thesaurus. For example, looking at the synonyms associated with the verb “lash”, the following synonyms generated by the MS Word thesaurus can be identified.

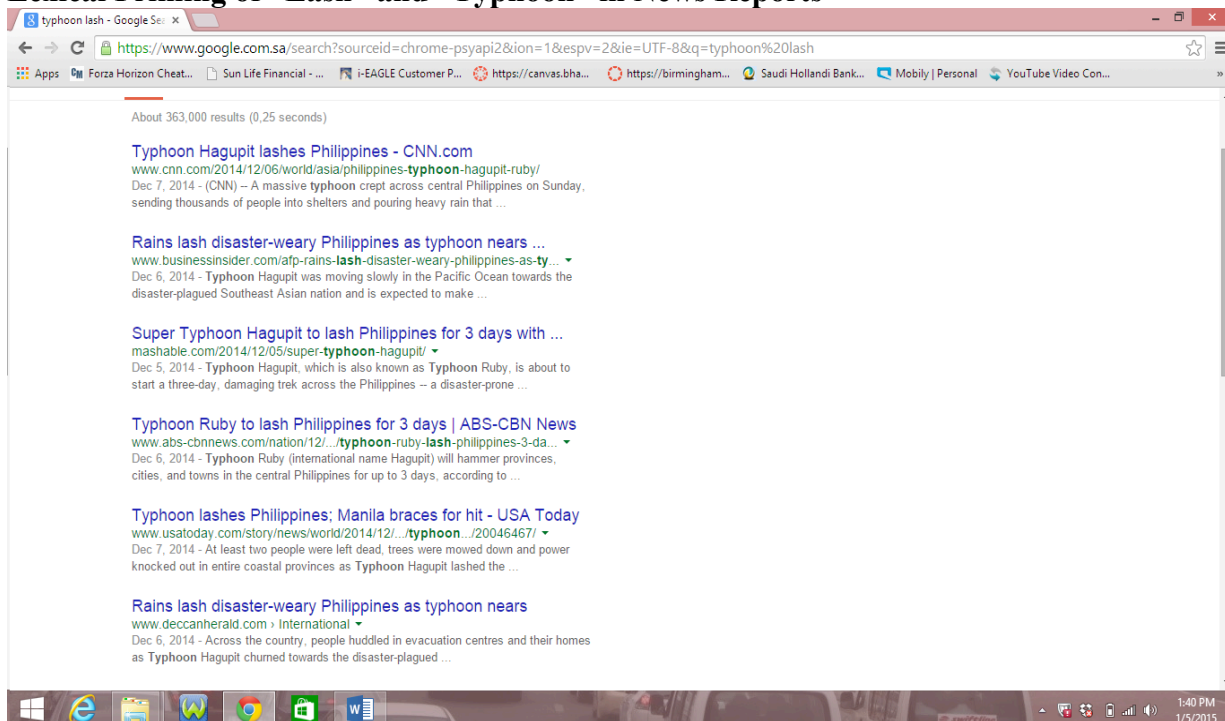
TABLE 2

Synonyms of the word “lash”

VERB	SYNONYMS
lash	smash, pound, beat, impact, bump, slam, criticize, lambaste, upbraid, castigate

Looking at the above list for the key collocate “lash”, it can be said that the synonymous verbs “smash”, “pound”, “impact”, and “slam” are acceptable for the node “typhoon/s/Yolanda” and this acceptability is based on the synonyms’ occurrence in Philippine media reports and commonality of use in spoken or written discourses. However, as the other synonyms in the MS Word thesaurus list are inspected, it will be noticed that “bump” is not something that a typhoon does and most especially with the remaining synonyms in the list (i.e. criticize, lambaste, upbraid, or castigate). This restriction is an example of semi-restricted collocation and familiar collocation. This is semi-restricted because the lexical sets that typically go with the node carry negative semantic prosodies which are basically negative feelings associated with certain words; these sets typically use verbs that demonstrate personification, and that nodes like “typhoons” or other destructive natural phenomena are colligated, (i.e. grammatically attached to verbs) which from the standpoint of teaching noun-verb combinations is important. Most importantly, the idea of familiar collocation brought about by media’s frequent use of verbs like “smash”, “pound”, and “beat” on “typhoon/s” restrict the use of “bump” and “criticize” for nodes that refer especially to major weather disturbances. Lexical Priming, as exemplified in Figure 1 below, also influences this restriction in a way that the verb “lash” frequently combines with “typhoon” in Philippine and international news reporting titles. This pattern therefore reveals that news report writers typically associate “lash” with disastrous weather phenomena like typhoons and such tendency can also prime readers to create the same word associations. Hence, by exposing students to the simple but creative uses of a thesaurus, teachers can effectively demonstrate that semi-restricted and familiar collocations limit the range of vocabulary that students can correctly use.

FIGURE 1
Lexical Priming of “Lash” and “Typhoon” in News Reports



A second effective way of demonstrating to students the constraints on word-combinations in English is through the corpus approach. For instance, in order to confirm use of the word “struck” to refer to what Typhoon Yolanda did to the Philippines, a corpus can be used. To do this, using ANTCOINC and the International Corpus of English (ICE) – Philippine corpus (International Corpus of English – The Philippines Corpus, 2004) which is composed of 200 written texts and 288 spoken texts, the following collocates for the lemma “struck”, along with the text types where they are categorized, are identified in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3

Collocates of “struck” from ICE-PH Corpus

NUMBER	TEXT	TEXT TYPE
Lemma: struck		
1	What is it that struck you as something that is too negative on	Direct conversation
2	some not actually tragic but uh problem that struck your life	Direct conversation
3	infrastructures affected by the strong temblor that struck the Philippines very recently	Parliamentary debate
4	urgently needed following three fires which struck the Institute 's facilities during the past	Scripted broadcast news
5	Sailors were often struck with nutrition-deficiency diseases due to	Non academic writing: Humanities
6	of Central Africa where the first Ebola epidemic struck , is possibly the deadliest virus to stalk	Non academic writing: Natural Sciences
7	cramming for a solution after the disaster has struck .	Press News Reports
8	misery. And then, war struck .	Press editorials
9	When the crisis struck , we laid down the conventional wisdom of to	Press editorials

Looking at 23 occurrences of the lemma “struck” from the 1 million word ICE Philippines corpus, it can be seen that “struck” is collocated nine times with the following semantic fields: negative, problem, temblor, fires, diseases, epidemic, disaster, war, and crisis. As such, with the Philippine corpus as the basis, it can be surmised that “struck” is usually associated with negative events like natural disasters, diseases, crises, or wars and these events are usually evident in written genres such as broadcast news, news reports, and press editorials.

With the lemma “struck” being associated with man-made and natural disasters as the ICE-PH corpus presents, a negative semantic prosody or negative feelings associated with the verb is created. However, it must also be emphasized that “struck” in reference to the 23 occurrences in the ICE-PH corpus can also assume a neutral semantic prosody especially when “struck” is taken to refer to ideas that are “caught” or feelings or realizations that are made by individuals. This observation is also evident in a few occurrences of “struck” in the 200-file written corpus of the ICE-New Zealand (1999) as the following text excerpts reveal:

“One thing that quickly **struck** us was the proliferation of bird life...”
 “...but the seamen were horror-**struck** to find that the old seafaring tales...”
 “I was **struck** by the conviction that the planet’s...”

Again, looking back at the sample text, the verb “struck” in reference to Typhoon Yolanda seems to be lexically primed and has a negative semantic prosody as the analysis of the ICE-PH corpus would reveal. Regarding its implication for the classroom, corpus-driven analysis can again effectively demonstrate to students that semi-restricted and familiar collocations influence how learners should combine words with other words. In classroom settings, realizing from the example that “struck” is associated with natural disasters, negative feelings, and to an extent, neutral semantic prosodies like realizations, ideas or feelings, corpus data suggest using word associations that have been created over time or are used frequently by media. In the absence of corpus, exposing students to genre-specific texts can heighten their awareness that certain words can either have positive or negative prosodies as a result of writers’ frequent use and associations with words.

A third way to demonstrate constraints of word-combinations in English is for teachers to discuss the constraints in terms of their lexicogrammatical patterning. This can be explained by looking at the collocates of “knock out” using the ICE-PH Corpus below (Table 4):

TABLE 4
Collocates of “knock out” from ICE-PH Corpus

NUMBER	TEXT
Lemma: knocking out	
1	in 1991, the US military had considerable trouble knocking out the Iraqi command network.
Lemma: knock out	
1	And with it is a knock-out game
2	and visual presentation so that you don't knock out on me
Lemma: knocks out	
0	NO OCCURRENCE

Lemma: knocked out

- 1 last year from De La Salle when they **knocked out** the Green Archers today one o
one
 - 2 month in Hong Kong, where all fishing was **knocked out**.
 - 3 it goes into a sweet sleep, **knocked out** of this world as one who has
-

Lemma: knocked off

- 1 was like the tide that you could get **knocked off** your feet
 - 2 At home it is so devastating it **knocked off** eighty thousand productive hectares
-

Examining the collocates of “knock out” using the ICE-PH corpus and including its lemmas or lexemes (i.e. “knocking out”, “knock out”, “knocks out”, “knocked out”, and its derivative “knocked off”), Sinclair’s notion of Lexical Grammar (2004) comes into the foreground. The lemma “knock out” as the corpus reveals, is lexically primed with a match or a game (e.g. **knock out** game; they **knocked out** the Green Archers) and is taken to mean “to eliminate a team from contention”. Changing the verb into its simple past form “knocked out” also changes the meaning to a feeling of sleepiness as in the occurrence, “it goes into a sweet sleep, **knocked out** of this world as one who has ”. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen if this derivative is a feature of native-speaker English corpora or it is a literary expression found in Philippine English. Hence, future research of this nature can help address this matter. To continue, looking at the lemma “**knocked off**”, especially with emphasis on the bound morpheme “off”, here is where lexical priming with destruction is identified as is the case with “At home it ... it **knocked off** eighty thousand... hectares”. Similarly, this sense of destruction of property is also identified in the lemma “**knocking out**” which in the case of the ICE-PH corpus refers to the destruction of an “Iraqi command network”. As such, “**knocking out**” in the context of the Typhoon Yolanda report and the lemma “**knocked off**” in the ICE-PH corpus both refer to the destruction of physical properties or infrastructure and hence carry a negative semantic prosody. From here it becomes clear that minor inflections on the lemma “knock out” will result in different meanings, and in the context of explaining the destructive physical effects that natural or man-made disasters bring, students can use the words “knock off” or “knock out” and its inflections.

Likewise, Table 5 below shows the collocates of “ripped” and its lemmas and the demonstration of the effect of lexicogrammatical constraints on word-combinations.

TABLE 5

Collocates of “ripped” from ICE-PH Corpus

NUMBER	TEXT
Lemma: ripped	
1	Repeatedly, she ripped her dress till her dry, sagging breasts
2	Between grief and anger she ripped her under things.
3	could see part of its stilled heart and ripped lungs through the monstrous wound
Lemma: rip	
1	into the water but they 're likely to rip apart when the big waves come.
Lemma: rips	
0	NO OCCURRENCE
Lemma: ripping	
1	arrowhead design at the tip, to maximize its ripping action when withdrawn.

With the base word/main lemma “ripped” followed by the morpheme “off” being used to mean the tearing of roofs in the context of the Typhoon Yolanda news report, the ICE-PH corpus appears to show similarities in meanings but this “ripped” is demonstrated differently as ripped here means “tearing” a dress and undergarments and “tearing” human parts like lungs. However, in terms of objects and in the context of the text where the lemma “rip” is found, it would be surprising to note that physical objects are “ripped apart” and this then has a connotation that is similar to roofs getting ripped off as it is written in our sample text.

Because of the limited occurrences of “ripped” in the ICE-PH corpus, the Brown University Standard Corpus of Present-day English (the Brown Corpus) (1979), was used to provide more conclusive results, revealed in Table 6 below:

TABLE 6

Collocates of “ripped” from the Brown Corpus

NUMBER	TEXT
Lemma: ripped	
1	their 11-month-old baby . The younger Thomas ripped a screen door, breaking the latch ,

2 the lumber is bought in planks and **ripped** to size for battens, etc. , on a
3 a following volley of shots shattered glass, **ripped** the ceiling, and sent him
lurching heavily
4 had passed on through . Susan and Julia **ripped** strips from their clothing and
bound the
5 The bitterness of their wedding night still **ripped** within him like an open wound.
6 they stick to your belly insides " . He **ripped** down the cellophane carefully, and
laid...

With the Brown Corpus as a basis, it can be observed that “ripped” here involves the tearing not just of fabric as occurrence number 4 suggests, but also in general, the tearing or destruction of physical objects like a screen door (occurrence 1), planks (occurrence 2), the ceiling (occurrence 3), and even cellophane (occurrence 6). From these data, albeit not as extensive, the lexicogrammatical patterning seen here is that “ripped” in Philippine English may refer to the tearing of fabric and even body parts, but the phrasal verb “ripped off” and “ripped apart” may refer to the tearing of physical structures like roofs and boards. This is different in the case of American English in the Brown Corpus where “ripped” can refer to both the tearing of fabric and the tearing of physical structures like ceilings and doors.

Looking at the above-mentioned instances of how lexicogrammatical patterns affect word combinations in English from a teaching point of view, when teachers demonstrate to students that lexicogrammatical constraints affect word combinations in English, students can be made more cautious in their choices of words, for example, because they know that phrasal verbs in particular carry different meanings depending on the prepositions or adverbs that accompany these main verbs and also depending on how these phrasal verbs are used from a corpus standpoint.

Lastly, a fourth way in which teachers can effectively demonstrate to students constraints of word-combinations is by directly teaching and exposing students to fixed expressions in English. Alexander (1978), as cited in Carter, (1998) classified fixed expressions in English into the following: Idioms, Proverbs, and Stock Phrases among others. In terms of constraints, as the text reveals, the stock phrases “**in the wake of**” and “**faced with... a scenario**” are governed by Restricted Collocations because they involve syntactic patterns that are generally more fixed and are in close partnership with each other.

Using the ICE-PH corpus, the phrase “in the wake of” was searched and the concordancer identified 12 occurrences of “in the wake of” in its fixed or frozen syntactic feature (i.e. no transpositions, no deletions, no additions, and no substitutions). In addition, out of these 12 occurrences, there were two occurrences where “in the wake of” is followed by the word “war” and the phrase “the volcanic eruption” to show association with natural disasters. Moreover, using spoken English corpora from ICE-New Zealand reveals 6 concordance hits for “in the wake of” in its fixed or frozen syntactic structure and also carries an association with events as exemplified by the phrases “two major blackouts”, “drastic social change,” and “welfare cuts”.

This also seems to be the case with the other Stock Phrase “faced with...a” where occurrences that reveal Restricted Collocations are evident in the following corpora:

ICE – PH Corpus:

“...we are **faced with a** proposal to renew the term of...”

“**Faced with a** currency crisis, we must brace ourselves...”

ICE-NZ:

“...you are **faced with a** striking difference in attitude...”

Brown Corpus:

“...except on occasions when one is **faced with a** thousand unexpected guests...”

“...the adolescent is **faced with a** series of identity crises...”

“So we are **faced with a** vast network of...”

From these data, it can be deduced that the fixed expressions, “in the wake of...” and “faced with a...” are typically fixed and as corpus data suggest, can be associated with negative events like wars, natural disasters, and financial or identity crises. However, corpus data also suggest that these fixed expressions can be associated with neutral semantic prosodies as “differences in attitudes”, “unexpected guests”, and “vast networks” reveal.

CONCLUSION

This paper, albeit limited in scope, featured the identification of collocates and fixed expressions from an authentic text that dealt with disaster reporting in the Philippine context. Based on the selected text, it enumerated four ways in which constraints on word-combinations in English can be demonstrated in the classroom. From this, it is worth noting that vocabulary teaching has indeed been evolving from the usual “use-a-word-in-a-sentence” teaching style to the ongoing realizations that tools such as corpus data can substantially help teachers understand that issues of collocations and the underlying restrictions in word-combinations in English can influence how vocabulary is learned and used. With important insights gained from this assignment, further investigations on the other collocates that were identified from the text and their constraints on word-combinations can be examined from the point of view of corpus data. Likewise, the examination of disaster reports using other non-native and native texts with corpora appears inviting as results from this venture can reveal new information or reinforce already established notions on how collocations are used in specific text types like disaster reporting among different varieties of English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Alexanne Don for serving as my MA program tutor and for her meticulous comments and suggestions on how I can better write this paper for the University of Birmingham’s MA Applied Linguistics course in Lexis.

I dedicate this paper to my lovely wife, Maribel, and my beautiful and smart daughter, Adelle Destiny.

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