

Comparing Vocabulary Patterns in Elementary School Textbooks: From the Perspective of Frequency and Collocations

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1. Introduction

These days, the public attention for English education has increased. In fact, in elementary schools, "Foreign Language Activities" became a regular subject as "Foreign Language" in 2020. This subject is for the fifth-graders and the sixth-graders and "Foreign Language Activity" is held for the third-graders and the fourth-graders.

I will find the commonalities and the differences of the verbs with high frequency in new textbook and former ones. Moreover, I will analyze the words which are used with high-frequency verbs. Through finding the changes in the textbook, I will think about the effective teaching method in elementary schools.

2. Research Questions

- (RQ1) How different are the three types of textbooks in terms of the verbs with high frequency?
- (RQ2) How different are the collocations of the verbs which are mentioned in RQ1 among the three textbooks?

3. Method

Material Which I Used


- *Hi, friends! 1.2* (used since April 2012).
- *We Can! 1,2* (used in 2018 and 2019 during the transition period)
- *Here We Go! 5,6* (started using this book this year)

The Method of Analysis

- step1: Type the sentences in the textbooks into a Word file.
- step2: Save it as a text file.
- step3: Analyze with the *Concordancer AntConc*.

The Method of Analysis for RQ1

We use *Word List* in *AntConc* to find the frequency and make the word lists of the top 20 verbs with high frequency in the textbooks. *Word List* has the words except for verbs, so we collect only verbs. In the case of Figure1, we collect only "are".

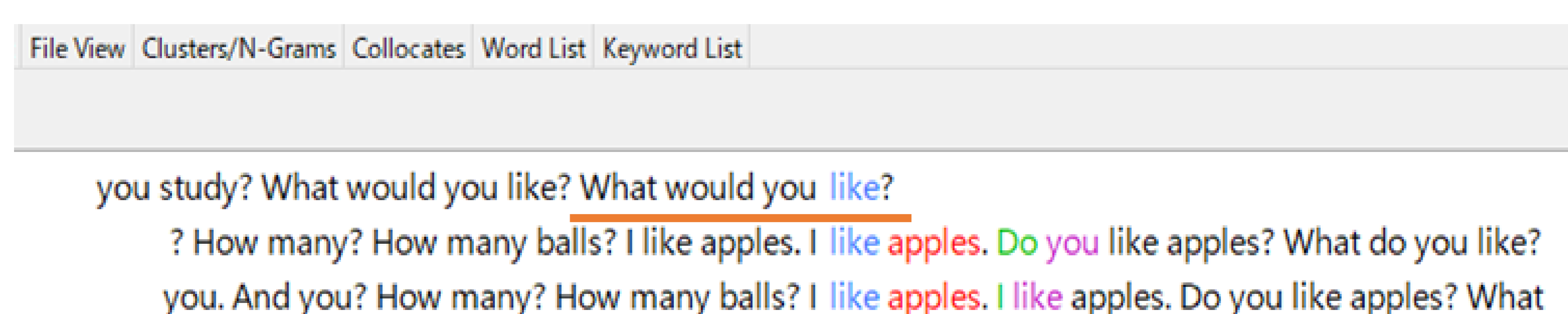


Rank	Freq	Word
1	23	you
2	19	are
3	18	i
4	16	we
5	13	good
6	13	what

(Figure 1: The sample of the findings using *Word List*)

The Method of Analysis for RQ2

I use *Collocates* and collect the collocation within 3 words from the target word. For example, in Picture2, in the case of "What would you like?", we collect "what", "would", and "you". If the sentence ends with the target word, I do not collect the words after the target word.



File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
you study? What would you like? What would you like?				
? How many? How many balls? I like apples. I like apples. Do you like apples? What do you like?				
you. And you? How many? How many balls? I like apples. I like apples. Do you like apples? What				

(Figure 2: The sample of the findings using *Concordancer*)

4. Results

(RQ1) How different are the three types of textbooks in terms of the verbs with high frequency?

(Table1: The high-frequency verbs)

	TB1 (Hi, friends! 1,2)		TB2 (We can! 1,2)		TB3 (Here We Go! 5,6)	
1	are	19	is	48	is	82
2	do	12	want	33	do	51
3	am	10	do	26	want	40
4	is	7	like	26	like	34
4	like	7	play	18	are	26
6	go	5	have	16	play	26
7	want	4	eat	10	see	18
8	help	3	be	8	sing	17
9	be	2	go	8	am	16
9	get	2	see	8	go	16
9	look	2	are	6	get	13
9	see	2	run	6	be	12
9	study	2	enjoy	5	eat	10
9	swim	2	watch	5	have	10

- The words which are used in TB2 and TB3 are almost the same.
- The information through "Sound" changed into that through "Letters". (*play* and *eat*)
- By increasing the number of units, the appearances of *run* and *watch* increased.
- The tense and the parts of speech increased. Gerunds and the past forms newly appeared from TB2 with *enjoy*.

(RQ2) How different are the collocations of the verbs which are mentioned in RQ1 among the three textbooks?

They can be divided into two groups. The collocations which increased and the collocations which decreased.

- There are the collocations that increased because of the new unit or new topic.
- There are the collocations that changed from information through sound into information through letters in TB2 and TB3.
- Basic expressions, such as a greeting, do not appear in "Foreign Language" for 5th graders and 6th graders.

5. Conclusion

We compared three types of textbooks and found changes in them. In fact, during the transition period from "Foreign Language Activity" to "Foreign Language", the textbooks already changed in accordance with the Course of Study. They were really similar to the latest one. We found that the kinds of the tense and the part of speech increased in the newer ones. This seems to be related to the unit or topic of the textbooks. Also, the information through sound changed into the one through letters following the fact that the perspective of "Writing" and "Reading" is added.

Compared with the past, it is certain that elementary school students learn English more in earnest so we can hope that the foundation of English learning will be stronger.