Patterns of Collocations Used in Companies' Core Values

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Abstract

This paper aims to 1) find out the frequency of main core values from companies' websites, and 2) investigate frequencies of collocation patterns used in companies' core values. The quantitative approach was used in this study. The data obtained from 500 companies in 2020 were identified parts-of-speech by using TagAnt, and were then analyzed frequency of main cores values, lexical words, and collocations by using AntConc. The results of the study reported that the frequents words of core values were integrity (165 words), customer (99 words), respect (86 words), innovation (78 words) and excellence (66 words). In addition, the frequent collocation patterns were: verb + preposition (288 or 28%), verb + noun (183 or 18%), and noun + preposition (154 or 15%). The results of the study may enable language learners to develop their competency and promote their awareness, especially in the use of English in business contexts. These results can also be used as a guideline for course preparation of business English.

Keywords: Core values, Collocations, English

Introduction

Many languages are used to communicate with each other in the globalized world. English is the language, connecting people together. English language has been used in almost 105 countries around the world. In other words, English has a major role in many areas, for example, in education, medicine, engineering, and business (Rai, 2019). According to Reddy (2016), human beings use language as ways of communication. Communication has become

one of the most crucial elements. To be able to understand each other from different nations, good communication is required. When people don't understand each other, There are possibilities that misunderstanding will happen. Putra (2020) has pointed out that English is the most widely spoken language in most parts of the world. The importance of learning English in today's society cannot be ignored.

Learning vocabulary is an essential part in foreign language learning because new words are found in written and spoken languages. For English learners, it is important to study vocabulary as a foundation before enhancing reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (Alqahtani, 2015). Many studies strongly agree with this idea. For instance, Saengpakdeejit's study (2014) states that vocabulary has been identified as a critical component of language learning because a lack of vocabulary knowledge. This causes learners to struggle when forming or producing English language. Viera (2016) also describes that vocabulary is necessary for learning a second or foreign language with the reason that without learning vocabulary, learners will be unable to understand others or describe their own feelings when communicating among them in English.

In addition to the world business, core values are essential part of the company. These principles guide workers or employees' thoughts and actions and can be considered as one of the most important aspects of a group's culture (Talbot, 2003, 20). For example, Malphus (2004) supports the importance of core values. Many companies write core values to focus on the purpose of a company and how to behave to achieve this purpose (Thomsett, 2018). Williams (2002) states that core values have been known to partly define the culture of organization and to act as a bridge to build relationships between workers. Ferguson and Milliman (2008) also add that core values have been seen as one essential way of improving organizational success and improving employee attitudes and behaviors.

From these above examples, core values generally represent the center of the ideological system and serve as defining standards of behavior which are symbolic of the group. In other words, core values are guiding principles that are used to come to right decisions and explain a reason for existing (Friedman, Warter & Warter, 2016). Considering the importance of English language in business word, several of the world's greatest organizations

are now using English as part of their corporate language strategy in order to communicate more effectively with clients and within organizations all over the world. Many companies have core values and define core values to identify a company's position and ways to succeed company's goals. Therefore, companies must use many collocations for writing core values to convey and explain their purposes clearly.

To represent core values and images, the foundation lies in vocabulary learning such as collocations. According to Rao (2018) collocations are an essential part of knowledge of second language acquisition and they are essential to people who learn English as a foreign language. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills can be improved with the help of collocations knowledge. The EFL learners can become fluent in English by learning and using collocations effectively (Xua, Akhterb & Qureshi, 2020). Dell and McCarthy (2017) also suggest that collocations will help language learners to speak and write English in a more natural and accurate way. Hence, in this paper, we aim to examine English collocations used in companies' values.

Literature Review

This section can be divided into two parts: definition of collocation and types of collocations which were used as a guideline to identify collocation patterns in this study.

Definition of collocation

There are many linguists who have defined collocation. Sinclair (1991, p. 170) defined that collocation is the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text. Collocation is a natural combination of words or the words are closely associated with each other. For example, pay attention, blond hair and heavy rain (McCarthy & Dell, 2008).

Types of collocation

Collocations can be divided into two major groups, e.g., lexical collocations and grammatical collocations.

Ilson (2010) defines those lexical collocations consisting of content words such as noun, adjective, verb and adverb. Lexical collation can be divided into seven types: verb

(usually transitive) + noun/pronoun (or prepositional phrase), verb (meaning eradication and/or cancellation) + noun, adjective + noun, noun + verb, noun + of + noun, adverb + adjective, and verb + adverb.

Grammatical collocations involve a dominant word (noun, adjective, verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause. Grammatical collocations can be divided into eight types: noun + preposition, noun + to infinitive, noun + that clause, preposition + noun, adjective + preposition, predicate adjective + to infinitive, adjective + that clause, and nineteen English verb patterns

Similar to Lewis's study (2000), this previous study shows that collocations can be divided into two main classifications: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations.

1. Lexical collocations consist of two content words or open class words, which include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Lewis has classified lexical collocations into six types, as illustrated below: e.g., adjective + noun, verb + noun, noun + noun, verb + adverb, adverb + adjective, and noun + verb.

2. Grammatical collocations are derived from the combination of one open class word, e.g. noun, verb, adjective, etc., and one closed class, which is mainly a preposition. e.g., adjective + preposition, verb + preposition, and noun + preposition.

In addition to Hill's work (2000), he described those collocations consist of

1. Unique collocations refer to collocations where the components are fixed. For example, shrug one's shoulders,

2. Strong collocations are not unique but strong in the meaning that they allow a very limited number of collocates. For example, rancid butter,

3. Weak collocations occur between two words and often co-occur with many words. They are easy to guess. For example, the word good is the weak collocation because this word co-occurs with many words such as a good girl, a good student, good furniture, good weekend etc. and

4. Medium-strength collocations are the ones, which are used with common words. For example, major operation

After reviewing related literature on English collocations, this research mainly focuses on the collocations used in companies' core values based on nine collocation types found in previous studies: N + Prep, V + N, Adj + N, V+ Prep, V + Adv, Adj + Prep, and Adv + Adj.

Objectives

1. To find out the frequency of main core values from companies' websites.

2. To investigate frequencies of collocation patterns used in companies' core values.

Scope

The data used in this study were selected from 100 companies ranking in 2020 with 8 criteria as follows: 100 best companies to work for, 100 fastest-growing companies, top 100 most powerful brands of 2020, the top 100 companies for remote jobs, the world' best employers 2020 list, global top 100 companies by market capitalization, best compensation 2020, and the world's 100 best-performing companies, 2020. The selected collocations were then categorized based on lexical words, consisting of the top ten most frequent words of noun, verb and adjective by using TagAnt. This program is used for identifying parts-of-speech in English.

Research Instruments

1. **TagAnt** was used to identify parts-of-speech.

2. **Microsoft Excel** was used to categorize collected data

3. **Antconc** was used to analyze word frequency found in this research.

4. **Dictionaries of English Collocation: Oxford, Macmillan and the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations** were used to identify the forms of English collocations.

Methodology

1. Select data based on eight criteria (see Scope).

2. Survey the data and copy to Microsoft Excel and divide data into each topic and description by using Microsoft Excel.

3. Identify lexical words by using TagAnt (Version 1.2.0)

4. Analyze lexical word frequencies and collocation patterns using Antconc.

5. Categorize collocations according to Oxford Collocation Dictionary, Macmillan Collocation Dictionary and The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English.

6. Summarize and discuss the results.

Results

1. Frequency of lexical word in main core values from companies' websites

The highest frequency of main core values in this study involves integrity (165), customer (99), respect (86), innovation (78) and excellence (66), respectively as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequency of main core values

No.	Main core values	Freq.	Examples of core values (Company name)
1	integrity	165	Act with integrity. (Malouf)
2	customer	99	Customer-centric (Dow Inc.)
3	respect	86	Respect for each other. (Comcast)
4	innovation	78	Innovation defines our future. (Danaher)
5	excellence	66	Perform with Excellence (Lockheed Martin)
6	people	61	People first (Shopify)
7	trust	56	Trust makes everything simple. (Alibaba Group)
8	team	50	One team (Nvidia)

No.	Main core values	Freq.	Examples of core values (Company name)
9	right	42	Do the right thing. (APS Payroll)
10	passion	40	We serve with passion. (NESTLE)
11	quality	34	Quality comes first (Microchip Technology)
11	service	34	Exceptional client service (Kimley-Horn)
13	diversity	33	Diversity is how we grow. (Taulia)
13	responsibility	33	Give and take responsibility. (IKEA)
15	together	32	We grow and succeed together. (NESTLE)
16	accountability	31	Take accountability (Cisco)
17	inclusion	30	We stand for inclusion. (American Express)
17	teamwork	30	A+ in Teamwork (Hibu)
19	collaboration	26	Creative collaboration (Cboe)
20	fun	25	Having fun while being the best. (Best Buy)

2. Frequency of collocation patterns in core values from companies' websites

The highest frequencies of collocation patterns were as follows: verb + preposition (288 words or 28%), verb + noun (18 words or 18%), and noun + preposition (154 words or 15%). Table 2 summarizes the frequency of collocation patterns found in this study.

Table 2 Frequency of collocation patterns

No.	Types of collocation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Verb + preposition	288	28
2	Verb + noun	183	18
3	Noun + preposition	154	15
4	Adjective + preposition	120	12
5	Verb + adverb	93	9
6	Noun + noun	78	8
7	Adjective + noun	66	7
8	Adverb + adjective	20	2
9	Noun + verb	14	1
	Total	1016	100

Examples of Collocations

This section presents nine types of collocations and examples used in companies' core values as follows:

1. **Verb + preposition**: We <u>strive for</u> excellence in everything we do.

2. **Verb + noun**: We <u>build trust</u> by being honest and authentic.

3. **Verb + adverb**: We <u>work together</u>, embrace diversity, and create opportunity for all.

4. **Adjective + preposition**: Do what's <u>best for</u> the company.

5. **Verb + adverb**: You <u>think strategically</u>, and can articulate what you are, and are not, trying to do

6. **Noun + noun**: We provide for employee health and welfare by offering competitive and comprehensive **employee benefits**.

7. **Adjective + noun**: We succeed through **satisfied customers**.

8. **Adverb + adjective**: We are all individually and **collectively responsible** for safety.

9. **Noun + verb**: We're doing to help small **businesses succeed** with a product we believe in, built by people with integrity.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study found nine collocations in companies' core values. The most frequent lexical collocation was adjective + noun. It occurs 590 times or 36.05%. This is because verbs are used for explaining a company's purposes and defining employee's behaviours. The results of the study were consistent with Gayatri's study (2018) reporting that the most dominant type of collocation used in English verb patterns collocation.

To sum up, collocations are frequently used for writing core values because these patterns identify what company strives for accomplishing, and guide company's thoughts and actions including symbolic of the group. Collocations play an important function in language learning. The results of the study can be used as a guideline for course preparation of business English, especially in understanding language patterns used in authentic contexts, and provide a better understanding of language learners whose English is not their first language. With the sound knowledge of English collocations, language learners can improve their communication competency and apply it appropriately and efficiently in their career specific context in the future.

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