

# A Comparison of Verb-Noun Collocations Collected from Revised High School English Textbooks in Japan

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## 1. Purpose of Research

The aim of this research is to compare verb-noun collocations from four revised English I textbooks and four former English I textbooks for Japanese high school students, and suggest effective teaching ways of collocations with the new textbooks in the classrooms. According to the government guideline for teaching in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) administered in 2003, English words to be used in revised English I textbooks are limited into 1300, 200 words less than former English I word number, although the objective of English I is to develop the students' basic ability to understand a speaker's or writer's intention and to express any kind of information and students' idea about their daily lives in English, and to cultivate a positive attitude toward communication in English. In fact, the word number is reflected in the revised English I textbooks. Table 1 shows that total types of the four textbooks are decreased by about 400 words. Under this condition, I believe that collocations, which are the way words combine to produce natural-sounding speech and writing, will be more important to develop good command of English targeted in English I within the limits of words.

This is follow-up of former collocation research among six English I textbooks of the same level for Japanese high school students. The findings in that research is (1) Six English I textbooks have no consensus on collocations which should be taught among them. (2) There are few collocations in the

Table 1. Total tokens and types in English I textbooks and revised ones

	Unicorn I	Milestone I	Sunshine I	One World I
Total tokens	10107	9457	9538	8591
Total types	1907	1931	1851	1814

	revised Unicorn I	revised Milestone I	revised Sunshine I	revised One World I
Total tokens	7910	7144	5978	6290
Total types	1627	1509	1394	1399

textbooks and there is not so much difference on the number of collocations among them. and (3) Each textbook has different concept on which collocations are important and how they should be taught. Obviously what is neglected is consideration of the fact that learners should develop their collocational ability. Then, this research is done to analyze if collocations are given more weight to in the revised English I textbooks and contrive the active way of teaching collocations with them to build up students' collocational data base.

## 2. Methodologies

### 2.1. Research Questions

The following three research questions are set up.

- (1) What kind of collocations and how many are used in the revised English I textbooks?
- (2) How are the collocations presented in the textbooks?
- (3) What are similarities and differences between collocations in the revised English I textbooks and those in the former English I textbooks?

### 2.2. Choices of English textbooks and collocations

English I textbooks for the tenth graders are used for this research. The main reason to select them is that the majority of tenth graders are supposed to use them at schools and that English knowledge acquired with the textbooks will become the basis for them. Among many English I textbooks, four textbooks<sup>(1)</sup> are selected: *Milestone English course I*, *One World English course I*, *Sunshine English course I* and *Unicorn English course I*. They are all of the same level and are used by students at many schools according to the data 'Nikkyohan Co. Ltd.,' collected in 1999. Moreover, they are all revised, following the new government guidelines for teaching, and so revised ones and former ones are compared.

120 target verb-noun collocations were prepared. In order to specify them, the following steps were taken. Firstly, nouns and transitive verbs which appear in all the target textbooks are extracted by means of KWIC concordance. Secondly, they are considered nodes, and all the collocates are selected in *COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM*<sup>(2)</sup>. By doing it, 204 collocations were found. Thirdly, the 204 collocations were checked by the *BBJ Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (1997) and *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (2002)<sup>(3)</sup>. And then 107 collocations were further selected. Finally, 13 collocations clearly mentioned as new and important word combinations in the respective textbooks were added to the 107 collocations. Totally 120 collocations were targeted in this research.

In order to answer Research Question 3, thirty-seven collocations which were targeted in the former textbook research added to the 120 collocations. 157 collocations were selected in the research question

Table 2. Selected collocations

1	action	take	41	job	get	81	research	do	121	bring	peace
2	answer	give	42	job	take	82	seat	take	122	bring	end
3	answer	get	43	job	find	83	seat	lose	123	catch	breath
4	ask	question	44	life	make	84	seat	win	124	catch	fire
5	break	make	45	light	shed	85	send	message	125	cut	rates
6	break	take	46	line	draw	86	send	letter	126	cut	rate
7	break	deadlock	47	lose	weight	87	send	postcard	127	cut	tax
8	build	house	48	lose	money	88	step	take	128	cut	costs
9	buy	share	49	lose	time	89	stop	put	129	cut	price
10	buy	house	50	lose	sight	90	story	tell	130	draw	attention
11	buy	stock	51	love	make	91	take	time	131	draw	conclusions
12	carry	weight	52	make	difference	92	take	care	132	keep	eye
13	catch	fish	53	make	money	93	take	look	133	meet	needs
14	catch	eye	54	make	sense	94	take	advantage	134	put	pressure
15	catch	glimpse	55	make	way	95	take	account	135	put	money
16	catch	train	56	make	decision	96	talent	show	136	put	end
17	catch	bus	57	make	use	97	train	take	137	run	country
18	catch	breath	58	meet	standard	98	turn	take	138	run	business
19	chance	give	59	meet	requirement	99	turn	attention	139	run	company
20	chance	take	60	message	get	100	walk	take	140	stand	chance
21	change	make	61	message	leave	101	win	election	141	stand	trial
22	change	name	62	message	deliver	102	win	title	142	take	years
23	check	make	63	message	receive	103	win	championship	143	got	call
24	close	eye	64	money	spend	104	win	game	144	made	visit
25	decide	fate	65	money	raise	105	win	race	145	paid	visit
26	discuss	issue	66	open	door	106	make	mistake	146	take	boat
27	discuss	matter	67	open	eye	107	make	progress	147	take	bus
28	eat	food	68	part	take	108	make	friends	148	take	holiday
29	example	set	69	part	play	109	take	pride	149	take	vacation
30	example	follow	70	place	take	110	make	call	150	mind	change
31	example	give	71	play	role	111	make	laws	151	pick	take
32	face	problem	72	pleasure	take	112	lose	temper	152	problem	solve
33	face	make	73	point	make	113	give	speech	153	set	fire
34	find	way	74	point	see	114	make	speech	154	set	standard
35	follow	path	75	point	reach	115	make	joke	155	difference	tell
36	get	rid	76	produce	result	116	make	reservation	156	distance	keep
37	give	advice	77	read	paper	117	spend	time	157	job	do
38	give	way	78	receive	treatment	118	take	picture			
39	give	information	79	receive	support	119	take	test			
40	goal	achieve	80	record	set	120	take	trip			

106–120 collocations clearly mentioned in respective textbooks

120–157 collocations selected from the former textbooks

3, seen in table 2.

### 2.3. Procedure

The following procedure was adopted:

- (1) Textbooks were changed to computerized texts to facilitate this quantitative research.
- (2) The frequency of use of the target collocations and the context in each textbook were examined by means of TEXTANA, a concordance software program.

## 3. Data analysis and results

The results are shown in the following order of the respective research questions.

### 3.1. Research question 1: What kind of collocations and how many are used in the revised English I textbooks?

Research question 1 is to examine what kind of collocations and how many are used in the target textbooks. In order to answer this question, the frequency of use of target collocations is checked by means of TEXTANA, a concordance software program. As shown in Table 3, 44 out of 120 target collocations (37% of the target collocations) are used in the textbooks. However, about twenty types of collocation appear in three target textbooks, while only nine types of collocation in one textbook. As a whole, the number of collocations which are treated in each textbook is very few. Moreover, almost all the collocations are treated only once except these nine collocations: 'give answer,' 'make mistake,' 'take step,' 'take pride,' 'make reservation,' 'spend time' and 'take test' (all twice), 'eat food' (three times), 'make speech' (four times). In addition, very few collocations are common among all the textbooks. These 11 collocations, 'take action,' 'ask question,' 'eat food,' 'find way,' 'get job,' 'lose sight,' 'make money,' 'raise money,' 'take care,' 'make call' and 'make friends' are among two textbooks. Three collocations, 'make mistake,' 'take step' and 'spend time' appeared among the three textbooks. None of other collocations are the same among the four textbooks.

According to Table 4, which shows the appearance of verbs and nouns of the target collocations, both of verbs and nouns of 26 collocations out of 44 collocations appear among the four textbooks. Furthermore, in other collocations which are not treated in the form of verb-noun combinations (Table 5), about half of them (38 collocations) do not appear as verb-noun combinations, although they respectively do in the four textbooks.

Considering the frequency of target collocations in *COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM* in Table 6, the target textbooks do not consult high-frequently used collocations in it in respect that collocations appearing in the target textbooks are not always equal to those which are high frequently used in *COBUILD*. Especially, some collocations which are mentioned as new and important ones in the

Table 3. Frequency of use of collocations

collocations		R.S.I	R.O.I	R.U.I	R.M.I	collocations		R.S.I	R.O.I	R.U.I	R.M.I
action	take		1		1	research	do				1
answer	give			2		seat	take				1
question	ask	1			1	message	send			1	
change	name				1	step	take		1	2	1
eyes	close		1			care	take			1	1
food	eat	1		3		look	take		1		
face	make	1				train	take			1	
way	find		1		1	train	catch	1			
information	give				1	use	make			1	
job	get	1	1			pride	take	2			
lose	sight			1	1	call	make		1	1	
decision	mke		1			laws	make		1		
money	make			1	1	temper	lose		1		
sense	make			1		speech	give			1	
mistake	make	1	1	2		joke	make			1	
money	raise		1		1	reservation	make			2	
eyes	open				1	speech	make			4	
part	take		1			time	spend		2	1	1
place	take				1	picture	take			1	
role	play				1	test	take			2	
point	make		1			trip	take			1	
support	receive	1				friends	make		1		1
		total number						6	9	10	11
		number of kind						8	16	20	17

R.S.I = Revised Sunshine English Course I  
R.O.I = Revised One World English Course I  
R.U.I = Revised unicorn English Course I  
R.M.I = Revised Milestone English Course I

textbooks are comparatively lower frequently used in *COBUILD*. It is said that collocations in the target textbooks are ones which are not considered in terms of whether collocations are used frequently in the daily lives of Native speakers of English.

Thus, the type and the number of collocations tend to be neglected in the four textbooks. Moreover, this fact is proved by the other two findings that frequency of collocations of Native speakers of English is not considered and verb-noun collocations are regardless although they are both used in the textbooks. In other words, pedagogical consideration of collocations are disregarded.

Table 4. Frequency of target collocations and appearance of the collocations in each textbook

	verb/noun (node)	collocates	S	S	O	O	U	U	M	M
1	action	take			1				1	
2	answer	give					2			
4	ask	question	1			×			1	
22	change	name							1	
24	close	eye			1					
28	eat	food	1				3			
33	face	make	1							
34	find	way			1				1	
39	give	information		×					1	
41	job	get	1		1					
50	lose	sight		×		×	1	×	1	
56	make	decision		×	1			×		×
53	make	money					1		1	
54	make	sense					1			
107	make	mistake	1		1		2			
65	money	raise		×	1				1	
67	open	eye							1	
68	part	take			1					
70	place	take							1	
71	play	role				×		×	1	
73	point	make			1					
79	receive	support	1			×		×		×
81	research	do							1	
82	seat	take							1	
85	send	message					1			
88	step	take			1		2		1	
91	take	care					1		1	
92	take	look		×	1			×		×
97	train	take					1			
16	catch	train	1			×				
57	use	make					1			
109	pride	take	2			×				×
110	call	make		×	1		1			
111	laws	make			1					
112	temper	lose			1					
113	speech	give		×			1			
115	joke	make					1	×		
116	reservation	make		×		×	2			×
114	speech	make		×			4			
117	time	spend			2		1		1	
118	picture	take					1			×
119	test	take				×	2			×
120	trip	take				×	1			
108	friends	make			1				1	
			9		17		30		17	

S = revised Sunshine I O = revised One World I U = revised Unicorn I M

= revised Milestone I

× = not appear in each textbook

Table 5. Appearance of the collocations of the other collocations in each textbook

	verb/noun (nodes)	collocates	S	O	U	M		verb/noun (nodes)	collocates	S	O	U	M
1	3 answer	get					39	51 love	make				
2	5 break	make					40	52 make	difference		×		×
3	6 break	take					41	55 make	way				
4	7 break	deadlock	×	×	×	×	42	58 meet	standard	×	×		×
5	8 build	house					43	59 meet	requirement	×	×	×	×
6	9 buy	share	×	×	×	×	44	60 message	get				
7	10 buy	house					45	61 message	leave				
8	11 buy	stock	×	×	×	×	46	62 message	deliver	×		×	×
9	12 carry	weight	×	×	×		47	63 message	receive				
10	13 catch	fish	×	×	×		48	64 money	spend	×			
11	14 catch	eye					49	66 open	door				
12	15 catch	glimpse	×	×	×	×	50	69 part	play				
13	17 catch	bus	×				51	72 pleasure	take				
14	18 catch	breath					52	74 point	see				
15	19 chance	give	×	×	×		53	75 point	reach		×		
16	20 chance	take					54	76 produce	result		×		
17	21 change	make					55	77 read	paper				×
18	23 check	make					56	78 receive	treatment	×	×	×	
19	25 decide	fate	×	×	×	×	57	80 record	set			×	
20	26 discuss	issue	×	×		×	58	83 seat	lose				
21	27 discuss	matter	×	×			59	84 seat	win				
22	29 example	set			×		60	86 send	letter	×		×	
23	30 example	follow					61	87 send	postcard	×	×	×	×
24	31 example	give					62	89 stop	put				
25	32 face	problem					63	90 tell	story				
26	35 follow	path	×	×	×	×	64	93 take	advantage	×	×	×	
27	36 get	rid	×	×	×	×	65	94 take	account	×	×	×	×
28	37 give	advice	×	×			66	95 talent	show				
29	38 give	way					67	96 time	take				
30	40 goal	achieve	×	×	×	×	68	98 turn	take				
31	42 job	take					69	99 turn	attention				
32	43 job	find					70	100 walk	take				
33	44 life	make					71	101 win	election	×	×		×
34	45 light	shed	×	×	×	×	72	102 win	title	×		×	×
35	46 line	draw			×	×	73	103 win	championship	×	×	×	
36	47 lose	weight	×	×	×		74	104 win	game	×			
37	48 lose	money					75	105 win	race	×	×	×	
38	49 lose	time					76	106 make	progress				

S = revised Sunshine I O = revised One World I U = revised Unicorn I M = revised Milestone I

× = not appear in each textbook

verb/noun (nodes)	collocates	S	S	O	O	U	U	M	M	CO-BUILD	verb/noun (nodes)	collocates	S	S	O	O	U	U	M	M	CO-BUILD
place	take							1		21066	point	see									800
time	spend			2		1		1		8790	receive	treatment		×		×		×			788
part	take			1						8572	produce	result				×					775
time	take									7639	receive	support	1			×		×		×	770
ask	question	1			×			1		7578	seat	win									719
make	decision		×	1			×		×	6687	read	paper								×	652
play	role				×		×	1		5915	change	name							1		645
action	take			1				1		5750	example	give									643
tell	story									5624	break	make									640
step	take			1		2		1		5430	answer	give					2				634
find	way			1				1		5247	example	follow									625
make	way									5240	job	take									619
take	care					1		1		5011	call	make		×	1		1				587
money	spend		×							4924	answer	get									563
make	difference				×				×	4735	job	find									554
make	sense					1				4451	seat	take							1		539
get	rid		×		×		×		×	4314	example	set						×			526
chance	give		×		×		×			4283	pride	take	2			×				×	525
part	play									4266	message	leave									504
make	money					1		1		4148	goal	achieve		×		×		×		×	452
open	door									3862	break	take									450
take	account		×		×		×		×	3747	line	draw						×		×	449
job	get	1		1						3612	face	make	1								440
change	make									3238	meet	standard		×		×				×	432
take	advantage		×		×		×			3076	buy	stock		×		×		×		×	430
point	make			1						3051	meet	requirement		×		×		×		×	410
make	progress									2776	walk	take									407
use	make					1				2671	turn	take									379
win	title		×				×		×	2633	catch	glimpsc		×		×		×		×	359
money	raise		×	1				1		2572	temper	lose			1						359
take	look		×	1			×		×	2294	break	deadlock		×		×		×		×	354
win	championship		×		×		×			2246	light	shed		×		×		×		×	347
win	race		×		×		×			2201	discuss	matter		×		×					345
send	letter		×				×			2119	stop	put									344
close	eye			1																	

### 3.2. Research question 2: How are the collocations presented in the textbooks?

Research question 2 is to examine how the target collocations are presented in the textbooks. Table 7 shows that the target textbooks have no general concept and consensus on how they are presented. For example, *Milestone English course I* introduces some collocations in various ways: displaying them in phrase list at the end of it, explaining the meaning in Japanese, while *One World English Course I* has no phrase list at the end of it, showing some paraphrased expressions in the footnotes. Moreover, checking collocations in the textbooks, verb-noun collocations seem to be less emphasized than other phrases including preposition-noun combinations and adjective-preposition combinations. Very few verb-noun collocations which are supposed to comprise words beyond the range of word number administered by MEXT less common words such as 'take pride' and 'lose temper' are clearly listed in the textbooks. As a whole, noun-verb collocations are disregarded in the target textbooks.

Table 7. How target collocations are presented in the textbooks

	revised Sunshine	revised One World	revised Unicorn	revised Milestone
collocations paraphrased into another easy expressions in the footnote	×	△ <sup>1</sup>	×	×
collocations added examples	×	×	×	△ <sup>2</sup>
collocations added Japanese translation	×	×	×	△ <sup>3</sup>
phrase list at the end of a book	○	×	○	○

△<sup>1</sup> = Some collocations are paraphrased into some clear and easy expressions.

△<sup>2</sup> = Examples of some collocations are shown in the footnotes.

△<sup>3</sup> = Some collocations have Japanese translation.

### 3.3. Research question 3: What are similarities and differences between collocations in the revised English I textbooks and those in the former English I textbooks?

Research question 3 is to examine what are similarities and differences between collocations in the revised English I textbooks and those in the former English textbooks. They are respectively analyzed in terms of three points: types, numbers and treatment of collocations in both of textbooks. Table 8 shows the frequency of use of collocations selected based on both of the former textbooks and the revised textbooks. Considering the type of collocations appearing in the textbooks, two features are found. One is that neither of the former and revised textbooks have general concept and consensus on what kinds of collocations should be taught. It is proved by the fact that none of collocations are common among four former and revised textbooks. In other words, different collocations are treated according to the different textbooks. The other feature is that used collocations are changed when the

textbooks are revised. In other words, the former textbooks and the revised textbooks have few of same collocations. For example, 'ask question,' 'give information,' 'lose sight,' 'take place,' 'take seat,' 'take step,' 'take look' and 'make friend' appear in one former and revised textbook and 'find way' is the same among two former and revised textbooks. 'Make mistake' is the same among three textbooks. This fact may be natural because subjects of each lesson are completely changed.

As for the number of collocations appearing in both textbooks, both former and revised textbooks pay little attention to collocations, as a whole. As can be seen in Table 8, the number of types of collocation is a bit increased in the three textbooks, although the number of words is decreased. Moreover, as looking at the total number of collocations and the number of type of collocations, repetition of the same collocations are neglected.

In terms of the treatment of collocations, the former textbooks generally highlight them less than revised textbooks, according to Table 9. Especially, there is a great contrast between the former and revised *One World English Course I*. While collocations are presented in only each footnote, where very few of them are paraphrased into another easy expression in the revised one, in the former one they are explicitly explained in various ways: by paraphrasing them into another easy expression in the footnote, by adding Japanese translation of collocations and examples of the usage and displaying them in the phrase list at the end of the textbooks. In contrast, in the revised *Milestone English Course I*, the treatment of collocations has been improved a bit, which is only one exception among the target textbooks.

Mentioned above, it can be said that collocations are less exaggerated in the revised textbooks in terms of types, numbers and treatment of them.

### 3.4. Summary

The results analyzed by the means of TEXTANA can be summarized as follows.

- (1) As all the target textbooks pay little attention to collocations, few are treated among them.
- (2) The target textbooks do not much refer to the collocations which are frequently used in *Bank of English*
- (3) Even collocations appearing in the textbooks are not repeated many times: they are not edited from the pedagogical point of view.
- (4) There is not so much difference of type, number and treatment of collocations between the former and the revised English I textbooks: Revised English I textbooks are not improved in terms of collocation.
- (5) The collocations as a whole are different according to the former and revised four different English I textbooks.

Table 8. Frequency of use of collocations

collocations		R. S	Sunshine	R. O	One World	R. U	Unicorn	R. M	Milestone
action	take			1				1	
answer	give					2			
question	ask	1							1
change	name		1					1	
eyes	close			1					
food	eat	1			2	3			
face	make	1			2				
way	find			1	1		2	1	2
information	give							1	1
job	get	1		1					
lose	sight					1		1	1
decision	make		1	1					
money	make		1			1		1	
sense	make					1			
<i>mistake</i>	<i>make</i>	1	1	1	1	2	1		
money	raise		1	1				1	
eyes	open							1	
part	take			1			2		
place	take							1	1
role	play							1	
point	make			1					
support	receive	1							
research	do							1	
seat	take							1	1
message	send					1			2
step	take			1	2	2		1	
care	take				1	1		1	
look	take			1	1				
train	take					1			
train	catch	1							
use	make					1			
pride	take	2							
call	make		1	1		1			
laws	make			1					
temper	lose			1					
speech	give					1			
joke	make					1			
reservation	make					2			
speech	make					4			
time	spend			2		1		1	
picture	take					1			
test	take					2			
trip	take					1			
friends	make			1	1			1	
time	spend				2				
take	picture						1		
catch	fire				1				
keep	eye								1
make	difference								1
make	way		1						
play	part						3		
put	end								1
got	call		1						
take	walk				1		1		
take	holiday						1		
problem	solve		2		2				
pay	attention				2		1		2
house	build						4		
chance	take								1
change	make				3				
job	take		1		1				
line	draw		1						
door	open		1				1		1
story	tell						1		
game	win								1
total number		9	13	17	23	30	18	17	17
number of type		8	12	16	15	20	11	17	14

R. S = Revised Sunshine I R. O = Revised One World I

R. U = Revised Unicorn I R. M = Revised Milestone I

Table 9. How target collocations appear in the former and revised textbooks

	S	O	U	M	R. S	R. O	R. U	R. M
collocations paraphrased into another easy expressions in the footnote	△ <sup>1</sup>	△ <sup>1</sup>	×	×	×	△ <sup>1</sup>	×	×
collocations added examples	△ <sup>2</sup>	○	○	○	×	×	×	△ <sup>2</sup>
collocations added Japanese translation	△ <sup>3</sup>	△ <sup>3</sup>	×	×	×	×	×	△ <sup>3</sup>
phrase list at the end of a book	○	○	○	○	○	×	○	○

△<sup>1</sup> = Some collocations are paraphrased into some clear and easy expressions..

△<sup>2</sup> = Examples of some collocations are shown in the footnotes

△<sup>3</sup> = Some collocations have Japanese translation.

S = Sunshine English Course I R. S = Revised Sunshine English Course I

O = One World English Course I R. O = Revised One World English Course I

U = Unicorn English Course I R. U = Revised Unicorn English Course I

M = Milestone English Course I R. M = Revised Milestone English Course I

#### 4. Pedagogical implications and discussion

Findings in the present research indicate some effective pedagogical implications and raise more questions for discussion based on some researchers' former claims.

(1) New vocabulary should be presented with some of its most frequent collocates.

In this research, it was found that all the target textbooks pay little attention to collocations. As a result, they are not treated many times in target textbooks and they do not much refer to the collocations which are frequently used in *Bank of English*. These findings are against the opinion of Bahns (1993) and Howarth (1998) that emphasizes the importance of collocation teaching for learners. Moreover, Gitsaki and Taylor (1999) claim that teachers should supply new lexical items together with their most frequent collocations in an EFL class while they are being learned. Hattori and Matsubatake (1980) mention that new words would be firmly fixed in students' mind when they are presented with learned words.

In respect of these four claims, when introducing a new words, teachers should provide it together with some useful lexical collocates to help learners build a database of collocations. This is thought to be fairly important for Japanese learners of English, because it is necessary for learners to develop their vocabulary to communicate with others in English positively. In fact, tenth graders would have a limited vocabulary because totally only thirteen hundred words are to be learned according to the government guidelines for English teaching by MEXT. This number of words will not be enough to achieve the objective of the guidelines, because about eight thousand words are necessary to have a conversation without any serious trouble (JACET 2003). In order to develop students' vocabulary in the restricted conditions, introducing combinations of new vocabulary and the lexical collocates would be useful. This opinion would be also supported by the fact that many new words do not appear with their collocates

although the collocates have already been learned in the four textbooks (Table 4 and Table 5).

(2) The core meaning of basic verbs which compose verb-noun collocations should be taught.

In this research, many verbs of target collocations are basic ones such as 'take,' 'make' and 'get.' However, learners face difficulty producing these verb-noun collocations because of their native language, Japanese. The abstract and core meaning of basic verbs should be taught for learners so that they may not be affected by Japanese direct translation for the collocations. Oikawa (1993) infers that teaching core meaning of basic words is useful for learners, especially, lower-level learners based on his experiment if the acquisition of verb-noun collocations will be promoted by teaching it for ninth graders to university students.

(3) Collocations should be treated several times in the textbooks

In this research, it was found that the collocations in English I textbooks were not repeated many times in the English I textbooks. Nation (1990) introduces several pieces of research on learners' retention of words. Kachroo (1962) examines how many times certain words are repeatedly treated in a textbook and how they are fixed in informants' memory. His findings show that words repeated more than seven times are acquired by almost all the informants and, more than half of words repeated only once or twice are not memorized by them. Salling (1959) and Crothers and Suppes (1967) conducts almost the same experiment. Salling suggests that at least a five-time repetition of words should be necessary to memorize them. Crothers and Suppes (1967) claim that six or seven repetitions of words should be needed. Saragi et al. (1978) come to the conclusion that when students try to keep some certain words in their mind through reading text, more than sixteen times should they read it. These pieces of research tell us that collocations should be repeated much more often in the textbooks. If it cannot be done because of the limited pages of them, teachers should think of the ways they will have more chance to meet their eyes of collocations, referring to the mechanism of their storage device<sup>(4)</sup>.

(4) Collocations should be taught explicitly

In this research, it was also found that the textbooks pay little attention to what kinds of collocations should be taught and how often they should be repeated. In addition, verb-noun combinations tend to be neglected and not to be explicitly presented in the footnotes and phrase list in the textbooks. First, a consensus on which collocations should be treated ought to be reached. Then, the collocations should be explicitly written in the textbooks for them as Schmitt (2000) and Nation (1995) mention. Schmitt claims that both explicit and incidental learning are necessary, especially certain important words make excellent targets for explicit attention, for example, the most frequent words in a language and technical

vocabulary. Nation also argues that we should consider vocabulary teaching in terms of cost/benefits, with the value of learning such words well worth the time required to teach them explicitly; on the other hand, infrequent words in general English are probably best left to incidental learning. Based on these two pieces of research, some collocations which are used frequently should be taught explicitly.

- (5) Learners should be recommended to make good use of collocation dictionaries.

This is related to implication (1) and (3). In order to develop learners' vocabulary in the restricted conditions, they should be encouraged to use collocation dictionaries such as *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (2002), *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combination* (1997) and *LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations* (1997), whenever they are not sure which word can be collocated with particular words they want to use. In the classroom learners should be shown how to use them.

- (6) Learners should have more chance to learn collocations by means of computers.

This implication is related to (5). In order to effectively build up learners' collocational data base in the restricted conditions, collocations can be learned through computer-assisted learning. By conducting two experiments, the claim of Coady, et al. (1995) is that computer-assisted instruction in high-frequency vocabulary items will increase learners' number of words whose forms and common meanings are recognized automatically irrespective of context (sight vocabulary), which will as a result lead them to greater gains on a reading proficiency. Kang (1995) also mentions the effects of a computer-assisted contextualized approach to vocabulary learning. As computers are spreading as an effective way of instruction at schools, computer-assisted learning will become more familiar for learners.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this research is to compare verb-noun collocations between in the former English I textbooks and in the revised ones and suggest some effective ways of teaching them with them. Not surprisingly, collocations are still neglected in the revised English I textbooks, although they are thought to be important factors for learners' good command of English by many researchers and the textbooks are revised to meet the objective of English I: "to cultivate a positive attitude toward communication in English." Under the poor conditions of textbooks, teachers have to think of effective ways of teaching collocations in the classrooms.

After this research, some questions remain to be clarified in further research. One is what kind of collocations and how many will appear in textbooks on other subjects like history and mathematics used

to develop learners' basic knowledge in English speaking country. The other is what kind of collocations should be taught according to JACET 8000 (2003). Collocations which not only depend on native speakers' frequent usage, but also are based on various need of Japanese learners of English should be identified through various collocation research.

#### Note

- (1) In Koya (2003), six English I textbooks are targeted to examine the treatment of collocations. However, two of them, *Royal English I* and *Creative English Course I*, are not revised and edited to new textbooks, according to the government guidelines for teaching administered in 2003. Therefore, in this research, the rest of them, which are changed to new revised textbooks, are used.
- (2) *COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM* are useful to know how frequent word combinations are used in the daily life of native speakers of English because there are about one hundred forty thousand node/collocate pairs in the collection and about 2.6 million different examples, and all examples are taken from the Bank of English, which is the largest bank of its kind in the world.
- (3) *COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM* and *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* are corpus-based dictionaries, whose examples are taken from the Bank of English, which shows high frequent word combinations used in the daily life of native speakers of English. *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* is however, based on the native speakers' intuition, not corpus-based. Both type of dictionaries are used to select collocations in this research.
- (4) Shaughnessy, Zimmerman and Underwood (1970) claims that certain words will be more firmly fixed by repeating them at certain intervals than by doing so intensively.

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#### English I Textbooks:

- Milestone English course I* (Keirinkan)
- One World English course I* (Kyoiku Syuppan)
- Sunshine English course I* (Kairyudo)
- Unicorn English course I* (Bun-eido)