

On Findability of Verb-Adverb Collocations in Electronic Dictionaries

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ABSTRACT

Little research concerned EFL learners' use of electronic dictionaries for collocational information. No study, to the researcher's knowledge, explored learners' ability to locate verb-adverb collocations in dictionaries. This study paves the way for further research in the realm of collocations and clarifies the way learners spot adverb collocates of verbs.

Advanced EFL Arab learners (n= 82) looked up a mix of 22 frequent and infrequent verbs searching for adverb collocates of these verbs in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English or Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary on DVD-ROM. The objectives were threefold: (1) assessing subjects' capacity to perform successful lookups (2) checking which of the dictionaries was more helpful, and (3) exploring any effect of knowledge of the meaning of the stimuli and training in dictionary-using on subjects' performance.

The subjects conducted versatile and exhaustive searches and located the sought-after information most often. It was easier for them to work with the least frequent verbs, however. Overall, no single dictionary was found to influence a significant difference in subjects' performance. Little evidence, however, suggested Oxford dictionary was comparatively better regarding the most frequent items. Subjects' success was unrelated to either training in dictionary-using or previous knowledge of the meaning of the stimuli.

Keywords: Arab EFL learners, EFL dictionaries, electronic dictionaries, verb adverb collocations.