

Using Collocation List as an Instrument to Identify Linguistic Metaphors in *The Independent*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate using a list of collocations as an instrument to identify metaphors in the language of newspapers (The Independent). This study is concerned with identifying metaphors by using collocation list. Collocation as a linguistic phenomenon means two or more words that go together in a text. This phenomenon can be considered as the best instrument to identify linguistic metaphor in large texts. This is because sometimes one of collocation's component parts is used metaphorically. This collocation is called a metaphorical collocation. This study comes as a support to the previous ones that view collocation list as an instrument that helps researchers to identify metaphor in large data like the language of newspapers. In this study, the researcher selects certain list of collocations from the independent, and applies a method of MIP suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007) as a method of identifying metaphorically used words. This qualitative study is based on identifying linguistic metaphors in certain list of collocations (five samples selected from The Independent).

Key Words: Linguistic metaphor, collocation

1. Introduction

Collocation as a linguistic phenomenon means a tendency for two or more words to co-occur in a text e.g. make a decision (Firth: 1957). Collocation has a deep relationship with a linguistic metaphor in which one of these two component parts of a collocation is used metaphorically. The relationship between collocations and linguistic metaphors is first argued by Deignan (1999 :22-25) saying that a list of collocations for the whole corpus is the best instrument to identify linguistic metaphors in any corpus data. This is due to the fact that sometimes one of the component parts of a collocation is used metaphorically. This idea is also supported by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) clarifying that sometimes one of these words that co-occur is used metaphorically.

Deignan (2005:193) states that the words that co-occur often indicate an incongruity. Thus the metaphorical meaning depends on the mutual unexpectedness or unusuality of two or more co-occurring words. Therefore, collocation list can be used as an instrument to identify metaphor in large data. For this reason the researcher uses a list of collocations to identify linguistic metaphors in *The Independent*. The researcher adopts (Metaphor Identification Procedure) suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007) as a method to identify metaphor. This study aims to identify metaphors used in *The Independent* by conducting certain list of collocations. In this study, the researcher raises two research questions:

1. To what degree can collocation list be used as an instrument to identify metaphor?
2. What is the evidence that approves the existence of metaphor in collocations?

2. Previous Studies

Collocation is first given theoretical prominence by Firth , who separates it from cognitive and semantic ideas of word meaning, calling it an "abstraction at the syntagmatic level" and accords it a distinct status of the linguistic levels at which meaning can arise (Firth, 1957: 196).

Lyons , 1966 (cited in Hadi, M. ,2013: 6) suggests that collocations should be studied as a part of the synchronic and diachronic analysis of

language. Nesselhuf (2003: 238) implies that for collocation to be learned, it should be acceptable and frequent in a neutral register and any special register that is of use to the learner.

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 284) define collocation as "a tendency for words to occur together". Kjellmer (1982: 111) states that frequency does not only depend on identifying collocations, in that "if frequency is our guide in extracting collocation material from the corpus, it is clear that that material would be of a very heterogeneous nature". Kjellmer (*ibid*) defines collocation as "lexically determined and grammatically restricted sequence of words". Sinclair (1991: 170) defines collocation as "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text".

In his study entitled "Collocation Errors Made by Arab Learners of English", Mahmoud, (2005) concludes that collocations constitute a difficulty for Arab learners, and they can not use and collocate words successfully. He argues that learners' consciousness about collocation should be raised to overcome this difficulty.

Similarly Hadi (2014) tackled "The Investigation of Iraqi EFL Learners' Use of English Lexical Collocations". In this study, one of her aims is measuring IraqiEFL learners' ability to perform English lexical collocations accurately.

In (2010), Mustafa investigates collocations in his study entitled "collocations in English and Arabic: A linguistic and Cultural Analysis". In this study, the researcher investigates collocations as a lexical relationship between words. This study is concerned withanalyzing collocations linguistically and culturally in English and Arabic. It is concerned with the role of culture and cultural discrepancies on translation of collocations. This study aims to show the relationship between culture and collocations reflected in translation. The findings of this study indicate thatthough collocation is a universal phenomenon, its structure, patterns, features, and meanings differ from one language to another, the translators should consider the cultural differences between the two languages.

Deignan, A. (1999 :22-25) investigates "Linguistic Metaphors and Collocation in Non-literary Corpus Data". In this study, Deignantalks about the fact the source domain in collocation may extend to its target

domain. This refers to the existence of metaphor within collocations. This metaphorical meaning existed in collocations depends on the incongruity between the words that co-occur in a text. After that Sardinha (2006) talks about the possibility of using collocation list as an instrument to identify linguistic metaphors.

In the present study, the researcher supports the notion of using collocation list to identify metaphor suggested by Berber Sardinha (2006), and Deignan, A. (1999). He adopts certain list of collocations to identify metaphor in *The Independent*. He adopts a method of identifying metaphorically used words (MIP) suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007) to identify metaphor in this list of collocations.

3. Definitions of Collocations

Collocation is defined as the co-occurrence of words with the same space of each other in a text. A distinction for these collocations is “usually made between co-occurrences that are frequent and those that are not”(Nesslhouf 2005: 11-18). This view goes back to what is called the frequency –based approach. This approach goes back to Firth. Many researchers such as (Williams, 2002; Baker, 1992) define collocations as a lexical unit that consists of a cluster of two or more words from different parts of speech. Firth (1957:190) defines collocation as "words in habitual company". Hunston (2002: 12) argues that “Collocation is the statistical tendency of words to co-occur.”

Another approach called Traditional Approach is concerned with collocations from a lexical point of view. According to this approach, collocation means combining two or more words. There are many definitions of collocation given under this approach:

Carter (1992: 47) views collocation as “a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language”. While Watson (1997: 7) argues that “Collocation is the placing together... of words which are often associated with each other, so that they form common patterns or combinations”. Finally, (Thornbury, Scott. 2002: 7) states that “Two words are collocates if they occur together with more than chance frequency, such that, when we see one, we can make a fairly safe bet that the other is in the neighbourhood.”

According to Benson, et al (1997: xv), collocations are considered as “fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions”, e.g. commit murder and consist of. Here the expected verb used with murder is commit. And the verb consist takes the preposition of .

The psychological approach to define collocations is concerned with the association in meaning between the co-occurring words. In other words, there is a strong association between words of a collocation. This association in meaning is considered as a collocative meaning which is one of the meaning’s types. For example ‘pretty’ and ‘handsome’ have the same meaning of good looking. In spite of they have similar meaning, they should be used with different nouns. For example, ‘pretty woman’ and ‘handsome man’. Thus there should be a degree of association between the co-occurring words .(Leech,1974 :20)

4. Classification of Collocations

According to Lewis (2000:134), collocations are classified into lexical collocations and grammatical collocations. This research is concerned with lexical collocations rather than grammatical ones. The grammatical collocation includes a principle word such as an adjective, noun, verb and a preposition, while the lexical collocation does not include grammatical words like prepositions. Lexical collocations consist of lexical words only. Also it should be noticed that the phrasal verbs such as take off, give up, mess up, ...etc., are considered as grammatical collocations.

Lexical collocation includes the combination of two equal lexical components. e.g. “hard time”. Grammatical collocation on the other hand includes the combination of lexical words (adjective, noun, verb) with a grammatical word, e.g. afraid of, interested in (Benson et al. 2010:xxxii - xxxiv).

5. Criteria and Characteristics of Collocations

Three criteria are suggested by Nattinger and De Carrico (1992: 178); flexibility, productivity, and compositionality. These criteria are suggested to distinguish collocations from the other kinds of word combinations such as free combinations, and idioms.

Nattinger and De Carrico argue that idioms are non-compositional and non-productive. Idioms are unpredictable in their meaning i.e. they can not be understood from the meaning of their component parts. They are fixed expressions, and we can not add extra words to them. In contrast, free combinations are fully compositional and productive in which they are completely predictable, and can be understood from the meaning of their component parts. In free combination, it is possible to substitute one word with its synonym. Collocations on the other hand are non-compositional. Collocation is sometimes non-compositional in which we can not understand its meaning from the meaning of its component parts, and this collocation is called a metaphorical collocation. Collocation is restricted, and we can not substitute its parts with their synonyms. Collocations are non-modifiable in which we can not add extra words to modify them. (Nattinger and De Carrico , 1992: 176-178).

Seretan (2011: 15) mentions some characteristics of collocations. First of these characteristics is that collocations are prefabricated in a sense that children memorize chunks of words, and not words in isolation. The second feature is that collocations are arbitrary. Collocations are arbitrary, and not regularly made. Collocations are “arbitrary word usages”. The third feature is that collocations are unpredictable i.e. it is impossible to predict a collocation because it is a prefabricated unit that does not depend on clear linguistic reasons. The fourth feature is that collocations are recurrent.

6. Linguistic Metaphors and Collocations

This section shows the relationship between collocations and linguistic metaphors, and how collocations can be considered as an instrument to identify linguistic metaphors.

Many researchers such as (Deignan 1999, Deignan 2005, Sardinha, 2006) have suggested that there is a need for an independent instrument to identify linguistic metaphors, especially when we deal with big data that we can't process by reading each text in full. What suggests this idea is the realization that we don't have an instrument in metaphor corpus analysis. In addition, this instrument makes us able together evidence for the presence of linguistic metaphors and conceptual metaphors. As a result, the researchers

figured out that collocations can be considered as an instrument to identify linguistic metaphors in large data.

Deignan.(1999 :22-25) suggests that collocation list for the whole corpus is the best instrument to identify linguistic metaphors in any corpus data.

The researchers suggest the idea of using collocation list as an instrument to study and identify metaphors because the traditional tools of identifying metaphors such as wordlists and concordances are insufficient instruments to identify metaphor as each is restricted to its own way. For example, in a word list, the researcher can not see words in use because he/she deals with words in isolation. Other methods such as a set of examples drawn from intuition from literature are insufficient because they may under-represent the data.(Cameron and Deignan. 2003: 151).

Finally, it should be noticed that this study is concerned with linguistic metaphor rather than conceptual metaphor. So the term of metaphor in this study refers to linguistic metaphor. In the next section the role of collocations in identifying metaphor is shown.

7. The Role of Collocations in Metaphor Identification

After discussing the use of collocation list as an instrument to identify metaphor in the previous section, the researcher shows the real role of collocation in identifying metaphor i.e. how collocation can contain metaphor.

Collocations play an important role in identifying and analyzing metaphor. This comes from the fact that within the cognitive school, some writers frequently consider collocations (lexical strings) that occur in more than one domain as an evidence for the contention that conceptual structures are metaphorically mapped. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980), cited expressions such as hit and hard in “His mother’s death hit him hard” have meanings in both the source domain of physical violence and the target domain of emotions.(Deignan, 1999: 22).

Also collocational patterns that occur in the source domain tend to be used in the target domain, and this is another evidence for using metaphor within collocations.

The possibility of using collocation list as an instrument to identify metaphor comes from the fact that collocates often indicate an incongruity (disagreement) between a word and its surrounding context. In other words, the metaphorical meaning depends on the unusuality or mutual unexpectedness of two or more co-occurring words. Deignan, A.2005(cited in Berber Sardinha: 2006:252). As a result, collocations play an important role in identifying metaphor.

8. A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse (Pragglejaz Group, MIP).

A method of MIP suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007) is the first methodology of identifying the words used metaphorically. Pragglejaz Group provide this approach to identify words used metaphorically in written and spoken discourse. This method consists of many procedures that should be taken into account in identifying metaphorically used words.

Pragglejaz Group (2007:3) view that identifying metaphor in any corpus can be achieved by adhering to a set of Procedures. These procedures are explained as follows:

1. The first procedure includes reading the entire text in order to identify a lexical unit (metaphor related word)which is examined for metaphorical use.
- 2- The second procedure is to identify the contextual meaning of the lexical unit.
3. The third procedure is checkingthe more basic meaning of the lexical unit. The basic meaning is a more concrete, specific and human oriented sense in contemporary language uses' dictionaries. The basic meaning should be included in the dictionary.
- 4-The fourth procedure is to make a comparison between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning of the lexical unit. As a result,once the contextual meaning of the lexical unit contrasts to its more basic meaning and can be understood in comparison with it, this lexical unit is used metaphorically.

5. Examining the relationship between the contextual meaning and the more basic meaning of the lexical unit. In other words, showing the degree of similarity between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.

Steen et al.(2010: 9,15) argue that “The Pragglejaz Group have built MIP on the assumption that metaphor in discourse can be identified by looking for indirectly used words which then have to be interpreted by comparison to a more basic sense”. As a result, the metaphorical meanings are indirect meanings rather than direct ones because they are the outcome of a contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning of a lexical item.

In this study, the researcher applies MIP of Pragglejaz Group (2007) to collocation list to identify metaphor in *The Independent*.

9. Methodology

The data of this study are a list of collocations selected from *The Independent* from 13th March to 23rd March 2020. They are restricted to three categories namely world news, UK news and US News. The data are of five collocations. The collecting technique of the samples is based on the criteria and characteristics of collocations explained in (section 5). This qualitative research depends on using collocation list as an instrument to identify linguistic metaphors in *The Independent*. This research begins with giving a theoretical perspective of collocations i.e. explaining the previous studies, definitions of collocation, classification of collocations, criteria and characteristics of collocations, showing the relationship between linguistic metaphors and collocations, explaining the role of collocations in metaphor identification, and explaining (MIP) suggested by Pragglejaz Group (2007) as a model to identify metaphor. After that the researcher analyzes and discusses the data.

In addition, there are two contemporary dictionaries Macmillan Dictionary, and Online Etymology Dictionary consulted in this study.

10. Analysis and Discussion

1. Dark Day

Working on identifying metaphor in collocation is easier than doing it in large data like news articles without a specific sample. Therefore the

researcher selects a list of collocations to identify metaphor. Through the incongruity between dark and day in this collocation, it is clear that dark is used metaphorically. This is approved by applying MIP to this collocation. MIP suggested by Pragglejaz Group(2007) includes many procedures. Identifying a lexical unit of this collocation is one of its procedures. In this collocation, the word ‘dark’ is considered as a lexical unit of analysis. In other words, it’s a lexical unit that is examined for metaphorical use. The next procedure includes identifying the contextual meaning of this word which is ‘something that is unpleasant and without any hope that something good will happen’. The third procedure of this method is identifying the more basic meaning of this word(dark) which is “with no or very little light”. According to this method of metaphor identification, since dark has a contextual meaning that can contrast to its more basic meaning, and can be understood in comparison with it, it is used metaphorically. As a result, the metaphorically used word in this collocation is ‘dark’.

2. Contain Coronavirus

Contain coronavirus is one of the common collocations used in the language of news talking about preventing coronavirus from spreading. This collocation is supposed to include metaphor because of the incongruity between its two component parts. Therefore, the procedures of MIP suggested by Pragglejaz Group(2007) are applied to identify linguistic metaphor in this collocation.

The first procedure is identifying the word ‘contain’ as a lexical unit (metaphor related word). The second procedure includes identifying the contextual meaning of this word which is ‘to prevent coronavirus from getting worse or spreading’, whereas the more basic meaning of ‘contain’ is “something contains something else. It has that thing inside it or as a part of it”. For instance, this drink doesn’t contain any alcohol. Another procedure which is comparing these two meanings. According to MIP suggested by Pragglejaz Group(2007), if the word (contain) has a contextual meaning that contrasts to its basic meaning, and can be understood in comparison with it, this word is used metaphorically in this context. Eventually, the word ‘contain’ is identified as a word that is used metaphorically in this collocation.

3. Cases Rise

The verb ‘rise’ is usually used with words that it does not agree with i.e. it is sometimes used metaphorically. In this collocation, rise is supposed to be used metaphorically. This should be investigated by applying MIP.

The first procedure of MIP includes identifying the word that should be examined for metaphorical use. This word is called a lexical unit (or metaphor related word). The lexical unit in this collocation is ‘rise’. The second procedure is to identify the contextual meaning of rise. Its contextual meaning is that the number of cases increases. Simply it means the number of the people who are infected with coronavirus pandemic increases.

The next procedure is examining whether there is a more basic meaning of this word. The more basic meaning of rise is “to move upwards or to a higher position”. For example, the aircraft rose slowly into the air. This is the old meaning of rise that is cited in OnlineEtymology Dictionary (See references). In this collocation, ‘rise’ has a clear contextual meaning that contrasts to its basic meaning, and can be understood in comparison with it. According to this method (MIP), since ‘rise’ has a contextual meaning that contrasts to its basic meaning, it must be marked as a metaphorically used word. In this collocation, rise is identified as a metaphorically used word

4. A Wave of Suicides.

The first procedure includes identifying a lexical unit (or a metaphor related word). The lexical unit in this collocation is ‘wave’. The next procedure is identifying the contextual meaning of this word. The contextual meaning of wave is “a sudden increase in cases of suicides”. The third procedure includes identifying the basic meaning of wave. Its basic meaning is “a line of water that rises up on the surface of a sea or river”. The fourth procedure is making a comparison between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning. Because the contextual meaning can contrast with its basic meaning, and can be understood in comparison with it, in this context, the word wave is used metaphorically. Thus wave is identified as a word that is used metaphorically.

5- Large Gatherings

By applying MIP, this collocation is investigated as follows:

The lexical unit of this collocation is ‘large’. It is the node of this collocation, and the word that should be examined for metaphorical use. This is the first procedure of MIP.

The second procedure includes identifying the contextual meaning of this word. The contextual meaning of large is ‘big gatherings’. The third procedure includes identifying the basic meaning of large. Through looking up this word in the dictionaries, we can notice that the basic meaning of large is the same as its contextual meaning, and we can not take one of these two meanings as a more basic meaning. According to MIP, since large does not have a more basic meaning, to be contrasted with its contextual meaning, it is not used metaphorically in this collocation, and this collocation does not contain metaphor.

11- Conclusions

The researcher in this study concludes that collocation list can be used as an instrument to identify linguistic metaphors in large data like the language of newspapers. Also he comes up with the fact that collocation list can support the researchers to make it easy to identify metaphor regardless of the potentially metaphors that may be left. The findings reveal that the researcher identified four linguistic metaphors in five collocations selected from *The Independent*. In this study, there is only one collocation that does not contain metaphor which is “large gatherings”. All what is mentioned above answers the first research question of this study.

The metaphors identified in this study are the outcome of the incongruity between the component parts of collocation. The researcher concludes that the metaphorical meaning depends on the incongruity (disagreement) between the words that occur together. In other words, it depends on the unusuality or mutual unexpectedness of two or more co-occurring words. In addition, the metaphorical meaning can be identified by comparing the contextual meaning of a word and its more basic meaning. Thus the second research question is answered.

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