THE COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION OF ENGLISH GRAMMATICAL COLLOCATIONS BY KUWAITI EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to investigate Kuwaiti EFL learners' ability to comprehend and produce grammatical collocations in English. It also examines whether their English proficiency level and the type of grammatical collocation influence their comprehension and production of such collocations. The results show that the difference in performance between the advanced learners and intermediate learners was enough to differ statistically on both comprehension and production tests. Furthermore, the most frequent types of errors that may occur as well as some possible reasons for their occurrence have been identified. Noun + preposition and adjective + preposition were the most problematic types in comparison with other types in both groups. It has been suggested that L1 interference plays a central role in the comprehension and production of grammatical collocations by Kuwaiti EFL learners. Particularly, literal translation from Arabic has been found to be the main reason for grammatical collocation errors. The prepositions in Arabic do not usually correspond to their English counterparts e.g., at in angry at, which is literally translated to *angry from in Arabic. Finally, lack of knowledge of grammatical collocations is also an important reason behind such errors. It might be suggested that English language curricula taught in Kuwait do not pay enough attention to grammatical collocations. The study concludes with some pedagogical implications that may help teachers of English as a second/foreign language increase the awareness of grammatical collocations.*

KEYWORDS: collocations, grammatical collocations, Kuwaiti EFL learners, error analysis, SLA, Kuwaiti Spoken Arabic, L1 interference

INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that one of the most significant aspects of learning the vocabulary of a particular language is collocations. Therefore, several researchers have stressed the significance of the acquisition of collocations by EFL learners who belong to different linguistic backgrounds. For example, Kane (1983) states that the significance of collocations stems from making the spoken and written language more vivid and stimulating. Along these lines, a big number of researchers adopted the classification of collocations proposed by Benson *et al.* (1986). Mainly, they classified collocations into two main categories, namely, grammatical collocation and lexical collocation. This research paper is a serious attempt to examine the problems that Kuwait EFL learners encounter in using grammatical collocations. Specifically, it aims to: (1) examine the problems that Kuwaiti EFL learners encounter in the use of grammatical collocations; (2) investigate whether the participants' English proficiency level plays a role in their comprehension and production of grammatical collocations; and

finally (3) identify the most problematic types of grammatical collocation and account for the reasons beyond these errors. The next section sheds light on the literature pertinent to the context of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collocations importance in Second Language Learning (SLL)

Several researchers propose various definitions of the term collocation in the relevant literature. First and foremost, Firth (1957: 183) posits that collocation is the elements that usually accompany words. Also, McCarthy (1990: 12) defines collocation as "a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others". Another definition is suggested by Sinclair (1991: 170), who points out that collocation is "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text". He also distinguishes frequent collocations from infrequent ones. In a similar vein, Nattingar and DeCarrio (1992: 132) define collocations as "strings of specific items that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance such as *rancid butter*". In a nutshell, it is clear that collocated words are those which are closely related to each other than others.

In terms of their importance, Brown (1974) indicates that learning collocations not only increases ESL/EFL learners' knowledge of vocabulary, but also improves learners' oral fluency, listening comprehension, and reading speed. This may explain why collocations have received extensive attention in second/foreign language teaching recently (Nattinger, 1988). In fact, Brown (1974) points out that learning collocations, gradually, enables learners to recognise language chunks used by native speakers in speech and writing, and to understand that words in combination with other words can acquire another meaning. Furthermore, collocations are considerably used in daily life conversations. Therefore, if mastered, they can help EFL learners memorise the semantic area of a certain word, and predict which words occur together. In addition, collocations are vitally important because they shift learners' focus from individual words to more complex structures that are used daily in social life. Hence, teaching collocations may result in enhanced communicative fluency in both speaking and writing (Nattinger, 1988). For example, Wilkins (1972: 111) states that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". It is accepted that choosing words carefully in specific situations is more necessary than choosing grammatical structures. Consequently, one may argue that since collocations enhance second language learners' knowledge of vocabulary in the target language, their acquisition is vital.

However, mastering the use of collocations is viewed as an area of difficulty facing many EFL learners (Crystal, 1992: 105). McCarthy (1990:13) argues that "even very advanced learners often make inappropriate or unacceptable collocations". Therefore, one may argue that examining these stumbling blocks is an area worthy of further investigation.

Features and classification of collocations

Numerous features and classifications of English collocations have been proposed in the literature. For instance, Boonyasaquan (2005: 11-13) suggests that there are four major factors that influence the range of items in collocations, these factors are summarised as follows:

1.   Collocations are frequent co-occurrences of items between which no word can be added. For example, in *knife and fork*, it is unusual to insert a word into this collocation like *knife, spoon* and *fork*.

2.   Collocations consist of elements that cannot be replaced by a synonym. For example, *John makes a cake*; but not *John does a cake.

3.   Collocations are binomials that cannot be reversed. The order of a collocation is more or less fixed, for example, *man and wife* not *wife and man*.

4.   Some collocations can be predicted, for instance, if someone hears the words *apply* and *shrug*, s/he automatically expects that the words *for* and *shoulder* will follow respectively.

Another major influential classification was suggested by Benson *et al.* (1986), who divide collocations into two major categories: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations. Grammatical collocations, generally, refer to different combinations of nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions or even grammatical structures like a clause or an infinitive. The main patterns of grammatical collocation are summarised in the following table:

Table 1 Main types of grammatical collocation by Benson *et al.* (1986)

Types/patterns of grammatical collocation	Example
Noun + preposition	*Apathy towards*, *blockade against*
Noun + that–clause	they reached *an agreement that* they will sign the contract, she took *an oath that she will pass the exam*
Noun + to- infinitive	he made *an attempt to* climb the mountain, she felt *a compulsion to* go to France
Preposition + noun	Sam is *in agony,* I met him *by chance*
Adjective + to – infinitive	she is *ready to* travel, it is *necessary to* go to the hospital
Adjective + preposition	Mary is *angry at* him, Jennifer is *fond of* animals
Adjective + that- clause	it was *imperative that* he leaves, he was *afraid that* his wife will leave him

The other major category is lexical collocations, which consist of different co-occurrences of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. What makes lexical collocations different from grammatical collocations is that the former do not include prepositions, clauses or infinitives in their combinations. The following table exhibits the main patterns of lexical collocation as described by Benson *et al.* (1986):

Table 2 Main types of lexical collocation by Benson *et al.* (1986)

Types/patterns of lexical collocation	Example
Verb (which means action) + noun /pronoun/ prepositional phrase	compose music, inflict a wound, set an alarm
Verb (which means eradication or cancellation) + noun	withdraw an offer, crush resistance, revoke a license
Noun + verb	bombs explode, storms rage, alarms go off
Adjective + noun	crushing defeat, heavy smoker, kind regards
Quantifier + noun	piece of advice, herd of cows, flock of birds
Verb + adverb	sleep soundly, argue heatedly, apologise humbly
Adverb + adjective	Distinctly remember, closely acquainted, deeply absorbed

It is worth noting that grammatical collocations are the ones which will be tested in this study. Lexical collocations have already been investigated by Alotaibi (2014).

The main causes of collocation errors

Several studies have been conducted to discover the causes of collocation errors. For instance, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) investigate Polish and German EFL learners' acquisition of English collocations, they note that the learners' collocational errors can be traced to L1 interference. Also, Flowerdew (1999) points out that learners acquire the meaning of English prepositions through their use individually without paying attention to their collocational properties. Moreover, Liu (1999) analyses collocational errors in Taiwanese students' writings. Table 3 below briefly describes the seven factors which cause the errors in Taiwanese students' writings.

Table 3 Sources of collocational errors as described by Liu (1999)

Cognitive strategies	Intralingual Transfer	1. overgeneralisation
		2. ignorance of rule restrictions
		3. false concepts hypothesised
		4. the use of synonym
	Interlingual Transfer	5. negative transfer
Communicative strategies	Paraphrase	6. word coinage
		7. approximation

Finally, Alotaibi (2014: 9) notes that Kuwaiti EFL learners have little awareness of lexical collocations in English. Additionally, he argues that the most frequent types of errors occur on *adjective + noun* and *verb (action) + noun /pronoun/ prepositional* in comparison with other types in both groups of learners i.e. advanced and intermediate. Alotaibi (ibid) concludes that L1 interference plays a central role in the acquisition of lexical collocations by Kuwaiti EFL learners.

Statement of the problem and purpose of the study

The acquisition of English collocations by EFL learners has been examined by numerous researchers recently. Based on the researchers' knowledge and experience in Kuwait, the main teaching principles in educational institutions focus mainly on syntax and other grammatical aspects of English. Thus, EFL learners are more or less aware of the grammaticality of English sentences. However, little attention has been paid to their acceptability in terms of word combinations. Also, Arab EFL learners usually encounter some difficulties in concentrating on repetitions of separate words as opposed to chunks of words, therefore, this may hinder their communication with native speakers of English. These observations may allude to the significance of learning grammatical collocations by EFL learners.

In this context, this study's main focus is to explore Kuwaiti EFL learners' awareness of grammatical collocations. The initial hypotheses are: (1) the English proficiency level of Kuwaiti EFL learners plays a crucial role in their comprehension and production of grammatical collocations; (2) EFL learners' performance varies according to the types of grammatical collocation; and (3) L1 interference contributes to EFL learners' errors concerning grammatical collocations. The current study adopts the classification of

grammatical collocations as designed by Benson *et al.* (1986). The following are the main research questions of this study:

A)   Does the English proficiency level of one hundred Kuwaiti EFL learners play a role in their comprehension and production of grammatical collocations in English?
B)   Do Kuwaiti EFL learners encounter problems with certain types of grammatical collocation? If yes, what types are the most problematic among the ones selected? And what are the reasons behind these errors?

METHODOLOGY

The sample
The sample of the current study consisted of one hundred Kuwaiti students at Public Authority of Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and College of Basic Education (CBE). The participants' ages ranged between 18 and 30 (mean= 24). Mackey and Gass (2005: 124) report that one hundred participants are enough for descriptive studies, fifty participants for correlational studies, and from fifteen to thirty participants for experimental studies. In order to ensure the validity of the results, the participants were selected randomly. Since the participants' English proficiency level is an independent variable, the participants are selected based on their scores on the English Placement Test (EPT). In particular, the participants who scored 50-69 on the EPT are considered intermediate, while those who scored 70 -85 are considered advanced. Hence, two groups, namely, intermediate learners (ILs) and advanced learners (ALs) were involved in the study. Table 4 shows the distribution of the participants in terms of their English proficiency level:

Table 4 The distribution of the participants in terms of their English proficiency level

Number of participants	English proficiency level
50	Advanced
50	Intermediate

Being aware of ethical issues is absolutely necessary, particularly, participants' confidentiality. Protecting private information of the participants such as their identity, or any other detail they reveal during the test is a priority. Therefore, the participants were asked not to write their names on the paper, and they have been assured that the data will be protected since some of the participants are known to the researchers. In addition, they were informed that the participation in the study is voluntary, they were also informed of the purpose of the study. To ensure maximum comfort, the participants were given the choice to withdraw anytime during the test if they feel tired, stressed or unwilling to do the test.

The test
The participants were tested twice in this study; a multiple-choice test was used to check their comprehension skills, whereas a fill-in the blank test was used to check their production skills of grammatical collocations. Nicol (2007: 54) points out that a multiple-choice test is commonly used to measure participants' comprehension of a certain structure. Therefore, the researchers opted for the multiple-choice test to check whether the participants are aware of grammatical collocations in English. Conversely, a fill-in the blank test is the commonly-used

instrument to test the participants' production skills. The test used in this study included seven types of grammatical collocation for both tests. The researchers included two examples of each type of grammatical collocation on each test. Hence, each test consisted of fourteen items, and both tests of twenty eight items (see Appendix 1).

The researchers ensured that the participants were familiar with the meanings of the components of each type of grammatical collocation. On the test, the participants had to choose between four choices that were designed in the following way: one correct answer (the correct collocation), one wrong answer (closely related to the correct answer), one distracter, and one I don't know option. The last option was used to reduce the probability of choosing a wrong answer, which in turn increases the reliability of the test. The grammatical collocations were collected from the Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary. The frequency of the selected collocations was then checked in *the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)* to ensure their use in contemporary speech. The sentences utilised in the test were adapted from *COCA* and *Macmillan dictionary* with minor modifications to better suit the English proficiency level of the participants.

Error Analysis (EA)

Error Analysis (EA) approach is used to analyse some potential causes of the grammatical collocation errors. Mitchell and Myles (2004) suggest that errors pertaining to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) are best investigated via EA approach, which focuses on the types of errors done by second language learners. This approach also attempts to account for these errors systematically. Mitchell and Myles (2004) note that one of the most common causes of errors in SLA is L1 interference. Accordingly, EA explains the errors made by EFL learners in terms of the differences between L1 and L2 or lack of knowledge of L2. In other word, errors can be classified as interlingual or intralingual (Saville-Troike, 2006: 38-39). In particular, interlingual errors refer to those caused by transfer from L1 to L2, while intralingual errors deal with those caused by aspects related to L1 only (Saville-Troike, ibid). In sum, EA is used to shed light on the possible reasons of grammatical collocation errors and to elicit accurate conclusions and justifications for such errors.

Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the results. First of all, means of the participants' answers were calculated for each group. Such means identify the differences between the answers of the two groups on the test. Besides, they show the most problematic pattern of grammatical collocation among the ones selected. In addition, a t-test was used to: (1) examine whether the English proficiency level of Kuwaiti EFL learners affects their comprehension and production of grammatical collocations; and (2) check whether the differences between the two groups i.e. ALs and ILs are statistically significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Testing the first hypothesis regarding the comprehension of grammatical collocations, Table 5 clearly shows that ALs (M=6.9) performed better than ILs (M=5.0). Additionally, there are

statistically significant differences between ALs and ILs in terms of their comprehension of grammatical collocations; the statistical significance (0.009) is less than (0.05).

Table 5 Results of t-test of differences between ALs and ILs on the comprehension test

Proficiency Level	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Advanced Learners (ALs)	50	6.9	2.6	-1.098	98	0.009*
Intermediate Learners (ILs)	50	5.0	2.1			

* Significance level < 0.05

The difference between the mean of ALs (M=6.9) and the mean of ILs (M=5.0) is enough to be statistically significant. The difference between the two means is (1.9), showing that the English proficiency level influenced the participants' answers on the test.

Moreover, the descriptive statistic analysis shown in Table 6 suggests that both ALs and ILs had some awareness of grammatical collocations; the total average of correct answers was (59.5%). This means that the participants have passed the test. Additionally, ILs group obtained good results, especially on types like *noun + to -infinitive*.

Table 6 Percentage of correct answers in terms of English proficiency level on the comprehension test

Types of grammatical collocation	Vocabulary items	Percentage of correct answers %		Mean of total answers %
		Advanced	Intermediate	
Noun + preposition	*protection from*	75%	50%	62.5%
	attitude to	43%	29%	36%
Noun + that–clause	*agreement that*	70%	57%	63.5%
	oath that	74%	46%	60%
Noun + to- infinitive	*attempt to*	71%	56%	63.5%
	ability to	82%	64%	73%
Preposition + noun	*by chance*	82%	56%	69%
	under oath	77%	45%	61%
Adjective + to - infinitive	*necessary to*	60%	50%	55%
	imperative to	66%	45%	55.5%
Adjective + preposition	*angry with/at/about*	47%	28%	37.5%
	experienced in/at	73%	60%	66.5%
Adjective + that - clause	*afraid that*	69%	51%	60%
	important that	78%	64%	71%
Mean of total answers%		69%	50%	59.5%

An examination of Table 6 demonstrates that ALs and ILs performance on the types of grammatical collocation varies from one pattern to the other. More interestingly, both groups obtained high and low percentages on the same pattern such as *noun + preposition* and *adjective + preposition*. These fluctuating percentages on the same pattern are caused by the items within these patterns. For example, the total mean of corrects answers on the item *protection from* was 62.5%, whereas the total mean of correct answers on the other item

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within the same pattern i.e., *attitude to* was 36%. A study of the items mentioned above and other items in Table 8 will be discussed later after testing the second hypothesis concerning the production of grammatical collocations.

Testing the participants' production skills of grammatical collocations, Table 7 demonstrates that ALs (M=6.5) performed better than ILs (M=4.5) on the test. Hence, there is a statistically significant difference between ALs group and ILs group in terms of producing grammatical collocations; the statistical significance (0.008) is lower than (0.05).

Table 7 Results of t-test of differences between ALs and ILs on the production test

Proficiency Level	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Advanced Learners (ALs)	50	6.5	2.5	-1.021	98	0.008**
Intermediate Learners (ILs)	50	4.5	2.6			

** Significance level <0.05

Table 8 Percentage of correct answers in terms of English proficiency level on the production test

Types of grammatical collocation	Vocabulary items	Percentage of correct answers %		Mean of total answers %
		Advanced	Intermediate	
Noun + preposition	*authority on*	71%	44%	57.5%
	fondness of/for	40%	19%	29.5%
Noun + that–clause	*assumption that*	63%	46%	54.5%
	suggestion that	67%	41%	54%
Noun + to- infinitive	*compulsion to*	67%	49%	58%
	pleasure to	77%	61%	69%
Preposition + noun	*by coincidence*	80%	55%	67.5%
	by phone	74%	44%	59%
Adjective + to - infinitive	*willing to*	56%	46%	51%
	pleased to	64%	39%	51.5%
Adjective + preposition	*good at*	41%	22%	31.5%
	worried about	70%	55%	62.5%
Adjective + that - clause	*astonished that/at*	67%	50%	58.5%
	certain that	72%	59%	65.5%
Mean of total answers%		65%	45%	55 %

A glimpse at Table 8 shows that the participants' performance on the comprehension test (see Table 6) is better than their performance on the production test. The mean of total answers on the comprehension test was (59.5%), whereas the mean of total answers on the production test was (55%).

Probably, this percentage on the production test is attributed to L1 interference**,** the researchers noted that L1 positive and negative transfer plays a crucial role in the participants' ability to obtain correct or erroneous answers on the test. These instances of correct vs. incorrect answers could be analysed through relying on EA approach. Starting with the *noun + preposition* pattern, the percentage of correct answers by participants in both groups on the vocabulary item *protection from* was relatively high (62.5%). This high percentage could be ascribed to the fact that the grammatical collocation was literally translated from Kuwaiti Spoken Arabic (KSA) as in (1):

1.   l-xuðra   taʕtiina   himaayih   min   l-ʔamraad
the-vegetables   give.us   protection   from   the-diseases
'Vegetables give us protection from diseases'

It seems that the participants translated the Arabic equivalent literally into English. Therefore, the participants were able to provide correct answers on this item. However, the participants provided wrong answers (36%) on another item from the same category, namely, *attitude to*. Similarly, *attitude to* can be literally translated into Arabic as **attitude from* as can be deduced from the following example:

The equivalent of *attitude to* in KSA is *mawqif min.*
2.   mawqif   an-naas   min   l-hukuumah   kan   jayyid
attitude   the-people   from   the-government   was   good
'people's attitude to the government was good'

The preposition *min* in Arabic can be translated into English as *from*. The participants may have chosen to use *from* as it is the only translation to the Arabic preposition *min.* This example has a misleading equivalent in Arabic, which may have made the participants translate the item inaccurately from L1.

The same applies to the *adjective + preposition* pattern*,* possibly, the participants supplied wrong answers on the item *angry at/with* (37.5%) because the literal translation of *angry at/with* in KSA is **angry from* as in example (3):

3.   ali   zaʕlaan   min   ahmad
Ali   angry   from   Ahmad
'Ali is angry with Ahmad'

Since the equivalent of the preposition used in the grammatical collocation *angry at/with* in Arabic is *from* not *at/with*, it can be suggested that the participants chose **angry from* not *angry at/with* on the comprehension test as a direct result of L1 interference.

The results show that the types of grammatical collocational errors vary. It is clear that they are not the same with regard to the correct answers the participants provided on the test. The *adjective + preposition* and *noun + preposition* types are more problematic in comparison with other types such as *noun + to – infinitive* or *noun + that - clause*. More specifically, the types of grammatical collocations vary in terms of the degree of difficulty to the participants.

Answering the second question, it is clear that L1 plays a central role in the comprehension and production of grammatical collocations. L1 transfer can be positive on certain items such as *protection from*, *authority on and experienced in* or negative on other items such as *attitude to*, *fondness of/for* and *angry with*. The latter type usually has a misleading equivalent in Arabic as explained in examples (1-3). Also, it could be argued that the participants paid more attention to the grammatical structure of the sentence while neglecting the meaning. The main focus of teaching English as a second/foreign language has usually been grammar rather than meaning as we argued in section 2.4. The types that have no one-to-one equivalent in Arabic are less problematic as the participants had to memorise the collocation as one unit.

Concerning positive transfer, the researchers noted that some items in types such as *preposition + noun* were slightly easier for the participants as a direct result of positive transfer from L1. Hence, one may argue that the participants' acquisition of such items can be seen as controversial. In particular, the researchers expected the participants to provide accurate answers on items such as *by coincidence* (67.5%), *by chance* (69%) and *under oath* (61%) since these items have a one-to-one equivalent in KSA *bi ssudfa* 'by coincidence'**,** *bi ssudfa* 'by chance', *tahta lqasam* 'under oath' and *bi ttalafuun* 'by phone' (59%) respectively (see tables 6 and 8). This is illustrated in the following examples:

4.   ∫ufit   ahmad   bi   ssudfa   albaariha
saw-I   Ahmad   by   the-coincidence   yesterday
'I saw Ahmad by coincidence yesterday'

5.   kan   l-muttaham   taht   l-qasam
was-he   the-accused   under   oath
'the accused was under oath'

6.   naaqa∫naa   l-mawduuʕ   bi   t-talafun
discussed-we   the-subject   by   the-phone
'we discussed the subject by phone'

Owing to the existence of one-to-one equivalents of the English grammatical collocations in Arabic, the participants were probably able to supply accurate answers on the test. These answers may not be attributed to the participants' knowledge of such collocations in L2, rather they literally translated the items from Arabic into English.

Additionally, items of the type *adjective/noun + that or to infinitive* were fairly easy to the participants as they have a fixed grammatical structure which the participants have acquainted themselves with throughout their academic life. Particularly, it has been indicated that the focus on grammar at schools in Kuwait is greater than that on vocabulary. Therefore, the participants were able to provide correct answers on items such as *certain that* (65.5%) and *imperative to* (55.5%).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Kuwaiti EFL learners have some awareness of grammatical collocations in English. Additionally, it is clear that English proficiency level plays a central role in the comprehension and production of grammatical collocations by Kuwaiti EFL learners. Advanced learners (ALs) performed better than intermediate learners (ILs) on the test; thus, the difference between the two groups was enough to differ statistically. It has become apparent that the most problematic patterns for both groups are the ones which have prepositions, especially those which have a misleading equivalent in Arabic. The patterns *noun/adjective + to –infinitive /that –clause* were found to be less problematic. The participants' faulty answers on the test were attributed to three reasons: (1) Kuwaiti EFL learners have not been fully exposed to this phenomenon at school; (2) the frequency of the items in everyday life may have affected the participants' awareness of such items; and (3) L1 interference plays a crucial role in the acquisition of grammatical collocations owing to the differences between English and Arabic prepositions. As far as the researchers are concerned, collocations and other phenomena such as euphemism and culturally loaded words require a higher degree of interaction and exposure to the target language. Accordingly, schoolteachers need to increase Kuwaiti EFL learners' awareness of grammatical collocations in English and their crucial importance in daily life conversation from early stages. Finally, it is suggested that more studies need to be conducted to identify the most suitable activities and tasks that can help in teaching and learning English collocations.

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Appendix One

Part A   (Test one)

Educational level: _____

Question 1: choose the answer that best completes the following sentences:

1.   Vegetables give us **protection** ……………. many diseases.
a) at   **b) from**   c) over   d) I do not know

2. People in Kuwait have a more relaxed **attitude** ……………. their work.
a) at   b) from   **c) to**   d) I do not know

3. They reached an **agreement** ……………. they will merge their companies.
a) that   b) of   c) on   d) I do not know

4. Alex took an **oath** ……………. he would do his duty.
a) to   b) of   **c) that**   d) I do not know

5. Rami made an **attempt** ……………. pass the exam.
a) towards   **b) to**   c) for   d) I do not know

6. My son has a great **ability** ……………. solve problems.
a) to   b) in   c) for   d) I do not know

7. It was ……………. **chance** that Omar was cast in the movies.
a) on   **b) by**   c) under   d) I do not know

8. The judge reminded the witness that he was still ……………. **oath**.
a) over   b) at   **c) under**   d) I do not know

9. It was **necessary** …………….late last week.
a) **to work**   b) work   c) to working   d) I do not know

10. It was **imperative** …………….there on time.
a) from being   b**) to be**   c) be   d) I do not know

11. Walid was **angry** …………….the way he was treated.
a) over   **b) at**   c) from   d) I do not know

12. She used to be a nurse so she is **experienced** …………….looking after children.
a) on   b) over   **c) in**   d) I do not know

13. I am afraid …………….you will miss the train.
a) for   **b) that**   c) on   d) I do not know

14. It is really important ……………. they receive all the help available.

a) that   b) for   c) on   d) I do not know

Part B   (Test two)

Educational level: _____

Question 1: fill in the blanks below with a preposition, *that* **or** *to* **which best collocates with the items in bold.**

1. I now have **authority** ……on………. the person who used to be my boss.
2. I have always had a **fondness** ……for………. fast cars.
3. There is an **assumption** ……that………. people who live in this house are poor.
4. The committee rejected a **suggestion** ……that………. share options should be offered to all employees.
5. Ali felt a **compulsion** …to………….see the doctor.
6. It was a **pleasure** ………to…….work with that team.
7. …By………. **coincidence**, his contract finished at about the same time his new contract begun.
8. She talked………by……. **phone** with me about her future plans.
9. She was always **willing** …to………….listen to something new.
10. They were **pleased** ……to……….hear that Alex cannot come tonight!
11. Alex was very **good** …at…….. English.
12. The labours in the oil industry are very **worried** ……about……….their future.
13. Laila was **astonished** ……that………. I should think such a thing.
14. I am **certain** ……that………. they will come earlier.

Appendix Two

Arabic sounds

Arabic consonants/vowels	Symbols	Description
ء	ʔ	voiceless glottal stop
ب	b	voiced bilabial stop
ت	t	voiceless dento-alveolar stop
ث	θ	voiceless inter-dental fricative
ج	j	voiced post-alveolar affricate
ح	h̲	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	x	voiceless uvular fricative
د	d	voiced dento-alveolar stop
ذ	ð	voiced alveolar fricative
ر	r	voiced alveo-palatal trill
ز	z	voiced alveolar fricative
س	s	voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	voiceless alveo-palatal fricative
ص	s̲	voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative
ض	d̲	voiced alveolar emphatic stop
ط	t̲	voiceless dento-alveolar emphatic stop
ظ	ð̲	voiced alveolar emphatic fricative

ع	ʕ	voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	γ	voiced uvular fricative
ف	f	voiceless labio-dental fricative
ق	q/g [1]	voiceless/voiced uvular stop
ك	k	voiceless velar stop
ل	l	voiced alveolar lateral
م	m	voiced bilabial nasal
ن	n	voiced alveolar nasal
ه	h	voiceless glottal fricative
و	w	voiced labio-velar glide
ي	y	voiced palatal glide
/ َ/	a	low short central unrounded
/ُ/	u	high short back rounded
/ِ/	i	high short front unrounded
آ	aa	low long central unrounded
وو	uu	high long back rounded
يي	ii	high long front unrounded
و	o:	mid long back rounded
او	aw	low short front unrounded + labio-velar glide
اي	ay	low short front unrounded + palatal glide
يي	ee	mid long front unrounded

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[1] These symbols represent the voiceless and voiced uvular stop.