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**TEACHING LEXICAL
COLLOCATIONS
TO RAISE PROFICIENCY IN
FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING**

**A CASE STUDY OF FIRST YEAR ENGLISH STUDENTS
AT GUELMA UNIVERSITY. ALGERIA**

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DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS DISSERTATION TO:

My parents, my brothers and my sister.

My husband and his family.

My son.

My relatives and my friends.

My teachers.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the role of teaching collocations in raising foreign language writing proficiency. Students of English as a Foreign Language are facing a variety of problems that make their writing not proficient. One major problem is the lack of appropriate vocabulary which could be related to the ignorance of collocations. Thus, we hypothesise that a correlation may exist between using collocations and writing proficiency. To prove this hypothesis, an experimental study has been conducted. Two groups have constituted our sample: an experimental group and a control one. A pre-test has been administered to examine students' use of collocations. It consists of two parts: part one includes exercises taken from McCarthy and O'Dell textbook "*English Collocations in Use*". Part two is an assessment of students' paragraphs. The results of the pre-test have shown a limited knowledge of collocations and a wide range of "mis-collocations". Afterwards, a questionnaire has been conducted to both teachers and students to gain more information about our sample's use of collocations. Data driven from the questionnaire have confirmed students' limited knowledge of collocations. An experiment has been conducted to raise students' writing proficiency by developing their collocational competence mainly through an explicit teaching of collocations. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test has been administered by assessing students' writing of the first examination's paragraphs. The results of the post-test have confirmed our hypothesis that a strong linear correlation exists between writing proficiency and using collocations. Thus, we recommend the adaptation of a Communicative-Collocational Approach to teaching writing which entails teaching writing through a communicative approach by developing students' collocational competence.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C-R: Consciousness-Raising

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

L3: Third / Foreign Language

MWU: Multi-Word Units

PPP: Presentation, Practice, Production

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Vs.: versus

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Introduction

In contrast to grammar, vocabulary has long been neglected in teaching. It has always been taught through the other skills whereas grammar has been taught as a separate module, which has ranked vocabulary in an inferior position to grammar. Curricula are full of grammatical rules that are said to improve the learner's language as if teaching a language equals teaching its grammar. Although, the old approaches have tried to teach vocabulary, words have been introduced only in lists which proved to be useless. Many researchers have recently raised the importance of teaching vocabulary like Michael Lewis who questioned "the grammar-vocabulary dichotomy" and advocated a lexical approach (1993, 1997, 2000) which is mainly interested in teaching collocations or "common word combination" (2000: 127). The latter is a broader term that does not include only collocations but also idioms, phrasal verbs, fixed phrases and semi-fixed ones.

Following Michael Lewis's views, we believe that teaching collocations would raise students' proficiency in language learning. Furthermore, we focus on the direct influence of teaching collocations on the field of foreign language writing where the students have a problem of combining words together. Even though the native speaker can also have a problem in associating words, foreign language students struggle more with making their writing sound natural. This may be due to their ignorance of collocations and the interference of the mother tongue or even the second language, which is the case of English language learners in Algeria, having Arabic as the mother tongue and French as a second language. Examining learners' writing, one could quickly notice the "mis-collocations" that are widespread in their written assignments. This reflects their lack of proficiency in the target language. Thus, we hypothesise, in this

study that students of English as a foreign language should learn collocations to make their writing better since collocations constitute the most important part of vocabulary.

1. Review of Literature:

Many researchers have considered the importance of collocations in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). But each researcher has approached collocations from a different dimension. So, there are different categories: some researchers have approached the problem of translating collocations in a purely linguistic description. Others have been much interested in contrastive and error analysis while the rest of researchers have investigated collocations' use and in some cases its relation to proficiency in speaking and/or writing. Since researches about this subject are extensive, we are going to state only some examples from each category. In 1987, Emery, P (cited in Mahmoud, Abdelmoniem. 2005: 119) has investigated Arabic/English translation of collocations by comparing collocations in the two languages. Next in 1991, he has dealt with collocation in modern Standard Arabic by specifying the types of collocations (ibid). In 1999, Farghal, M. and Shunnaq, A. have also approached collocations in relation to English / Arabic translation (ibid: 119-120). In 2002, Al-Salmani, A. has focused in his MA thesis on Collocations and idioms in English-Arabic translation. Far from translation, other researchers have investigated other matters related to collocations in Foreign Language Learning. In 2003, Hassan Abadi Siavosh has studied learning English lexical and grammatical collocations by Iranian EFL learners. After examining learners' collocations types he has found that their performance differs according to the patterns of collocation "in favour of verb-noun collocations" and that acquisition of lexical collocations is easier than grammatical ones. In her research about learning collocations Gitaski, C (cited in Siavosh, 2003: 51) has pointed out that learning

collocations is facilitated by the level of ESL learners. The higher is the level, the easier is learning collocations. She has further stated that easiness depends also on the degree of complexity of the collocation itself. Concerning the problem of collocational errors, some researchers have approached it within their mother tongue. In 1989, Kharma and Hajjaj (cited in Mahmoud, Abdelmoneim: 2005: 118) has focused on verb-noun collocations in their analysis of collocational errors made by Arabic learners of English. Later in 1997, lombard has studied the use of collocations by non-native speakers of Mandarine in his Doctoral Dissertation. He has relied on learners' written assignments to collect the necessary information about collocations' problems and types. In 2005, Dr Mahmoud, Abdelmoneim has studied errors made by Arab Learners of English. The results of his empirical study have indicated that collocation constitute a problem for Arabic learners. This problem could be overcome by raising learners' consciousness about collocation with the help of simple contrastive analysis of English and Arabic. After that, in 2007 Cao, Hongquan and Nishina, Kikuko from Tokyo Institute of Technology have analyzed errors of Japanese adjectival collocations. By administering a survey questionnaire, they have resulted in classifying collocational errors and constructing "an error database".

Concerning collocations' use in speaking, in 2003 Sung, J (cited in Hsu: 2) study has resulted in a strong correlation exists between the use of English lexical collocations and speaking fluency. Then in 2008 Hsu, Jeng-yih and Chiu, Chu-yao have investigated the same subject as Sung, J but they reached contrary results. They have found that no significant correlation exists between the use of English lexical collocations and speaking fluency. However, they have found that a strong correlation exists between knowledge of collocation and speaking proficiency but no correlation exists between knowledge and use of collocation. Furthermore, Hsu has investigated the influence of

using collocations on fluency in writing. In 2007, he has conducted an empirical study about the impact of lexical collocations on the writing of Taiwanese College English majors and non-English majors. His empirical study consists of an on-line writing test on the same topic which has been evaluated through a web-based writing programme. Correlation has been found between writing proficiency and using collocation. But none of the researchers has tried to teach collocations as a treatment to see whether teaching collocations could lead to fluency in writing. This research has approached the problem of mis-collocations in foreign language writing by trying to teach collocations in order to see if there is a correlation between using collocations and writing proficiency after the treatment. Recently, in 2009, Lombard has explored the use of collocations by ESL students from a task-based approach. To know more about collocations' researches see *appendix one*.

2. Statement of the Problem

Students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lack the vocabulary needed to produce correct written English. Besides, they use inappropriate word combinations when they write; i.e., words that do not go together. As a result, their writing is not proficient. As claimed by Hill: "Students with good ideas often lose marks because they don't know the four or five most important collocations of a key word that is central to what they are writing about." (Hill, in Michael Lewis, 2000: 50). Therefore, their writing is full of "mis-collocations" that make it sounds unnatural. Hill illustrates this problem with the following example in which students say: "His disability will continue until he dies" rather than "He has a permanent disability." (ibid: 49-50). Hence, students should realize the fact that words have their collocational fields.

Consequently, it is advised to teach English students the right associations of words to raise their proficiency in English generally and in writing specifically. As it is claimed by Lewis Michael, collocations should be taught because they constitute the central part of vocabulary. Hence, Michael Lewis could be considered as the father of the lexical approach and thus of collocations. He argues that language acquisition takes place when the learner is able to analyse the language into lexical 'chunks'. In other words, learning English collocations would make the speech and the writing of foreign language learners sound native-like. As claimed by McCarthy and O'Dell, collocations (2005: 6) "...give you the most natural way to say something: *smoking is strictly forbidden* is more natural than *smoking is strongly forbidden*". So, collocations are prefabricated chunks that are already stored in the learners' memory. It is these chunks which are retrieved by the learner when (s) he produces the language not isolated words. In this respect, vocabulary learning is a focal point in language acquisition while grammar is ranked as a secondary factor that aims at organizing chunks of vocabulary. This is because grammar is not sufficient, it is always taught but students still make grammatical errors when they write.

Eventually, collocations require to be taught so that the learners would be aware of them because they would help learners not only to understand lexis but also to communicate ideas more effectively when they write. Teaching collocations would provide the learner with a helpful device in writing. It could facilitate the task of writing by making it easier, more precise and more natural and native like. For instance, instead of saying 'they disagreed with an angry way', we say 'it was a *heated debate*'.

3. Aims of the Study

The aim of the present study is twofold:

- (1) to investigate the correlation between collocations' use and proficiency in writing;
- (2) to raise students' writing proficiency by teaching collocations to develop their collocational competence mainly through noticing and consciousness-raising.

4. Hypothesis

Through our teaching of 'Written Expression' at the university level, we have observed that English learners do not know collocations and this is a fact manifested in their writing. Their lack of proficiency in writing is perhaps due to their ignorance of collocations. Hence, we hypothesise that:

-If we teach collocations to foreign language learners, they would use them when they write. Consequently, their proficiency in writing would increase.

So, effective foreign language writing could be better achieved when learners study collocations. Therefore, a correlation may exist between students' use of collocations and proficiency in writing.

Thus, we are going to work on the development of students' collocational competence through explicit teaching based on noticing and consciousness-raising in order to raise their vocabulary stock and help them write accurately. This is due to the assumption that teaching grammar is not sufficient. More exploration is needed in the field of vocabulary generally and collocations particularly.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1 Choice of the Method

This research has been conducted through the experimental method as an appropriate way of investigating our hypothesis which states that using collocations

would raise students' writing proficiency because collocations' use correlates with proficiency in writing. The use of collocations would increase if we teach collocations to foreign language learners. Consequently, we are going to investigate the case study of first year English students at the University of Guelma. We have two groups under study: an experimental group and a control one. Both groups would be treated objectively in order to reach valid results. The same courses of writing will be taught to both groups. Attention of the experimental group will be drawn towards noticing collocations by highlighting them so that learners' consciousness about collocations would raise. Thus, collocations will be taught to the experimental group through explicit teaching that aims at encouraging autonomous learning. Both groups will be tested before and after the treatment in order to determine the efficiency of teaching collocations on raising the writing proficiency of the experimental group.

5.2 Population of the Study

Subjects of our study are first year students at the English Department of Guelma (East of Algeria). There are 240 first year students divided into ten groups, each group includes twenty-four students. Since it is difficult to deal with the whole number of the population, our sample is composed of two groups which are chosen randomly. It consists of forty-eight students whose native language is Arabic and their Second Language is French. They are aged between 17 and 24 years. A group is to be considered as the experimental group which will receive the treatment while another group is considered as the control one. In addition to students' population, we are also interested in the teachers of written expression at the same department, aged between 21 and 41 years. There are four teachers for first year students—including me, and two teachers for second year students. The reason behind choosing the teachers of writing

and not other modules is due to the fact that they are supposed to know more about students' writing level as well as collocations' use.

5.3 Data Gathering Tools

To answer the research questions, quantitative data from students' questionnaires as well as teachers' questionnaires would be collected. We begin with the students' questionnaire in order to have a global view about students' knowledge of collocations and their level in writing. However, the questionnaire could not provide access to what is "inside a person's head" (Tuckman, cited in Cohen and Manion: 305) and as Cohen and Manion claim: "...at the heart of every case study lies a method of observation" (1980:125), it is better to put the target sample under observation through experiment to gain "research-relevant information". Both the experiment and the questionnaires would help us to collect data about the status of teaching collocations and the problems that students encounter in writing especially mis-collocations. The last problem is due to students' ignorance of the most common collocates a word has. Since students are used to study vocabulary through the other modules and not as a separate module, there is no clear tendency to include collocations within the curriculum. Eventually, a major part of vocabulary may be neglected. Therefore, we have to proceed to teachers' questionnaire to benefit from their experience in the field of teaching writing.

A pre-test is to be administered prior to the study in order to assess students' level in writing in relation to the use of collocations. The pre-test has two parts: part one includes exercises from McCarthy and O' Dell textbook *English Collocations in Use* (see *appendix 4*), while part two relied on the subjects' essays to assess their level in writing and their knowledge of collocations. Later, "mis-collocations" will be counted in an objective way from both parts of the pre-test. The treatment includes a collection of lessons in which the experimental group's attention is directed intentionally towards

collocations. The experimental group will get an intensive teaching of collocations for three hours a week during a four-month period, i.e. the first semester. The learners' awareness of collocations is raised through explicit teaching based mainly on highlighting, noticing and consciousness-raising. At the end of the experiment, a post-test will be administered to both groups to determine if teaching collocations has contributed to the improvement of the experimental group writing proficiency.

Once data is collected from the pre-test and the questionnaires, we will code and score the answers through analysing questions' responses by giving objective scores to each question. In the post-test we are going to assess students' writing of the first mid-term examination by applying Jacobs et al.'s Scoring Profile. Then, we will score their use of collocations objectively. Eventually, the Pearson Coefficient of Correlation of both groups is counted between the two variables: using collocations and writing proficiency. Finally, we will interpret the data according to the research aims, the hypothesis and the results of both the pre-test and the post-test to prove or disapprove the validity of the hypothesis.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation includes two theoretical chapters: Chapter one –*Collocations*– introduces the term 'collocations', explains its origin, definitions, patterns, types and criteria. The nature of vocabulary is explained by focusing on individual words versus Multi-Word Units. Next, the relation between collocations and the two close concepts, idioms and phrasal verbs, is clarified. Then, the field of vocabulary teaching is explored in order to draw a relationship between teaching collocations and “communicative competence”. Hence, the concept of “collocational competence” in foreign language writing is explored. Chapter two –*Teaching Collocations in Foreign Language Writing*

– reviews the most common approaches to teach writing. It sheds light on the problem of “mis-collocations” in foreign language writing as well as the purpose of teaching collocations where we provide challenges and directions for teaching collocations. Finally, we emphasize the importance of materials in teaching collocations, and the role of both the teacher and the student in and outside the foreign language classroom. Chapter three –*The Experimental Study*– represents the implementation of the experiment and the pre- and post-tests. Chapter Four –*Data Analysis and Interpretation*– provides comments on the findings of the tests and the experiment. On one hand, this chapter introduces an analysis of the results drawn from teachers and students’ questionnaires. On the other hand, it interprets data driven from both the pre-test and the post-test to see whether the experiment has led to any changes in the performance of the experimental group in contrast to the control group. At the end, a general conclusion will follow with some pedagogical implications.

Introduction

Linguists have defined the term “collocation” in different ways. We try in this chapter to clarify this notion by exploring its origins and citing its most significant definitions according to two specified approaches: the Traditional Approach and the Statistical one. Providing insights into phraseology and the lexical approach would clarify the importance of collocations as an interesting part of vocabulary. The latter is explored by introducing its nature generally and comparing individual words with Multi-Word Units particularly. After that, we explore collocation types, patterns and criteria and point out the relation between collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs. Finally, we deal with both communicative and “collocational competence” which is a new expression in collocation teaching introduced by Lewis Michael in 2000.

1. 1 Collocations’ Origin in Phraseology and Prosody

Phraseology has its roots in Russia where it appeared in lexicology in the twentieth century as a branch of linguistics that deals with words joined as a whole unit (Cowie, A. P 2001: 1). Phraseology is different from lexicology in that the latter is related to the meaning of individual words whereas the former is related to “phraseological units”, that is word combinations that have become very important in first and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (ibid). Moreover, this field of linguistics has been highly developed by Firth, J. R and the Neo-Firthians Halliday, M and Sinclair, J. Recently, corpora and web concordances have become very influential tools which contribute to the analysis of phraseology (ibid: 3).

Palmer, F. R is considered as a pioneer in the field of collocations; He (as cited in Kennedy, Graeme. 2003: 468) defines “collocation” as “a succession of two or more words that must be learned as an integral whole and not pieced together from its

component parts”. However, it is widely accepted that the word “collocation” was coined by Firth in 1957 when he said ‘You shall know a word by the company it keeps’ (Firth, cited in Palmer, 1981: 75-76). Firth uses the word *collocation* to refer to the association of words in the same context so that when you see a word you expect the presence of another. He claims: “Collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or customary places of that word order but not in other contextual order and emphatically not in any grammatical order. The collocation of a word or a 'piece' is not to be regarded as mere juxtaposition, it is an order of *mutual expectancy*”, (Firth, 1957: 181). He further believes that collocates of a word help us to understand its meaning. Firth gives the example of *dark* that collocates with *night* “one of the meanings of night is its collocability with dark” (ibid: 196). Here, the meaning of the word *night* is clarified through its collocate *dark*. Also, the word that needs clarification— here night, is called the *node* word, whereas the words that could be combined with it are called *collocates*.

The work of Firth had an impact on many linguists who studied collocations. we can cite here, but not exhaustively, some of them like Bolinger (1972), Peters (1977, 1983), Hakuta (1974) , Wong-Fillmore (1976), Nattinger (1980), Syder (1983), Allerton (1987), Sinclair, J (1987), Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985), Sinclair, J (1991), Francis, Hunston, and Manning (1996), Paradis (1997). Among these studies, Sinclair (1991, as cited in Andreou, G and Galantomos, I. 2008: 1) has introduced new concepts “the idiom principle” and “the open-choice principle” which are the two principles that govern the choice of words by speakers and writers. The first principle results in collocations or other degrees of *idiomaticity* like for instance idioms or fixed phrases in contrast to the second principle which is more general and includes “a wide range of possible and acceptable words” (ibid.).

Furthermore, Hoey (as cited in Michael, Lewis, 2000: 232) claims that what constitutes a collocation is the “meanings” rather than the words, following Sinclair (1991) who says that “Many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain semantic environment” (ibid). In this scope, Hoey is pointing out what he calls “a world beyond collocations” referring to “semantic prosody” (ibid). The latter is –as defined by Hoey, the association of a word with “a particular set of meanings” (ibid). That is what makes a word collocates with specific meanings rather than others. He illustrates his view with the example of the word *chilly*. Within the prosody of "time", *chilly* collocates with morning, night, evening, day; whereas it does not collocate with minutes or decades. (ibid: 233)

1.2 Collocations in the Lexical Approach

According to Barlow (as cited in Partington, A. 1998: 21-22) “purely syntactic descriptions of language especially those of the generative schools” could not really explain how language works. He argues that the generative school has ignored the fact that words have their collocations; rather, it has concentrated on the explanation of “free association of lexical items” on the basis of grammar (ibid). Attempts to design a lexical syllabus have started with Willis in 1990. Later, Michael Lewis coined the term “lexical Approach” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 138) to indicate a theory in which lexis and vocabulary play a major role in language learning. The lexical approach has emerged as a reaction to the behaviourist view which is based on PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production). Contrary to it, the lexical approach is based on exposing the learner to large amounts of input combined with consciousness-raising. (Thornbury, Scott. 2002: 109). Woolard, George (as cited in Lewis, Michael: 2000: 31) has pointed out that within the lexical approach, vocabulary is learnt by learning word combinations not just individual words. Besides, word combinations have to be treated as whole not as

separated individual words. They are “prefabricated chunks” that are stored in the mind as “individual wholes”. Whenever learners want to speak or write, they recall these ready chunks instead of brainstorming their mind searching for which word goes with which. This view is also shared by Lewis, Morgan (as cited in Lewis, Michael: 2000: 15) who claims that: “so much of the language of the effective language user is already in prefabricated chunks, stored in their mental lexicons just waiting to be recalled for use.”

Consequently, collocations represent an important part of lexical chunks. Thus, we think that if learners are exposed to these chunks, they may well internalize the rules of writing and speaking. This is due to the fact that lexical competence is the result of frequent exposure, consciousness-raising and memorizing. (to be discussed in chapter two. Section 2.8.2)

1.3 Approaches to Define Collocations

Two approaches to define collocations could be distinguished: the Statistical/Frequency-based Approach or “the phraseological approach” (Nesselhauf, N. 2005: 12) and the Traditional Approach. The first approach is called also “statistically oriented approach” by Herbst (as cited in Nesselhauf, N: 14). Attempts by linguists to define the term collocation have resulted in various definitions. We have tried to classify the most common ones under each approach.

1.3.1 The Statistical / Frequency-based Approach

This approach has its roots in the “phraseological approach” (Nesselhauf, N. 2005: 12) whose most common adherents are Cowie, A. P Mel’ uk, I and Hausmann, F. J. It analyses “co-occurrences” through a corpus-based data in “an inductive approach”

that “generates a wide range of collocations” (Granger, S. 2005: 1). Under this approach, there are common definitions which we chronologically order as follows:

1- “Collocation is the statistical tendency of words to co-occur.” (Hunston, S. 2002: 12)

2- “...the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text” (Sinclair, J. cited in Nesselhauf, N. 2005: 12)

1.3.2 The Traditional Approach

Unlike the Statistical / Frequency-based Approach, the Traditional one approaches collocations from a lexical point of view. It is concerned with combining two or more words. However, the Traditional Approach could benefit from co-occurrences drawn from the Statistical Approach. Thus, the two approaches are complementary. The following are the most common definitions given to collocation under this approach:

1- “When two words co-occur, or are used together frequently, they are said to collocate.” (Gairns, R and Redman, S. 1986: 36).

2- “How words typically occur with one another” (Carter and McCarthy. 1988: 32)

3- “...a sequence of two or more consecutive words, that has characteristics of a syntactic and semantic unit, and whose exact and unambiguous meaning or connotation cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its components”

(Choueka, Y. 1988: 609)

4- “A collocation, in its simplest definition, consists of two words which are linked together in the memory of native speakers and occur together with some frequency in both written and oral discourse” (Aghbar, 1990. As cited in Hsu, Jeng-yih and Chiu Chu-yao. 2008: 182)

- 5- “collocation has long been the name given to the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (contextual) context” (Hoey, 1991. As cited in Partington, A.1998: 16)
- 6- “...a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language” (Carter: 1992: 47)
- 7- “Collocation is the placing together... of words which are often associated with each other, so that they form common patterns or combinations” (Watson, D. 1997: 7)
- 8- “...the ways in which words regularly occur near each other” (Diegnan et al: 1998: 35)
- 9- “Two words are collocates if they occur together with more than chance frequency, such that, when we see one, we can make a fairly safe bet that the other is in the neighbourhood.” (Thornbury, Scott. 2002: 7)
- 10- “Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing.” (Oxford Collocations Dictionary. 2002: vii)
- 11- “we define collocations as two words belonging to different grammatical categories to exclude binomials where the two words are from the same category and are connected implicitly or explicitly by a conjunction (e.g. and, or) or a preposition such as "in" or "by" (e.g. *push and shove, sick and tired, here and there, in and out, life and death, hand in hand, dead or alive*)." (Mahmoud, Abdulmoneim. 2005: 118).
- 12- “A collocation is a pair or group of words that are often used together.” (McCarthy, M. J and O’Dell, F. 2005: 6)

From the above definitions, given under each approach, we notice that there is no single definition of the word “collocation”. However, in spite of the difference in approaching and defining collocations there is a common agreement among all the linguists/pedagogists that collocations are two or more words combined together continuously. For example, the expression “fast food” is called "collocation" because

the word *fast* 'co-locates' or 'co-occurs' frequently in the same location as the word *food*. If we see “fast” we directly expect the presence of “food”. In this context, “fast” could not be substituted for the word ‘quick’ or ‘rapid’ for the simple reason that it will not sound natural. As indicated in definition n°: 10: “Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing.” (Oxford Collocations Dictionary. 2002: vii). Thus, teaching collocations is much advocated because it may lead to natural writing/speaking. Other examples may include collocations like: ‘deliver a speech’ and ‘make a decision’. This does not mean that all co-occurring items can be considered as collocations since there are many word combinations that go together but they are not considered as collocations because collocations are only one type of word combination. For instance we exclude from collocations binomials (as explained by Abdelmoneim in definition n°: 11) and *compound nouns* such as ‘post-office’, ‘swimming pool’ and ‘dry-cleaning’. Also, *phrasal verbs* like ‘get up’, ‘carry on’ are classified under grammatical collocations since there are two types of collocations: grammatical and lexical ones (*explained in: 1.5 Collocation types*).

1.4 Collocations’ Patterns

The grammatical words that constitute a collocation are grouped in various patterns. We have classified the most common patterns in the following two tables according to Lewis, M (2000: 133) and McCarthy and O’ Dell (2005: 12):

Adjective + noun	a difficult decision
Verb + noun	submit a report
Noun + noun	radio station
Verb + adverb	examine thoroughly
Adverb + adjective	extremely inconvenient
Verb + adjective + noun	revise the original plan
Noun + verb	the fog closed in

Table 1.1 Collocations’ Patterns according to Lewis, M (2000: 133)

Adjective + noun	bright colour
Noun + verb	the economy boomed
Noun + noun	a sense of pride
Verb + preposition + noun	filled with horror
Verb + adverb	smiled proudly
Adverb + adjective	happily married

Table 1.2 Collocations' Patterns according to McCarthy and O' Dell (2005: 12)

We agree with McCarthy and O' Dell that "There are many types of collocations" (2005: 12) since there are nine parts of speech: noun, adjective, adverb, verb, preposition, conjunction, article, pronoun and interjection. The first five parts could be combined to compose collocations. We observe that Michael Lewis' patterns are nearly similar to McCarthy and O' Dell's ones. As shown in the two tables above, we notice that in both classifications there are the following patterns: **adjective + noun**, **noun + noun**, **verb + adverb**, **noun + verb** and **adverb + adjective**. But in the first classification, there is the pattern **verb + adjective + noun** while in the second one there is: **verb + preposition + noun**. In the second table the pattern **verb + noun** is not found whereas in the first one we find both patterns: **verb + noun** and **noun +verb**. As a result, we can deduce a new classification from the two tables mentioned above by including all the patterns with the same examples as follows:

Adjective + noun	bright colour
Noun + verb	the economy boomed
Verb + noun	submit a report
Noun + noun	a sense of pride
Adverb + adjective	happily married
Verb + adverb	smiled proudly
Verb + preposition + noun	filled with horror
Verb + adjective + noun	revise the original plan

Table 1.3 Collocations' Patterns according to McCarthy, O'Dell and Lewis, M

In the table above we find eight patterns of collocations. In these patterns the focus is on the main parts of speech since articles, pronouns and prepositions are not apparent in the patterns. For instance, in the last two examples the preposition “with” and the definite article “the” are not included in the patterns. Concerning articles, they are used for defining nouns; so, we think that including or deleting them from the patterns would not make any difference. Pronouns are not included because they are always changing: different pronouns with different verbs. Prepositions are not included because we are talking about lexical not grammatical collocations. (*See collocation types below*)

1.5 Collocations’ Types

Collocations are classified in various manners; each scholar has divided them according to different dimensions. Some scholars have considered their strength, others their use...etc. The most common types are discussed below.

1.5.1 Lexical Vs (Versus) Grammatical Collocations

According to Michael Lewis, collocations are either lexical or grammatical (2000: 134). Since this research is concerned with lexical collocations and not grammatical ones the term “collocation” refers to “lexical collocations”. The difference between grammatical and lexical collocations is that the former includes a principal word that is an adjective, a verb or a noun and a grammatical word which is usually a preposition (Benson, 1989: 593) whereas the latter does not include grammatical words like prepositions. Lexical collocations consist only of lexical words and they may be more difficult to learn. Consequently, phrasal verbs such as *carry on*, *give up*...etc are considered as grammatical collocations and they are found in all English-English dictionaries while specific dictionaries are allocated to lexical collocations which may

be ignored by native speakers too. In the following two tables, the constituents of each type are classified with examples:

Verb + prepositions	Walk up
Noun + prepositions	Anger at
Adjective + prepositions	Proud of

Table 1.4 Examples of Grammatical Collocations

Verb + noun	set the table
Adjective + noun	Fresh breathe
Adverb + adjective	bitterly hurt

Table 1.5 Examples of Lexical Collocations

As it has been discussed above, it is clear that in the first table the dominating part is “prepositions” which represent grammatical words whereas in the second table there are no prepositions; only lexical words are included. Thus, it is the preposition that makes a collocation grammatical.

1.5.2 Technical Vs Academic Collocations

Here, collocations’ types are approached from the dimension of General/ Specific English. Technical collocations are different from lexical and grammatical collocations in that the former are used in a special field within a special register. i.e. ESP (English for Specific Purposes) to help the learners acquire a specific language usage and use. However, the latter are academic/General and could be used in both General English and ESP.

Moreover, technical collocations are “powerful indicators of register” (Partington, A 1998: 20). They are “pre-cooked expressions” which are needed in “many genres of writing”. Each genre has its special collocations so that what is a normal collocation within a specific genre could not be considered so in another genre.

Sinclair (as cited in Partington, 1998: 20) illustrates this case with the collocations “vigorous depressions” and “dull highlights” that are normal only in the register of meteorology and photography respectively. In this context, Fuentes, Alejandro Curado (2001: 118) claims that “The level of technicality in word behaviour is closely related to subject domain. The salient condition is that elements function uniquely in their corresponding field, describing the restricted setting.” He illustrates his view with specific combinations of the noun *network* such as *U-network*, *access network*, *local area network* (ibid). Also, technical collocations help in increasing the learner's potential to command special languages. However, Fuentes (ibid: 111) remarks that free collocations that appear in different registers are considered as “semi-technical” word combinations. He gives the example of information: *information system*, *information technology*, *digital information*, and *information about* (ibid). According to Farrell (Cited in Fuentes, 2001: 115) semi-technical collocations are “formal, context-independent words with a high frequency and/or wide range of occurrence across scientific disciplines, not usually found in basic general English courses; words with high frequency across scientific disciplines.”

Hence, we can say that technical collocations are register-dependent while semi-technical ones are related to scientific domains but they may be found in academic language. As a result, all the types are important in learning ESP but only academic collocations are useful in General English especially “common core collocations” which are collocations that are used frequently and hence common.

1.5.3 Strong Vs Weak Collocations

Classifying collocations according to strength refers to the degree of words' association. Some words co-occur so often that when a word appears, its collocate

follows it most of the time. Here, it is qualified as a “strong collocation”. But when two words collocate rarely, the strength reduces and the collocation is not strong enough for the collocate to be predicted since the words are not always together.

Hill, Jimmie (as cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 63) classifies collocations according to strength into four categories: unique, *strong*, *weak* and *Medium-strength* collocations. First, there are **unique collocations**. As examples, Hill gives the two collocations “*foot the bill*” and “*shrug your shoulders*”. The two collocations are unique because the verbs “foot” and “shrug” are not used with any other nouns. Secondly, there are **strong collocations** like “*trenchant criticism*” and “*rancid butter*”. These are not unique because there are other things that can be trenchant or rancid, but these collocations are very few. Thirdly, there are **weak collocations**: to illustrate, adjectives like long, short, cheap, expensive, good or bad could be combined with many things (nouns) for instance *red car*. These combinations are “more predictable” and easy to the majority of students. Finally, the fourth type is **medium-strength collocations**; for example “*holds a conversation*” and “*a major operation*”. Hill (ibid) thinks that students are concerned with this type which is neither strong nor weak.

1.5.4 Open Vs Restricted Collocations

Cowie and Howarth (1996: 81) distinguish two types of collocations: ‘*open*’ and ‘*restricted*’. According to them, a collocation is *restricted* if its parts ‘keep their literal meaning’, for instance “*vested interest*”, whereas a collocation is considered as *open* when one or both parts has/have a ‘figurative meaning’ such as “*white man*” referring to “skin colour”. *Open collocations* are as described by Carter “open to partnership with a wide range of items” (cited in Partington, A. 1998: 26). Most lexical items are included in this type for instance: white, short, long, red...etc. In between the two extremes there are “semi-restricted” collocations. Here a specific word has a limited

number of collocations. Carter (ibid.) gives the example of the verb *harbour* that collocates with *doubts, uncertainty, grudge* and *suspicion*.

Cowie and Howarth (1996: 83) further claim that restricted collocations are “idiosyncratic and arbitrary” in contrast to “perfectly open collocations...formed by general principles of co-occurrence”.

As a general comment, we can consider “open collocations” as “weak collocations” in Hill’s terms. But it is difficult to consider “restricted collocations” as weak or strong because this is related to the meaning rather than the frequency of co-occurrence. Also, we agree with Cowie and Howarth that collocations could be “arbitrary” regardless of their type. For what makes a word like “fast” collocates with “food” if we can say rapid or quick food. In fact, it is only what we ought to say so as to make our speech *natural*.

1.6 Collocations’ Criteria

Collocation is characterized by three main criteria: *Non-compositionality*, *non-substitutability* and *non-modifiability* (Bowles, Hugo, 2007: 08). First, a collocation is *non-compositional* in the sense that we cannot understand its meaning even if we understand the meaning of the individual words. A good example of non-compositionality is an idiom for instance, ‘*to have an itching palm*’ meaning ‘*to be greedy for money*’ (Kirkpatrick, E. M. and Schwarz, C.M, 1993: 180).

Second, *non-substitutionability* means that we cannot substitute the words that constitute a collocation for their synonym. For example, in the collocation: *close the meeting*, it’s wrong to say *shut the meeting* because “shut” and “meeting” do not go together, whereas one could say shut the door. Finally, Collocations are *non-modifiable*, that is to say it is impossible to modify them by adding extra words.

1.7 Collocation and Colligation

The difference between the two terms “collocation” and “colligation” has to be pointed out so that one should not think that they are the same. Hoey (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 234) argues that another word exists far from collocation and semantic prosody, which is *colligation* or “the grammatical company a word keeps and the positions it refers”. Colligation is “what we do” with the language. Colligations of a word are a description of what this word “typically does grammatically” (ibid). Hoey gives the example of 'employment words': *accountant, actor, actress, architect, carpenter*, which have different colligations. That is to say, these words do not occur with/in the same “grammatical constructions” for instance: indefinite articles and possessive case (ibid). Robins (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 213) points out the difference between collocations and colligations as follows:

“Groups of words considered as members of word-classes related to each other in syntactic structures have been called colligations to be distinguished from collocations which refer to groups of words considered as individual lexical items irrespective of their grammatical classes and relations”

Consequently, the learners have to differentiate between the three concepts: collocations, colligations and semantic prosody in order to have a clear view about what a collocation is. Also, as indicated by Hargreaves Peter (ibid: 214) knowledge of a word’s collocates has to coincide with the grammatical patterns or colligations of this word.

1.8 The Nature of Vocabulary: Individual Words Vs Multi-Word Units

One cannot speak about collocations and ignore vocabulary since the latter consists of both individual words and collocations. Furthermore, collocations represent

the most important part of vocabulary. We are going to speak about the nature of vocabulary by discussing first the term “word”, and introducing its meaning, classes, families, formation and forms. After clarifying the concept “word” it is useful to pass to the concept of “Multi-Word Units” to explore its meaning. Then, we will discuss a focal point which is the relation between vocabulary and grammar.

1.8.1 The Meaning of “word”

One could not speak about a language without words; the word is the main constituent of a language. Second and foreign language learners are always acquiring new words. According to Scott Thornbury (2002: 01), the acquisition of new words is a continuous process even in the first language. Words may be considered as the heart of vocabulary which makes the learners torn between form and meaning. Once the learners grasp the meaning of a specific word they become eager to know how to employ it in the right way and/or context. However, they are often confused to find another meaning of an already known word. Moreover, pronouncing a word the wrong way could lead to the problem of mixing it with another word which is its *homophone*.

1.8.2 Word Classes

Word classes are parts of speech. Words are classified into eight categories: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, articles and interjections. A word can belong to two classes, for instance “fast” is both an adjective and adverb. Also, Thornbury (2002: 4) claims that word classes are divided into *grammatical /function words* and *content words*. He further says that content words “carry a high information load” while function words play a grammatical role in the sentence (ibid: 3-4). We can classify the two types in the following table:

Function words	Content words
Prepositions	Nouns
Conjunctions	Verbs
Articles	Adverbs
Pronouns	Adjectives
Interjections	

Table 1. 6 Word classes: Function Words Vs Content Words

As shown in the table above, content words are: nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. They play an important role in vocabulary, according to Thornbury (2002: 4) content words are related to teaching vocabulary but function words are allocated to teaching grammar.

1.8.3 Word Families

Each word has a family that shares with it the same *root*, this family is the result of the addition of “suffixes” after the root of a word to get new words that are called “inflexions” (Thornbury, S. 2002: 4). But when the new words are the result of adding affixes like: the “s” of the plural or the “ed” of the past, they are called “derivatives”. Thus, “inflexions” and “derivatives” are the consequence of “affixation”. New words could also be formed by adding “prefixes” to the root of the word, they are also called “derivatives” (ibid). In the following diagram, we illustrate the process of affixation of the root "use" as follows:

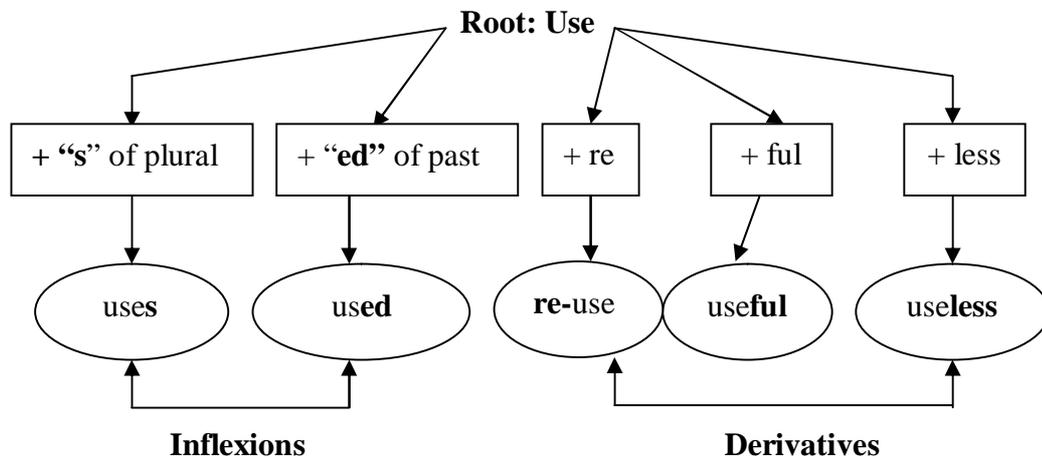


Figure 1-1: A Diagram of the Process of the Affixation of the Root “Use”

The illustration above indicates that the process of affixation includes inflexions and derivatives. Adding the affixes “s” and “ed” respectively results in the inflexions “uses” and “used”. Also, the addition of the prefix “re” results in the derivative “reuse” while the addition of the suffixes “ful” and “less” results in the derivatives “useful” and “useless” respectively. Of course there are other inflexions by adding “ing”, “er”...etc, and other derivatives exist by adding "mis", "able"...etc. but generally we can say that affixation leads to specifying a word’s family. Consequently, the words included in the family of the root “use” are indicated in the following diagram:

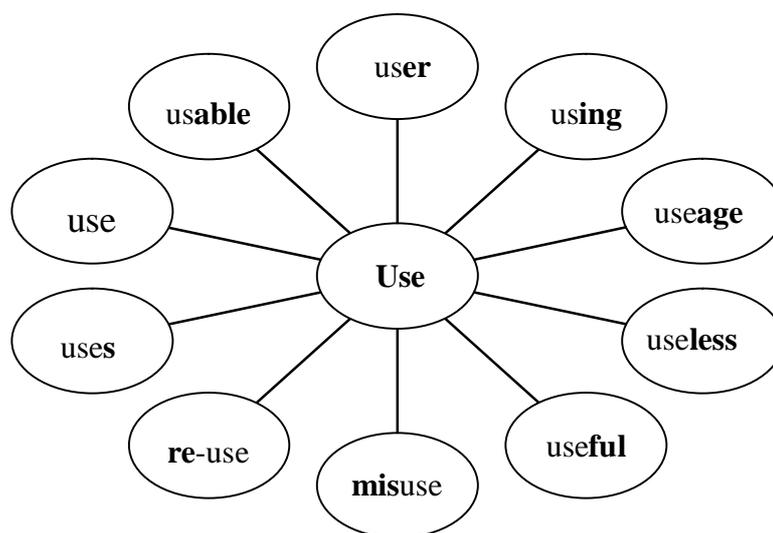


Figure 1-2: Word Family

1.8.4 Word Formation

New words are formed by various ways, Thornbury (2002: 5) states five ways:

-**Affixation** (discussed in the previous section).

-**Compounding**: to join two or more words such as up-to-date.

-**Blend**: to mix two words into one, he gives the example of breakfast + lunch = brunch.

-**Conversion**: to convert a part of speech into another one. Thornbury gives the example of “must” which is converted from a verb to a noun in this sentence “*a balloon flight is an absolute must*”.

-**Clipping**: to shorten “longer words” for example influenza flu.

1.8.5 Words' Relations

The learner could be confused by encountering words that have different meanings but look alike, or words that are written differently but mean the same thing. Therefore, words' relations that can be a source of troubles for the learner should be clarified as follows:

-Synonyms

Synonymy is related to words that have the same meaning; one could be substituted for the other without affecting the meaning of a sentence. Thus, synonyms help to explain difficult words with easier ones. Sometimes, they enrich writing by giving a rhetorical meaning to the text for instance when a noun is described by two adjectives that have the same meaning.

-Antonyms

Antonyms are words which have opposite meanings, for example “good” and “bad”. The meaning of words could be clarified by their antonyms, for example the meaning of “ugly” is “not beautiful”.

-Homonyms

Homonyms are words that have the same sound and spelling but differ in their meaning. The following table represents our own list of some English homonyms with their different meanings. As shown in the table below, those words are spelled and pronounced in the same way, but they have different meanings which could be clarified through the context or the associated words.

	A	B		A	B
01	May: a model verb for making predictions	May: a month	17	Green: the colour	Green: jealous
02	Coffee: the drink	Coffee: the cup	18	Dash: of punctuation	Dash: small amount
03	Nail: of finger	Nail: of wood	19	Crown: top of a hill	Crown: a golden circle worn by a king/queen
04	Pipe: a tube	Pipe: a small musical instrument	20	Age: length of days, years, months that somebody has lived	Age: a specific period of time
05	Caravan: a large vehicle	Caravan: a group of people	21	Bill: note (money)	Bill: a bird's beak
06	Miss: (v) to long for	Miss: lady	22	Can: a model verb	Can: a metal/plastic container
07	Rock: a type of music	Rock: a solid and hard material on the earth	23	Net: pure	Net: web
08	Bank: an organization where people store money	Bank: the ground along the side of a river	24	Pole: a thin piece for holding things up	Pole: the point at the two tops of the earth
09	Refrain: chorus	Refrain: (v) to stop	25	Star: a small point of light in the sky	Star: a famous person in a specific field
10	Spirit: alcohol	Spirit: soul	26	Suit: a formal set of clothes	Suit: a playing card
11	Cycle: bike	Cycle: a series of events that happen repeatedly	27	Watch: a small clock	Watch: the action of looking by paying attention to something
12	Play: a story to be performed on the stage of the theatre	Play: to have fun	28	March: a month	March: long walk to protest
13	Club: a place where you go to do something in partnership with others	Club: people with a common interest	29	Volley: type of sport	Volley: a number of bullets/stones thrown at the same time
14	Bear: big animal	Bear: to support the weight of something	30	Plane: aeroplane: a means of transport	Plane: a tool for making the surface smooth
15	Saw: to see in the past	Saw: a tool for cutting	31	Moor: heather	Moor: Arabic person from Marrakch
16	Cube: a shape	Cube: multiplying a number by itself twice	32	Palm: of the hand	Palm: a tree of dates

Table 1.7 List of English Homonyms

-Homophones

Homophones are two words that are pronounced similarly but they have different meanings and spellings. Here is our own list of the most common English homophones:

	A	B		A	B
01	Sea	See	17	Strait	Straight
02	flour	flower	18	Hi	High
03	Sail	Sale	19	Bee	Be
04	Weak	Week	20	Bite	Byte
05	Knight	Night	21	Son	Sun
06	Sought	Sort	22	Key	Quay
07	Ewe	You	23	Waist	Waste
08	Cord	Chord	24	Pane	Pain
09	Hole	Whole	25	Awe	or
10	Knew	New	26	Bass	Base
11	Here	Hear	27	Plain	Plane
12	I	Eye	28	Coarce	Course
13	Red	Read (past)	29	Whet	Wet
14	Right	Write	30	Brake	Break
15	Cereal	Serial	31	Which	Witch
16	Morning	Mourning	32	Principal	Principle
17	Piece	Peace	33	Knot	Not
18	Sight	Site	34	Air	Heir
19	Wear	Where	35	War	Wore
20	Earn	Urn	36	Whirr	Were

Table 1.8 List of English Homophones

As indicated in the table above, some words are pronounced similarly whereas their meaning and spelling are slightly or totally different.

-Heteronyms

Heteronyms are words that are spelled the same but have different pronunciations and different meanings. For example there is “desert” as a noun and “desert” a verb. (To see more examples you would access the following web page: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~cellis/heteronym.html>)

-Hyponymy

According to Thornbury (2002: 9-10) a word is a hyponym of another word if the former is included in the latter. He gives the example of “hammer” which is a hyponym of the word “tool”. He (ibid) further claims that all the words that are hyponyms of “tool” like “screwdriver” and “saw” are considered as “co-hyponyms”; and that “tool” is “the super-ordinate term”.

-Polysemy

Polysemes are the various related meanings that a word has. (Thornbury: 2002: 8-9). The meaning of a word differs according to its context in the sentence. Thornbury gives the example of “hold” which is “a polysemous word” that has various meanings in different sentences like “Mrs Smith is holding a party next week” and “You need to hold a work permit” (ibid: 9)

1. 8. 6 Multi-Word Units

The expression “Multi-Word Units” (MWU) is used to refer to words that are considered as a single unit. As claimed by Thornbury (2002: 6) MWU are “called simply **lexical chunks**”. They include *idioms* such as ‘kick the bucket’; *phrasal verbs* like: give up ; *fixed phrases* or “polywords” such as 'up to now', 'upside down', 'out of my mind', 'of course', 'in spite of'...; and *semi-fixed phrases* like ‘a friend of mine/her/them’. According to Mel' uk (as cited in Cowie, A. P. 2001: 31) MWU are also called “set phrases” or “phrasemes”. He identified two types of phrasemes, pragmatic and semantic phrasemes. Semantic phrasemes have three sub-types: collocations, idioms and quasi-idioms; while pragmatic phrasemes have only one type that is “pragmatemes”. He further considers collocations as “the absolute majority” of

phrasemes. (ibid). Consequently, collocations are a part of MWU. What characterizes collocations is the fact that its constituents are not always “fixed”, they could be separate from each other (Thornbury, 2002: 7). Hence, Thornbury considers collocation as “a looser kind of association” (ibid).

1.9 Collocations, Idioms and Phrasal verbs

These three terms are often used interchangeably. Therefore, it is interesting to point out the relation that may exist between them. Let us first examine the meaning of idioms and phrasal verbs. An *idiom* is an expression in which all the words do not have their literal meanings, their sense is rather figurative or metaphoric. So, the meaning of the idiom is rarely understood. Besides, *phrasal verbs* are phrases in which verbs are joined to articles, for instance "give up" where meaning is rarely guessed from the individual words. Examining both definitions implies that idioms and phrasal verbs are like collocations because they include words that go together. So, collocations are often idiomatic. Jimmie Hill said “...in a sense, all collocations are idiomatic and all phrasal verbs and idioms are collocations or contain collocations” (cited in Lewis Michael. 2000: 51). Since the learners are usually acquainted with phrasal verbs and idioms rather than other types of collocations, it is better to direct their attention to types mentioned by Michael Lewis and McCarthy and O' Dell.

Furthermore, Sinclair argues that words are chosen on the basis of what he labels “collocational principles” (1991: 109), pointing out two principles: First, *The open-choice principle* when the learner is free to choose which words go with which as long as (s)he does not break the grammatical rules. Second, *the idiom principle* when the learner considers prefabricated chunks as single wholes. Sinclair argues that what mainly governs the learner’s choice is the idiom principle.

1. 10 Vocabulary vs. Grammar

Contrary to grammar, vocabulary has been neglected, Richards (1976: 77) argues that:

“The teaching and learning of vocabulary has never aroused the same degree of interest within language teaching as have such issues as grammatical competence, contrastive analysis, reading, or writing, which have received considerable attention from scholars and teachers.”

This view is confirmed by Moras Solange and Sao Carlos (2001: 1) who claim that traditional vocabulary teaching was “limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or sometimes listening texts. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion”. They farther argue that: “Nowadays it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus” (ibid)

Necessity to teach vocabulary goes hand in hand with teaching collocations because the latter is a major part of the former. As McCarthy (1990: 12) says “collocation is an important organizing principle in the vocabulary...”. In addition, the importance of collocations started when the efficacy of grammar and word lists was called into question, neither lists of vocabulary nor grammar is effective in teaching, it is rather words joined together or in Lewis Morgan words “chunks of lexis” that make the difference. He (as cited in Michael Lewis. 2000: 16) claims that: “the more collocations learners have at their disposal, the less they need to grammaticalise”. Furthermore, Morgan thinks that collocations constitute a huge part of lexical chunks, what the learner needs is only to recall these memorized chunks. (ibid: 15). So, teachers should not rely on word lists because they are as claimed by Hoey (cited in Lewis

Michael, 2000: 227) “learned without reference to any context in which they might be used, they tend to get confused with each other”. According to Hoey “list-learning” is “dangerous” because it doesn't lead to the production of “natural-sounding sentences” (ibid).

Besides, vocabulary could be extended if “mis-collocations” are pointed out to students after the correction of their essays (George Woolard, in Lewis Michael. 2000: 30). This method, as Woolard thinks, will help to raise the learners’ awareness of collocations.

“By focusing our students' attention on mis-collocations we make them aware that learning more vocabulary is not just learning new words, it is often learning familiar words in new combinations” (ibid : 31)

Furthermore, in Morgan Lewis and Michael Lewis terms, the “grammar-vocabulary dichotomy” is “invalid”. Morgan Lewis explains that the learner can learn grammar and many words (extensive vocabulary) but still s/he could not use grammar to express these words properly (2000: 15). On the other hand, Michael Lewis argues that “The dichotomy is invalid; language is fundamentally lexical”. (2000: 149). When dealing with a text, as remarked by Michael Lewis, the meaning is understood through lexis not through grammar which indicates that grammar “plays a subordinate role” (Michael Lewis, 2000: 147). This is the same idea of Sinclair (as cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 147) who claims that “Grammar is part of the management of text rather than the focus of meaning-creation.” As a result, what affects the meaning of words is vocabulary rather than grammar.

1.10.1 Collocations and Communicative Competence

Within Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), Chomsky has identified two main concepts: competence and performance. The former is what the learner knows about the language whereas the latter is what s/he does with the language. (Nunan, 1988: 32-33). Hymes, D (1971: 271) criticizes the Chomskian “theory of competence” for its ignorance of the “sociocultural dimension” that may interfere in the description of language. He rather introduces the concept of “Communicative Competence” to highlight “the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors governing effective language use” (Coady, J and Huckin, T. N. 1997: 12). Nyysönen Heikki (2004: 159–160) claims that competence is used by Chomsky to represent knowledge of grammar; however, it is used by Hymes to indicate communicative competence.

Communicative competence is the basis of the communicative approach that represents a radical breakthrough with the traditional approaches that were based on “habit formation”. Under the communicative syllabus, the aim is fluency rather than accuracy. Here is a comment of Nyysönen Heikki on the constituents of communicative competence: “communicative competence is a highly complex ability. It includes grammatical accuracy, intelligibility and acceptability, contextual appropriateness and fluency” (ibid: 160)

According to Partington (1998: 18) the use of collocations manifests the native speaker/writer’s communicative competence. A native speaker has the ability to decide which collocation is normal in that context. However, if s/he uses an unusual collocation s/he will aim at “surprise, dramatic, or humorous effect” (ibid).

Unlike foreign learners, natives have what Firth labels “expectancies” (ibid: 16) of the collocational fields that a word has. Thus, if we like to teach collocations to non-natives

we have to develop their “expectancies” of the words which tend to occur within the same field of a specific word.

1.10.2 Collocational Competence

Learning a language is the result of many competences grouped together; hence, we should work on these competences to achieve the learning objectives. We are used to hear of communicative and linguistic competence but “collocational competence” is usually an unfamiliar phrase. This concept is coined by Michael Lewis (2000: 49) who said: “We are familiar with the concept of communicative competence, but we need to add the concept of *collocational competence* to our thinking”.

Collocational competence is “the ability to accurately combine chunks of language thus enabling production of fluent, accurate and stylistically appropriate speech.” (Heikkila, T and T, 2005: 1). Without this competence students are facing many problems in writing their assignments. One of these problems is grammatical mistakes as “students tend to create longer utterances because they do not know collocations which express precisely what they want to say” (Hill, as cited in Michael Lewis. 2000: 49). Crystal (cited in Heikkila, T and T, 2005: 2) also claims that collocations “differ greatly between languages, and provide a major difficulty in mastering foreign languages”. Therefore, they need help in the classroom to pass over collocational problems.

As a result, to overcome the problem of word associations, collocational competence needs to be developed in order to achieve fluency and proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) generally and Foreign Language writing particularly. The development of students’ collocational competence would result in the improvement of communicative competence. Consequently, proficiency in the foreign

language would increase as far as the learners' competencies are developed. Writing as well as speaking would be more fluent, accurate and meaningful since the learner knows the most common collocations that enable him/her to speak and write more efficiently. So, knowing collocations means knowing vocabulary, which facilitates the task for the learner to perform better in the foreign language.

Conclusion

As collocations are 'prefabricated chunks' that have already been memorized in the mind, they facilitate the production of language. Instead of recalling individual words and wasting time in thinking how to group them together to have a lexically right structure, it would be better to retrieve collocations that make our language more natural.

Collocations are widespread in English, Arabic and French but each language has its specific collocations. The second language learner should not mix between the three languages; our knowledge of Arabic or French mustn't affect our English production. Here, interference is a major problem that hinders foreign language learners' speech and writing. Thus, foreign language learners have to be taught the most common collocations of the target language so as to constitute a profile of several collocations that they may need to differentiate between their mother tongue word combinations and those of the foreign language. Accumulating word combinations in such a collocations profile in the learners' mind would help them develop their collocational competence and avoid translating word combinations from the mother tongue to the foreign language. Consequently, they would be able to communicate effectively either in speech or in writing.

Introduction

Learning English requires an integration of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The latter is a necessary skill that has to be developed since it is a manifestation of the learners' performance in a foreign language. Therefore, teachers have been always looking for effective methods and approaches to teach writing so that Learners' written production could be improved. In this chapter, we are going to introduce the skill of writing and concentrate on the most common approaches to teach it. The purpose is to gain knowledge about the best way writing could be taught on one hand, and to investigate whether collocations have gained any interest over history, on the other hand. After that, we are going to explore the concept of "mis-collocations" which are widespread in learners' writing. Overcoming this problem may help them to write appropriately if it is realized by teaching collocations explicitly. Directions to do so are explained in this chapter and followed by the materials that facilitate the process of building learners' awareness of the most common collocation. Finally, the roles of both teachers and learners are discussed.

2.1 The Skill of Writing

Writing is a difficult skill learners have to master, both native and non-native speakers may lack the competence necessary to make them good writers because learners could not express their ideas effectively without this competence. Within this scope, Tribble (as cited in Frith, J, 2009: 1) argues that:

“It is through the mastery of writing that the individual comes to be fully effective in intellectual organization, not only in the management of everyday affairs, but also in the expression of ideas and arguments”.

Thus, foreign language learners are struggling to write correctly since they face many obstacles toward a correct English composition. Writing necessitates, at least, a basic knowledge of grammar, lexis and vocabulary, and the ability to express ideas in an appropriate English language unaffected by the mother tongue.

What the learners ought to reach in writing is *proficiency*, which is used by some writers to replace “competency” or what to “do with the language”. (Nunan. 1988: 34). Nunan agrees with Richards on the fact that proficiency is “the ability to perform real-world tasks with a pre-specified degree of skill”. (ibid: 35). Michael Lewis farther considers proficiency as a term that refers to three characteristics: *accuracy*, *fluency* and *complexity*. (Michael Lewis, 2000: 174)

Firstly, we have to consider *accuracy versus fluency*; under the communicative approach accuracy is not the main interest as far as it does not hinder the communication of meaning. What is aimed at is not the form but rather the meaning. The communicative approach does favour fluency, whereas the audio-lingual and grammar translation approaches favour accuracy. Hence, considering the 'accuracy/fluency' question from the view point of teaching approaches and methodologies is somewhat problematic. Thus, the teacher would better encourage the learner's fluency first, then accuracy would follow at the end of the writing process.

Secondly, “*complexity*” is, according to Michael Lewis, the improvement of students' writing especially at advanced levels. It indicates “the writer's ability to construct noun phrases which are high in informational content” (2000: 175). He gives the example of noun phrases joined by *of*, for instance *nature of time, a construction of*

our minds....etc. He further comments that noun phrases are neglected in contrast to verb phrases that are the focus of traditional grammar. (ibid: 176).

As a result, the accuracy / fluency dichotomy has to be replaced with an endeavour to direct our students towards complexity of the language. This may lead to both fluency and accuracy. Hence, proficiency in foreign language writing will increase to a degree that it could challenge natives' proficiency especially if students are taught the most common collocations that improve their writing style and make it more natural.

2.2 A Review of Approaches to Teaching Writing

The following review aims mainly at investigating the state of collocations under the most interesting approaches to teaching writing. An examination of the principal directions of the product, the process, the genre, the process genre, and the eclectic approach aims at discovering whether there was any intention to teach collocations.

2.2.1 The Product Approach

The Product or the 'controlled writing approach' was widespread in the mid-1960s, interested in the final product and mastery of linguistic features through the imitation of the teacher's model. Thus, errors of grammar and lexis were continuously corrected. Importance was given to the surface structure of language rather than the underlying meaning. The product approach has been severely criticised because of its neglect of the learners' needs and the stages of the writing process. It considered language as "basically a process of mechanical habit formation" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 57), which hindered creativity and imagination of the learner.

2.2.2 The Process Approach

The *process approach* has emerged at the end of the 1960s as a reaction to the product approach. What becomes important is the way of writing rather than the final product. The process approach is “an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models”. (Tribble, as cited in Holmes, 2005: 1).

This approach includes four main stages: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. According to Tribble these stages are 'recursive' and 'not linear at all' (ibid.). He explains that “at any point in the preparation of a text, writers can loop backwards or forwards to whichever of the activities involved in text composition they may find useful” (ibid.)

The following diagram by White and Arndt (cited in Harmer, J. 2001: 258) explains the process approach stages:

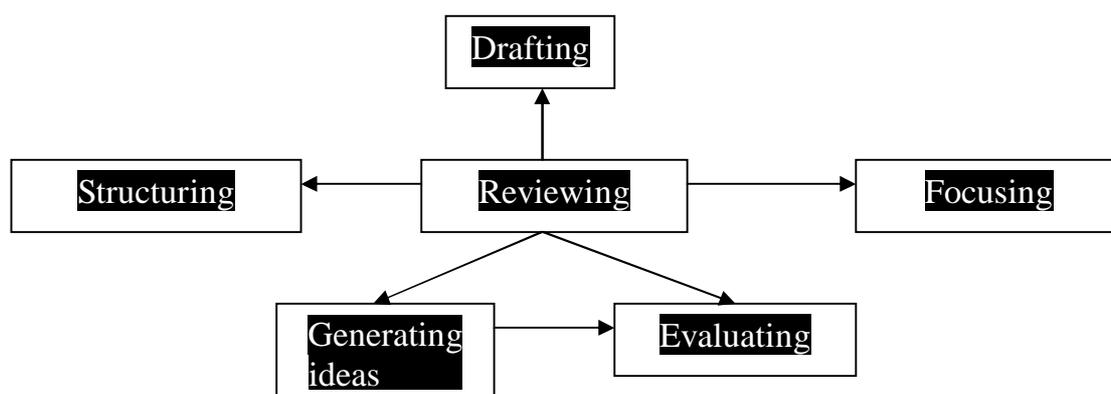


Figure 2-1: White and Arndt’s Process Writing Model (cited in Harmer, J. 2001: 258)

The above model represents a process of writing in which 'reviewing' is a central stage where the learner revises his/ her draft. So, the learner evaluates the draft

continuously in order to generate more sentences that express better his/her ideas. Structuring depends on the review of the draft according to what the learner aims to express.

Moreover, correction is not emphasized from the early stages because it hinders communication. It comes only at the last stage which is 'revising' or in White and Arndt's words 'reviewing'. Unlike the product approach where the teacher is the only corrector, feedback in the process approach is received from both the teacher and the learner. In this respect, the language skills rather than the linguistic features are developed.

2.2.3 The Genre Approach

This approach is the result of criticizing both the product and the process approaches. It emerged in the mid-eighties to advocate learners' study of a text within a specific genre before proceeding to writing (Harmer, J. 2001: 258). It is the fruit of the work of Halliday (1985), Swales (1981, 1990), and Bhatia (1991, 1993) that aims at developing the learners' communicative competence in relation to a specific genre. (Henry, A and Roseberry, R. L, 1998: 147). For example, if the genre is *short stories*, a model would be first introduced to learners. Then, after understanding how a short story is written, i.e. the rhetorical organization: the setting, the climax, the style...etc. the learners could start writing by imitating the given model which leads the students to "...see writing as a form of 'reproduction' rather than as a creative act" (op. cit. 259). Here, learners have to develop their ideas in relation to the social context in which the genre is used.

This approach is similar to the product approach in that imitation is a monitoring factor in the writing process; hence, it has been bitterly criticized. Harmer claims that “A genre approach is especially appropriate for students of English for Specific Purposes” (2001: 258). Eventually, genre studies especially the article of Swales (1981) have resulted in designing materials in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) by Weissberg & Buker (1990), and in describing a project in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) represented by Bhatia (1993). (Henry, A and Roseberry, R. L, 1998: 148).

In the following table, the main characteristics of the product, the process and the genre approaches are summed up and compared as follows:

The Product Approach	The Process Approach	The Genre Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A model is followed: controlled writing. -The final product is the most important thing. -Interest in Linguistic Knowledge -Individual -The teacher is the only feedback provider. -The learners' needs are neglected. -Linear. -Continuous correction of errors. -One draft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no model to follow: free and creative writing. -the process of writing is the most important thing. -interest in the functions and skills of the language and the learners' needs -cooperative -peer review and teacher's feedback. -the learners' needs are satisfied. -recursive -errors' correction is at the end. -more than one draft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a model is followed: controlled writing. - the genre is the most important thing. -interest in the rhetorical style and the linguistic features of the genre. -cooperative then individual -peer review and teacher's feedback. -the learners' needs that serve the genre are emphasized -linear - errors' correction is important especially if it affects the genre. - more than one draft.

Table 2.1: A Comparison of the Product, the Process and the Genre Approach

2.2.4 The Process-Genre Approach

Badger and White (2000: 153) coin the name of this approach which is the result of combining the process with the genre approaches. Its purpose is to build students awareness of the different genres in writing through the process approach. Badger and White (ibid) introduce six stages in teaching writing under the process genre approach: preparation, modelling and reinforcing, planning, joint constructing, independent constructing, and revising.

First, the teacher prepares the learners to write by introducing a specific genre such as a job application letter. Then, the teacher provides a model of an application letter in order to reinforce the learners' knowledge of this genre by discussing features like the structure, the style and the social context. The third step is to raise the learners' interest in the topic by planning meaningful activities. After that, there is the stage of 'joint constructing' where the learners join the teacher to write a model. Then, the learners follow this model during the stage of 'independent constructing' where they have to write individually. Finally, there is 'revising' where each learner revises and edits his/her final draft depending on peer review and/or the teachers' feedback.

The following diagram represents the discussed stages of the approach. It illustrates how the process and the genre approach work together for a purposeful teaching of writing.

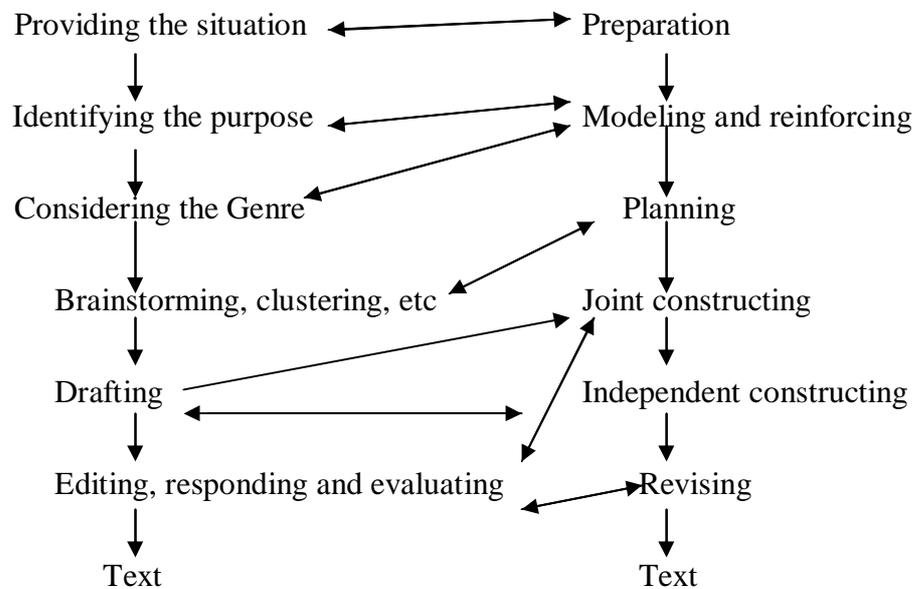


Figure 2-2: Application of the Process-Genre Approach (Badger, R. G., & White, G. 2000: 21)

2.2.5 The Eclectic Approach

The ‘single’ method approach has been called into question since it has not fulfilled the objectives of language learning / teaching. As a result, there has been a call for a ‘pluralistic’ approach to language teaching. Necessity to adopt an eclectic approach to language teaching has led to the implementation of a variety of strategies according to the needs of each student on one hand, and the context of teaching on the other hand.

According to Mellow, J. D. (2002: 1) language teaching should follow what Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow, J. D (2000) called *principled eclecticism*. The latter is one of different concepts that have been used to refer to eclecticism. As stated by Mellow (ibid), these concepts are:

“-effective or successful eclecticism (i.e., based on specific outcomes) (Olagoke, 1982),
 -enlightened eclecticism (H. D. Brown, 1994, p. 74; Hammerly, 1985, p. 9),
 -informed or well-informed eclecticism (J. D. Brown, 1995, pp. 12-14, 17; Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, & Wheeler, 1983; Yonglin, 1995),
 -integrative eclecticism (Gilliland, James & Bowman, 1994, p. 552),
 -new eclecticism (Boswell, 1972),
 -planned eclecticism (Dorn, 1978, p. 6),
 -systematic eclecticism (Gilliland, James & Bowman, 1994, p. 552),
 -technical eclecticism (Lazarus & Beutler, 1993), as well as
 -the complex methods of the arts of eclectic, including deliberation (Eisner, 1984, p. 207; Schwab, 1969, p. 20; 1971, pp. 495, 503, 506). ”

Considering the disadvantages of these types of eclecticism, Mellow agrees with Larsen-Freeman that principled eclecticism came as a reaction to “(i) single-theory reliance or absolutism; (ii) relativism; and/or (iii) unconstrained pluralism” (ibid: 2). He explains his view by pointing out the fact that no theory is adequate in the sense that each theory has disadvantages that lead to the emergence of another theory. He further comments that the single approaches are criticized for being relative and unsuitable for all the teaching situations. Each approach is used only within a specific context. Then, he proceeds to claim that unconstrained pluralism is also criticized because it is arbitrary having no single theory or ‘contextual considerations’.

In contrast to ‘unconstrained pluralism’, Mellow’s eclecticism is based on two explicit principles which guide the teachers’ selection of activities. First, properties-based activities which are ‘categorized’ according to two dimensions. In the first dimension language is seen as ‘*form* or *function*’; that is to say the focus is on the structure or the meaning of the language. The second dimension considers learning as ‘*construction* or *growth*’. On one hand, construction means that the learner constructs

knowledge about the language through ‘cognitive processing’ and ‘attention, practice, and automatization’ of input. On the other hand, growth is the acquisition of language by ‘exchanging meaning’ in a natural context. (ibid: 3). Second, the *centring principle* that highlights the ‘coherence’ of courses through the use of activities which keep “the same forms, functions, and/or signs”. (ibid: 9)

Teaching writing under an eclectic approach implies that a variety of activities have to be applied in the classroom under a wide range of strategies. Here, the activity is varied according to the genre which the learners are expected to master. For instance, if the aim is to teach story writing, eclecticism includes first the stage of reading a sample story, then identifying the steps of writing a story by giving exemplifications from the model: the situation, the setting, the plot...etc. After that, the learners would engage in the task of writing a story by collaborating with the teacher who acts as a guide, a feedback provider, and a facilitator who helps the learners by simplifying the task of word choice and grammar. So, the teacher should be so competent and effective that (s)he could vary his/ her activities according to the context of learning, the genre to be taught and the students’ needs.

As a general comment, collocations are totally ignored within the analyzed approaches. Moreover, all the approaches have advantages as well as disadvantages; therefore, writing cannot be taught effectively unless all the approaches are combined together under an eclectic approach in which the two leading factors are the context and the learners’ communicative needs. Since these needs would not be satisfied if the learners lack the necessary vocabulary needed to express them, and because collocations constitute the major part of vocabulary, there is a need for an approach that focuses on teaching collocations in order to facilitate the teaching of writing.

2.3 Mis-collocations in Foreign Language Writing

It is widely observed that foreign language learners face a major problem in writing. Although they have the ideas and storm their brains to find the words, they do not know which words could be joined together to form correct expressions. Thus, their essays include a wide variety of mis-collocations. This is due to their lack of collocational competence because they have received an instruction that is “grammar-focused” where there is no direct instruction of vocabulary. They have learned vocabulary through the other subjects, and most of the time they have discovered only individual words. Yet, the majority of learners do not know even what collocations are. To overcome this problem, the teacher should attract his/her learners’ attention towards collocations because teaching grammar and individual words is not sufficient. Once the learners notice which words co-occur together, they start to guess the meaning of each word according to its ‘company’ so that they could use it when they are asked to write. Consequently, learners find difficulties in identifying collocations when they read a text. So, they could not know which words go together from free reading. As a result, reading could not solve the problem unless it is directed by the teacher.

Furthermore, the unlimited number of collocations may confuse the learners who wonder how they could acquire this massive input. Since acquiring a language requires learning its vocabulary, the teacher should simplify the learning task by advising the learners to start with the most common collocations that are frequently used by native speakers. Then, they could enrich their knowledge of collocations through an extensive teaching with the help of collocation dictionaries such as Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English. The main reason of teaching collocations is helping the learners to overcome possible mis-collocations in writing and achieve fluency as claimed by Nesselhauf, N. (2005: 2):

“prefabricated units are essential for fluency in both spoken and written language...it has been known that whether or not L2 production is fluent crucially depends on the learner’s control over a large repertoire of prefabricated units”.

As a general comment, teaching the most common collocations is the key towards overcoming the problem of mis-collocations in Foreign Language Writing. Hence, each teacher has to believe in the necessity of developing the learners’ collocational competence, and the importance of grammar as well as vocabulary.

2.4 Interference of the Mother Tongue

Foreign language learners tend to transfer negatively already known words and group of words from Arabic into the target language because of interference. They do translate expressions (either consciously or unconsciously) from L1 (Language1) into L2 (Language2) due to "interlanguage" or "errors of competence" [Corder (1967, 1975, 1981), Nemser (1971), Richards (1971, 1972), Selinker (1969, 1972), and Selinker and Lamendella (1981)], which is a huge problem that hinders learners’ performance in the target language. Errors of competence could be "fossilized" (Selinker 1972; Selinker and Lamendella 1978) if the learner, as claimed by Huxley, “stops adapting hypotheses before reaching full mastery of the target language. For example, he/she may continue to speak with a "foreign accent," despite apparent ability, opportunity, and motive to attain native-speaker pronunciation patterns.” (Huxley, F. C. 1986: 68)

Teachers have to urge learners to think in the target language as far as possible in order to avoid translating the L1 collocations into the L2, since these translations would lead to errors in writing or speaking. Translation exercises are advocated by Aston (cited in Vasiljevic, Zorana, 2008: 49) as a reliable method to direct learners’

attention towards the difference between the L1 and L2 collocations. Also, ignorance of collocations results on translating words and word combinations from the target language to the L1 which leads to wrong collocations that negatively affect fluency as claimed by Philip, J:

“Students generally encounter words in their literal sense first, match them to a translation equivalent in their L1, and from then on, unless instructed otherwise, use the word in calqued forms of the L1 phraseology. The relative success of this strategy effectively masks the underlying problem, which is more serious than simply getting collocations wrong. Persistent calquing actually prevents students from acquiring a sense of the word’s conceptual range in the L2, negatively affecting textual fluency and cohesiveness” (Philip, J. 2007: 13).

Consequently, Arabic affects learners’ production of English and makes it full of mis-collocations which are the result of negative transfer of Arabic collocations into English. Thus, teachers have to help the learners by making them notice the difference between collocations of each language. What is a common collocation in Arabic isn’t necessarily so in English and vice versa.

2.5 Interference of French as a Second Language

French, which is the heritage of the French colonialism in Algeria, intervenes strictly in the speech of Arabic students. Thus, code switching / mixing is a common phenomenon in the Algerian society. Three codes are used interchangeably by the Algerian speaker: Standard Arabic, French and low Arabic (Darja). The latter is replaced in some regions by Tamazight, Torguiya, Mzabiya or Chaouiya. Consequently, the interference of French in the production of English could not be avoided especially that they are both Latin-ascendant languages. However, transfer from French is sometimes positive especially when a word has the same meaning in English for

instance: presentation, introduction, conclusion, innovation...etc, but it becomes negative when the meaning is different in the case of *false* friends for example: actually / *actuellement*, to assist / *assister*...etc. Therefore, teachers have to teach their learners false friends so that they don't mix English words with those that have different meanings in French.

As a general comment, Algerian learners of English are facing a two-dimensional problem: transfer from Arabic and French. Moreover, there is also the influence of informal Arabic or Darja with all its sub-types: Tamazight, Torguiya and Chaouiya. In such a multilingual society avoiding negative transfer could not be totally avoided.

2.6 The Aims of Teaching Collocations

Teaching collocations has long been neglected as an influential way to increase foreign language learners' fluency. However, it is expected by Lewis, M that collocations will become the centre of teaching: "Collocation will become so central to everyday teaching that we will wonder whatever took up so much of our time before" (2000: 27). If this can be realized, learners' written productions would meet the qualities that could make them native-like.

Teaching collocations as claimed by Cowie, A. P and Howarth, P (cited in Blue, George M. and Mitchell, R. 1996: 90) is the step towards fluent writing: "Another feature of mature writing is the linking of collocations into larger sequences, which can produce a highly admired effect of fluency and confidence." They farther comment that familiarization with collocations is the result of "a gradually growing perception of their

idiosyncratic properties and specifically of the arbitrariness with which their components select each other”. (ibid: 92)

As collocations would influence students’ learning of any language, the aims of teaching collocations can be summarized in the following sequence written by *Daniela Forquera* (2006: 2):

- “- to maximise the value of language.
- to identify the powerful partnerships in a text.
- to expand their mental lexicons.
- to make better use of language they already partly know.
- to process and produce language at a much faster rate.
- to improve their stress and intonation in larger phrases (pronunciation).”

As a general comment, we observe from the purposes mentioned above that teaching collocations is beneficial for language learning as a whole not only for the writing skill.

2.7 Challenges to Teaching Collocations:

The call for teaching collocations has raised a huge problem which is the unlimited number of collocations in the English language that makes their teaching impossible. As a result, Bahns (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:134) supposes that “the teaching of lexical collocations in EFL should concentrate on items for which there is no direct translational equivalence in English and in the learners’ respective mother tongues”. However, Supporting Krashen’s theory (1982) of exposing the learner to a large amount of ‘language input’ Michael Lewis considers this huge number of collocations as an advantage rather than a problem. He thinks that teaching collocations,

whatever is their number, is an effective way in learning (ibid). At the same time Michael Lewis argues that this is a heavy burden for the foreign learner: “A mature language-user’s mental lexicon is much larger than we previously thought, and the non-native learner's task in mastering a sufficiently large lexicon correspondingly more difficult.” (Lewis, M. 2000: 128)

Moreover, much time has to be spent on teaching collocations so that the learner is exposed to a maximum number of collocations. Stockdale, Joseph G (2004: 3) thinks that success in second language learning is based on two points that must be followed in teaching: definition and collocations. Yet, a different amount of time is allocated to both points. He explains this matter in the following lines:

“Collocation is of much higher importance, however, in terms of use, acquisition and ultimate success in language learning. In a vocabulary presentation, one-tenth of our time should be spent on establishing a definition, and the rest of the time should be spent on collocation and use.” (Stockdale, Joseph G. 2004: 3)

Consequently, we see that the main challenge to teaching collocations is “time” especially if their number is huge. Therefore, we think that English language teachers have to concentrate on the most common collocations that are used by native speakers and could lead to fluent and natural writing. Once this is realized, teachers could proceed to other collocations that are less frequent in speech/ writing provided that there is much time.

2.8 Directions for Teaching Collocations

Mis-collocations are widely spread in foreign learners’ writing. This problem has to be solved by exposing the learner to highlighted word combinations, and raising his/ her attention to them on the basis of direct teaching that is conducted mainly

through noticing and Consciousness-raising (C.R). The following section is a discussion of the different ways through which collocations could be taught.

2.8.1 Teaching Collocations by Highlighting and Noticing

Language acquisition depends to a large extent on noticing. This view is confirmed by Ellis, R who says "No noticing, no acquisition." (cited in Thornbury, S. 1997: 326). Schmidt and Frota (ibid.) specify two types of noticing that help to acquire a language: first, exposure to the language input which helps to convert it into "intake". Second, the comparison between the "output" and the input.

According to Thornbury, S (1997: 327) noticing is "a conscious cognitive process"; therefore, it is up to the teachers to push their learners towards developing "noticing strategies". This could be achieved, in his opinion, through two main tasks: "reformulation" and "reconstruction". (ibid.) He considers reformulation as a good way of improving students' writing where the teacher "reformulates" students' erroneous sentences. (ibid.) Thornbury explains that reconstruction is to re-build a text that is given by the teacher, which helps students' to develop their "linguistic competence" (ibid. 330).

In addition, noticing is considered by Schmidt (1993) as "the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake" (as cited in Harley, B.1994: 57). Schmidt claims that "nothing in the target language input becomes intake for language learning other than what learners consciously notice" (cited in McLaughlin, 1990: 627). He farther insists that "our research should focus on what learners notice" (ibid). In fact, another important factor that leads to noticing is "consciousness/awareness" which on its role is controlled by "attention" (Harley, B.1994: 58).

On the basis of what has been stated above by Schmidt, Frota and Harley, we can draw the following diagram to explain how attention, noticing and consciousness-raising lead to learning:

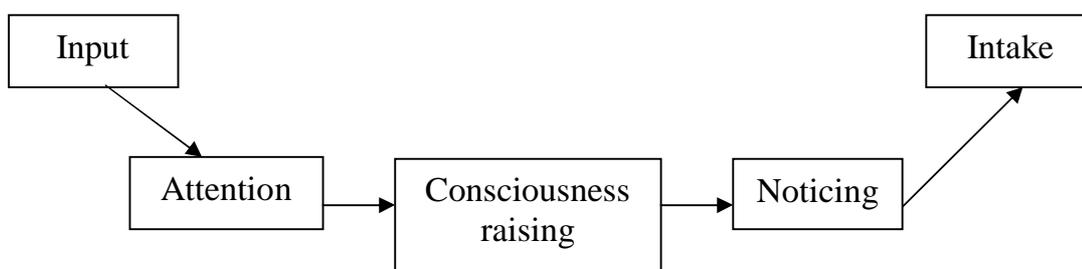


Figure 2-3: Stages of Converting Input into Intake

Consequently, the teacher could benefit from developing the learners' noticing in teaching collocations by drawing their attention towards two or more words that are always found together. One way of making students do so is *highlighting*. It helps the learners to draw attention to any element. Highlighting could be achieved by underlining the collocation, colouring it, writing it in italics or in bold. These are effective ways to draw the learners' attention to collocations in order to notice them. In Lewis Morgan view (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 14), the learners will not make progress unless they are trained to notice words that go together. This training, he thinks, will increase their fluency in speaking and writing.

“The reason so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply because they have not been trained to notice which words go with which. They may know a lot of individual words which they struggle to use, along with their grammatical knowledge, but they lack the ability to use those words in a range of collocations which pack more meaning into what they say or write.” (Morgan Lewis, cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 14)

Having a different point of view, Michael Lewis (2000: 161) argues that noticing chunks and collocations is a necessary but not a “sufficient condition” for input to become intake.

“...the belief that deliberate noticing helps is by no means an established certainty; the current mainstream position is that it probably has at least a facilitative, helpful effect. Explicit noticing is probably a necessary, but not sufficient condition to ensure that input becomes intake” (Michael Lewis: *ibid.*)

Lewis, M farther claims that noticing helps but not always. Thus, the teacher should guide learning because if the learners are not directed to notice language in a text there is a risk that they will 'see through the text', in this case, learning fails.

Furthermore, as indicated by Woolard in the quote below, (cited in Lewis Michael, 2000: 35) noticing has to be reinforced by recording the selected collocations in a self-directed process.

“collocation is mostly a matter of noticing and recording, and trained students should be able to explore texts for themselves. Not only should they **notice** common collocations in the texts they meet, but more importantly, they should **select** those collocations which are crucial to their particular needs. This is very much in line with modern trends in language teaching, where there is a shift from simply teaching the language to helping learners develop their learning skills.”

So, Woolard, in the quote above adds the element of *recording* since he thinks that noticing alone is not sufficient. Students have to record collocations especially those that meet their needs.

As noticing is an interesting factor in memorising knowledge in long-term memory, there are several factors that make it stronger. According to Lewis, M (2000: 117) noticing should be reinforced by homeworks, cooperation, involvement and

motivation. Other important factors that foster noticing are repetition and “meaningful contexts” as claimed by Kennedy, G (2003: 484) “the provision of systematic, repeated exposure to collocations in meaningful contexts lies at the heart of the teaching enterprise.”

As a general comment, noticing collocations facilitates their acquisition but it is “a complex process” that has to be guided by the teacher who should be selective in highlighting collocations to draw the learners’ attention towards them in a suitable context.

2.8.2 Teaching Collocations through Consciousness-raising

In Krashen's ‘Monitor Model’ consciousness is combined with “learning” and unconsciousness with “acquisition” (Krashen, 1981, cited in McLaughlin, 1990: 620). This model has been severely criticised by McLaughlin who proposes an ‘Information-processing Model’ in which the difference is between controlled and automatic processes. (McLaughlin, 1990: 620). He claims that this “distinction is not based on consciousness and unconsciousness processing”

Consciousness is a monitoring factor in language learning, of four main dimensions as indicated by Schmidt (1994, cited in Lier, Leo Van, 1996: 69-70). Firstly, *intention* that indicates the existence of purpose; secondly, *attention* which includes focusing and noticing; thirdly, *awareness* .i.e, “to have a knowledge of”; fourthly *control* that represents automaticity in performing tasks. These four elements are interrelated and consequently interdependent. (Lier, Leo Van, *ibid.*: 70). In addition, consciousness raising (C.R) is based mainly on providing the learner with an opportunity for sufficient exposure to a specific feature of the language. This fact is claimed by Ellis

who says “Consciousness-raising refers to a deliberate attempt on the part of the teacher to make the learners' aware of specific features of the L2” (Ellis, R, 1993: 108-09)

Jane and Dave Willis (1996: 64) identify among C.R characteristics two main points: first, isolating a specific term to draw attention to it. Second, encouraging hypothesis' testing about that term. Furthermore, they have identified seven (7) categories of activity types:

- “1- identify and consolidate patterns or usages;
- 2- classifying items according to their semantic or structural characteristics ;
- 3- hypothesis building, based on some language data, and then perhaps checked against more data ;
- 4- cross-language exploration;
- 5- reconstruction and deconstruction;
- 6- recall;
- 7- reference training”

We can notice that the first activity approaches language from a lexical point of view where the focus is on patterns and usages. Here, we are at the level of words or items. In the second activity the aim is to discriminate the structural features of an item from the semantic ones. i.e. to separate meaning from morphology. The third activity represents the main principle of C.R which is to build a hypothesis on the basis of the information one has about the language, and to compare this information with other information. The fourth activity is to explore the meaning of language by trying to interpret it. The fifth activity indicates that language has to be divided or deconstructed into its constituting items which have to be treated as isolated items. When the learner becomes aware of these deconstructed items s/he will be able to reconstruct the text.

Recall is the sixth activity. It is very important because recalling previous knowledge means that it has been memorized and ready to be employed by the learner whenever it is needed. The last activity is “reference training” in which the Learner is involved in what the words refer to for instance by using a dictionary.

Since “There is no learning without awareness” (McLaughlin, 1990: 626), the teacher has to develop students' awareness of the language by attracting the learners' attention which is a necessity in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) because no attention means no consciousness; “when people pay attention to something, they become conscious of it” (Baars, 1988. cited in Schmidt, 1993: 208). So, awareness is a prerequisite of acquisition. (Harley, B. 1994: 65). It helps the learner to acquire the language efficiently.

2.8.3 Teaching Collocations through Context:

It is widely thought that a correlation exists between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Davis, 1944, 1968; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997 ; Singer, 1965 ; Spearitt, 1972 ; Thurstone, 1946). Thus, vocabulary knowledge could be expanded through reading. Other direct effective procedures to teach vocabulary are keyword lessons (Levin, McCormick, Miller, Berry, & Pressley, 1982), synonym drills (Pany, Jenkins, & Schreck, 1982) and classification, defining and sentence production tasks (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982). However, these methods proved insufficient because if the learners' attention is not directed towards collocations, teaching will not be effective. This task becomes much easier if the most common collocates of a word are taught in context. It is remarked by Hoey (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 230) that “learning items in context may be easier than learning them out of context”. Here, it is

the teacher who would direct the learners' attention towards the meaning of word combinations in context because it is not an easy task to guess the meaning. As claimed by Laufer (cited in Coady, J and Huckin, T. N. 1997: 2) “Guessing word meanings by use of contextual clues is far more difficult”. Coady and Huckin think that this problem is due to the fact that students do not have a wealthy vocabulary to use in guessing the words of the text. A student, according to them, must know “98 % of the words in a text”. (Coady, J and Huckin, T. N. 1997: 2)

2.8.4 Teaching Collocations through Exercises

The teacher could introduce a variety of exercises in the classroom to develop students' collocational knowledge. The following exercises are chosen from Michael Lewis book *Teaching Collocation* (2000). They are introduced by Michael Lewis, Morgan Lewis and Jimmie Hill as an effective way to teach collocations.

The first exercise is 'correcting common mistakes' in which the learner is asked to correct a collocation mistake in each sentence using a dictionary. For instance, in the sentence: “When I did badly in the exam it was a strong **disappointment**”. Students have to find a word that goes with disappointment. (Lewis, Michael; Lewis, Morgan & Hill, J. 2000: 106-107)

The second exercise below is to match the adverbs with the adjectives using a dictionary to check the adjectives (ibid.: 110).

List 1

Bitterly

Strictly

Lavishly

Eagerly

Generously

Widely

Heavily

Extensively

List 2

anticipated

available

damaged

disappointed

illustrated

influenced by

limited

rewarded

After that, the students are asked to complete a text with each expression.

Another type of exercises is to cross out the odd verb out in verb-noun collocations, for instance:

Accept, act on, disregard, follow, ignore, make, solicit, take

ADVICE

We notice that the previous exercises are effective in teaching collocations because they promote the learner's awareness of the collocates a word has. However, it is noticed by Hoey (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 229) that the majority of strategies in teaching lexis rely on “themed” word lists which are ineffective in vocabulary learning.

As an example he provides the following exercise:

VOCABULARY: Art, music and literature

Look at the nouns below and write them in the correct column.

Composer	poem	author	painter	oil painting	
Instrument	band	palette	sketch	orchestra	
Chapter	tune	tune	bugle	biography	detective story
Brush	banjo	portrait	fiction	play	
Drawing	novel	pianist	pop group		

ART

MUSIC

LITERATURE

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Consequently, Hoey (cited in Michael, Lewis, 2000: 229) claims that these exercises could become effective if “the themed lists” are related to “collocational information”. He provides the following exercise as an example (ibid.):

VOCABULARY AND LISTENING: Sport

Make a list of as many sports and leisure activities as you can think of.

Use the pictures to help you. [Pictures omitted]

Write in *play*, *go*, or *do*. There are three of each.

.....tennis athletics football
.....exercises volleyball fishing
.....jogging aerobics skiing

Although it is a difficult task, the teacher may write his/her own exercises since s/he knows his/her students’ needs. This is advocated by Michael Lewis (2000: 116) in the following quotation:

“Although writing exercises can be very frustrating, it is one of the best ways you can yourself develop a cleaner understanding of collocation and in turn help your learners to notice, record and learn language from the texts they read in a way which builds their mental lexicons efficiently and systematically.”

As a general comment, in this section we have provided examples on how collocation exercises could be made. The given models can help teachers produce their own exercises. McCarthy and O’Dell exercises (from which we have drawn the pre-test -see appendix 4) are also a reliable source to follow. So, teachers have to make their students practice collocations through exercises and vary them according the students' needs.

2.9 Materials for Teaching Collocations

Materials are very necessary language teaching tools and every teacher has to rely on the available ones. However, s/he could develop his/her own materials according to learners' needs and the teaching/ learning environment. Nunan, D (1988: 98) emphasizes their importance as a crucial element in the curriculum which acts as a model for both the teacher and the learner. He claims that:

"materials are, in fact, an essential element within the curriculum, and do more than simply lubricate the wheels of learning. At their best they provide concrete models of desirable classroom practice, they act as curriculum models, and at their very best they fulfill a teacher development role. Good materials also provide models for teachers to follow in developing their own materials."

According to Graves, K materials are "the backbone of the course". She further explains "...it is something concrete that students use, and it provides a focus for the class" (1996: 26). Nunan points out that no one could imagine a classroom without materials (op. cit. 89). In this respect, materials' role as Richards and Rodgers (2001:30) comment is "...to present content, to practice content, to facilitate communication between learners or to enable learners to practice content without the teacher's help."

The essential feature of materials used in the classroom is that they have to be "authentic", a term used by Nunan (1988: 99) to describe materials that "reflect the outside world" and "have been produced for purposes other than to teach language". However, for Widdowson (1990, cited in Ahlstrom, C. 2005: 5) authenticity alone is insufficient if the material is not "meaningful" to the learner. Such a material could be chosen by both the teacher and the learner. Moreover, teaching writing requires that the written texts that are presented to students have to be authentic. According to Wilkins, D. A. (1976: 79) it is "easier to provide authentic written materials than authentic

spoken materials". Hence, authenticity provides possibility of noticing and using language in its real context.

Concerning collocations, there are multiple sources to rely on in teaching collocations. These may include published materials such as McCarthy and O'Dell Textbook *English Collocations in Use*, and other collocational resources, such as dictionaries, concordances, corpora and the Internet. A textbook like *English Collocations in Use* would be very helpful since it includes various collocations in different fields: travel, lifestyle, work...etc. The teacher could rely on it to teach written expression by introducing some useful collocations that can be used in writing about some subjects.

The most common source for collocations is dictionaries which could be considered as a reliable source the learner can refer to whenever s/he finds difficulty concerning which words go with a specific word. For instance, the LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations (1997), edited by Hill, J and Michael Lewis, and the Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2002). According to Woodward, Tessa (2001: 132-133) "Dictionaries...can be helpful in many ways. You can use them, for example to, ...check the use of a word or phrase by studying the examples and noting collocation...find out about the register, connotation or association of a word or phrase..."

Apparently, texts also are a very interesting source for teaching collocations since they include different collocations. In this respect, Hoey (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 242) emphasizes the use of authentic texts which present language in real contexts. In addition, Michael Lewis (2000: 186-187) advocates the choice of a text that

satisfies the learners' needs in a way that develops their mental lexicons in a “balanced way”. A teacher, he argues, has to choose a text according to “collocational reasons” (ibid.). Also, he advises the teachers to select academic writing where the focus is to convey information whereas creative writing risks the use of non-standard collocations used to create dramatic effects. (ibid: 189)

The Internet and especially web-concordances are a huge source of information concerning collocations. As claimed by Guelbuck, Alexander (2009: 149) “collocation extraction is a time consuming task for a human and requires the expertise of a professional lexicographer. Therefore, many approaches for automating collocation extraction have been proposed”. Recently, corpora in this field have been a focus of interest as a main source of data related to collocations.

One of the most valuable concordances is the *Collins COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM*. It is worth quoting Hirvila, Alan's (1997: 418) speech about it even if it is a bit long:

“There are several reasons to appreciate this package. Most important is its exclusive focus on collocations, which is valuable in two major regards. One is that it allows users to concentrate solely on the desired word associations, without the distractions or confusion potentially caused by the presence of other information (as in the case of a dictionary). Furthermore, for someone learning the English language, knowing when and how to link certain words is among the most difficult kinds of knowledge to acquire, especially when the collocations may not seem to make much sense or to conform to any easily identifiable logic or rules. Knowledge of English collocations is also one of the most pressing needs of many non-native speaking students.”

Concerning the number of collocations in the CD, Hirvela comments that “The package contains a total of 10,000 "nodes" or headwords with as many as 20 collocates per headword. In all, users have access to approximately 140,000 collocations and 2,600,000 authentic examples (taken from various "real world" sources) of those collocations. ” (ibid.) Thus, this is an authentic material since it is taken from “real word” situations.

Relying on these sources, or any other material that could be developed by the teacher, will help in a way or another in enhancing students’ knowledge of collocations. Wilkins (1976: 77) states that "the success of our teaching should be judged by whether or not our pupils are able to communicate meanings appropriately. To ensure that this is so, we need to introduce new forms of language learning materials".

As a general comment about materials, we think that a combination of available materials and teacher-developed ones would be helpful to the learners in the field of collocations’ learning. It would also be beneficial if the learners intervene in the choice of the materials.

2.10 The Role of the Teacher

The teacher acts as a feedback provider especially when (s)he corrects students’ essays and reviews their use of collocations. Paying attention to mis-collocation is a focal point in teaching collocations. He/she is responsible for directing learners’ attention towards collocations and urging them to build autonomy in learning so that they can notice collocations themselves and build awareness of these “pre-fabricated chunks”. As stated by Willis, D (1990: 130-131)

“We hear more and more frequently nowadays that the role of the teacher is not so much to teach as to manage learning - to create an environment in which learners can operate effectively. Sometimes this is taken further, and the job of the teacher is to help learners manage their own learning. This is the teacher helping learners to discover for themselves the best and most effective way for them to learn.”

For instance, the teacher could do so by advising his/her learners to use a collocation dictionary in order to search for collocations. Moreover, the teacher has to advise the learners to use a notebook which is, as noticed by Woolard (cited in Michael Lewis, 2000: 43), also useful: “it is important to record what is noticed...a single encounter with a word is not enough to ensure its acquisition”. A notebook helps the learners to rehearse all the collocations dealt with so that they could memorize them easily and recall them when needed.

As claimed by Michael Lewis (2000: 117) the most important task of the teacher is to encourage noticing because it helps to convert the input into intake. He explains:

“...the single most contribution the teacher can make to ensuring that input becomes intake, is ensuring that learners notice the collocations and other phrases in the input language. This involves an important change of perspective for many teachers, particularly those used to emphasizing the language that students produce. We now recognise that it is noticing the input language which is crucial to expanding learners' mental lexicons” (ibid.)

Other roles for the teacher may include motivating the learners to learn collocations by raising their awareness of the importance of collocations in increasing second language writing proficiency and evaluating their writing by directing it towards achieving native-like fluency.

2.11 The Role of the Student

As an effective element in the teaching / learning process, the English learners have to direct their learning strategies towards promoting self-autonomy in and outside the classroom. As claimed by Benson “we are born self-directed learners” (Benson, as cited in Mishan, F, 2005: 36). In the classroom, the learner has to do many things to insure that output becomes intake by, for instance, taking notes, paying attention to the teacher, collaborating with the teacher and the classmates...etc. Outside the classroom, each learner is responsible for his/ her progress by organizing data driven from the course, memorizing the courses, revising for the exam, surfing the web for more information about a specific point that needs more clarification...etc. All these strategies are beneficial for the learner; such strategies may lead to the development of the learners' competences including collocational competence, especially if the learner uses a notebook to record collocations and recall them whenever s/he writes. This rehearsal activity (recall and practice) expands the scope of collocation learning and reinforces precise storage in long-term memory.

As a result, autonomy is an internal trait that is due mainly to readiness and willingness. Even though these two factors are controlled only by the learner, the teacher may enhance them by following an approach that is learner-directed (Mishan, F, 2005: 37). Thus, Autonomous learning should be encouraged by the teacher who could enhance autonomy by providing authentic texts that help the learner to acquire vocabulary which (s) he needs in the real world (ibid.).

Conclusion

The fact that students face problems concerning word groupings is due mainly to their ignorance of collocations. This problem has led to the widespread of what Michael Lewis calls “mis-collocations” or wrong association of words. Eventually, foreign learners’ writing has become not proficient and complicated by the problem of interference from Arabic as the mother tongue and French as the second language especially because there are so many words that are spelled similarly in French and English, but most of the time they do not share the same meaning. The learners tend to translate L₁ collocations into the L₂; and therefore, their writing sounds unnatural. To solve this problem, we have to make our learners aware of the English collocations by teaching them as much collocations as possible, so that they realize the difference between the collocations of each language. Consequently, their writing in English would be more natural and accurate if they use collocations.

It is through learning collocations that each learner could reach native-like fluency in writing. Therefore, teachers’ attention has to be directed towards raising students’ awareness of collocations through explicit teaching based mainly on noticing and consciousness-raising. This could be achieved by highlighting collocations to the learners in context in order to make them noticed. Then, the teacher discusses the use of each encountered collocation, and the students are asked to write these collocations in a lexical notebook in order to use them when they write. This will help the students recall collocations each time they need them. Consequently, they build a consciousness of the most common collocations. Moreover, teaching collocations has to rely heavily on authentic materials that are meaningful to the learner by adapting “a learner-centred curriculum” where the main purpose is satisfying the learners’ needs and encouraging

self-autonomy. Collaboration between the learner and the teacher may also have a significant role in teaching collocations especially in choosing the necessary materials that enable them to develop their collocational competence. Moreover, collocations' exercises would be a very influential tool for enhancing students' knowledge and use of collocations especially if they use collocations' dictionaries. Hence, teachers have to vary these exercises according to the learners' communicative needs.

Introduction

This chapter presents the experimental study which has been conducted at the English Department of Guelma University. A detailed description of the experiment is provided by defining its aims, population, data-gathering tools and content. There is also a description of both measurement tools: the pre-test and the post-test.

3.1 Aims of the Experiment

As it is pointed out in the introduction, the aim behind this experiment is to improve the students' writing proficiency by teaching collocations. Since we teach written expression to two groups of first year students at the English Department of Guelma University, we have chosen these two groups to be the sample population in the experimental study. The groups have been allocated randomly one to the experimental group and the other to the control group. Because we have to follow the syllabus content given by the Department (in the form of titles: see appendix five) to teach writing, both groups will receive the same lessons. However, the experimental group will be taught collocations mainly through awareness and consciousness raising in the course of written expression, as it will be shown below (section 3.6).

3.2 Population and Sample of the Experiment

The sample population, as mentioned above, consists of two groups of first year students at the English Department of Guelma University. One group is randomly considered as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. They represent the whole population of first year students—ten groups with twenty-four (24) students in each group, whose mother tongue is Arabic, and study English as a Foreign Language. Guelma University has been established in 1986. The English Department

has opened in 1999. There are five (5) teachers of written expression for first year students who study writing twice/ three hours per week.

3.3 Students' Questionnaire

The main tool of enquiry is the questionnaire for both teachers and students. It aims at answering the research questions and investigating collocations' knowledge and use on one hand, and students' writing proficiency on the other hand. Before the pre-test, we have investigated students' writing proficiency and knowledge of collocations by administering a questionnaire directed to the students. Hence, the sample population includes eighty-four (48) first year students at the English Department of Guelma University, aged between seventeen (17) and twenty-four (24) years.

3.3.1 Administration

The questionnaire has been administered during the first semester of the academic year 2008-2009, precisely at the beginning of the experiment on October, 27th, 2008. Courses have started on October 18th 2008 but the questionnaire has not been administered until all the students have joined the university. A total of forty-five (45) minutes has been sufficient for students to answer all the questions.

3.3.2 Description

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: part one aims at getting information about students' background knowledge, and part two makes a survey about students' knowledge of collocations on one hand and their writing proficiency on the other hand. Part one includes five (5) questions, Question one and two are about age and gender; whereas question three shows years of studying English in the primary, the middle and the secondary school in order to check whether their experience in English is the same.

We have added a column for *other* choices so that we consider students who have studied more years in other university branches before studying English. Question four investigates whether English was their own choice because we think that this choice indicates, to some extent, students' aptitude and motivation to learn English.

In part two, students' writing proficiency and knowledge of collocations are questioned. students are asked about their use of English-English dictionary if there is any (question 6), their level in both English and writing (questions 7 and 9). After that, information is required about the most difficult skill for students (question 8). Difficulties in writing are also questioned (question 10). Then, enquiry about knowledge of collocations and its source is investigated (question 11 and 12). Afterwards, the students are asked about their problems in writing concerning collocations and their translation from Arabic (question 13 and 14) and whether Arabic or French would interfere in their writing (question 15 and 16). They are also asked if they have a collocation dictionary and whether they have access to it. (question 17 and 18). Finally, students' opinions concerning collocations teaching and the possibility of learning vocabulary as a separate module –to foster their knowledge of collocations and improve their proficiency in writing– are investigated. (question 19 and 20). The last question is open for students to add further comments. (question 20).

3.4 Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers are more concerned with the problem of teaching collocations than students especially when they teach written and/or oral expression. Curriculum designers should have included collocations in the curriculum of teaching English as a Foreign Language, and hence urge teachers to deal with them in their classes.

3.4.1 Teachers' Sample Population

Our population sample includes teachers of Written Expression because they know the different problems facing English students in writing since mis-collocation is a major problem. There are two teachers for the second year and four for the first year (including me). They are aged between 21 and 41 years old.

3.4.2 Administration

The questionnaire has been administered at the English Department of Guelma during a four-day period from November 3rd to November 6th, 2008. Teachers preferred to answer it at home and to return it the day after.

3.4.3 Description

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is designed to get background information on the teacher concerning gender, age, qualifications and experience, while the second part is about collocations and writing proficiency.

3.5 The Pre-test

It consists of two parts: part one tests learners' collocations knowledge, and part two tests their writing proficiency as well as the use of collocations in writing.

3.5.1 The First Part: Collocation Exercises

It includes four collocation exercises extracted from McCarthy and O'Dell textbook (*see appendix three*) and organized in four sections: A, B, C and D.

3.5.2 The Second Part: Students' Written Assignments

Students were asked to write three paragraphs: the first one was about *unemployment*, the second one about *ambition*, whereas the third one was a free topic. The aim of these three choices is to ensure that the problem does not lie in the topic but in the ability of using collocations in writing even if the topic is free. A total of 144 paragraphs has been collected, examined and corrected. Both grammatical and collocational errors have been spotted out.

3.6 Content of the Experiment

The experiment includes a series of lessons gathered from various sources provided that they help to cover the content of the syllabus given by the administration of the Department (See appendix 4). According to the syllabus content (See appendix 4) the experiment starts with course 6 (the Paragraph) in the syllabus because before this course not all the students have joined the class. Here is a sequence of those courses that have been given to the experimental group in which the objective is to make it notice collocations and learn them. The control group has been given the same courses without hints to collocations. Eventually, objectives of teaching writing could be achieved as well as those related to teaching collocations. This collection of courses could be designed within a purposeful curriculum to teach writing to first year students. We hope that other researchers who teach writing would try these courses in the future as a material for teaching collocations.

Lesson n ° 1: The Paragraph

This lesson is entitled "*paragraph*". It is the sixth lesson in the syllabus content (see appendix 5). Lessons 1-5 were already given to students before starting the experiment. The objective behind this lesson is to teach the students what is meant by a

paragraph and how it is written. Besides, our personal objective is to introduce to the students of the experimental group some examples of collocations in order to build their awareness of what is meant by collocation. After explaining the definition of a paragraph, a sample paragraph was given. We extracted it from *English Collocations in Use*. It was given to students as an example about how to write a paragraph. We chose this paragraph precisely because it includes common examples of collocations. The control group has to study the same course including the same example but without highlighting collocations; while the experimental group has to be taught the eleven (11) collocations highlighted in the extracted paragraph bellow.

The paragraph:

“My friend Beth is desperately worried about her son at the moment. He wants to enrol on a course of some sort but just can't make a decision about what to study. I gave Beth a ring and we had a long chat about it last night. She said he'd like to study for a degree but is afraid he won't meet the requirements for university entry. Beth thinks he should do a course in Management because he'd like to set up his own business in the future. I agreed that that would be a wise choice.” (McCarthy and O'Dell: 2005, Exercise 2.1 p 9)

First, the students were asked about the meaning of the word “paragraph”. Then, they were given feedback on their answers. Later, a definition was provided to the word “paragraph”. We proceeded to “how do we write a paragraph?” After a short discussion with the students, the right structure was given and explained to the students. i.e.: topic sentence, supporting sentences/details and concluding sentence or restatement. After that, the paragraph below was given as an example which was read by the students silently. Next, some questions were asked about the topic sentence, number of

supporting details and the concluding statement. Finally, we highlighted the first collocation “desperately worried” in order to explain what is meant by collocation. To facilitate the task, we introduced the well-known collocation “fast food” to make the meaning of collocation stored in students’ mind. Learners were asked to give examples to make sure that they understood. Later, we collaborated with the students to make them extract the other collocations and notice them. We asked them to write all the collocations dealt with in *a lexical notebook*. Finally, we asked the students to write a paragraph trying to use at least one of these collocations. The result is positive with some students who tried to use some collocations like “to give a ring”. As a homework, we asked them to search for other collocates of the auxiliaries “do” and “make”

Lesson n° 2: Topic Sentence and Supporting Details

The second lesson in the experiment is entitled “*Topic sentence and supporting details*”. It is divided into two sessions:

Session n° 1

A topic sentence was given to students from a selected paragraph in *English Collocations in Use*. That is “Henry and his brother grew up in a family where money was always tight”. Students were asked to develop it using supporting details in their own words with at least three sentences. Some students have asked about the word “tight”. Providing the answer we told them that the expression “money is tight” is a collocation since the word “tight” goes with “money”. Students' writings have to be read by them, we gave them feedback focusing on mis-collocations. Finally, we provided the topic sentence continuation from the textbook. The paragraph's topic is “Getting money. Here collocations are highlighted:

“Henry and his brother grew up in a family where money was always tight. Henry hoped that when he was grown-up, money would never be in short supply for him. Henry's brother only wanted a steady income but Henry wasn't interested in just earning a good salary, he wanted to make big money, to be seriously rich. He started making money at school when he sold the sandwiches his mother had made him to other children. He also worked in his school holidays to earn money. He put this money in a bank account and hardly ever made a withdrawal from it. When he left school, he raised enough money through the bank to buy his first shop. He got a really good deal because he found a shop that was going cheap. By the time he was twenty he had already made a small fortune though, of course, most of his money was tied up in his business.”
(McCarthy and O'Dell: 2005, section C p: 78)

Next, we asked the students for the explanation of each collocation. Later, the students recorded the collocation in their lexical notebook.

Session n° 2

This lesson was a continuation of the previous one. Students were asked to write the supporting details of this topic sentence: “As you grow older, you' ll begin to understand your parents better”. It is also from: *English Collocations in Use*. The paragraph was about “Understanding Parents”. Students first tried to write their own paragraphs; then, their errors were corrected when they read especially those related to mis-collocations. After that the model was given in which collocations were highlighted and then explained to the learners.

“As you grow older, you'll begin to understand your parents better. Becoming angry with them all the time doesn't help. You may not want to go to summer camp when none of your friends will be there, but your parents know you will soon make new

friends there. You would all have gone on a family holiday together if your grandmother hadn't fallen ill, but surely you can understand why they don't want to leave her. You'll feel much more sympathetic to your parents' feelings when you have a child of your own! ” (McCarthy and O'Dell: 2005, exercise 8.3 p: 21)

After recording the new acquainted collocations in the notebook, the students were asked to write a paragraph on a free topic in which they should use as many possible collocations as they could relying on the notebook. Here, the students could develop their competencies concerning collocations as well as writing paragraphs.

Lesson n ° 3: Types of Paragraphs

Having dealt with three paragraphs about the topic sentence and supporting details, students are supposed to have a considerable knowledge about how paragraphs are written. So, we can proceed to “Types of Paragraphs” through which students will be exposed to many collocations. First, the type is defined. Then, an example is given to the students where they are asked to point out the available collocations. Afterwards, collocations are highlighted by the teacher and recorded by the students. As there are many types of paragraphs, this lesson is divided into four sessions.

Session n ° 1:

1- Narrative Paragraph

“When I left university I made a decision to take up a profession in which I could be creative. I could play the guitar, but I'd never written any songs. Nonetheless I decided to become a singer-songwriter. I made some recordings but I had a rather heavy cold so they didn't sound good. I made some more, and sent them to a record company

and waited for them to reply. So, while I was waiting to become famous, I got a job in a fast-food restaurant. That was five years ago. I'm still doing the same job. ” (McCarthy and O' Dell: 2005, exercise 1.5 p: 7)

2- Exemplification Paragraph

“Vitamins and minerals can be added to enrich (replace nutrients lost in processing) or fortify (add nutrients not normally present) foods to improve their nutritional quality. Breads and cereals are usually enriched with some B vitamins and iron. Common examples of fortification include the addition of vitamin D to milk, vitamin A to margarine, vitamin C to fruit drinks, calcium to orange juice, and iodide to table salt.” (P, Insel and W.Roth, Core Concepts in Health. Lecture 35: Language Review: The Paragraph, p: 6. Retrieved November 1st, 2008 from: <http://vulms.vu.edu.pk/Courses/ENG201/lec35.p>)

3- Definition Paragraph

“Longitudinal dunes are long low ridges of sand that lie approximately at right angles to the trend of the sand waves, or parallel to the direction of the wind. Some of the ridges are almost straight; others are slightly wavy. They range up to about 10 metres in height and 30 metres in width. Many are more than one and one-half kilometres long. Both sides of these dunes have practically the same slope and are usually covered with grass and shrubs. While the crest is usually bare of vegetation, on some dunes, even the crest is covered. Where this occurs, it means that wind action has stopped on this particular dune” (Source: Paragraph types-definition, p: 2. Academic Skills Office: University of New England, retrieved November 1st, 2008 from: <http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/students/factsheets/paragraph-definition.pdf>)

Session n ° 2:

4-Enumeration Paragraph

“Have your blood cholesterol measured if you've never had it done. Finger-prick tests at health fairs and other public places are generally fairly accurate, especially if they're offered by a hospital or other reputable health group. When you know your "number," follow these guidelines from the National Cholesterol Education Program:

-If your cholesterol is under 200 mg/dl, maintain a healthy lifestyle--including eating a low-fat diet, getting regular exercise, maintaining a healthy body weight, and not smoking--and get another test within five years.

-If your cholesterol is between 200 and 239 mg/dl, have a second test performed and average the results. If that number falls in the same range, and if you do have any form of cardiovascular disease, change your diet to improve your cholesterol. In addition, eliminate any other risk factors you have and get tested again in about one year.

-If your cholesterol is 240 mg/dl or more, your physician should order a more detailed cholesterol analysis and recommend therapy based on the results. You should begin a cholesterol-improving diet immediately.” (P. Insel and W. Roth. Cited in the Mayfield Handbook of Technical and Scientific Writing. Section 5.3.11. Retrieved November 1st, 2008 from: <http://www.mhhe.com/mayfieldpub/tsw/pd-num.htm>)

5-Classification Paragraph

"Problems of the children exposed to domestic violence can be classified into three main categories. The American researchers distinguished between emotional and behavioral, cognitive and longer-term problems. The first category of problems reflects the effects of witnessing domestic violence on the emotional functioning of the children, which are later revealed in their behavior. This category includes anxiety, depression,

trauma symptoms, temperament problems and, as a result, aggressive and fearful behavior. Another kind of problems concerns cognitive functioning and attitudes of the children. A number of studies founded the association between witnessing domestic violence and memory problems, low ability to concentrate attention and positive attitude concerning the use of violence. The last category of problems was researched retrospectively and includes social, family and professional problems of the adults, who were exposed to domestic violence as children. Such childhood experience results in low social competence, problems with professional development, victimization of women and men's aggressive behavior. In such a way, witnessing of domestic violence influences the main areas of children's functioning, resulting in emotional and behavioral, cognitive and longer-term problems." (Nina Kavatsyuk, 2008. Academic Writing. Retrieved November 1st, 2008 from: <http://fedoriv-writing.blogspot.com/2008/01/classification-paragraph-by-nina.html>)

6- Description Paragraph

"My father has a round face, with chubby cheeks and a droopy moustache. My mother has a more pointed face and a straight nose. My younger sister is more like my father. She has an oval face and an upturned nose. My older sister is like a model. She has a slim figure and a slender waist. She has a lovely complexion and beautiful sleek shoulder-length hair, and she's always immaculately groomed. I feel so ordinary next to her - I've got coarse hair and rather broad hips, but she always says I look nice." (From McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005: 40)

Session n° 3

7- Compare and Contrast Paragraph

“Even though high school and college are both institutions of learning, they differ in at least three ways. The first difference between high school and college is their social atmospheres. In high school the facility is usually smaller, and students are, for the most part, well acquainted with each other. In addition, students in high school have the same six-hour 7:45 to 1:45 day, thus helping them to know one another better. On the college scene people are constantly coming and going, therefore rarely seeing the same person twice in a day, which accounts for fewer people being acquainted with each other. The second difference between high school and college is their policies about homework. In high school, homework is required to help motivate students to study. Knowing they have to submit assignments in algebra or history gives students an incentive to keep up with these subjects. In college most homework consists of studying; very little of it is written and turned in. If students do their homework, it is to their advantage; if they do not, the teachers will not force them to do it. The student is only wasting his own money if he neglects his course work. The third and last difference between high school and college is their attendance policies. In high school, students must attend class to get assignments and personal help in a certain area. Furthermore, high school students are less responsible; therefore, they need more guidance, which they can receive by going to class. In college, students may skip classes if they choose and refer to the syllabus to acquire missed assignments or tests. It is the student’s responsibility to make work up. In spite of these differences between high school and college, they both serve the same purpose -- to prepare an individual for the real world.” (Source: Sinclair Community College, retrieved November 1st, 2008 from: http://www.sinclair.edu/centers/tlc/pub/handouts_worksheets/english/075_comparison_contrast.pdf)

8-Sequence/ Process Paragraph

"Here is a wonderful worm treat that I'm sure you'll really love to bake. You must have the following ingredients: 1-20 ounce package of refrigerated sugar cookie dough and 3 cups crushed fruit-flavored cereal. First, combine the dough with half a cup of the cereal. Second, divide the dough into 32 balls. Next, refrigerate the dough mixture for one hour. Before you bake the worm treats preheat the oven to 375°. While the oven heats, roll each dough ball into six to eight worm shapes. Then, roll the worms in the remaining cereal to coat. Afterwards, curl the worm into an interesting shape. Place the worms two inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Finally, bake the worm treats for 10 to 11 minutes until they are lightly browned. These worm treats are really delicious."

(Source: http://www.mce.k12tn.net/reading/paragraph_unit/lesson5.htm, accessed on November 2nd, 2008)

9-Choice / Opinion Paragraph

"Cell phones should not be allowed in theatres. For instance, last night, I went to see a movie with my friends. It was a suspense movie. At the most exciting moment, the actors didn't speak and only quiet music was playing. It was very exciting, so my friend and I leaned forward listening carefully. Suddenly, we heard a loud sound—a silly musical melody. The man behind us had a cell phone, and he was receiving a call. In addition, he decided to answer it, so he spoke out loud to his friend. Because it was very distracting, my friend and I felt annoyed. Therefore, we feel that people must turn off their cell phones when they watch a movie, or not bring them at all." (Source:

<http://www.lc.cgu.edu.tw/yang/CourseMaterial/EnglishWriting/AnOpinionParagraph.doc>, accessed on November 2nd, 2008)

Session n ° 4

10- Explanation Paragraph / Cause and Effect Paragraph

“Smoking has many serious effects. The most obvious effect is the deterioration of a smoker's health. Smoking increases the risk of lung disease, increases blood pressure, increases the risk of heart attacks, and reduces the flow of oxygen to the brain. Smoking creates respiratory problems. A smoker's cough expels phlegm, a thick mucus in the nose and the throat that wants to escape the body. Prolonged use may lead to emphysema and the need to hook up to a machine to pump enough oxygen into the lungs. Another effect of this habit is that smoking breeds halitosis; a smoker's breath always smells foul and repulsive. Smoking frequently results in social isolation because fewer people smoke or want to be in the presence of a second-hand smoke. Friends and acquaintances often bluntly tell their smoking friends that they don't want the smell in their cars or in their homes. The strong, offensive odour of smoke clings to smokers' clothing, hair, and skin. The final effect of smoking is that it depletes the pocketbook. Smoking is now an expensive habit, and the price of cigarettes continues to rise. The effects of smoking are many, which leaves one wondering why intelligent people do not find a way to break their harmful addiction.” (Retrieved on December, 3rd, 2008 from: <http://www.epcc.edu/facultywebpages/jwhiteside/JoyceWhiteside/ParagraphsFeaturing/CauseandEffect/tabid/8324/language/en-US/Default.aspx>)

11- Evaluation Paragraph

"First, the article “Gambler’s Suicide Reveals Casino’s Bottom Line” by Ronald Reno appears to be a very reliable source. The document’s author is Ronald A. Reno, the Senior Research Analyst in the Public Policy Division of Focus on the Family, a Christian organization. Reno has written countless articles on the topic of gambling, and

is thus a qualified authority on the subject. Next, the document is current (2000); all the examples he uses are from the year 2000 as well. Also, the document's research seems to be accurate in that Reno refers to the well-known National Gambling Impact Study Commission's report and several real-life scenarios, even giving the state in which they occurred so that the stories could be easily researched; however, Reno provides no citations for the reader to do this. Reno's coverage is also lacking since he does not give any information prior to 2000, but this does not affect the article's overall argument. The only question one may have is the objectivity of the author, especially since Reno is publishing for a Christian, anti-gambling organization. His purpose is to persuade a popular audience that gambling is a negative endeavour and should be done away with; however, he is at least somewhat biased since he is being paid to find information that supports that point of view." (Retrieved on November 23rd, 2008 from: <http://www.jddd.com/english/eng102/portfolio%202/Portfolio2.Example.ProgressReportMemo.Gambling.pdf>)

At the end of the lesson, students were given a list of transitional words and phrases that will help them to write each type of paragraphs.

Lesson n ° 4: Telling Stories

The programmed story is entitled: **The Lion Who Wanted to Zoom** by James Thurber

There was once a lion who would have given everything for an eagle's wings. So he sent a message to the eagle, asking the great bird to come and see the king of beasts. When the eagle landed in front of the lion's den, the latter said, "Let's make a bargain.



I give you my mane for your wings." "Keep talking, brother," said the eagle. "Without my wings I could no longer fly." "So what?" said the lion. "I can't fly now, but that does not prevent me from being king of beasts. I became king of beasts on account of

my magnificent mane.” “All right,” said the eagle, “but give me your mane first.” The eagle came closer and the lion threw a huge paw at him, pinning him to the ground. “Now give me those wings immediately!” he growled angrily. So the lion took the eagle’s wings but kept his own mane. For a while the eagle was very hopeless and discouraged, but then he had an idea. “I bet you can’t fly off the top of that great rock over there;” said the eagle. “Who, me?” asked the lion, and he walked to the top of the rock and took off. His weight was too great for the eagle’s wings to support him, and besides he did not know how to fly, never having tried it before. So he crashed at the foot of the rock. The eagle hastily climbed down to him and regained his wings and took off the lion’s mane, which he put about his own neck and shoulders.

Flying back to the rocky nest where he lived with his mate, he decided to have some fun with her. So, covered with the lion’s mane, he poked his head into the nest and in a deep, awful voice he cried, “Harrrooooo!” His mate, who was very nervous anyway, grabbed a pistol from a bureau drawer and shot him dead, thinking he was a lion.

Moral: Never allow a nervous female to have access to a pistol, no matter what you’re wearing. (Source: Thurber, J.1940, *Fables for Our Time and Famous Poems*. New York: Harper and Row. P: 13. Retrieved November 15th, 2008 from: <http://www.nubuk.com/texts/lionwantedtozoom.pdf>)

First, students were introduced to the terms "story", "fable" and "novel". Then, the difficult words were explained in order to make the story clear. The main focus is to make the learners acquainted with vocabulary and thus all the collocations in the story should be noticed and underlined. After that, the story is interpreted working on the students' writing skill. They are asked to:

- Give the meaning of some words using their own words.
- Give synonyms and opposites of some words.
- Formulate the lion’s trick in their own words.
- Describe why the eagle is mean.
- Write any good commentary on some lines of this story.
- Answer the question: what does this fable teach us—in your opinion?

Consequently, the students will learn how to deal with a story and gain more knowledge of vocabulary through the teaching of collocations. Due to the length of the story and activities, this lesson was divided into two sessions in order to give enough time for the students to finish the required tasks.

Lesson n ° 5: Summarizing

The aim behind this lesson is to make the students understand what is meant by “summarizing”, and “how to summarize?” The lesson is divided into two sessions:

Session n ° 1

In this session the students are informed about techniques of summarizing. The lesson started with defining the word “summary”/ “résumé” and comparing it to the word “paraphrase”. Next, the students were provided with techniques of summarizing.

Session n ° 2

In the second session, a text from E. M Forster’s essay *“Notes on the English Character”* is given to the students to be summarized:

“...The Englishman appears to be cold and unemotional because he is really slow. When an event happens, he may understand it quickly enough with his mind, but he takes quite a while to feel it. Once upon a time a coach, containing some Englishmen and some Frenchmen, was driving over the Alps. The horses ran away, and as they were dashing across a bridge the coach caught on the stonework, tottered, and nearly fell into the ravine below. The Frenchmen were frantic with terror: they screamed and gesticulated and flung themselves about, as Frenchmen would. The Englishmen sat quite calm. An hour later, the coach drew up at an inn to change horses, and by that time the situations were exactly reversed. The Frenchmen had forgotten all about the danger, and were chattering gaily; the Englishmen had just begun to feel it, and one had a nervous breakdown and was obliged to go to bed. We

have here a clear physical difference between the two races--a difference that goes deep into character. The Frenchmen responded at once; the Englishmen responded in time. They were slow and they were also practical. Their instinct forbade them to throw themselves about in the coach, because it was more likely to tip over if they did. They had this extraordinary appreciation of fact that we shall notice again and again. When a disaster comes, the English instinct is to do what can be done first, and to postpone the feeling as long as possible. Hence they are splendid at emergencies. No doubt they are brave--no one will deny that--bravery is partly an affair of the nerves, and the English nervous system is well equipped for meeting physical emergency.

It acts promptly and feels slowly. Such a combination is fruitful, and anyone who possesses it has gone a long way toward being brave. And when the action is over, then the Englishman can feel...

No national character is complete. We have to look for some qualities in one part of the world and others in another. But the English character is incomplete in a way that is particularly annoying to the foreign observer. It has a bad surface -- self complacent, unsympathetic, and reserved. There is plenty of emotion further down, but it never gets used. There is plenty of brain power, but it is more often used to confirm prejudices than to dispel them. With such an equipment the Englishman cannot be popular. Only I would repeat: there is little vice in him and no real coldness. It is the machinery that is wrong. ” (Forster, E. M. Notes on the English Character, cited in Richard, P. M & Hall, W. L’ Anglais Par La Littérature. Classe de 2ème. 1966. France: Brodard-Taupin. P: 180.)

The students are asked to read the text and understand the difficult words. Then, collocations are pointed out by both the teacher and the students. Mis-collocations are pointed out like “disaster comes” and replaced by the right collocations (disaster happens / occurs). After various trials and readings by students, the following summary was given to students:

"The English are not as unfeeling as they appear to be. They are misunderstood because they measure out their emotional responses carefully. They “act prudently in

crisis and do not indulge in sentimentality". This makes them ready to face the challenges of life. Unlike the French, the Englishmen are known for acting well in time. To sum up, the English are practical rather than emotional."

Lesson n ° 6: The Composition

Session n ° 1

In this lesson we started by introducing the origins of the word "composition" which is a Latin word that means "putting together". Then we explained the present meaning of this word which is "putting together a whole by combining parts". (from Wikipedia: The free encyclopedia). This indicates that there are different implications for this word. For instance the musician is a composer, the reporter is a composer...etc. After that, we focused on the writer as a composer of different genres: *narrative*, *descriptive*, or *expository*. Then, the aim of each genre is discussed. We proceeded later to techniques of composition providing an example of writing a short story. Next, we gave an example of a short story. Students were asked to underline collocations as a homework. Here is the short story entitled "The Frog in the Shallow Well"- a Chinese Fable-:

"Once a frog that lived in a well bragged to a turtle that lived in the Sea.

"I am so happy!" cried the frog, "When I go out, I jump about on the railing around the edge of the well.

When I come home, I rest in the holes inside the wall of the well.

If I jump into the water, it comes all the way up to my armpits and I can float on my belly.

If I walk in the mud, it covers up my flippered feet.

I look around at the wiggly worms, crabs, and tadpoles, and none of them can compare with me.

I am lord of this well and I stand tall here. My happiness is great.

My dear sir, why don't you come more often and look around my place?"

Before the turtle from the Sea could get its left foot in the well, its right knee got stuck. It hesitated and retreated. The turtle told the frog about the Sea.

"Even a distance of a thousand miles cannot give you an idea of the sea's width; even a height of a thousand meters cannot give you an idea of its depth.

In the time of the great floods, the waters in the sea did not increase. During the terrible droughts, the waters in the sea did not decrease.

The sea does not change along with the passage of time and its level does not rise or fall according to the amount of rain that falls. The greatest happiness is to live in the Sea."

After listening to these words, the frog of the shallow well was shocked into realization of his own insignificance and became very ill at ease." (Source: <http://allaboutfrogs.org/stories/well.html>. Accessed on November 17th, 2008).

Session n ° 2

Collocations of the short story are highlighted, discussed and written, as usual, on learners' lexical notebook. Students follow with the teacher the organization of the story. At the end, they were asked to follow the story writing techniques in order to write a short story using already taught collocations.

3.7 The Post-test

The post-test includes an assessment of students' paragraphs of the first exam of written expression to test their writing and use of collocation. Test results have been examined to answer the main question of the research: is there a correlation between the use of lexical collocations and students' proficiency in writing? Therefore, we have followed the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to count the correlation coefficient between the two variables: using collocation and writing proficiency. In this case:

- The null hypothesis is that there is no significant correlation between the two variables.
- The alternative hypothesis is that a strong correlation exists between the two variables.

The results are discussed at the end of the last chapter—Data Analysis and Interpretation.

Conclusion

As indicated in this chapter, we have taught lexical collocations to the experimental group to see whether teaching them would influence their way of writing. Through a series of lessons aimed at teaching writing we have included collocations by providing special examples that could help in raising students' awareness. Of course, we were limited by time and syllabus constraints. If not, our lessons would be much enriched by further examples and exercises that help to develop students' collocational competence. We have tried to vary the examples as much as possible to make students acquainted with a large number of collocations in different topics. Moreover, we have tested students' writing and knowledge of collocations before and after the experiment. Analysis and interpretation of tests' results and findings will follow in the next chapter.

Introduction

Our experimental study has focused on the use of collocations by foreign language learners in their writing assignments. It investigates mainly the correlation between students' proficiency in writing and their knowledge and use of collocations. Here is the analysis and interpretation of data driven from the pre-test, students and teachers' questionnaire, and the post-test.

4.1 The Pre-test

The following pre-test is extracted from McCarthy and O'Dell textbook *English Collocations in Use*. It includes two parts: part one is a collection of exercises related to collocations and part two is an assessment of students' written assignments. Here are the results of each part:

4.1.1 The First Part: Collocation Exercises

The first part consists of four different sections: A, B, C and D. Sections A and B include multiple-choice exercises. Section C is about matching words whereas in section D there is sentence completion. Under each section, there is the number and the page of the exercise. Results from this part show that students' knowledge of collocations is very limited.

Section A:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number of answers	Percentage	Number of answers	Percentage
Correct answers	17	14.16 %	19	15.83 %
Incorrect answers	103	85.83 %	101	84.16 %
Total	120	100 %	120	100 %

Table 4.1: Percentage of students' correct and incorrect answers in Section A of the pre-test

In this section, students are asked to choose the incorrect phrase from four phrases. Since there are five phrases and twenty-four (24) informants in each group, the number of answers in each group is one hundred and twenty (120). In the experimental group there are 17 correct answers and 103 incorrect ones. In the control group a total of 19 correct answers and 101 incorrect answers has been collected. As a comment on these results in both groups, the majority of answers concerning collocations are wrong.

Section B:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number of answers	Percentage	Number of answers	Percentage
Correct answers	98	34.02 %	95	32.98 %
Incorrect answers	190	65.97 %	193	67.01 %
Total	288	100 %	288	100 %

Table 4.2: Percentage of students' correct and incorrect answers in Section B of the pre-test

In section B, students have to choose which verb goes with the given noun. There are 12 sentences. As a result, two hundred and eighty-eight answers (288) have been counted in each group (see the table 4.2 above). The table shows that only 98 answers are correct in the experimental group and 95 answers are correct in the control group. Incorrect answers are prevalent in both groups.

Section C:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number of answers	Percentage	Number of answers	Percentage
Correct answers	20	10.41 %	47	24.47 %
Incorrect answers	172	89.58 %	145	75.52 %
Total	192	100 %	192	100 %

Table 4.3: Percentage of students' correct and incorrect answers in Section C of the pre-test

In this section, students should match two parts of a collocation. There are 8 collocations. Consequently, the result is one hundred and ninety-two answers (192) in each group. As it is shown in the table above, only 20 answers are correct in the experimental group whereas in the control one there are 47 correct answers. However, the number of wrong answers exceeds that of correct ones in both groups.

Section D:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number of answers	Percentage	Number of answers	Percentage
Correct answers	90	31.25 %	123	42.70 %
Incorrect answers	198	68.75 %	165	57.29 %
Total	288	100 %	288	100 %

Table 4.4: Percentage of students' correct and incorrect answers in Section D of the pre-test

In this section, students are given words in a box. They have to complete 12 sentences with a suitable word from the box in order to get right collocations. Eventually, two hundred and eighty-eight answers (288) are collected in each group. Only 90 correct answers are counted in the experimental group and 123 in the control one. Wrong answers are numerous in the two groups with a percentage of 68.75 % in the experimental group and 57.29 % in the control one.

From the four tables above, the number of correct and incorrect answers in the whole pre-test could be deduced as follows:

	Correct answers	Percentage	Incorrect answers	Percentage
Section A	36	7.07 %	204	16.10 %
Section B	193	37.91 %	383	30.22 %
Section C	67	13.16 %	317	25.01 %
Section D	213	41.84 %	363	28.65 %
Total	509	100 %	1267	100 %

Table 4.5: Percentage of students' correct and incorrect answers in each section

From the table above, it is indicated that the number of incorrect answers about collocations exceeds the half of correct answers. This result shows that there is a problem concerning students' limited knowledge of collocations. In the following table the number of answers in the whole test is indicated with percentages as follows:

	Number of answers	Percentage
Correct answers	509	28.65 %
Incorrect answers	1267	71.34 %
Total	1776	100 %

Table 4.6: Percentage of Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers in the Whole Pre-test

As a result, the percentage of correct answers drawn from the whole test is only 28.65 %, which reflects students' limited knowledge of collocations. In addition, the high percentage of incorrect answers (71.34 %) implies that collocations constitute a major problem for students.

4.1.2 The Second Part: Students' Written Assignments

In this part, paragraphs written by the students have been collected and assessed. The number of both grammatical and collocational errors has been counted to see whether it is grammar or collocation that represents a setback for students in writing. The result of this test is indicated in the following table:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grammatical errors	313	44.08 %	407	44.57 %
Collocational errors	397	55.91 %	506	55.42 %
Total	710	100 %	913	100 %

Table 4.7: Percentage of Students' Grammatical Versus Collocational Errors in Written Assignments

The learners' writing proficiency is too low. Their writing is full of numerous "mis-collocations" such as "made a party", "dangerous society", and "to win money from the job". Grammatical errors are also widespread, students do not know how to order parts of speech; they write sentences without verbs. Sometimes, they use two words to point to the same subject: for instance, one student has written in the paragraph about unemployment "the unemployment this problem is because the government do not give posts to the unemployed people". So, there are two subjects: *the unemployment* and *this* problem. In this sentence, the student seems to be affected by Arabic in his / her use of 'the' with 'unemployment' aiming to define it like in Arabic "el" ().

Some students are also inclined to use French words when they don't know their equivalents in English, for instance: "...the système is not good and the responsables are not doing their job ". Here, it is observed that the word "système" and the word "*the responsables*" are borrowed from French (les responsables). Arabic also has a considerable influence over students' writing. To illustrate, this sentence has been found in a student's paragraph: "...without forgetting people who are working day and night to bring food to their childrens but they pay them only few money not sufficient for living a generous life. ". The mis-collocation "*generous life*" is borrowed from Arabic (: hayat karima). To conclude, lack of vocabulary is a major problem for those learners especially in the field of collocations. It is clear from the table above that the percentages of grammatical and collocational errors are nearly close to each other. Even so, what should be taught intensively is collocation. Although the latter constitutes the heart of writing, it is still neglected in the field of teaching whereas grammar is always taught and the learners still make grammatical errors. Therefore, teaching collocations may make the difference.

4.2 Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been administered to collect information from first year students of English who have been allocated randomly to two groups: an experimental group that will receive the treatment and a control one which stands as a means of comparison to see whether the treatment has come to any changes. The aim behind this questionnaire is to collect data about students' level in writing and their knowledge of collocations.

4.2.1 Analysis of Results and Findings

The answers collected from students' questionnaire have been counted and organized in tables in order to quantify the results which are presented below.

Part One: Background information

1-Age:

Age / years	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
17	1	4.16 %	2	8.33 %
18	10	41.66 %	5	20.83 %
19	8	33.33 %	9	37.5 %
20	0	0 %	4	16.66 %
21	2	8.33 %	2	8.33 %
22	1	4.16 %	1	4.16 %
23	2	8.33 %	0	0 %
24	0	0 %	1	4.16 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.8: Students' Age

It is observed from the previous table that students' age is between 17 and 24 years. The majority of students in the experimental group are 18 years whereas in the control group they are 19 years. In general, students' age varies slightly from 17 to 24 years.

2. Gender

Gender	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	4	16.66 %	4	16.66 %
Female	20	83.33 %	20	83.33 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.9: Students' Gender

It is indicated in the table above that females are twenty in each group. They constitute 83.33 % of the whole population whereas males represent only 16.66 %. These rates indicate that English is the target foreign language for girls rather than boys.

3- Previous experience in studying English

School	Years	The experimental group		The control group	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Primary School	/	23	95.83 %	22	91.66 %
	3	1	4.16 %	2	8.33 %
Total		24	100 %	24	100 %
Middle School	2	12	50 %	12	50 %
	3	10	41.66 %	9	37.5 %
	4	2	8.33 %	1	4.16 %
	5	0	0 %	2	8.33 %
Total		24	100 %	24	100 %
Secondary School	3	17	70.83 %	16	66.66 %
	4	5	20.83 %	3	12.5 %
	5	2	8.33 %	5	20.83 %
Other	/	/	/	/	/
Total		24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.10: Years of Studying English in the Primary, Middle and Secondary School.

In the experimental group a percentage of 95.83 % has not learned English in the Primary School. Only 4.16 % of them have learned it for three years in the primary school. i.e. only one student. The case is nearly the same in the control group where a percentage of 91.66 % has not learned English at the Primary School. In the Middle School half of students has been taught English for two years (50 %) in both groups. The other half has studied for three, four or five years. In the Secondary school, the majority of students have studied English for three years in both groups. In the experimental group the percentage is 70.83 % and in the control group it is 66.66 %. 20.83 % of students in the experimental group have studied it for four years while in the control group there is only 12.5 %. Concerning the percentage of students who have studied English for five years there are 8.33 % and 20.83 % in the experimental and the control group respectively. As a result, each student has studied at least 5 years but not more than 13 years.

4- Students' choice to study English at the university

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	17	70.83 %	16	66.66 %
No	7	29.16 %	8	33.33 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.11: Students' choice to study English at the University

The majority of the population in both groups has claimed that English is their choice, which somehow indicates that students have a determination and a desire to learn the language. As a result, the majority of the population is motivated since they have an intention to study English.

Part Two: Collocations and Writing Proficiency

5- Ownership of an English-English Dictionary

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	17	70.83 %	15	62.5 %
No	7	29.16 %	9	37.5 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.12: Ownership of an English-English Dictionary

More than the half of the population in both groups (70.83 % and) has claimed that they possess an English-English Dictionary, which indicates that they may use it to explain new words.

6- Frequency of using an English-English Dictionary

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Never	1	5.88 %	0	0 %
Rarely	0	0 %	1	6.66 %
Sometimes	9	52.94 %	7	46.66 %
Often	3	17.64 %	3	20 %
Always	4	23.52 %	4	26.66 %
Total	17	100 %	15	100 %

Table 4.13: Frequency of Using an English-English Dictionary

Although the majority of students in each group have a dictionary, only a few students always use it (less than 20 % in both groups). Most of students in both groups sometimes use the dictionary. A limited number of students often uses it. None in the experimental group rarely uses it but one student never uses it. In the control group all the students use it but there is one student who uses it rarely.

7- Students' appreciation of their English Level

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very bad	/	0 %	/	0 %
Bad	4	16.66 %	7	29.16 %
Medium	19	79.16 %	16	66.66 %
Good	1	4.16 %	1	4.16 %
Very good	/	0 %	/	0 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.14: Students' Appreciation of their English Level

Since students' level in English may indicate their level in writing, they have been asked how they appreciate their level. A percentage of 79.16 %, which constitutes the majority of students in the experimental group, represents those who have a medium level. 66.66 % of students in the control group are medium. In the experimental group 16.66 % of students claims that their level in English is bad. In the control group there is a percentage of 29.16 % that represents students with bad level in English. There is one student in each group who claims that s/he is good; none has claimed that s/he is very bad or very good.

8- The most difficult skill for students

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Listening	4	16.66 %	2	8.33 %
Reading	/	0 %	/	0 %
Speaking	10	41.66 %	9	37.5 %
Writing	10	41.66 %	13	54.16 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.15: The Most Difficult Skill for Students

54.16 % of the population of the control group has selected writing as the most difficult skill. However, in the experimental group speaking and writing are in the same rank with 41.66 %. In the control group speaking comes in the second rank with a percentage of 37.5 %. Concerning listening, only a few students have opted for it. None has considered reading as the most difficult skill. We can notice, here, that the two productive skills (speaking and writing) represent a challenge for the majority of the students.

9- Students' appreciation of their level in writing

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very bad	0	0 %	1	4.16 %
Bad	13	54.16 %	10	41.66 %
Medium	11	45.83 %	13	54.16 %
Good	/	0 %	/	0 %
Very good	/	0 %	/	0 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.16: Students' Appreciation of their Level in Writing

Concerning students' level in writing, only one student in the control group has claimed that it is very bad. The majority of students in this group have said that it is medium whereas the rest has considered it as bad. In the experimental group more than half the students have claimed that their level is bad, the other half has said that it is medium.

10- Sources of difficulties in writing

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grammar	1	4.16 %	1	4.16 %
Vocabulary	13	54.16 %	12	50 %
Both	10	41.16 %	11	45.83 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.17: Sources of Difficulties in Writing

In the experimental group nearly half of students (54.16 %) has claimed that the source of difficulties in writing is vocabulary. 41.16 % of them have stated that it is both grammar and vocabulary that make their writing difficult. A minor percentage of 4.16 % represents one student who has claimed that it is grammar. In the control group half the students have stated that lack of vocabulary hinders their writing, while 45.83 % have claimed that both grammar and vocabulary make writing a difficult task. A small percentage of 4.16 % (1 student) has stated that the problem is due to grammar.

11- Students' Knowledge of Collocations

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	4.16 %	1	4.16 %
No	23	95.83 %	23	95.83 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.18: Students' Knowledge of Collocations

A high majority of students do not know collocations except one in each group. Twenty-three students have answered “no” which indicates that 95.83 % of the whole sample do not know “collocations”.

12- Source of collocation knowledge

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
School	1	100 %	0	0 %
Other	0	0 %	1	100 %
Total	1	100 %	1	100 %

Table 4. 19: Students' Source of Collocation Knowledge

Concerning the two students who know collocations, a student in the experimental group has claimed that his/ her source of knowledge is school. In the control group there is one student who knows it from another source.

13- Students' Problems in Writing Concerning Word Combinations

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	79.16 %	18	75 %
No	5	20.83 %	6	25 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 20: Students' Problems in Writing Concerning Word Combinations

The majority of students in the experimental group (79.16 %) have claimed that they have a problem in writing concerning word combinations. They do not know which words could be associated with a specific word. The same problem exists in the control group with a percentage of 75 %. Only 20.83 % and 25 % in the two groups respectively has claimed that they do not have a problem concerning word association.

14- Transfer of Arabic Collocations

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	15	62.5 %	19	79.16 %
No	9	37.5 %	5	20.83 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 21: Transfer of Arabic Collocations

As it is noticed from the table above, more than half the students in each group have claimed that Arabic, be it the first language, influence their writing concerning collocations. They tend to translate Arabic collocations to English, which makes their writing sound unnatural and full of mis-collocations. Thus, the learners have to notice that each language has its own collocations.

15- Arabic Interference in English Writing

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	79.16 %	14	58.33 %
No	5	20.83 %	10	41.66 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 22: Arabic Interference in English Writing

In writing, students tend to transfer Arabic expressions into English. This is a widely observed phenomenon in Foreign Language Learning known as “interference” of the mother tongue. A high majority of the students (79.16 % in the experimental group and 58.33 % in the control group) have claimed that Arabic influences their writing. So, they are conscious of their negative transfer from Arabic to English.

16- French interference in English writing

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	3	12.5 %	10	41.66 %
No	11	45.83 %	14	58.33 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 23: French Interference in English Writing

The majority of students have claimed that unlike Arabic, French does not influence their writing. Only 3 students in the experimental group and 10 in the control one have claimed that French does affects their writing. As a result, both Arabic and French affect students' writing either consciously or sub-consciously.

17- Ownership of a Collocations Dictionary

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	/	0 %	/	0 %
No	24	100 %	24	100 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 24: Ownership of a Collocations Dictionary

None of the learners has a dictionary of collocations, some of them do not even have an English-English Dictionary. (See question 5). This indicates that they do not know the usefulness of having a Collocations' Dictionary or an English-English one.

18- Vocabulary learning strategies

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Individually (words in lists)	12	50 %	11	45.83 %
In combinations (words together)	12	50 %	13	54.16 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.25: Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Concerning the best way of learning new words, students have to choose between words in lists and word combinations. In the experimental group half the students has opted for the first choice and the other half for the second one. While in the control group 54.16 % of students consider learning words in combinations as the best way of learning new words. The rest i.e. 45.83 % has claimed that they prefer learning words in lists.

19- Teaching collocations to raise students' writing proficiency

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Totally disagree	/	0 %	/	0 %
Partially disagree	2	8.33 %	1	4.16 %
Neither agree or disagree	3	12.5 %	2	8.33 %
Partially agree	6	25 %	4	16.66 %
Totally agree	13	54.16 %	17	70.83 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4. 26: Teaching Collocations to Raise Students' Writing Proficiency

More than 50 % of the population in each group totally agrees that teaching collocations would raise their writing proficiency. A quarter of the participants in the

experimental group partially agree while 8.33 % partially disagree. 12.5 % of students in this group stay indecisive. In the control group 16.66 % of students partially agree whereas 4.16 % of them partially disagree and 8.33 % neither agree and disagree. So, a minority of students lack awareness of the necessity to teach collocations.

20- Teaching vocabulary as a separate module

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	22	95.83 %	23	95.83 %
No	2	8.33 %	1	4.16 %
Total	24	100 %	24	100 %

Table 4.27: Teaching Vocabulary as a Separate Module

Nearly all the students (95.83 % in the experimental group and 95.83 % in the control one) agree that vocabulary has to be taught as a separate module like grammar. These results reflect students' lack of knowledge concerning English vocabulary and the importance of vocabulary as an influencing factor in English learning. In this respect, grammar is not supreme over vocabulary. Both are important and have to be taught as separate modules, according to learners' preferences and priorities.

21- Further comments of the students

Concerning this question, we have received three comments. The first one as written by a student is: "I Think that vocabulary have (has) the same importance as the other modules so we need to learn it as a separate module". Another student has written: "We really need extra courses for vocabulary so that we can broaden it". The last one has claimed "I haven't enough vocabulary, I wish I learn it better"

Consequently, we observe that students have emphasized the idea of teaching vocabulary as a separate module. The last two comments show students' lack of vocabulary and their need for more courses.

4.2.2 Summary of Results and Findings from the Students' Questionnaire

To sum up, we can say that the majority of the students have an English-English dictionary but do not always use it although it is an influential material in learning that could improve their English level which the majority of students claimed that it is medium. We can also say that writing in parallel with speaking are the most difficult skills for students in the experimental group whereas in the control one more than half the students consider writing as the most difficult skill. Therefore, a majority of students in the experimental group claimed that their level in writing is bad and a minority said it is medium. In the control group the majority of students said their level is medium but a minority said it is bad except one who considered it as very bad. So, as claimed by the students, their difficulties in writing are due to grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, only one student in both groups knows collocations. One said that his/her source of knowledge was school (perhaps the secondary school) whereas another one stated that it was outside school. Most of the students claimed that they do not know how to combine words correctly and that they are influenced by Arabic or French or both. The students also claim that they do not have a collocation dictionary. Half of the students in the experimental group prefer learning words individually whereas the other half likes words combined together. In the control group, more than 50% prefer word combinations to individual words (words in lists). The majority of the students in both groups think that the teachers have to teach them collocations to raise their writing proficiency. Nearly all the students like the idea of studying vocabulary as a separate module. Consequently, the students are aware of their need to study collocations in

order to improve their level in writing. They also want to study vocabulary as a separate module which will enhance their collocational competence since they will have the time to be exposed to many collocations.

4.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been administered at the English Department to collect information about teaching collocation. The target population has included all the teachers of written expression since there are only 6 teachers: 2 for second year students and 4 for first year students (including me). We have chosen only teachers of writing because they know students' level in writing and can help us specify the problems of these students concerning writing and collocation.

4.3.1 Analysis of Results and Findings

Answers from the teachers' questionnaire have been collected and counted in order to have some significant results that may help us to approach the problem of mis-collocation in students' writing.

Part one: Background information

1- Gender

	Number	Percentage
Male	1	20 %
Female	4	80 %
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 28: Teachers' Gender

The table above represents teachers' gender, as it is indicated in it 80 % of teachers are females. There is only one male. Whatever is their gender, it would not

influence the results of our research since they teach the same syllabus content within the same environment.

2- Age

	Number	Percentage
between 21 and 30 years	4	80 %
between 31 and 40 years	/	/
between 41 and 50 years	1	20 %
More than 50 years	/	/
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 29 : Teachers' Age

None of the teachers has exceeds 50 years. Only one teacher is aged between 41 and 50 years. The majority of them are aged between 21 and 30 years old. This indicates that their experience in the field of teaching is not long.

3-Degree or qualifications

	Number	Percentage
Licence / B.A	5	100 %
Magister / M.A	/	/
Doctorat / Ph.D	/	/
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 30: Teachers' Degree or Qualifications

To know more about teachers' level, we have asked them about their degrees and qualifications. All the teachers have accomplished a Licence degree which equals a Bachelor of Arts degree.

4- Teachers as Post-graduate Students.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	20 %
No	4	80 %
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 31: Teachers as Post-graduate Students.

To see whether these teachers are continuing their post graduation studies we have asked them if they are preparing a Magister or a Doctorat. Only one teacher has claimed that s/he is registered in post-graduation studies.

-If your answer is Yes, please specify the degree you are preparing.

	Number	Percentage
Magister	1	100 %
Doctorat	0	0 %
Total	1	100 %

Table 4. 32: Teachers' Degree in Post-graduation Studies

As indicated in the table above, only one teacher is preparing a Magister degree.

5- Teachers' work Situation

	Number	Percentage
Part-time teacher	5	100 %
Full-time teacher	/	/
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 33 : Teachers' Work Situation

The aim of this question is to see whether teachers are devoting their time only to the university or they work as part-time teachers. In fact, it is indicated in the table that all the teachers are Part-time teachers.

6- Teachers' experience in teaching written expression

	Number	Percentage
Less than one year	5	100 %
From one to five years	/	/
More than five years	/	/
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 34: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Written Expression

According to the information in the table above, teachers do not have a long experience in teaching writing. They have taught written expression for less than one year.

Part two: Collocations and Writing Proficiency

7- Teachers' three main challenges in teaching writing

Concerning this question, we have got different answers but none has claimed that his/ her challenge is to teach collocations. The first teacher has claimed that his / her challenges are: to encourage students to write, to eliminate errors and to decrease the influence of both the mother tongue and French. The second has considered giving feedback, helping the learner to write appropriately and teaching the basic elements of writing. The third has pointed out that the main challenge is to collaborate with the students by helping him/ her to write correct English. Then, other aims are to be a guide for the students and to help them communicate ideas logically. For the fourth teacher, the main three challenges are: to stop the influence of the mother tongue; to enhance the students' writing by encouraging them to use the dictionary; and to advise them to read in order to acquire more vocabulary that would help them in writing. The fifth teacher has claimed that his / her challenges are: to improve students writing, to teach them how to think in English rather than Arabic, and to see writing as a means of communication

where the errors could be neglected. It is observed from these aims that teaching collocations is not an aim for teachers. In addition, no teacher has considered developing students' vocabulary except the fourth teacher who focuses on reading to help students acquire new vocabulary. The fifth teacher has been interested in developing communicative competence whereas "collocational competence" has been neglected.

8- The most difficult language skill for students

	Number	Percentage
Listening	/	/
Reading	/	/
Speaking	1	20%
Writing	4	80%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 35: The Most Difficult Language Skill for Students

As indicated in the table nearly all teachers consider writing as the most difficult skill for students to master. Only one teacher has stated that speaking is the most difficult one for students.

9- Raising Students Writing Proficiency through the Teaching of Grammar / Vocabulary

	Number	Percentage
Teaching grammar	3	60%
Teaching vocabulary	2	40%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4.36: Raising Students Writing Proficiency through the Teaching of Grammar / Vocabulary

Most teachers still ignore the importance of vocabulary in improving writing. 60 % of them have stated that grammar is more influential than vocabulary in improving students' writing. Their belief is uncertain since teachers are always teaching grammar but students' writing is still full of grammatical errors.

10- Teaching Vocabulary: Words in Isolation versus Word Combinations

	Number	Percentage
Words in isolation	/	/
Word combinations	5	100%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 37: Teaching Vocabulary: Words in Isolation versus Word Combinations

All the teachers have claimed that when teaching vocabulary word combinations require more emphasis than isolated words. This implies that students could benefit from learning words in isolation but it is better to learn them in combination.

11- The Best Way of Teaching Vocabulary

	Number	Percentage
Reading	4	80%
Listening	/	0%
Context	1	20%
Translation	/	0%
Consciousness-raising activities	/	0%
Noticing	/	0%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 38: The Best Way of Teaching Vocabulary

80 % of teachers (4 teachers) have claimed that the best way of teaching vocabulary is through reading. One teacher has preferred context as a good way of

teaching vocabulary. As a result, we observe that these teachers ignore the role of consciousness-raising activities and noticing.

12- Teaching Vocabulary through the Other Skills or as a Separate Module

	Number	Percentage
through other skills ?	1	20%
as a separate module ?	4	80%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 39: Teaching Vocabulary through the Other Skills or as a Separate Module

80 % of teachers prefer to teach vocabulary as a separate module. Only one teacher thinks that it is enough to teach it through the other skills. In fact, if vocabulary is given more importance by teaching it as a separate module, students will have more opportunities to be acquainted with more words. This could help them enrich their vocabulary. One has to ask such a question as “why is not grammar taught through other modules like vocabulary?”

13- The Major Cause of Learners’ Errors in Writing

	Number	Percentage
L1 interference	/	/
They don’ t have enough words	1	20%
They don’ t master grammatical rules	/	/
They don’ t know how to combine words	4	80%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 40: The Major Cause of Learners’ Errors in Writing

Teachers realize that the major cause of learners’ errors in writing is due to the fact that they do not know how to combine words. Only one teacher has claimed that the cause is lack of vocabulary.

14- Noticing Collocations

	Number	Percentage
Never	/	/
Rarely	1	20%
Sometimes	2	40%
Often	1	20%
Very often	1	20%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 41: Noticing Collocations

Teachers are not helping their students to notice collocations. Only one teacher has claimed that he does so very often. Another teacher often makes students notice collocations. Forty percent (40 %) of teachers sometimes draw students' attention to collocations. One teacher rarely does so. As a result, teaching collocations is not a clear intention in the mind of every teacher, and hence we can say that they are not aware of its importance.

15- Mis-collocations in students writing

	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	/	0 %
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 42: Mis-collocations in Students Writing

One hundred percent of teachers have claimed that the problem of “mis-collocations” exists in students' essays. Students combine words incorrectly which makes their writing sounds unnatural and non-native like.

16- Teaching students collocations to make them write correctly

	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	/	0 %
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 43: Teaching Students Collocations to make them Write Correctly

All the teachers agree that teaching collocations is necessary to make students write correctly. Although they do not mention it as a necessity in the previous questions. Lack of awareness is obvious.

17- Designing a Collocational Syllabus

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	20%
No	4	80%
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 44: Designing a Collocational Syllabus

Eighty percent of teachers have not agreed on the fact that we have to design a collocational syllabus. Only one accepts this view. Perhaps, teachers do not have a clear view about this matter. Their short experience and lack of awareness deprive them from distinguishing the significance of the issue.

18- Ways of teaching collocations

	Number	Percentage
Through highlighting word combinations to encourage the learners to notice them	5	100 %
By raising students' consciousness to them	5	100 %
Through feedback from the teacher on wrong word combinations in students' essays	4	100 %
Through exercises	3	100 %
By using collocation dictionaries	0	0 %
By recording all the noticed collocations in a notebook in order to revise them later	1	100 %
Other	0	0 %

Table 4. 45: Ways of Teaching Collocations

Concerning ways of teaching collocations teachers have to choose one or more answers from the six choices. They could select “other” if they think of other ways which are not mentioned. All the teachers have opted for the first way which is teaching collocations through highlighting. Also, the second choice has attracted all the teachers. Only four teachers have agreed on the importance of feedback on mis-collocations. Three teachers have chosen teaching collocations through exercises. Only one teacher thinks that a lexical notebook could be useful. Surprisingly, all the teachers have ignored the importance of using dictionaries to learn collocations. No teacher has opted for “other” which implies that teachers do not think of other ways for teaching collocations.

19- Further suggestions for teaching collocations

Teachers do not have any suggestion for how to teach collocations. Perhaps they find the ways mentioned in the table sufficient or they may not be much interested in this subject.

20- Encouraging Autonomous Learning of Collocations

	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	/	0 %
Total	5	100 %

Table 4. 46: Encouraging Autonomous Learning of Collocations

Teachers encourage autonomous learning of collocations by students. They like the idea of autonomy in learning since none has chosen “no”.

- Ways of encouraging autonomous learning of collocations

Although teachers have encouraged autonomous learners, they have provided no explanation about how to be autonomous in learning collocations.

21- Additional information about teaching collocations

No additional information has been added by teachers concerning teaching collocations

4.3.2 Summary of Results and Findings from the Teachers' Questionnaire

To sum up, we observe from the results drawn from the teachers' questionnaire that teachers' experience in teaching is very limited since the age of the majority of them is under 30 years. Only one teacher is registered in post-graduation studies. Besides, they are all part-time teachers whose experience in teaching "written expression" is less than one year. It is also noticed that teaching collocation is not an aim for those teachers although one of them is interested in teaching new vocabulary through reading. Another teacher is interested in developing students' communicative competence whereas "collocational competence" is neglected by all the teachers. Most of the teachers think that writing is the most difficult skill for students and that the major cause of their errors in writing is due to the fact that they do not know how to combine words. Although the teachers know that the students have a problem in combining words, they do not make a considerable effort to teach collocations which represent the most important part of word combinations. This is obvious from their answer to question 14 when only two of them claimed that they *sometimes* make their students notice words that go together. Moreover, all the teachers agree that teaching collocations is necessary to make students write correctly but they do not teach them in reality. Therefore, teachers are not aware of the importance of teaching collocations. Hence, only one of them thinks that a collocational syllabus has to be designed but they do not have any idea about teaching collocations or learners' autonomy in learning them. The most important remark from the questionnaire is that although four teachers

have considered “reading” as the best way of teaching vocabulary whereas one has chosen “context”, none of them has stated or further explained this view in suggestions to teach collocations -since the two (reading and context) are not stated in the section of “ways of teaching collocations”- as if teaching vocabulary does not have a relation with teaching collocations. Consequently, the teachers are not really aware of the significance of teaching collocations due to their short experience in the field of teaching generally and written expression especially.

4.4 The Post-test

The post-test aims at investigating whether there is a correlation between using collocations and writing proficiency by comparing the results of the experimental group that received the treatment and the results of the control group. The two groups have been allocated randomly to the experimental / control group. The Karl Pearson Coefficient Test of Correlation has been conducted to see whether the use of collocations correlates with writing proficiency. Pearson’s correlation coefficient provides information about the degree of correlation as well as the direction of the correlation. The results are shown below.

4.4.1 Analysis of Results and findings

The coefficient of correlation is “ r ”. If “ r ” is approximate to “+1” or “-1” the correlation is high. If it is “+1” or “-1” the correlation is strong/perfect. If it is between “+/- 0.25” and “+/- 0.75” it is a moderate correlation. But if “ r ” is near 0 the correlation is weak and if “ r ” is 0 there is no correlation. If “ r ” is positive (marked by +) this means that if the values for “ x ” increase the values for “ y ” also increase. But if “ r ” is negative this indicates that if the values for “ x ” increase the values for “ y ” decrease.

4.4.1.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the Experimental Group

The following table represents two variables: first, scores of students' paragraphs in the first mid-term examination in written expression. Second, scores of using collocations. We have chosen the paragraphs of the exam because students are supposed to be much more motivated and willing to do their best. Concerning the first variable i.e. using collocations, the scores have been given objectively as follows:

Number of Collocations	Scores rated from 0 to 6
0	0
[1 – 2[1
[2 – 4[2
[4 -6[3
[6 – 8[4
[8 -10[5
More than 10	6

Table 4.47: Scores according to Collocations' Use

Scores for the second variable which is “writing proficiency” have been counted following Jacobs et al.'s (1981) Scoring Profile (as cited in Weigle, S. C. 2002: 116). According to this profile, five features have to be evaluated: content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. This scoring profile has been chosen because it takes into consideration all the necessary features in writing especially vocabulary which includes individual words as well as MWUs like collocations, idioms, fixed phrases...etc. (see appendix 6). Scores are indicated as follows:

5: Excellent to very good.

4: Good to average.

3: Fair to poor.

2: Very poor.

1: Not enough to evaluate.

The scores of students of the treatment group concerning using collocations and writing proficiency are indicated in the following table as follows:

The Experimental Group Students	x: Scores concerning the use of lexical collocations	y: Paragraph writing scores
1	5	3
2	5	2
3	6	3
4	4	1
5	4	1
6	5	2
7	5	3
8	2	1
9	3	1
10	4	1
11	2	1
12	3	1
13	6	4
14	6	5
15	4	2
16	3	2
17	4	2
18	6	3
19	3	1
20	4	2
21	2	1
22	6	4
23	2	1
24	2	1
Total	96	48

Table 4.48: the Experimental Group Scores of the Post-test

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

$$x = \frac{96}{24} = 4$$

$$y = \frac{\sum y}{n}$$

$$y = \frac{48}{24} = 2$$

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

The rule for counting “r” is:

Hence, the values of “r” are counted in the following table:

Students	x	y	$x_i - \bar{x}$	$y_i - \bar{y}$	$(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})$	$(x_i - \bar{x})^2$	$(y_i - \bar{y})^2$
1	5	3	1	1	1	1	1
2	5	2	1	0	0	1	0
3	6	3	2	1	2	4	1
4	4	1	0	-1	0	0	1
5	4	1	0	-1	0	0	1
6	5	2	1	0	0	1	0
7	5	3	1	1	1	1	1
8	2	1	-2	-1	2	4	1
9	3	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
10	4	1	0	-1	0	0	1
11	2	1	-2	-1	2	4	1
12	3	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
13	6	4	2	2	4	4	4
14	6	5	2	3	6	4	9
15	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
16	3	2	-1	0	0	1	0
17	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
18	6	3	2	1	2	4	1
19	3	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
20	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
21	2	1	-2	-1	2	4	1
22	6	4	2	2	4	4	4
23	2	1	-2	-1	2	4	1
24	2	1	-2	-1	2	4	1
Total	96	48	00	00	33	48	32

Table 4.49: Correlation between Using Collocations and Writing Proficiency

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{33}{\sqrt{48 \cdot 32}} \quad r = \frac{33}{\sqrt{1536}} = \frac{33}{39.19}$$

so r = 0.84

Consequently, there is a strong correlation between the two variables: collocations' use and writing proficiency.

4.4.1.2 Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the Control Group

In the control group we have got the following scores:

The Control Group Students	x: Scores concerning the use of lexical collocations	y: Paragraph writing scores
1	1	2
2	2	3
3	1	2
4	1	2
5	2	3
6	1	2
7	1	2
8	2	3
9	1	2
10	3	6
11	1	2
12	0	1
13	0	1
14	1	1
15	0	2
16	1	2
17	1	1
18	1	2
19	1	2
20	0	1
21	1	2
22	1	2
23	0	1
24	1	1
Total	24	48

Table 4.50: the Control Group Scores of the Post-test

We remark from the table above that the scores are not good, we count correlation between non-proficiency in writing and mis-collocations as follows:

Students	x	y	$x_i - \bar{x}$	$y_i - \bar{y}$	$(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})$	$(x_i - \bar{x})^2$	$(y_i - \bar{y})^2$
1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
5	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
9	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
10	3	6	2	4	8	4	16
11	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
13	0	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
14	1	1	0	-1	0	0	1
15	0	2	-1	0	0	1	0
16	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
17	1	1	0	-1	0	0	1
18	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
19	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
21	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
22	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	1	-1	-1	1	1	1
24	1	1	0	-1	0	0	1
Total	24	48	00	00	15	12	26

Table 4.51: Correlation between Mis-collocations and Writing Non-proficiency

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{24}{24} = 1$$

$$\bar{y} = \frac{\sum y}{n}$$

$$\bar{y} = \frac{48}{24} = 2$$

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{15}{\sqrt{12 \cdot 26}} = \frac{15}{\sqrt{312}}$$

$$r = \frac{15}{17.76}$$

As a result,

$r = 0.84$

According to the statistics, a strong correlation exists between mis-collocations and non-proficiency in writing.

4.4.2 Summary of Results and Findings from the Post-test

In short, although the scores of students' paragraphs/writing are not all good, all the students in the experimental group used collocations in their writing which was our aim behind teaching collocations. On the contrary, in the control group the students' use of collocations was too limited; therefore, their paragraphs' scores were lower than that of the experimental group. Consequently, teaching collocations has influenced students' writing. The results indicate that there is a correlation between students' writing proficiency and their use of collocations. As indicated statistically, a strong correlation exists between the two mentioned variables.

4.5 Summary and Discussion of Findings

To sum up, the findings from both the students' and the teachers' questionnaire have enlightened us about their views concerning the problem of mis-collocations in students' English writing. It is highly appreciated that students are aware of the problem of collocations and the necessity of learning them in order to develop their communicative competence in writing through developing their collocational competence. Contrary to students, the teachers' responses to the questionnaire concerning the problem of mis-collocations in writing were contradictory. Although they claim that the students face this problem and should be taught collocations, they do

not make any effort to teach them. This is due to their unawareness of collocations' importance as an efficacious feature in improving students' proficiency. The evidence is that teaching collocations to the students through the experiment has improved their collocational competence, limited their mis-collocations and increased their awareness of joining words together in a consecutive, systematic process governed by the rules of natural speech and writing.

Statistical differences are a clear indicator of the changes that occur within the writing of the experimental group after teaching collocations. Although the results of the pre-test and the questionnaires have shown a limited knowledge and use of collocations as well as a low proficiency in writing in both groups, the post-test's findings denotes the existence of a strong linear correlation between collocations' use and writing proficiency. Scientifically speaking "correlation does not *imply* causation" but in this context, where all the variables were controlled under the experiment as much as possible and since there are statistical differences between the findings of the pre-test and that of the post-test, we can proclaim that students' writing proficiency after the experiment is caused by the use of collocations due to their teaching by directing students' attention towards them mainly through noticing and consciousness raising.

Consequently students' writing has been improved and their English proficiency has been increased. The teachers' attention has also been attracted towards the role which can be played by collocation and the influence it has on foreign language writing.

Conclusion

Statistical analysis has indicated that a significant positive linear correlation exists between students' use of collocations and writing proficiency. Students do not write proficiently because they have not been taught collocations. According to the questionnaire's results, they do not even know that there is a dictionary of collocations. Thus, we realize that a great problem concerning which word goes with which exists. The research hypothesis has been confirmed by the post-test. Students' paragraphs of the first-mid term examination have been carefully examined and scored so that each student in both groups has got two scores: the first one is related to using collocations whereas the second to writing proficiency. By counting the coefficient of correlation between the two variables it has been proved that teaching collocations have made a difference within the experimental group. Students have used collocations in their paragraphs of the examination because they have become aware of the fact that using collocations can improve their writing and make it more natural. Therefore, it is advocated that collocations should be included in the writing syllabus at the university so that collocational competence could be developed in order to increase students' communicative competence. Eventually, writing proficiency as well as English proficiency would be enhanced.

General Conclusion

English students are usually incompetent in writing, mis-collocations are widespread in their writing, and their words are associated inappropriately. Therefore, they need to use collocations in order to write more proficiently. As indicated in the results of this empirical research teaching English collocations to Arabic learners would enhance their proficiency in writing and raise their collocational competence. As a consequence, diction may become an easier task when the learners already have ready “prefabricated chunks” in their mind. What must be done is only recalling these chunks or Multi Word Units from memory. Also, what the learners have to bear in mind is to consider these lexical chunks as a single word. Hence, teaching collocations would be beneficial for them. Teachers especially of written expression should help the learners develop their communicative competence as well as their collocational competence so that they become fluent in English generally and writing specifically. This could be achieved through an explicit teaching of collocations that is based mainly on building students’ awareness of the most common collocates of a word.

1. Concluding Remarks

A teacher is responsible for helping the learners increase their knowledge about collocations through highlighting collocations in context by making students pay attention to them, and thus notice them. Feedback is also useful to overcome mis-collocations. Exercises on collocations are very successful to provide practice of the most common collocations of a word. Teachers have to rely on the available “authentic” materials of teaching collocations. They could adapt them according to learners’ needs or they would better adopt their own materials on the basis of the needs of learners. Effective teachers would also collaborate with the learners along the teaching/ learning

process. For instance by making them involved in choosing the materials that match suit them. Besides, teachers have to urge foreign language learners to use dictionaries especially those of collocations so as to enrich their vocabulary which is equally important to grammar. In this respect, autonomous learning is much advocated and the teacher is always a guide for learners. In addition, collocation has to be included in the syllabus of TEFL especially at least in writing and speaking since it may have a direct influence on these two skills.

Finally, it is better to teach vocabulary as a separate module so that learners will have an opportunity to be exposed to as much words as possible. In this case, they develop their lexical competence including both individual words and Multi-Word Units. As a result, foreign language learners would become more able to decode the meaning of word-combinations like collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs...etc. which still constitute a major problem for them. Teaching collocations would help learners of Second/Foreign languages face the problem of mixing L1 and L2 or/and L3 (the third/foreign language) collocations. Nonetheless, they could at least reduce mis-collocations in writing. This would direct learners towards proficiency in the Second/ Foreign Language generally and Writing or speaking specially.

2. Pedagogical Implications

Explicit instruction of collocations has to be involved in English teaching curricula where the focus is on raising learners' awareness of word combinations. In addition, the use of collocations dictionaries must be emphasized. Also, foreign language writers need to be guided by teachers who encourage the use of collocations in writing. Moreover, vocabulary would be better acquired if it is taught as a separate module, not through other modules because this is not sufficient. Our proof is that

although vocabulary is taught through other modules like oral expression and literature or civilization, the majority of students do not know collocations. Another proof is that grammar is always taught separately but students always face problems concerning the internalization of its rules.

Collocations may have a great deal in foreign language teaching provided we draw learners' attention to them especially if vocabulary is taught as a separate module. Therefore, we suggest a *Communicative-Collocational Approach* to teaching writing (or speaking) in which the aim is to teach writing following a communicative approach by concentrating on attracting students' attention mainly to collocations. We have chosen to combine two approaches: a Communicative Approach and a Collocational Approach. Some could ask why exactly a Communicative Approach and not a task- or competency-based Approach, or why Collocational and not Lexical since Lexical is more comprehensive than Collocations because collocations are part of lexis. The answer is that our combination of the Communicative and the Collocational Approach is due to two causes. First, our conviction that the main aim behind writing is communication which ought not to be extremely inhibited by linguistic/lexical or grammatical features except collocations which help to carry meaning and clarify it effectively and precisely. Second, collocations are the most important part in vocabulary because they lead to writing proficiency. As a result, learners would write aiming at communicating effectively by using collocations. Here, communication is vital in writing whereas grammatical and linguistic factors are secondary factors. We think that this approach, if tested in the future, may help Foreign Language learners acquire a wide range of collocations that facilitate communication. Eventually, they could be able to write proficiently so that their vocabulary would improve and their writing would sound more natural and native-like.

In a *Communicative-Collocational Approach* to teaching writing, we advocate the following key features:

- 1- Teaching collocations is the major endeavour to reach proficiency in writing.
- 2- Teaching individual words come in the second position, and it is useful only if these words are taught in context.
- 3- Compared to vocabulary, grammar has a minor role in raising writing proficiency. As a result, it is ranked in a second position because too much grammatical rules could hinder communication.
- 4- Since communication is the main aim behind writing, the underlying meaning is more important than the surface structure. Consequently, lexical structures are not much emphasized except word combinations especially collocations that have an influence on the meaning. Thus, learners are encouraged to use collocations even if they write them incorrectly provided that this does not change its meaning.
- 5- In vocabulary, lexical collocations represent the most important part. Then, we have grammatical collocations and phrasal verbs whereas individual words are ranked in the third position.
- 6- Collocations are included in the syllabus of writing. They are taught explicitly through highlighting, noticing, consciousness-raising.
- 7- Collocation is included in the criteria of evaluating compositions.
- 8- Feedback on mis-collocations is very important because it will raise learners' collocational competence and consequently communicative competence.
- 9- Activities that enhance students' knowledge and use of collocations are required.
- 10- Textbooks and other materials of collocations have to be referred to by both the teacher and the learner whenever needed.

11- Materials—either adapted, adopted or designed, are very useful in teaching collocations and fulfilling the objectives of teaching writing.

12- Autonomous learning is emphasized since the teacher cannot provide the students with everything.

13- A Lexical Notebook is very useful to store collocations that are recalled later.

14- Testing Collocations implies testing language generally and writing specially.

15- General Collocations are discriminated from Technical ones. The latter are only used in ESP while the former is used in all the registers. Thus, general collocations should be included even in ESP courses.

These features –mentioned above- are guidelines for teaching writing through a communicative-collocational approach.

3. Research Perspectives and Limitations

We support Nadja Nesselhauf's (2005) proposal of developing a collocational syllabus. This, if realized, would be very useful for foreign language learners. A collocational syllabus implies a syllabus in which the main focus is on collocations. It would be designed according to the needs of learners. A collocational syllabus would help to increase proficiency in foreign languages. For instance if a collocational syllabus is designed to Algerian learners of English it would be better to include translating collocations from English to Arabic and vice versa. Variety is also important so that collocations cover all the subjects of real-life. This technique is followed in McCarthy and O'Dell textbook "*English Collocations in Use*" (2005) where the themes are various: law, crime, news, money, war...each theme is introduced and followed by practice in the form of exercises. (See two sample pages in *Appendix 7*). Also, it is found in *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (2002). (See a sample

page in Appendix 8). The same dictionary provides a list of collocations with common verbs: do, make, have, take and give. (See Appendix 9) This list has been given to the experimental group to help them in writing. However, any further development of this issue is limited by syllabus content and time constraints. Reforms concerning the teaching of writing which takes collocations into account have to be enhanced by much more generalized studies. Furthermore, if ever this suggested idea is accepted, the course density, variety of materials and teacher training will be required.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Chronology of Researches about Collocations

Year	Researchers	Research Title
1977	-Marton, M	-Foreign Vocabulary Learning as Problem No. 1 of Language Teaching at the Advanced Level
1981	-Channel	-Applying Semantic Theory to Vocabulary Teaching
1985	-Burgschmidt, E and Perkins, C	-Phraseologie: Kollokationen-Phraseme-Idiome.
1987	-Emery, P	-Collocation: A problem in Arabic/English translation?
1989	-Kharma, N and Hajjaj, A	- Errors in English among Arabic Speakers: Analysis and Remedy.
1990	-Biskup, Danuta	-Some Remarks on Combinability: Lexical Collocations
1991	-Emery, P	-Collocation in modern standard Arabic
1992	-Bahns, J and Sibilis, U. -Biskup, D.	-Kollokationslernen Durch Lekt re -L1 Influence on Learners' Rendering of English Collocations. A Polish/German Empirical Study.
1993	-Bahns, J and Eldaw, M. -Zhang, Xiaolin	-Should We Teach EFL Students Collocations? -English Collocations and their Effect on the Writing of Native and Non-Native College Freshmen.
1994	- Chi Man-lai, Amy et al. -Hasselgren, A.	-Collocational Problems amongst ESL Learners: A Corpus-based Study. -Lexical Teddy Bears and Advanced Learners: A Study into the Ways Norwegian Students Cope with English Vocabulary.
1995	-Farghal, M and Hussein, O -Morshali, F	-Collocations: A Neglected Variable in EFL. -A Cross-Sectional Study of the Acquisition of English Lexical Collocations by Iranian EFL Learners.
1996	-Gitaski, C -Herbst, Thomas -Howarth, Peter	- The Development of ESL Collocational Knowledge. -What are Collocations: Sandy Beaches or False Teeth? -Phraseology in English Academic Writing. Some Implications for Language Learning and Dictionary Making.

1997	-Lombard, R. J	-Non-Native Speaker Collocation: A Corpus-Driven Characterization from the Writing of Native Speakers of Mandarin.
1998	-Al-Zahrani, M. S. -Granger, S	-Knowledge of English Lexical Collocations among Male Saudi College Students Majoring in English at a Saudi University. -Prefabricated Patterns in Advanced EFL Writing.
1999	-Farghal, M. -Lorenz, G. R. -Shei, C.	-Translation with Reference to English and Arabic. -Adjective Intensification-Learners Versus Native Speakers. A Corpus Study of Argumentative Writing. -A Brief Survey of English Verb-Noun Collocation.
2000	-Kaszubski, P	-Learner Corpora: The Cross-roads of Linguistic Norm.
2001	Huang, L	- Knowledge of English collocations: an analysis of Taiwanese EFL learners.
2002	-Al-Salmani, A	-Collocations and idioms in English-Arabic translation.
2003	-Siavosh, H. A -Sung, J	-A Study of the Learning of English Lexical and Grammatical Collocations by Iranian EFL Learners -English lexical collocations and their relation to spoken fluency of adult non-native speakers.
2005	-Mahmoud, Abdulmoneim	-Collocation Errors Made by Arab Learners of English.
2005	-Nesselhauf, Nadja	-Collocations in a Learner Corpus.
2007	-Cao, H. and Nishina, K. -Hsu, J.	-Error Analysis of Japanese Adjectival Collocations for an Error Database Tokyo Institute of Technology. -Lexical Collocations and their Relation to the Online Writing of Taiwanese College English Majors and Non-English Majors.
2008	-Hsu, J.Tim and Chiu, C.	- Lexical Collocations and their Relation to Speaking Proficiency of College EFL Learners in Taiwan
2009	-Lombard, R. J	An Exploratory Study of Collocational Use by ESL Students – A Task- based Approach.

Appendix 2 : Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student :

Please answer the following questions as thoughtfully and specifically as possible. This form will only be seen by your instructor and is meant to provide information needed in the fulfilment of her Magister.

Will you please tick () the corresponding answer or fill in with information where necessary

Part One: Background information

1-Age:.....years old

2-Sex :

Male	
Female	

3- How long have you been studying English?

Primary school years
Middle school years
Secondary school years
Other years

4- Is it your choice to study English?

Yes	
No	

5- Do you have an English-English Dictionary?

Yes	
No	

6- If yes, how often do you use it?

Never	
Rarely	
Sometimes	
Often	
Always	

Part Two: Writing Proficiency and Knowledge of Collocations

7- How could you appreciate your level in English?

Very bad	
Bad	
Medium	
Good	
Very good	

8- In your opinion, which skill is the most difficult?

Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing	

9- How could you appreciate your level in writing?

Very bad	
Bad	
Medium	
Good	
Very good	

10- If not good or very good, what makes writing difficult for you?

Grammar	
Vocabulary	
Both	

11- Do you know collocations?

Yes	
No	

12- If yes, what is the source of your knowledge?

School	
Other	

13- Do you have problems in writing concerning word combinations: words that go together?

Yes	
No	

14- When you are writing, do you put words together the way you do in Arabic?

Yes	
No	

15- Do you think that Arabic influences your writing?

Yes	
No	

16- Do you think French influences your writing?

Yes	
No	

17- Do you have a dictionary of collocations?

Yes	
No	

18- How could you learn new words better?

Individually (words in lists)	
In combinations (words together)	

19- Do you agree that your teachers should teach you collocations like 'fast food', 'pay attention' to help you write proficiently?

Partially disagree	
Totally disagree	
Neither agree or disagree	
Partially agree	
Totally agree	

20- Do you think that vocabulary needs to be taught as a separate module like grammar?

Yes	
No	

21- If you would like to add anything about this subject, please write it below.

.....
.....
.....

Thank you a lot for your cooperation

Appendix 3: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear colleagues:

This questionnaire is intended to gather information about teaching collocations within the written Expression module. The collected information will help to enrich our magister research about raising students writing proficiency through the teaching of collocations. Your responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported in the dissertation anonymously. We are very grateful to your help.

Will you please tick () the corresponding answer or fill in with information where necessary

Part one: Background information on the teacher

1-Gender :

Male	
Female	

2-Age :

between 21 and 30 years	
between 31 and 40 years	
between 41 and 50 years	
More than 50 years	

3-Degree or qualifications ?

Licence / B.A	
Magister / M.A	
Doctorat / Ph.D	

4- If you have a 'Licence' (B.A), are you completing post-graduation studies?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If your answer is *Yes*, please specify the degree you are preparing

Magister	
Doctorat	

5-You work at the English Department as :

Part-time teacher	
Full-time teacher	

6- How long have you been teaching Written Expression at the university?

Less than one year	
From one to five years	
More than five years	

Part two: Collocations and Writing Proficiency

7- What have been your main three challenges since you have started teaching writing?

1-.....
.....
.....

2-.....
.....
.....

3-.....
.....
.....

8- In your opinion, which language skill is the most difficult for students to master?

Listening	
Reading	
Speaking	
Writing	

9- In your opinion, what can raise students writing proficiency more: teaching grammar **or** teaching vocabulary?

Teaching grammar	
Teaching vocabulary	

10- When you teach vocabulary, which of these require more emphasis?

Words in isolation	
Word combinations	

11- What is the best way of teaching vocabulary?

Reading	
Listening	
Context	
Translation	
Consciousness-raising activities	
Noticing	

12- Do you think that vocabulary has to be taught:

through other skills ?	
as a separate module?	

13-What is the major cause of your learners' errors in writing? (Choose only **one** cause)

L1 interference	
They don' t have enough words	
They don' t master grammatical rules	
They don' t know how to combine words	

14- When you are teaching, do you make your students notice words that go together (collocations) such as: *fast food, make a decision, take a photo...etc.?*

Never	
Rarely	
Sometimes	
Often	
Very often	

15- When you correct you students' essays, do you find that they combine words wrongly?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

16- If yes, do you think that we have to teach students collocations to make them write correctly?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

17- Do you think that we have to design a collocational syllabus?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

18- How could collocations be taught?

Through highlighting word combinations to encourage the learners to notice them	
By raising students' consciousness to them	
Through feedback from the teacher on wrong word combinations in students' essays	
Through exercises	
By using collocation dictionaries	
By recording all the noticed collocations in a notebook in order to revise them later	
Other	

19- If you have other suggestions for how to teach collocations, would you please write them below?

.....
.....
.....

20- Do you encourage students to learn collocations on their own (autonomous learning)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If your answer is Yes, can you tell them how?

.....
.....
.....

21-If you have additional information about teaching collocations would you please add more details below.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix 4: Collocation Pre-test: Part One

Collocations pre-test

A- Cross out the incorrect phrase in each line.

1 strongly recommend strongly influence strongly love strongly dislike

2 highly educated highly profitable highly unusual highly exhausted

3 bitterly regard bitterly regret bitterly resent bitterly criticise

4 absolutely convinced absolutely tired absolutely devastated absolutely absurd

5 deeply unhappy deeply religious deeply successful deeply committed

(McCarthy and O'Dell. 2005.Exercise 6.3 p:17)

B- Choose the correct collocation.

1 She (had / took / paid).....attention to what I told her and started working harder.

2 I (had / made / took)over a hundred photographs on my trip to Antarctica.

3 She (made / paid / brought)me a nice compliment yesterday.

4 I (got / made / had)a bad dream last night and woke up sweating.

5 The President (made / gave / paid)tribute to all the people who had supported him.

6 I (got / took / had)a liking to our new teacher the moment I met her.

7 I (gave / made / had)a feeling I had met Richard before, but I couldn't remember where.

8 I went to Douglas Farnham's funeral to (give / take / pay)my last respects to a fine man.

9 I think I'll (take / make / do) a chance and leave my flight booking till the last minute. I may get a cheaper ticket.

10 Shall we (make / get / have)a party for Jane? She's leaving the school next week.

11 We need to (make / get / take)action immediately!

12 I (had / got / took)a feeling that he was trying to hide something from me.

(McCarthy and O'Dell. 2005. Exercise 9.2 p:23)

C- Match the two parts of these collocations.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1 apply for | cousin |
| 2 get | separation |
| 3 estranged | custody |
| 4 nuclear | home |
| 5 provide for | wife |
| 6 distant | family |
| 7 set up | your family |
| 8 trial | a divorce |

(McCarthy and O'Dell. 2005. Exercise 19.3 p:43)

D- Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the box.

bitterly conversation enough hints ignorance in the conversation observations politely profusely softly the conversation the subject the truth
--

- 1 I hope you will always tell me.....
- 2 I wish you had never raised
- 3 I hope she'll get the point if I drop.....
- 4 You can usually rely on Jack to make some interesting.....
- 5 I don't believe George when he pleads.....
- 6 I was too shy to join in.....
- 7 When he arrived late he apologised.....
- 8 When I give my students a lot of homework, they always complain.....
- 9 It doesn't sound quite natural to address your fellow students so.....
- 10 'I love you,' he whispered to her.....
- 11 I'll try to attract his attention during a lull.....
- 12 It's not always easy making polite.....

(McCarthy and O'Dell. 2005. Exercise 49.4. p: 103)

Appendix 5: Content of Writing Syllabus for First Year Students

- 1. Punctuation**
- 2. Prefixes and suffixes**
- 3. Simple Statement**
- 4. If Clause**
- 5. Compound Statement**
- 6. Paragraph**
- 7. The Topic Sentence and Supporting Sentences**
- 8. Telling Stories: “The lion who wanted to zoom”**
- 9. Summarizing**
- 10. The Composition**
- 11. Citation and Rewording**
- 12. Outline: Pollution**
- 13. Taking Notes**
- 14. How to Write an Essay Form?**

Appendix 6: Jacobs et al.'s Scoring Profile

Résumé

Le but de ce travail est de mettre à jour le rôle de l'enseignement des collocations dans l'amélioration de l'écrit chez les étudiants de la langue Anglaise en Algérie. Pour parvenir à notre but, deux groupes de 24 étudiants et étudiantes pris au hasard parmi ceux de la première année d'Anglais à l'université de Guelma ont été choisis comme un échantillon représentatif.

Après avoir administré des questionnaires à notre échantillon et aux enseignants de l'écrit pour constituer une idée sur la connaissance et l'emploi des collocations par les étudiants ainsi que l'importance de son apprentissage, une étude expérimentale corrélationnelle a été menée sur deux groupes homogène, l'un est expérimental, l'autre est témoin. Le groupe expérimental a subi un enseignement de l'écrit désigné au première année et en se basant sur l'importance de l'emploi des collocations. Le groupe témoin a eu droit au même programme tout en se passant de la partie sur les collocations.

Les deux groupes ont été soumis à un pré-test de deux parties : la première est constituée d'un nombre d'activités mesurant le savoir des étudiants en termes de collocation, et la deuxième évalue le niveau des étudiants en expression écrite et le taux d'utilisation des collocations pendant l'écrit. Les résultats de ce pré-test ont montré un savoir très limité des collocations parmi les deux groupes.

Les expressions écrites des deux groupes pendant l'examen du premier semestre ont été évaluées ; ainsi une mesure du coefficient de corrélation entre l'utilisation des collocations et la compétence à l'écrit en Anglais.

L'analyse des résultats a montré de grandes différences entre les résultats du pré-test et ceux d'après seulement dans le groupe expérimental. Cette même analyse a montré qu'il

ya un lien très étroit entre l'utilisation des collocations et une très bonne maîtrise de l'écrit en Anglais.

Notre étude a abouti à plusieurs recommandations dont les plus importantes sont la sensibilisation des étudiants d'Anglais envers le rôle primordiale des collocations et collocabilité pour l'amélioration des compétences linguistiques en général, et l'aptitude des étudiants à l'écrit en particulier. Ce travail nous suggère aussi d'adopter une nouvelle approche communicative-collocationnelle pour l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'écrit à travers l'approche communicative afin de développer les compétences des étudiants en collocations.

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