



TEACHING COLLOCATIONS THROUGH SHORT STORIES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract

The use of collocations is the key to fluency, accuracy and genuineness in the use of a second language, but collocations are another vocabulary feature that ESL learners of the secondary level find challenging, because vocabulary is taught separately. This paper will discuss whether teaching English collocations, with the use of short stories, in the secondary school level, is an efficient method and how learners perceive this teaching method. The study involved a mixed method pre-test, post-test design that took place within eight weeks involving a total of 56 secondary school students in two schools in Vehari, Pakistan and were aged 13-16. The intervention consisted of explicit and contextualized teaching of target collocations in form of selected short stories with the help of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading tasks. pre-and post-tests constructed by the researcher were used to gather quantitative data, which were analyzed with the help of the descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test. Findings indicated that there was a strong improvement in collocational knowledge of students with a mean score of 6.82 changing to 13.20. The difference was statistically relevant ($t = -25.727$, $p < .001$), which means that the method based on short stories is effective. It indicates that short stories give a rich and realistic context of learning collocation, which may be readily incorporated into ESL lessons at the secondary school level.

Keywords: *Collocations, Short Stories, ESL Instruction, Vocabulary Learning, Secondary School Learners*

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1. Introduction

The term collocation is associated with the presence of words in a speech or writing (Kennedy, 2013) and without the knowledge of people about collocations, it would be not possible to speak fluently. Actually, the students must be acquainted with collocations to be able to say native-like utterances (Ann, 2014). Consequently, the problem of comprehending collocations is a significant topic in EFL/ESL classes. Whereas collocations patterns are familiar to native speakers of a given language and can be easily understood upon coming across a simple look, ESL learners might find it a bother to understand given concepts in case they had not been introduced to such concepts before (Lewis, 2000). This has made numerous researchers examine the impact of various teaching methods in learning collocations (Kennedy, 2013; Lewis, 2000; Neselhaaf, 2003).

In particular, storytelling is an effective and useful method of teaching the language (particularly in the field of language learning, as development of language has gained relevance in the educational field at all ages). According to Ler Strom (1990 as cited in Lewis, 1993) professional and personal success is pegged on the ability of an individual to speak, write, listen and read well. In order to provide the effective language learning approach, Pesola (1991) suggested that telling stories is one of the best practices to surround the young learners with the language. The learners in the dispensation of tales have an experience with the robust actual language of individual communication, not the typical classrooms of the foreign language departments. The short story reading is a unique way of developing learning skills. Reading stories, learners gain the perception of order, which will come in handy when reading more complex stories of literature (Anwar et al., 2025). One of the key aspects of the creation of successful communication is collocation learning and has been viewed by both teachers and researchers as a part of language. Reading is one of the strategies that may potentially improve the knowledge of EFL learners regarding collocations. Lewis (2000) has defined reading as the analytic process that involves the rereading of a story text by the learners.

1.1. Background of the Study

This has seen vocabulary research in the second language acquisition (SLA) focusing more and more on the acquisition of not just single word items but also the acquisition of multi-word items (e.g. collocations, lexical bundles, formulaic sequences). Collocations, which are typical pairs of words: to conduct a survey, to try, or to catch a

cold, are the key factors in bridging the divide between knowing individual lexical items and using fluent language to speak like a native speaker (Bui, 2021; Ding et al., 2024). Collocational knowledge supplements the breadth of vocabulary (number of words that one knows) by the depth (how flexibly and accurately one can apply the words to the context). Through word-knowledge framework, word knowledge consists of knowledge of its form, meaning, and usage: the latter consists of collocations and restrictions on collocational usage (Ding et al., 2024).

The problem of poor mastery of the collocations may be a restricting element to the achievement of fluency and naturalness in the learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students might be familiar with single words but fail to put them together as a sentence in a more natural, non-scholarly way (Bui, 2021). Empirical research reveals that even at intermediate stages, learners make a lot of collocational mistakes e.g. verb + noun structures (e.g. make homework instead of do homework), which impair the naturalness of their speech and writing (Du, Afzaal and Al Fadda, 2022). Besides, studies indicate that highlevel learners continue to experience difficulties with collocations that are less transparent or collocations that include abstract nouns (Du et al., 2022; Yamagata, 2024).

1.2.Problem Statement

Secondary school students often acquire vocabulary in isolated lists rather than in natural groupings. This leads to difficulties in comprehension and in producing contextually appropriate language. Traditional methods of vocabulary teaching may overlook collocations, which are essential for fluency. Thus, there is a need to integrate literature-based materials, particularly short stories, into vocabulary instruction to enhance collocational competence.

1.3.Research Questions

1. How effective is the use of short stories in teaching collocations at secondary level?
2. How do the students perceive the effectiveness of learning collocations through short stories?

1.4.Research Objectives

1. To study the effectiveness of short stories in teaching collocations at secondary level
2. To study students' perceptions about effectiveness of learning collocations through short stories.

1.5. Significance of the Study

- **For teachers:** It provides a practical, literature-based approach to vocabulary instruction.
- **For learners:** It helps students acquire collocations in meaningful, memorable contexts rather than in isolation.
- **For curriculum developers:** It offers insights into integrating literary texts with language teaching objectives at the secondary level.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to city School Vehari and Daanish School Tibba Sultan pur. 70% students of selected class took pre and post test particularly dealing with their efficiency to use collocations in language learning. As this is a mixed method approach, researchers have focused on quantitative as well as qualitative methods of research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Importance of Collocations in ESL Learning and Academic Achievement

The significance of learning collocations is associated with resolving the issues that a learner faces during using the language and developing the linguistic knowledge base (Tahmazova, 2023). Learning the workings of words in combination enables the learner to learn not only the literal meaning of words but also the figurative and metaphorical meaning that are brought about by the combination of words (Nation, 2001). This, in its turn, leads to the better understanding of the language lexical framework and cultural background. The learning of collocations helps to learn vocabulary and gain more contextual and cultural knowledge in order to engage in communication (Biber et al., 1998; Meara, 19). The significance of collocations in the language learning process is further enhanced by the fact that they help to acquire natural use of language when interacting in daily communication, as well as enhance the communicative competence. Contemporary instructors embrace interactive pedagogical approaches to learn collocations so that the learner could become a proficient user of both oral and written versions of communication (Tahmazova, 2023). Also, digital tools provide an opportunity to explore collocations in different contexts by learners, which further enrich their repertoire of linguistic features (Sinclair, 1991).

2.1.1. The Role of Collocations in Fluency and Accuracy in Language

In order to have fluency and accuracy in language, collocations are key components. In order to establish independent mastery of a language, the learners have to learn collocations and their use. The mere understanding of the meaning of the separate words does not suffice in the acquisition of effective language skills. The skills in the

collocations help the learners employ the words in a proper way within the context, construct flowing expressions, and attain a natural flow of the speech. Collocations enhance effectiveness and comprehensibility of speech, so it is important to mention the issues which strong collocations may cause. Their definitions are not so clear without a clear context and it is necessary that learners pay attention to certain patterns of combination rather than focusing on learning the meaning of the words in a dictionary.

This focus will help in the acquisition of proper and well-versed language use.

2.1.2. Enhancing Natural Expression Skills:

Learning collocations will allow learners to apply expressions that can be used in daily communication, and therefore, learners will find it easier to fit in to a language. As an example, take a break is a more frequently used and more natural phrase as compared to pause. By learning these kinds of phrases, learners will be able to speak in a more fluent and communicate with the native speakers effectively. Here, it is correct to say homework and not to create homework as the phrase make homework is an affliction of learners who do not know the collocations.

Have a conversation: Pairing have with conversation forms a natural utterance in spoken language, and other ways such as make conversation, do conversation are wrong.

Catch a cold: The term catch is used figuratively in this context, and it is translated to mean getting sick. Though the former get a cold is also reasonable, the more natural one is catching a cold.

When such collocations are mastered, the learners can be able to communicate more fluently and in a natural manner in real life scenarios.

2.2. Development of Writing and Speaking Skills

Knowing and properly applying collocations is an important aspect in improving the skill of writing and speaking which are vital to academic and professional success. As an example, the language constructions like hold a survey and make a presentation are more professional and enable the learners to speak more efficiently in scholarly situations. We may take a couple of examples:

- Try: This is a phrase that refers to trying or putting in effort. As an illustration, she tried to complete the report on schedule. This combination is more natural and formal to both write and to say than anything such as try hard.
- Conclusion: This collocation can be translated to mean to decide. As an example, the researcher made a conclusion after the analysis of the data. It is clear and refined and thus is ideal to use it in academic writing and official discussions.

2.3.Theoretical Model of Collocation Learning

Within the past ten years, the issue of collocations has become more and more popular because it has been attributed to L2 proficiency and posed a threat to the L2 learners (see Boers, 2019; Nguyen and Webb, 2017). According to the perspectives on the vocabulary formation, there is an agreement that words combination blocks are important elements of the language use, which comprise a third or half of speech or written language (Conklin and Schmitt, 2012). It should be added, as well, that these combinations of words (i.e., collocations) may be applied in the context of numerous applications in communication (Schmitt and Schmitt, 2020), and L2 learners can succeed in transferring information across (Boers et al., 2006). The process of obtaining such multi-word units, particularly, the one of the type verb-noun, is an issue with L2 learners (Peters, 2016). The challenges are twofold.

Collocations can also be less apparent to the language since they can be present in language input since learners are more oriented to specific words, they do not get to learn them as the units of cohesion (Boers, 2019). The importance of collocations is not adequately attended in formal classroom teaching and the learners are not presented with the realistic use (Brown, 2011; Meunier, 2012). Hence, more language input options are required to enhance the knowledge and application of L2 collocations by the learners. However, in recent times, the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 2020) has gained more attention and it gave rise to more studies, focusing on the L2 collocation learning with the use of multimodal input. Multimedia learning takes into consideration the fact that the information processing mechanism of human beings might be more effective in processing information in two different channels as opposed to a single channel. Information processing has two options. One of them is presentation mode that divides the visual input as a nonverbal channel and the written and aural input as a verbal channel. The other sensory mode categorizes the aural input to be handled over auditory channel, the written and visual input is handled over the visual channel. Information processing issues, raised by Mayer (2020) appear to resonate with the Dual Coding Theory proposed by Paivio (2006) where the author states that human process of cognition involves two distinct, but complementary systems: verbal and visual systems. Paivio is of the opinion that the two systems are enhanced when both systems are activated at the same time. To be more specific, information processing, its understanding and even recollection can be achieved through the help of both verbal (text and/or sound) and visual (dynamic and/or static image) input that, in its turn, opens two paths, benefiting the performance and memory of the learners. Although cognitive theory of multimedia learning and the dual coding theory are universal to the instances of collocation learning in language learning, it can be deduced that, the usage of the various avenues of language input, which include

reading texts in the presence of audio support and viewing videos with or without captions, may come in handy in improving the collocation knowledge of the L2 learners.

2.4.Explicit vs. Incidental collocation Learning in ESL Contexts

Even though the exposure to massive input of the language is the main assumption of the L2 learners to learn the English vocabulary, students cannot be expected to learn every single word in a formal classroom (Huckin and Coady, 1999; Nation, 2001; Webb and Chang, 2012). The incidental vocabulary learning is considered one of the possible, long-term steps that can be used to enhance the vocabulary knowledge of learners (Schmitt and Schmitt, 2020). The approach provides the learner with more exposure to the L2 contexts where the vocabulary acquisition process occurs naturally during reading or listening activities as compared to vocabulary acquisition being consciously addressed and planned. The study of incidental vocabulary learning has shifted the emphasis of single-word learning (e.g., Horst, 2005; Webb, 2007) to collocation learning (e.g., Pellicer-S´ animez, 2017; Puim` ege & Peters, 2020). This focus on incidental collocation learning is important because when the study of classrooms (e.g., Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003) has shown that L2 learners are much less knowledgeable about collocations than about single words, this can also lead to a considerable percentage of language errors in use. It has been observed that L2 learners can enhance their attainment of collocations by a series of meaning-oriented language processes such as listening (Pavia et al., 2019), reading (Pellicer-S´ ancoraz, 2017), reading-while-listening (Webb et al., 2013) and viewing (Puim` ege & Peters, 2020).

1. 2.5 Short Stories as an Authentic Resource in ESL

The intermediate stages of language instruction may be fruitful because literature possesses the following characteristic; it is universal and short stories would enable the instructor to brush on the issues of human beings. The students express their emotions on various issues and they are in urgent need of education that would help them to get a better understanding of the world that we as human beings exist in. Furthermore, when he is communicating about something, he will be a participant in the topic that he is probably to consider a meaningful one and he will feel like spending as much time as possible on it. Narration is an expression of human nature in which a sequence of behavior is narrated, which may be intriguing and even inspirational even (Maibodi, 2008). The teacher narrates a story to the EFL students, he calls on his learners to use questioning, pausing, and sharing of ideas in the thinking process. When choosing stories in his classroom, he engages background knowledge of the students to be involved to learn by asking the students to picture and imagine the setting or the events, forecast the possible actions, and connect the characters and events with his/her life and with understanding the cultural essence in the

played setting of the story under consideration. It is thus the role of the learners to apply what they have learned in order to interpret new information (Delett, 2001, as cited in Erkaya, 2005). To compare with other genres when using foreign language, Saka (2014) believes that the short stories are not deprived of their merits. To a variety of authors, the word collocation is applied to denote different things (Sinclair 1991; Stubbs 1995), but it is possible to distinguish two most common perspectives of the phenomenon, the frequency-based one and the phraseological one (Nesselhauf, 2005). In the frequency-based definition, a collocation is a place of a set of words with high frequency that is often observed than what should be depicted that would occur should words be chosen randomly in any language. It boasts of top talents in Firth, Halliday and Sinclair. Within the phraseological meaning, two or more lexemes (or roots) are associated with each other and are characterized along the line of the feature of appearance within a particular collection of grammatical constructions (Cowie 1994, p. 3169).

2.5. Empirical Studies on Teaching Collocations in ESL Secondary Classrooms

Collocations have been found to be an important aspect of language use and they distinguish native speakers from the non-native speakers (Ellis, 2001; Kaya, 2006). Some studies have been conducted by scholars on this issue, and the results were that EFL teachers/ learners worked out English collocations in a far too random variety which little help to real application. As an example, many initial investigations merely tested EFL/ESL learners on their collocation's knowledge (Keshavarz and Salimi, 2007) or investigated the error of collocation made by the EFL/ESL learners (Jeng, 2006). In a sample of EFL high school students, n (2002) examined collocation instruction on the receptive and productive collocation competence of high versus low achievers.

The findings revealed that all students achieved improvement in receptive tests in collocation more than productive tests, poor learners while scores in a production test were enhanced after collocation teaching. Both groups had favorable attitudes towards collocation teaching activities. Tseng (2002) randomly assigned 94 high school students to the experimental group, (explicit collocation teaching), and the control condition, (no training), and assigned 12 weeks of explicit collocation teaching to the experimental group and no training to the control group. The post-test of the experimental group vastly overtook the control group after collocation instruction despite their previous collocation levels. Knowledge of English lexical collocations were studied by Sung (2003), in which he noticed the use of collocations by national as well as international students. Her findings revealed that lexical collocation knowledge had a significant correlation with speaking proficiency of the subjects.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter includes the time duration in which area of research is selected, topic is decided, and data is collected. Institutional cooperation regarding consent for collection of data and to ensure anonymity of students is confirmed. Research population selected from secondary school level is described clearly. There is description of sample of the study which is students of secondary school who were involved in pre and post test taking. The reliability and validity of pre and post test is described in this section.

3.2. Research Design

This study employs a pre-test post-test design to assess the effectiveness of teaching collocations through short stories at the secondary school level. The approach measures changes in students' collocational knowledge before and after the intervention, focusing on clear, quantifiable outcomes. The study will be conducted over eight weeks in a single classroom setting at Daanish School (Girls) Vehari and The City School Vehari, with ethical measures including informed consent from students and their guardians, as well as approval from the school administration.

3.3. Research Population and Sample

The participants will consist of 56 secondary school students aged 13 to 16 years, selected from City School Vehari, Daanish School Tibba Sultan Pur. These specific schools are chosen for its accessibility and representation of typical urban secondary education in the region. Students were drawn from one or two intact classes using convenience sampling, ensuring a mix of proficiency levels based on teacher recommendations. All participants will form a single group receiving the short story-based instruction, as the study focuses on within-group improvement. Accommodations will be provided for students with language learning needs to ensure inclusivity, but the focus remains on general learners.

3.4. Research Procedures

The study will use three short stories selected for their engaging narratives and richness in collocations suitable for secondary school learners. Approximately 15-20 target collocations per story (e.g., adjectivenoun like "heavy rain," verb-noun like "make a decision") will be pre-identified. Supporting materials include worksheets for collocation identification and pre- and post-tests using number of collocations correctly in sentences according to given instructions.

3.4.1. Procedure

The instructional process is structured in three phases—pre-teaching, while-reading, and post-reading—to support contextual learning of collocations. In the pre-teaching phase, which lasts 15-20 minutes per session, the teacher introduces target collocations with clear definitions and examples to prepare students for the story. During the while-reading phase, which takes 30-40 minutes, students read the story individually or in pairs, identifying collocations in context using worksheets to record and discuss findings. The post-reading phase, spanning 20-30 minutes, involves students applying collocations through activities like retelling the story or writing short responses. Sessions occur twice weekly. A pretest assessing collocational knowledge is administered at the start of the study, followed by the eightweek intervention, and a post-test at the end.

3.5.Data Collection

Data collection is limited to pre- and post-tests, each consisting of 20-30 items (e.g., writing a paragraph with given set of collocations) to evaluate recognition and use of the target collocations. Both tests will follow the same format to ensure consistency and will be scored for accuracy. Post test is conducted after 6 to 8 weeks of pre-test, once all the strategies to use collocations in writing are taught to students to make results of study more reliable. Data is collected from 70% (21) students of a class of 30 participants, of City School Vehari and 70%

(35) students of a class of 50 students.

3.6.Data Analysis

The analysis will use basic descriptive statistics, calculating mean scores and standard deviations for the pre- and post-tests. A paired t-test will compare the group's performance before and after the intervention to determine if there is a significant improvement in collocational knowledge. Results will be presented clearly, focusing on score changes and general trends. Limitations, such as the single-school focus and lack of a control group, will be acknowledged to contextualize findings.

3.7.Reliability and Validity

The researcher administered a survey to ensure validity. Maxwell (2005), Rossman and Rallis (2003) sustained the idea that a researcher can lessen the risk of less validity by triangulation.

Triangulation allows “a better assessment of explanation that one develops” (Rossman, 2003).

4.Data Analysis

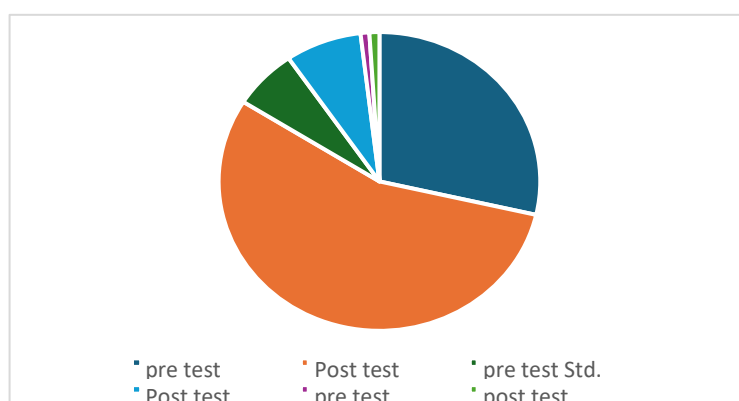
4.1.Introduction

In this part of research study, the pre-test taken from research participants is evaluated according to the Rubric and their performance is evaluated based on their background knowledge of collocations. The Rubric on the basis of which participant's performance is evaluated is given below:

Participants	Number of correct collocations in pre-test	Number of correct collocations in Post test
1.	7	13
2.	5	11
3.	8	14
4.	7	13
5.	8	12
6.	8	11
7.	6	14
8.	5	12
9.	6	13
10.	3	10
11.	5	11
12.	6	13
13.	4	10
14.	6	12
15.	8	16
16.	4	10
17.	3	11
18.	5	11
19.	5	12
20.	7	13
21.	7	14
22.	7	12
23.	8	13
24.	8	13
25.	9	16
26.	7	14
27.	8	13
28.	6	15
29.	6	15

30.	6	14
31.	7	16
32.	7	17
33.	8	16
34.	5	13
35.	7	12
36.	10	12
37.	8	15
38.	9	14
39.	9	15
40.	7	16
41.	6	14
42.	8	14
43.	6	15
44.	6	16
45.	8	15
46.	9	15
47.	8	16
48.	8	11
49.	9	12
50.	9	12
51.	8	11
52.	7	12
53.	6	11
54.	6	12
55.	7	12
56.	6	14

4.2. Data Analysis



	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
score in pre test	6.8214	56	1.55045	.20719
Pair 1				
score in post test	13.1964	56	1.83323	.24498

4.3.Explanation and Interpretation of Paired Samples Statistics

1. Pre-test Mean (6.82)

The mean index of the pre-test was 6.82. It indicates that the average score of the students calculated before the intervention was approximately 6 to 7 points, and it is a rather low level of initial understanding or performance. Considering that this mean lies on the low end, we can only assume that the majority of students were either not well versed with the contents of the test, or they have not been sufficiently prepared.

2. Interpretation:

The average score of 6.82 is certainly not a high number, which means that students could have improved significantly. This baseline score helps to start with some point of measuring the impact of the intervention. The weak performance in the initial phases would be followed by improvement in the post-test, which would show the possibility of the use of instructional strategy or program.

3. Post-test Mean (13.20)

The means of the score rose significantly to 13.20 after the intervention. It is nearly twice the average of the pre-test indicating a good improvement in the performance of students. This kind of increase depicts that most students have gained an advantage of the learning activities or treatment.

4. Interpretation:

The post-test mean is high and this shows a considerable positive increase. It demonstrates that the intervention probably worked towards enhancing the knowledge and performance of the students. The fact that the post-test mean is so high proves that students have made significant improvements in comparison to their pre-test scores.

5. Standard Deviation

Standard deviation assists us in knowing the extent of dispersion of the scores. A low value implies that the scores are near to the mean whereas a high value implies that the scores of the students are varied.

6. **Pre-test Standard Deviation (1.55)**

The standard deviation of the pre-test was 1.55, indicating that the majority of students had their scores very close to the group mean point of 6.82. This is the sign of moderate variation: there were the students who did not do below average and were slightly above average in their performance.

7. **Interpretation:**

Prior to the intervention, the variability in performances of the students existed but not very significant. This implies that students were normally put at an equal level with some inherent variance in knowledge or skill.

8. **Standard Deviation after test (1.83).**

The standard deviation of the post-test rose to 1.83 that is a little higher than that of the pre-test. This implies that the majority of students got improved, but not by the same rate. Other students were greatly improving whereas others were improving averagely.

9. **Interpretation:**

The fact that the standard deviation increased post-intervention implies that there are higher levels of variation in the level of improvement. Although the intervention was successful, various students benefited to some extent, and this is perhaps because of the variation in effort, learning styles, or readiness.

10. **Standard Error of the Means (SEM)**

SEM illustrates the accuracy of the sample mean to the population. The lower is the value, the more precise is an answer.

11. **Pre-test SEM (0.21)**

Standard error during pre-test was 0.21. This is not bigger to mean that the pre-test mean of 6.82 is a true representation of the overall actual performance.

12. **Interpretation:**

The low SEM indicates that the mean in the pre-test is stable and constant and the probability of sampling error is low. This is a correct estimation that can be taken with fair degree of assurance in order to compare it to the post-test.

13. **Post-test SEM (0.24)**

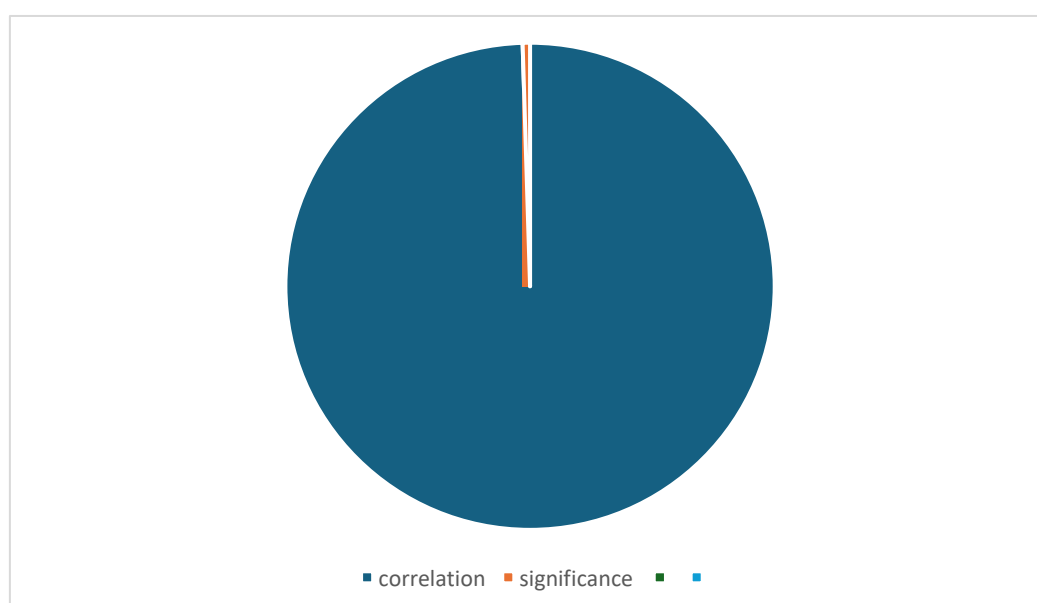
The post-test SEM was 0.24 which is not very low as compared to the pre-test SEM. This slight increase is an indication of the slight improvement in the score variability following the intervention.

14. Interpretation:

Though the SEM improved a little it remains very small. It is implied that the post-test value of 13.20 is still a valid and fair estimate of the actual performance level of the students. This increase in the mean is thus credible and significant.

4.4. Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 score in pretest & score in post test	56	.409	.002



4.5. Explanation and Interpretation

1. Correlation (0.409)

The pre-test and post-test scores have a relationship of 0.409, which is a moderate positive relationship. It implies that there is an observable relationship between the previous and post intervention performance of students. Students who had higher marks in the pre-test had a tendency to have higher marks in the post-test, but this correlation is not high enough to conclude that the pre-test was the only factor that predetermined their final results.

2. Interpretation

The correlation of 0.409 between initial abilities of the students and their post-test scores can be described as moderate, implying that although the initial abilities did have an impact on the posttest scores in the students, the intervention was rather significant. Since the correlation was significantly less (near 1), it would have implied that the pre-test scores almost explained the post-test scores. However, the correlation was moderate thus indicating many students made better gains than the pre-test performance might have indicated i.e. the intervention helped them make the gains.

3. Significance (p-value = 0.002)

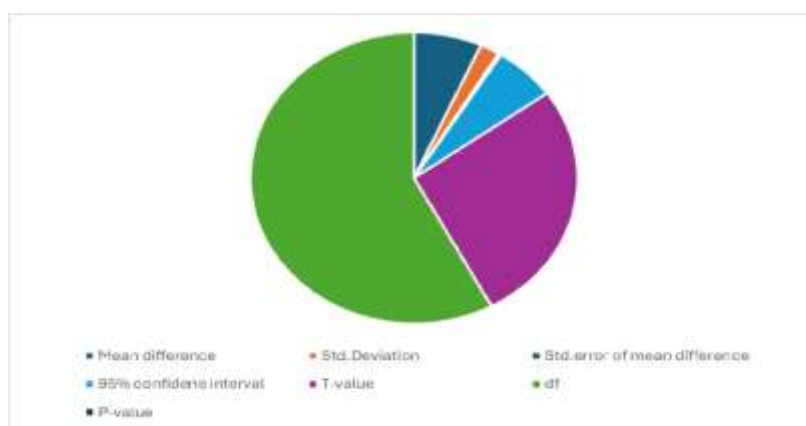
The established significance level for the correlation of pre-test and post-test scores are statistically significant ($p = .002 < .05$) therefore this correlation has strength.

4. Interpretation

The very low p-value allows us to be comfortable in saying that the correlation is likely to be an actual pattern of student performance rather than just random chance. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between pre-test and post-test scores.

4.6. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 score in pre- test - score in post test	-6.37500	1.85436	.24780	-6.87160	-5.87840	-25.727	55	.00



4.7.Explanation and Interpretation (Paired Samples Test)

1. Mean Difference (-6.38)

The average difference in scores from pre-test to post-test was a negative six-point-three-eight, indicating that the average post-test scores had increased over the average pre-test scores. In layman's terms, the students' performances improved because they took part in the called Intervention. This means that, as a group, the students showed an overall improvement of approximately six-point-three-eight points from their first test to the second test.

2. Interpretation

The mean difference being negative shows that the effect of the educational intervention was positive on the improvement of student learning. The students had more knowledge at the end of the intervention (the posttest scores were higher) so they did learn something during that time period.

3. Standard Deviation of Differences (1.85)

A standard deviation of 1.85 indicates that there was much variation between students' scores regarding how much each student improved. While there were a number of students who had an improvement of around 6 points, other students had a slightly larger or smaller amount of improvement.

4. Interpretation:

The variations experienced in educational contexts are typical, since students often differ in the degree to which they improve. Some students will gain more from the intervention than others, while others make less note-worthy progress but their improvement is still meaningful.

5. Standard Error of the Mean Difference (0.25)

The standard error of estimating the average difference between groups, is equal to approximately 0.025. This means that the average difference calculated between the two groups can be considered as accurately as possible, because of the low standard deviation of the measurement. Lower standard deviations indicate that the value is less likely to change on repeated measures.

6. Interpretation:

Because the standard error is very small, the average improvement of 6.38 points is likely a dependable reflection of how much improvement truly exists in the whole population. **95% Confidence Interval (-6.87 to -5.88)**

The confidence interval goes from -6.87 to -5.88 . This tells us that we can be 95% sure the real average improvement in the whole population falls within this range. Since the entire interval is negative, it clearly shows that students scored higher on the post-test than on the pre-test.

7. Interpretation:

Since the confidence interval does not cross zero, it strengthens the conclusion that the improvement is real and statistically meaningful. The actual improvement is likely between 5.88 and 6.87 points. **t-value (-25.727)**

The t-statistic is -25.727 , which is extremely large in absolute value. Such a high value shows that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is very strong compared to the amount of variation in the data.

8. Interpretation:

A large t-value shows that the improvement is not small or due to chance — it reflects a strong, meaningful change produced by the intervention.

9. Degrees of Freedom ($df = 55$)

The degrees of freedom for this test are 55, which simply represents the number of participants minus one. This value helps determine the critical t-value that the observed t-value is compared with.

10. Interpretation:

With 55 degrees of freedom, the t-value of -25.727 is far beyond the level required to be considered statistically significant.

11. Significance ($p\text{-value} = 0.000$)

The p-value is 0.000, which is far below the usual cutoff of 0.05. This shows that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is highly statistically significant.

12. Interpretation:

Because the p-value is basically zero, it is extremely unlikely that the improvement in post-test scores happened by chance. This strongly suggests that the intervention genuinely helped improve the students' performance.

5. Conclusion

The paired samples t-test shows a clear and statistically significant improvement in student performance after the intervention. On average, students gained 6.38 points, which is supported by the very large t-value (-25.727) and the highly significant p-value

(0.000). The confidence interval further confirms that the improvement is real, consistent, and meaningful. Altogether, these results strongly indicate that the intervention had a positive impact on student learning.

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APPENDIX

The *Gift of the Magi ” – O . Henry

Useful collocations :

make a sacrifice deep love long, flowing hair cherished possession close to tears
save money hard-earned coins shabby room warm embrace heartfelt smile

The Last Leaf ” – O . Henry

Useful collocations :

deadly illness lose hope bitter cold strong bond life-saving moment gloomy
weather

artistic talent

weak voice faint smifinal masterpiece

Thank You, Ma’am ” – Langston Hughes

Useful collocations : firm grip soft heart heavy purse troubled boy kind gesture
warm meal moral lesson

second chance honest living polite behaviour

For the treatment phase, a set of short stories rich in natural collocational patterns was selected (e.g., The Gift of the Magi, The Last Leaf, Thank You, Ma’am). Each story contained target collocations such as deep love, firm grip, heavy purse, and golden statue, which were explicitly highlighted and practiced through exercises. The post-test showed improved recognition and production of these collocations.”