

Improving Moroccan University Students’ Understanding and Use of Lexical Collocations through Bottom-up Listening Strategies

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Abstract

Understanding and using lexical collocations seem quite challenging for Moroccan learners of English as they are not accustomed to learning the target language as chunks, but rather as individual words. Moreover, students are rarely exposed to adequate authentic language use. This results in limited knowledge of collocational patterns and eventually miscommunication and sometimes lack of accuracy. Exposing students to lexical collocations through active listening strategies, namely bottom up, can aid their understanding and accurate production of collocations. This study is, therefore, an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of bottom-up listening strategies in improving Moroccan university students’ receptive recognition of different types of lexical collocations and their adequate use. Two groups of students, a controlled and an experimental, belonging to the same year and field took part in this study. Both groups were exposed to a pre-listening and a pre-writing test and a post-listening and a post writing test. The experimental group, however, explicitly learnt and employed the different types of collocations for all the stages of the listening and writing tasks. The study adopts both a qualitative analysis of students’ understanding and production of collocations and a quantitative approach using t-test. Findings reveal that bottom-up listening strategies have significantly proved effective in helping students of the experimental group to develop their listening comprehension of collocations, enhance their knowledge and use of different types of lexical collocations which were more meaningful and efficient than those of the controlled group.

Keywords: Bottom-up, listening strategies, understanding, use, lexical collocations