



A Correlational Study of Expectancy Grammar's Manifestation on Cloze Test and Lexical Collocational Density

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Abstract

The notion of expectancy grammar as a key to understanding the nature of psychologically real processes that underlie language use is introduced by Oller (1979). A central issue in this notion is that expectancy generating systems are constructed and modified in the course of language acquisition. Thus, one of the characteristics of language proficiency is that it consists of such an expectancy generating system. Therefore, it is claimed that for a proposed measure to qualify as a language test, it must invoke the expectancy system or grammar of the examinee. This article aimed at finding the relationship between textuality of a text and its realization in expectancy grammar. To this end, texts with high and low lexical collocational density (LCD) as a means of reaching textuality in a text are given to participants in the form of cloze test. Texts with high and low lexical collocational density were selected to act as cloze tests and administered on EFL learners. An independent t-test was used to analyse the mean of the scores obtained in pairs of low and high LCD texts. The results showed that texts with high lexical collocational density enjoy higher degrees of readability and are suitable for cloze tests. In other words, the group who took cloze tests with high lexical collocational density outperformed the group whose cloze tests had been prepared on texts with low lexical collocational density.

Keywords: Expectancy Grammar, Cloze Test, Lexical Collocational Density, Textuality

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Introduction

Oller (1979) introduces the notion of expectancy grammar as a key to understanding the nature of psychologically real processes that underlie language use. It is suggested that expectancy generating systems are constructed and modified in the course of language acquisition. Language proficiency is thus characterized as consisting of such an expectancy generating system. Therefore, it is claimed that for a proposed measure to qualify as a language test, it must invoke the expectancy system or grammar of the examinee.

The term expectancy grammar calls attention to the peculiarly sequential organization of language in actual use. Natural language is perhaps the best known example of the complex organization of elements into sequences and classes, and sequences of classes which are composed of other sequences of classes and so forth. The term pragmatic expectancy grammar further calls attention to the fact that the sequences of classes of elements, the hierarchies of them which constitute a language are available to the language user in real life situations, because they are somehow indexed with reference to their appropriateness to extralinguistic contexts.

A wide variety of research has shown that the more grammatically predictable a sequence of linguistic elements, the more readily it can be processed. In other words, as sequences of linguistic elements become increasingly more predictable in terms of grammatical organization, they become easier to handle.

For Oller (1979), cloze procedure is one of the possible ways to tap this expectancy grammar. He states that the cloze procedure - that is, the family of techniques for systematically distorting portions of text - is a method for testing the learner's internalized system of grammatical knowledge. He explicitly argues for the inclusion of a cognitive aspect (cognitive processes) in language testing theory. He claims that the ability to make guesses based on context-induced situations springs from a cognitive perspective since the interlocutor processes the incoming input and predicts the future input. Oller's expectancy grammar originates from a more general hypothesis of second language acquisition that is titled "unitary trait hypothesis", also introduced by Oller (1979). The hypothesis links language acquisition to cognitive processes as a single trait rather than several distinct traits of four language skills that were proposed earlier by Lado (1961) and Carroll (1961, 1968). In spite of the fact that unitary trait hypothesis lost its attraction, the notion of expectancy grammar, which was later developed into "pragmatic expectancy grammar" by Oller (1983) has remained compelling due to the role it attributed to cognitive factors in second language proficiency.

In the early 1970s, the movement towards the study of language from communicative points of view was highly promoted. This gave the history of language another shock not less in strength than the movement in the 1950s and 60s. One of the predominant linguistics movements has been the emergence of Halliday

and Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1985). In his theory as Systemic Functional Grammar, Halliday considers text rather than a sentence as the unit of communication (Lotfipour, 1997). A text has “texture” which is vital to construct a text as text. In studying a text as a unified whole (Halliday, 1973, 1978, 1985; Halliday & Hassan, 1976), “Coherence” and “Cohesion” offer texture to the text and play a great role in organizing the text together. Halliday and Hassan (1976) categorize cohesion as “Lexical”, “Grammatical”, and “Conjunction”. They further show that Lexical cohesion is composed of “reiteration” and “collocation”, and define lexical collocation as, “the occurrence [of words] in proximity with each other of pairs” (Halliday & Hassan, 1976, p. 285) or in chains, like “cloudy”, “raining”, and “umbrella”. These collocations have semantic relations rather than grammatical ones and refer to each other across the text, and, therefore, make the text cohesive. For instance, the above collocations give cohesion to this mini-text:

The sky is “cloudy”. It may “rain”. I’d better take my “umbrella”.

This collocative chain of “cloudy”, “rain”, and “umbrella” is considered as a cohesive tie which relates the sentences together, behaving as a textual strategy has a special effect not only on the organization of the text as a cohesive one but also on the cognitive processes (e.g. top-down, bottom-up, and cyclical) in the mind of the reader to comprehend it. As this study has a discursal approach to the study of collocations in a text, it should be noted that collocating nodes in a text work in a way that can give a degree of comprehensibility to the text. In other words, it is assumed that the more collocating nodes present in a text, the more cohesive ties are made and, hence, the more comprehensibility and readability is expected.

Lexical collocation is considered as a cohesive device in connecting similar collocative items across the text. Lexical collocation as a sub-category of lexical cohesion belongs to the components of textual function of language (Halliday, 1973). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), lexical collocation is “the occurrence in proximity [of words] with each other of pairs” (p. 285) such as the following: “doctor”... “medicine”. Lexical collocation can be seen in lexical chains, for instance “rain”... “cloud” ... “umbrella” ... etc., These related words can be employed by the writer to tie the text together and make a general concept of “raining” schema. The concept of “rain”, “cloud”, and “umbrella” belong to the “raining” semantic field, and therefore, these concepts are interrelated with one another on the one hand and with the semantic field, “raining”, on the other.

In Halliday’s view, meanings are realized as forms, and forms are realized as expressions. He refers to this realization as a three - level of coding or what he called “strata”. These levels are “semantic” (meanings), “lexico-grammatical” (form), and “Phonological” or “orthographic” (expressions). The second level consists of word (or lexis). It can play an important role in bridging the meanings to sounds or writing as a mediator. Thus, we focus on this central part in the present research through

looking at the lexical collocations. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), “cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary” (p. 5).

In general, Halliday’s (1961) “Categories of the theory of Grammar” modified a systemic approach to grammar which viewed language as networks of options underlying an utterance. There are other scholars who view discourse as a system. The notable figures are Kintsch (1982) and van Dijk (1972, 1977). But the dominant approach in text analysis is known as “Cohesion Theory” which has been adopted by Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Lexical collocation

According to Birch (1989), in order to understand how situational / contextual features determine the internal organization of the text, the systemic linguistic approach should deal with the texture of the text. Following Halliday (1978), texture not only tends to determine the range of meaning but it also relates language to its environment. Lotfipour (1989) believes texture includes four dimensions:

- thematization strategies (i.e. what the writer chooses to stand at theme of the sentences of his text), (cf. Halliday, 1985),
- textual schematic structure (i.e. the overall structure or macro – structure of the text),
- textual cohesion (i.e. the type and number of cohesive devices employed in the text which contribute to the degree of cohesiveness of the text),
- Paralanguage (i.e. elements used in the text, including the prosodic features in spoken texts and typographic elements such as underlining, italicizing in written text).

These textual features / strategies are employed by language users to make a text. These strategies play an important role in reading processes because the text operates as an interface between the writer and the reader. Any text should have texture. Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize that texture is a feature through which we can distinguish a text from non-text. In their view, a text “derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment” (p. 2). Thus, “a text can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture” (ibid).

Textual strategies

Textual strategies in Hallidiyan view can be studied within the linguistic strategies which enable the writer to employ text-forming strategies in terms of text elaboration strategies and they also enable the reader to follow the text-decoding strategies in terms of text-reductive processes (Candlin & Lotfipour, 1983; Lotfipour, 1982; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

Lotfipour (1989) says, "... textual strategies are employed by the writer/speaker; and variation in them can be argued to have effects on the reader discourse comprehension process and the message to be negotiated" (p. 5). He also believes that "a written text contains a set of discoursal and textual strategies and they are involved in discourse textualization processes" (Lotfipour, 1989, p. 8).

Textual strategies which are manipulated by the writer vary according to their text-type. For instance, the textual strategies in literary and non-literary texts are different and, therefore, they are selected as a result of the writer's rhetorical purposes (Birch, 1989; Lotfipour, 1989; Widdowson, 1975).

In Halliday and Hasan's (1976) view, textual strategy works as a textual function. They put:

this [textual function] comprises the resources that language has for creating text, in the same sense in which we have been using the term all along: for being operationally relevant, and cohering within itself and with the context of situation. (p. 27)

Then they propose lexical cohesion as one of the aspects of textual strategy. Lexical cohesion includes reiteration and collocation which function as ties in hanging the text together. Lotfipour (1997) argues:

... the type of lexical choices made within each collocational chain would affect the degree to which it contributes to the textual cohesion. This effect can also be argued to be the function of the type of lexical relations between the lexical "nodes" [or the related words from semantic points of view] within such chains. (p. 3)

The role of textual strategies in building the texture of the text is significant and it will be elaborated with regard to the effects of lexical collocation as one of the textual strategies on cognitive processes as well as on reading comprehension (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Though the literature in the domain of TEFL enjoys some empirical research on lexical collocation studies, the concept of the correlation between the density of lexical collocation and cloze test procedure has not been tracked by the researchers. To this date, no citable empirical research work is done on this in Iranian contexts as well. However, the concept of lexical collocations and, sometimes specifically lexical collocational density, and the relationships that could exist between collocations and other language learning skills and components has a somehow long history in research literature in ELT circles. For instance, Zhang (1993) investigated the relationship between the learners' collocational knowledge and their writing skill. To that purpose, he administered to online test, one on collocational knowledge and the other on their writing fluency on 60 (30 native and 30 non-native) speakers of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In this study,

Zhang found that 1- native speakers performed significantly better than non-native speakers on the collocation test, and 2- native speakers outperformed the non-native ones in the correct application of collocational phrases in their writing.

In another study to delve into the relationship between lexical collocation knowledge and general language proficiency, Al-Zahrani (1998) worked on English lexical collocations among four academic levels of 81 Saudi EFL students. In this study, Al-Zahrani showed that a significant difference existed in the students' knowledge of lexical collocations among different academic years. He also reported that a strong correlation was found between the students' lexical collocations and their overall language proficiency which was measured by TOEFL test. But he provided no report on the frequency of the collocations used in his students' writing test.

In another significant study that focused on the study of lexical collocations, Sung (2003) investigated the connection between the lexical collocation knowledge and fluency in speaking skill among 24 native and 72 non-native speakers of English. The participants in her study took two tests: one collocation knowledge test and one speaking fluency test. The results indicated that a significantly strong collocation existed between the EFL students' knowledge of lexical collocations and their speaking ability. She also concluded that knowledge of lexical collocations is "a more significant indicator of degree of speaking proficiency than other factors such as the use of lexical collocations or length of stay in the U.S." (p. v).

On the basis of what has gone before, the following research question and hypotheses are proposed:

RQ: Is there a meaningful relationship between the degree of lexical collocational density of text and the learners' performance on cloze tests?

RH: There is a meaningful relationship between the degree of lexical collocational density of text and the learners' performance on cloze tests.

Null hypothesis: There is not a meaningful relationship between the degree of lexical collocational density of text and learners' performance on cloze tests.

Methodology

Research Design

To do this research, first, texts with high and low degrees of lexical collocational density are selected. There are totally 10 short texts, five with low and five with high lexical collocational density. The criteria for determining the degree of lexical collocational density is taken from Gorjani's (1996) data pool. The short texts were also adopted from "Short Passages for University Students" (Shiraz University Publications, 1980).

There are various methods for administering cloze procedure. The most commonly used and, therefore, the best researched type is the cloze test constructed

by deleting every *n*th word of a passage. This procedure has been called fixed ration method because it deletes 1/*n*th of the words in the passage. Another type of cloze procedure (or family of them) is what has been called the variable-ration method. Instead of deleting words according to a counting procedure, words may be selected on some other basis. For instance, it is possible to delete only words that are richly laden with meaning, typically these would include the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, or a combination of them in the text in question. For a comprehensive study of the cloze administration procedures refer to Farhadi, H., Jafarpour, A., & Birjandi, P. (2001) and Oller (1979).

In this research, for deleting the *n*th word in low and high LCD texts, the variable-ration method is used. Since the purpose is to find the relationship between lexical collocational density of texts and the students' scores on cloze tests, so only lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) are deleted in the selected texts.

Participants

In order to choose our participants, a pre-test was given to a group of intermediate English learners who participate at Iran Language Institute English classes twice a week. This pre-test was taken from Nelson English Language Proficiency Tests (1976). The students had 90 minutes to answer the questions on the proficiency test. After the students took the test, the scores were ranked in the order of higher to lower scores and the top 40 students (both male and female) were chosen as the final sample population who were going to be given our texts with low and high LCDs. The final population were randomly assigned in experimental and control groups. The cloze tests on low LCD texts were given to our control group and the experimental group took the cloze tests on high LCD texts.

Every session, the control and experimental groups were asked to take a multiple-choice cloze test. The tests on low LCD texts were given to group one (our control group) and the tests on high LCD texts were given to group two (our experimental group). Each cloze test was followed by 5-10 multiple-choice items (depending on the size of our text) and the students had 15-20 minutes to take the tests.

Results

In this research we tried to find the relationship between Lexical Collocational Density of text and learners' performance on cloze texts. The aim was to see if there can be a meaningful relationship between Oller's (1979) Expectancy Grammar and Lexical Collocational Density of texts which is realized in terms of low and high LCD index. According to our hypothesis, we claimed that texts with high lexical collocational density (LCD) enjoy a high degree of readability and can better yield themselves to the notion of Expectancy Grammar. In other words, texts in which the number of central and peripheral collocational nodes is high and is technically considered as collocationally dense texts are more cohesive and hence easier to

cognite, perceive, and comprehend, compared with texts in which the number of nodes is less. In order to statistically test our hypothesis, we analyzed twenty texts in terms of their LCD and classified ten texts as collocationally more dense and ten other texts as collocationally less dense. The texts are turned into cloze tests based on the guidelines specified for constructing cloze tests in the literature and then were given to our sample population to read and answer the the multiple choice questions that followed each text. The results of each pair as our raw data are presented in the following tables as descriptive and inferential statistics. To see the texts and their corresponding cloze tests, see the appendix.

Table 1. Descriptive results of low and high LCD cloze test pairs

| Pair no. | High LCD | N. | Mean | Std. of error of Mean | Median | Mode | Std. deviation | Variance | Range | Min. | Max. | Sum. |
|----------|-----------------------|----|-------|-----------------------|--------|------|----------------|----------|-------|------|------|------|
| | Low LCD | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Neglected Harvest | 20 | 16.65 | 0.638 | 17.00 | 20 | 2.852 | 8.134 | 9 | 11 | 20 | 333 |
| | How to Grow Old | 20 | 13.90 | 0.750 | 13.50 | 10 | 3.354 | 11.253 | 11 | 9 | 20 | 278 |
| 2 | Children Survive | 20 | 17.30 | 0.476 | 17.50 | 15 | 2.130 | 4.537 | 6 | 14 | 20 | 346 |
| | Aches in the Body | 20 | 15.80 | 0.651 | 16.00 | 16 | 2.913 | 8.484 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 316 |
| 3 | Elements in Air | 20 | 17.30 | 0.430 | 17.00 | 16 | 1.922 | 3.695 | 6 | 14 | 20 | 346 |
| | Blood Transfusion | 20 | 15.70 | 0.508 | 16.00 | 18 | 2.273 | 5.168 | 8 | 11 | 19 | 314 |
| 4 | The Function of Sleep | 20 | 17.35 | 0.494 | 17.50 | 20 | 2.207 | 4.871 | 6 | 14 | 20 | 347 |
| | Secrets of Snoring | 20 | 15.00 | 0.692 | 15.00 | 13 | 3.095 | 9.579 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 300 |
| 5 | Camel-God's Gift | 20 | 15.80 | 0.490 | 15.50 | 13 | 2.191 | 4.800 | 6 | 13 | 19 | 316 |
| | The Arabian Camel | 20 | 12.85 | 0.856 | 13.00 | 8 | 3.825 | 14.661 | 12 | 7 | 19 | 257 |

Table 1 shows the descriptive results of the scores obtained in cloze tests on Low and High LCD texts. It is clear from the table that in all the pairs, which was composed of a high and a low LCD text with a cloze test, the mean of the scores in all the high LCD texts are higher than the mean in low LCD texts. Other information like the standard deviation, the mode, the median, the variance, the minimum and maximum of scores are also presented in the table.

In our hypothesis, we claimed that texts with high lexical collocational density (LCD) are more suitable for cloze tests since they enjoy a higher index of textuality and readability, compared with texts which have low LCD. So it is also assumed that students taking cloze tests on high LCD texts would perform better than those who

take cloze tests on low LCD texts since they show better understanding and comprehension compared with those who read low LCD texts. The hypothesis considered the mean of the scores of the students in high and low LCD texts and hypothesized that this mean is higher in cloze tests on collocationally rich texts than collocationally poor ones.

In table 1, we presented the descriptive results of this study, i.e. the mean of the scores, in both experimental and control groups. According to descriptive results for each pair of texts, there is a considerable difference between the mean of the scores in high and low LCD cloze test scores. This difference indicates better performance of experimental group over control group in this study.

But in order to see whether this difference is meaningful enough to confirm or reject our hypothesis, we needed to run t-test on the scores. In so doing, we analyzed the scores by SPSS statistical software and the results of t-tests for each pair of texts are presented below. A discussion of the independent t-value results follow the table.

Table 2: t-values of One-sample Test for low and high LCD cloze test pairs

| Pair # | High LCD | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | 95% confidence Interval of the Difference | | Test Value |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------|----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|------------|
| | | | | | | lower | upper | |
| Low LCD | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Neglected Harvest | 2.352 | 19 | 0.030 | 1.500 | 0.17 | 2.83 | 15.15 |
| | How to Grow Old | -1.666 | 19 | 0.112 | -1.200 | -2.82 | 0.32 | |
| 2 | Children Survive | 4.514 | 19 | 0.000 | 2.150 | 1.15 | 3.15 | 15.15 |
| | Aches in the Body | 0.998 | 19 | 0.331 | 0.650 | -0.71 | 2.01 | |
| 3 | Elements in Air | 5.002 | 19 | 0.000 | 2.150 | 1.25 | 3.05 | 15.15 |
| | Blood Transfusion | 1.082 | 19 | 0.293 | 0.550 | -0.51 | 1.61 | |
| 4 | The Function of Sleep | 4.458 | 19 | 0.000 | 2.200 | 1.17 | 3.23 | 15.15 |
| | Secrets of Snorrig | -0.217 | 19 | 0.831 | -0.150 | -1.60 | 1.30 | |
| 5 | Camel- God's Gift | 1.327 | 19 | 0.200 | 0.0650 | -0.38 | 1.68 | 15.15 |
| | The Arabian Camel | -2.686 | 19 | 0.015 | -2.300 | -4.09 | -0.51 | |

According to table 2, except for pair number 5, the t-value of the scores in the rest of the pairs is greater than p critical in 0.5 Aloha Decision Level ($p > 0.5$). Therefore, the statistical analysis of t-value indicates that due to a considerable difference between the means of the scores in Low and High LCD cloze tests, the null hypothesis is automatically rejected in all the pairs (except pair no. 5) and our substantive hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the statistical analysis reveals that there is a meaningful relationship between the density of lexical collocations of a cloze test and the mean of the scores on.

As inferential statistics in table 2 also shows, in pair no. 5, though a considerable difference is observed between the mean of the scores on Low and High LCD cloze tests, the t-value (1.327) is smaller than p critical in 0.5 Alpha Decision Level ($p < 0.5$). It means that in pair 5, the difference between the mean of the

scores is not meaningful enough to reject the null hypothesis and confirm the substantive hypothesis.

Discussion

Considering the empirical studies done on the subject of the knowledge of lexical collocation and also looking back at the notion of expectancy grammar which was evolved into pragmatic expectancy grammar by Oller (1983), it can be discussed that there should be a relationship between the cognitive processes that involve in the process of language acquisition and the proficiency level of the learners with respect to the knowledge of lexical collocations as one of the devices to establish cohesion in a text. Cloze test, as one of the integrative tests which measures language proficiency as a whole, has been believed to tap the expectancy grammar and the cognitive processes that are involved in the process of language learning. Cloze test is normally administered on texts and the degree of text cohesion is a paramount factor in reading comprehension. In other words, the reader when reading a piece of text embarks on the same cognitive processes that are already active by the underlying philosophy of cloze test procedure. This study tried to investigate this possible relationship between the learners' expectancy grammar which is realized in the form of a cloze test and any effect that the lexical collocational density, as a significant tool for creating cohesion in a text and increasing reading comprehension, might possibly have on the learners' performance on such a test. The findings of other similar studies are discussed in the following lines.

Based on the general notion of lexical collocation of a text, Sadighi and Sahragard (2013) studied the effect of different levels of lexical collocational density of text on the learners' reading comprehension. The results of this study indicated that the texts with high lexical collocational density influenced the learners' reading comprehension positively. Though a general positive influence of texts with high lexical collocational density on reading comprehension was reported, different proficiency levels of the participants did not affect their performance on lexical collocation test with different lexical collocational density significantly. The results of this study can be further discussed with relation to the ideas presented by Halliday and Hasan (1976) who claimed that lexical collocations is a significant factor in establishing the cohesion of the text. In other words, textuality of a text is enriched when the cohesive devices are properly used in a text, which leads to a better comprehension of the text.

In another study, Elke (2016) investigated the role of the learning burden of collocations at the initial stage of form-meaning mapping. He reported that all factors appeared to affect the learning of collocations. Incongruent collocations (+/- literal translation equivalent) appeared to be more difficult to be learned than the congruent ones. Like congruency, collocational density, as a means of creating the textuality of a text, can also be effective in the learning process. This study further

emphasizes the cognitive dimensions of language processing and language learning which is discussed earlier as how unitary trait hypothesis proposed by Oller (1979) may play a significant role in the process of language learning and acquisition. Though the notion of unitary trait hypothesis lost its influence among linguists, the notion of pragmatic expectancy grammar, originally taken from this notion by Oller (1983), still remains a very powerful hypothesis with respect to cognitive aspects of language processing and development.

It is discussed that learners who wish to reach high levels of competence in English need to acquire a good repertoire of collocational knowledge (Nesselhauf, 2003). A reason for this can be the fact that knowing how to use collocations increases both the fluency and the accuracy in the second language. According to McCarthy (1990) an important factor that distinguishes a native speaker from a non-native one is the knowledge of collocations which emphasize the need to include the knowledge of collocations in language teaching pedagogy should be given “the same kind of status in our methodology as other aspects of language such as pronunciation, intonation, stress, and grammar” (Hill, 2000, p. 59) methodologies.

In their study to measure Iranian learners’ general knowledge of collocations in university level, Keshavarz and Salimi (2007) performed a 36-item multiple-choice cloze test & a 36-item open-ended cloze test and a TOEFL test on lexical vs. grammatical collocations and reported that EFL learners have, in general, insufficient knowledge of English collocations. The results of this study also revealed that a strong correlation exists between collocation knowledge & overall English proficiency

As noted earlier, the notion of possible correlation between cloze test procedure (with its underlying expectancy grammar) and the lexical collocational density of text has not explicitly been studied elsewhere, neither in Iranian nor foreign contexts. It is hoped that the findings of this study would shed further light on the studies of lexical collocational density, cognitive studies of language learning, reading comprehension and, finally, cloze test as an integrative procedure for language testing.

Conclusion

Expectancy Grammar, as introduced by Oller (1979), offered a new view of language and language use underpinning tests, focusing less on knowledge of language and more on the psycholinguistic processing involved in language use. He suggested Pragmatic tests involving two factors: the online processing of language in real time, and mapping of linguistic with extralinguistic factors. Further, he proposed what came to be known as the Unitary Trait Hypothesis, that is, that performance on a whole range of tests depended on the same underlying capacity in

the learner: the ability to integrate grammatical, lexical, contextual, and pragmatic knowledge in test performance. He argued that certain kinds of more efficient tests, particularly the cloze test measured the same kinds of skills as those tested in productive tests. It was argued that of a cloze test was an appropriate substitute for a test of productive skills, because it required readers to integrate grammatical, lexical, contextual, and pragmatic knowledge in order to be able to supply the missing words. But further work showed that cloze tests on the whole seemed mostly to be measuring the same kinds of things as discrete point tests of vocabulary, grammar.

Knowledge of lexical collocation is also proven to be a significant factor in second language acquisition. Collocations is also shown to be one of the most problematic areas in learning a second language (Mohamadian, Z. & Sabbagh Shabestari, Sh., 2017). Any text should have texture. Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize that texture is a feature through which we can distinguish a text from non-text. In their view, a text “derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment” (p. 2). Thus, “a text can be identified as contributing to its total unity and giving it texture” (ibid). One of the textual features to provide textuality, in Hallidian view, is through Lexical Collocations as, “the occurrence [of words] in proximity with each other of pairs” (Halliday & Hassan, 1976, p. 285) or in chains, like “cloudy”, “raining”, and “umbrella”. These collocations have semantic relations rather than grammatical ones and refer to each other across the text, and, therefore, make the text cohesive. Lexical cohesion is shown to be manifested in literature where lexical items are not only contributing to meaning but also serving as cohesive ties (Amenorvi, 2018).

This research tried to look for a relationship between these two notions namely the Expectancy Grammar, realized in cloze test procedure, and cohesion of a text, created by lexical collocations. The research question asked if there is a meaningful relationship between high lexical collocational density in texts with the learners' performance on cloze tests administered on such texts. To statistically find an answer to this question, cloze tests on texts with low and high LCD are given to our experimental and control groups and the results are interpreted using statistical softwares. The results showed that learners who answered cloze tests on high LCD texts outperformed the other learners who answered cloze tests on low LCD texts. It can be concluded that cohesion, as one of the features for creating textuality of a text, is highly affected by the density of lexical collocations. In other words, the more lexical collocations in a text, the more cohesion it enjoys.

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