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**A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master's
Degree in Linguistics and Didactics**

**Teaching and Learning Collocations in the
EFL Context: A Case Study of Third Years
EFL Students**

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the role of teachers in teaching lexical collocations and also to develop the students' awareness of writing skill. And then, to make them know how to combine words correctly. Then, students should give much more importance to English collocations and should pay attention to them. The central questions that have guided this analysis are: Do teachers teach collocations to their students in the classroom? What exactly makes students misuse collocations? The researcher uses qualitative method. Also, the researcher analyses and interprets the questionnaires distributed to both teachers and students. The questionnaires have given to both teachers and students to get more information about our samples' use of collocations. Data collected from the questionnaire have confirmed the students' limited knowledge of collocations. The results have confirmed our hypothesis that a strong correlation exists between EFL writing and teaching collocations. Then, we as researchers try to obtain results from both questionnaires. The materials used in this study are Oxford Collocation Dictionary, tests book, and other books related to the topic. In the end, we end up with findings obtained from the results of the questions, and then we give some recommendations provided to teachers of English about teaching collocations. Finally, the research ends with reference lists.

Dedication

I dedicate my research to:

My dear parents

My two brothers

My sisters

My uncles and aunts

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign language

SLA: Second language Acquisition

ESP: English for specific purposes

GE: General English

ESL: English as a second language

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General Introduction

Nowadays, teachers give great importance to grammar and vocabulary rather than words combinations. EFL students depend on set of grammatical rules and focus on isolated words. Thus, students have difficulties in words combinations, and in order to help students solve these difficulties, they need to be trained to know how English words are used together. Students have to notice and know how to use common lexical collocations to enhance their English learning. Raising the issue of misusing collocations leads us to ask the following questions:

- 1- Do teachers teach collocations more effectively?
- 2- What makes students misuse collocations?
- 3- What is the importance of collocations in EFL?
- 4- How can students learn collocations correctly?
- 5- Why is using words combinations important in writing?
- 6- Do students need to learn collocations?
- 7- How can collocations be taught?

This research aims to investigate the use of collocations and to raise the students' writing awareness by teaching collocations through noticing, consciousness-raising and exercises to develop their collocational competence.

Through correcting papers, teachers noticed that students do not know how to combine words correctly in their writing. Additionally, their lack of using words that go together this is due to their ignorance of collocations. Hence, we state that:

If teachers teach collocations to their learners, they would use them when they write. Consequently their ability of writing would increase. Or, if writing can be better achieved effectively when learners study collocations, the correlation may exist between students' use of collocations and their writing style.

Our research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces an overview of collocations, and provides the different approaches to identifying collocations. It also sheds light on different types of collocations. And then, it discusses the main characteristics of collocations. Finally, it tends to highlight the distinction between collocation and colligation.

The second chapter tackles the directions and challenges to teaching collocations. It provides mis-collocations in EFL writing. It also highlights the interference of French and Arabic as a second language. And then, it states the challenges to teaching collocations. Finally, it focuses on the directions to teaching collocations.

The third chapter describes and analyses questionnaires for both teachers and students. First, we analyse third year students' questionnaires, then we proceed to the teachers' questionnaires. After that, we collect data obtained from the two questionnaires. Then, we discuss the results obtained from the analysis of the data.

Chapter One: An Overview of Collocations

1. Approaches to Studying Collocations

Linguistic studies have investigated different aspects of the phenomenon of collocations. These studies can be classified into three main approaches to identifying collocations: The frequency-based approach, the significance oriented approach and the lexical approach.

To define the concept of collocation, many researches have come out with different definitions, and studies have been insufficient to provide one approach to study collocations. Thus, many linguists who work on collocations cover variant views or approaches.

2. 1. Frequency-based Approach

It is adopted by researchers who are involved in using analysis of syntagmatic relations. In this approach, a collocation is considered the co-occurrence of words at a certain distance, and a distinction is usually made between co-occurrences that are frequent and those that are not (Nesslhouf 2005: 11-18). This view has been called the frequency –based approach. It goes back to J-Firth and has been developed further by Halliday and Sinclair. Some researchers, adopting a frequency- based approach to collocations consider co-occurrence of all frequencies to be collocations (Halliday 1966, Moon 1998), while others like Stubb (1995) reserves the term for frequent co-occurrences. Kjllmer (1987) and Kenedy (1990) use recurrence i.e. co-occurrence more than once in a given corpus. This approach demonstrates co-occurrence through a corpus-based data in an inductive approach. It also generates a wide range of collocations.

2. 2. Significance Oriented Approach

In this approach, “collocations are seen as a type of word combination most commonly as one that is fixed to some degree but not completely” (Cowie, 1996). This approach has been referred to as the significance oriented approach or phraseology approach. It has its roots in the Russian phraseology. The main adherents of it are Cowie, I. Mel’cuk and Housman (ibid, 1996).

The most important variation in Cowie’s use (1996) of the term concerns the distinction between collocations and other types of word combinations. However, Mel’cuk and Housman have stressed that there is a difference in the nature of the elements in a collocation. Unlike the frequency-based approach, the phraseology approach constantly requires that the elements of collocations should syntactically be related to (adj+ noun, noun+ verb, noun+ noun).

The frequency –based approach and the phraseology approach are two outstanding and significant approaches that shed light on collocations and provide linguists with basic analysis

elements to classify collocations into various categorizations and distinguish the term collocation from other phraseological types.

From the above definitions given under each approach, it is noticed that there is no single definition of the word collocation between linguists. Therefore, there is an agreement among them that collocations are two or more words combined together. For example, the expression '*fast food*' is called collocation because the word '*fast*' collocates or co-occurs frequently with the word '*food*'. In this context, the word '*fast*' cannot be replaced by the word '*quick*' or '*rapid*' because this replacement will not be natural.

2. 3 The Lexical Approach

According to Barlow (as cited in Partington, 1998: 22), "purely syntactic description of language especially those of the generative schools could not really explain how language works". He argues that the generative school has neglected the words that have their collocations; rather, it has focused on the explanation of free association of lexical items on the basis of grammar. The starting attempts to design a lexical syllabus started with Willis in 1990. Later, Lewis created the term "lexical approach" to indicate a theory in which lexis and vocabulary play an important role in language learning.

The lexical approach has emerged as a reaction to the behaviorist view that is based on PPP (presentation, practice, and production). (Thornbury-Scott, 2002:109) Woolard and George (as cited in Lewis : 2000: 31) pointed out that within the lexical approach, vocabulary is learnt by learning words combinations not as individual words but also word combinations have to be discussed as whole not as separated individual words. They are prefabricated chunks: group of words that can be learnt as a unit by somebody who is learning a language .For example, chunks are: "*Can I have the bill please?*" and "*Pleased to meet you?*" These prefabricated chunks are stored in the mind as individual wholes (ibid, 31). Whenever learners want to speak or write, they recall these ready-made chunks instead of brainstorming their mind looking for which word goes with which. This view is also shared by Lewis, Morgan (as cited in Lewis: 2000: 15) who claims that "so much of the language of the effective language use is already in prefabricated chunks stored in their mental lexicons just waiting to be recalled for use".

As a result, we see that collocations represent an important part of lexical chunks. Thus, we think that if learners are exposed to these families of words (chunks), they may internalize the rules of writing and speaking.

3. Types of Collocations

Collocations are classified into various types; every researcher has divided them according to different dimensions. Some researchers have considered their strength, others their use, etc. The most common types are discussed below.

3. 1. Lexical vs Grammatical Collocations

According to Lewis, collocations are either lexical or grammatical (2000:134). This research is related to lexical collocations not grammatical ones. Thus, the term collocation here refers to lexical collocations. Thus, the difference between grammatical and lexical collocations is that the former includes a principle word such as: an adjective + a verb or a noun + a preposition, while, the latter does not include grammatical words like prepositions. Lexical collocations consist only of lexical words and they may be more difficult to learn (ibid).

However, phrasal verbs such as: give up, mess up, take off, ...etc, are considered as grammatical collocations that are mentioned in English-English dictionaries, while specific dictionaries are allocated to lexical collocations that may be neglected or ignored by native speakers. The following examples illustrate each type, the first type is grammatical collocations that include: verb+ preposition, such as: go to, calm down, take into, etc. Also, noun+ preposition, like: anger at, the light from the window, etc. And then, adjective + preposition, as: safe from attack, proud of, etc. Whereas, the second type consists of: verb+ noun like: shed light, draw up a lit, pass up a chance...etc. The third type is: adjective + noun, such as: idle threat, strong light, etc. The fourth type is: adverb + adjective as: intensely personal, stunningly attractive.

As we have discussed above, it is clear that in the first type the controlling word is prepositions that represent grammatical words while in the other types there are no prepositions, only lexical words are included.

3. 2. Technical vs Academic Collocations

Technical collocations are different from lexical and grammatical collocations. The former are used in a special field within a special register i.e.ESP (English for specific purposes)

to help the learners acquire specific language usage and use whereas the academic collocations are used in both General English (GE) and ESP.

Moreover, technical collocations are powerful indicators of register. (Partington, 1998: 20). They are pre-cooked expressions that are needed in many genres of writing. Each genre has its special collocations; therefore, what is a normal collocation within a specific genre cannot be considered as genres.

Sinclair (as cited in Partington, 1998: 20) discusses this case with the collocations “*vigorous depressions*” and “*dull highlights*” that are normal only in the register of meteorology and photography respectively. Fuentes and Curodo (2001:118) claim that “the level of technicality in word behavior is closely related to subject domain. The salient condition is that elements function uniquely in their corresponding field, describing the restricted setting”. According to them, there are specific combinations of the noun ‘Network’ such as: *U- network, access network, local area network* (ibid). Also, technical collocations help in increasing the learners’ 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 (1971) semi-technical collocations are formal context – independent words with a high frequency and / or a wide range of occurrence across scientific fields. They are also not usually found in basic general English courses, words with high frequency across scientific disciplines. So, we can say that technical collocations are register- dependent while semi-technical ones are considered as scientific branches but they may be found in academic language. Consequently, the two types are important in learning ESP but only academic collocations are useful in General English.

3. 3. Strong vs Weak Collocations

Strong collocations are different from weak ones, therefore, classifying them according to the strength, refers to the degree of words’ association. Hill (cited in Lewis, 2000: 63) categorizes collocations according to their strength into four classes or classifications as: unique, strong, weak and medium –strength collocations. Firstly, there are unique collocations. For example, Hill gives two examples of collocations “foot the bill” and “*shrug your shoulder*”. 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 which indicate adjectives like *long, short, large, bad*, etc., could be associated with many nouns such as *:red car, large house, bad marks*, ... etc. These combinations are easy to the majority of students (ibid). The last type is medium-strength collocations, for example “*hold a conversation*” and “*a major operation*”. Hill (ibid) shows that students are interested in this type which is neither strong nor weak.

3. 4. Open vs Restricted Collocations

Cowie and Howarth (1996: 81) distinguish between two types of collocations, open and restricted. According to them, collocation is restricted if its parts keep their literal meaning, for instance: “*vested interest*”, whereas a collocation is considered as open when one of the parts have a figurative meaning such as: “*black man*” or white man referring to skin color. Open collocations are described by Carter “open a partnership with a wide range of items”. (cited in Partington, 1998: 26). Most lexical items are included in this type, for instance: *black, red, white, large, short*, 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 *harbor* that collocates with *doubts, uncertainty, grudge and suspicion*. Cowie and Howarth (1996: 83) claim that restricted collocations are “idiosyncratic and arbitrary” in contrast to perfectly open collocations....formed by general principles of co-occurrence”.

As a final comment, we can consider open collocations as weak 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 (Hill, 2002:63). Also we agree with Cowie and Howarth that restricted collocations can be arbitrary regardless of open ones. Thus, what makes a word like “fast” collocates with “food” is that the word fast generally comes with the word food. Therefore, we cannot say for example, rapid food or quick food.

4. Characteristics of Collocations

Collocations are distinguished into three main characteristics that are: Non-compositionality, Non substitutability and Non modifiability (Schwaz, 1993: 181). First, a collocation is non-compositional in the sense that it is difficult for us to understand the idiomatic

meaning of the words, but, from the other side, 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, CM, 1993: 180).

Moreover, non-compositionality states that the meaning of the collocation is not entirely understood from the meaning of constituents. Collocations are characterized by limited compositionality which means that there is usually an element of meaning added to the combination. In the case of *strong tea here*, the word *strong* has acquired in some active agent which is closely related but slightly different from the basic sense having great physical strength. This characteristic, (non-compositionality) can be illustrated most clearly with idioms such as “*to kick the bucket*”, where the idiomatic meaning of the whole (i.e. to die) seems unrelated to the constituents kick or bucket.

The second characteristic, non-substitutionability means that we cannot substitute the words that constitute a collocation for their synonyms. For example, “*close the meeting*”, it is wrong to say “*shut the meeting*” because “*shut*” and “*meeting*” do not go together, whereas one could say “*shut the door*”.

Also, we say “*hot dog*”. Here the meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the parts. Another examples: “*powerful computer*”/“*strong computer*”. Even in the context, the components of the collocation have the same meaning. That’s why; we cannot say yellow wine instead of white wine.

The third characteristic, non-modifiability means that many collocations cannot be freely modified without changing their meaning. For example, “*to kick a plastic bucket*” has only the literal meaning not the idiomatic one. However, many other collocations are modifiable without a change in meaning such as: “*powerful new computer*”, *white wine* not *whiter wine*, *mother in law* not *mother in laws*,...etc.

Collocations and multi-word units are assumed to follow semantic non-compositionality, syntactic non-modifiability, and non-substitutability of components by semantically similar word (Schwarz, 1993: 182).

To sum up, the collocation for example, “in *broad day light*” which means no attempt to hide one’s actions, the meaning differs from the literal meaning which is “*wideday light*”. The constituents of it cannot be modified. So, we cannot say “*broad lights*”. Also, we cannot substitute any element of this collocation by its synonym such as: “*wide day light*”. Although most collocations share these characteristics which are mentioned before, they widely vary of different degrees.

5. Collocation and Colligation

Collocation is mentioned in the same field as colligation, but the two are distinguishable. Colligation is the tendency not of a few particular words, but of any items from an entire grammatical sub-class to co-occur with a specific item.

Collocation is the way one word co-occurs with another, colligation is the way one word regularly co-occurs with a particular (grammar) pattern. So, for example some verbs typically occur with a particular tense or a noun might typically appear preceded by a personal pronoun, rather than an article. For example, “*pass my/your driving test*” or “*it’s my / your / our responsibility to... “, but I will take responsibility for...”*” (Lewis, 2000: 168).

In general we *commit crime* has changed, so the collocation *commit suicide* has become an exception to the colligation *commit crime*. At first sight, a set of countable nouns share a lot of meaning. So, we might expect them to take definite and indefinite articles such as: “*the Finnish architect*”, a “*church architect*” and possessive cases like: “*the academy’s architect*” (*ibid*, 168).

It can be noticed that, the view of Lewis about collocation and colligation is slightly different from Firth’s understanding of lexical co-occurrence tendencies. Each linguist is aware of the phenomenon of lexical co-occurrence in his own way. Although collocation and colligation do not work together, the relationship between the two can be seen on a scale of generality. The notion of colligation operates at the grammatical level of meaning; however it has been extended to cover the syntactic constraints or even just preference of particular words (Firth, 1957).

Firth (1957) tries to clarify the difference between the concepts. He argues that collocations are actual words in habitual company. A word in a usual collocation stares you in

the face as it is, while colligation cannot be of words as such. Hence, colligations of grammatical categories related in a grammatical structure do not follow word divisions or even sub-divisions of words.

It obvious from what we have seen above that, collocation and colligation are totally different. A collocation is a set of words combined together, whereas a colligation refers to a chunk of words related to grammatical structures.

Furthermore, 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. (Lewis, 2000: 234) argues that another word exists far from collocation and semantic prosody, which is colligation or “the grammatical company”. Colligation is what we do with the language. Colligations of a word are a description of what this word typically does grammatically. Hoey (2000) gives the example of employment words: *doctor, teacher, 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. (Robins, 1997: 234) states the difference between collocations and colligations as follows:

group 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.

Robins states that, collocations and colligations are not the same and they do not go hand in hand. He clarifies colligation as set of words considered as chunks of word-classes combined together in syntactic structures. Whereas, collocations refer to members of words considered as individual lexical items which do not respect their grammatical classes and relations.

As a result, the learners have to differentiate between the two concepts, collocations and colligations in order to have a clear view about what a collocation is. Also, as indicated by Hargreaves (ibid: 214) the word collocation takes place with the grammatical patterns as colligation as well.

Chapter Two:
Directions and
Challenges to Teaching
Collocations

1. Mis-collocations in Foreign Language Writing

It is noticed that foreign language learners face a major problem in writing; although learners have the ideas and the lexical words to storm their brains to find the words. Yet, they do not know which words can be combined together to form correct expressions. Thus, their essays include a wide variety of mis-collocations. This is owing 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 learnt vocabulary through the other subjects, and most of the time they discovered only individual words. Yet, the majority of learners do not know what collocations are. To resolve this problem, teachers should attract the learners' attention towards collocations because teaching grammar and individual words is not enough. 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 can use it when they are asked to write. Consequently, learners find difficulties in identifying collocations when they read a text. So, they cannot know which words go together from free reading. Therefore, reading cannot overcome the problem unless it is directed by the teacher.

Furthermore, the unlimited number of collocations may confuse the learners who wonder how they can 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 can enrich their knowledge of collocations through an extensive teaching with the help of dictionaries. The main reason of teaching collocations is to help the learners to overcome possible mis-collocations in writing and achieve fluency as claimed by Nesselhauf, (2005: 2) that "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 learners' control over a large repertoire of prefabricated units".

As a result, teaching the most common collocations is the key to overcoming the problem of mis-collocations in foreign language writing. Hence, each teacher believes in the necessity of developing the learners' collocational competence.

2. Interference of the Mother Tongue and French as a Second Language

2. 1. Interference of the Mother Tongue

Foreign language learners tend to transfer negatively already known words and groups of words from Arabic into the target language due to interference. They do translate expressions (either consciously or unconsciously) from L1 into L2 due to errors of competence (Corder 1967), Nemser(1971), Richards(1971), Selinker(1969), and Lammendella, 1981), which is a huge problem that hinders learners' performance in the target language. Errors of competence could be fossilized (Selinker 1972 and Lamendella, 1978) if the learner as Huxley confirms:

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- speakers' pronunciation pattern (Huxley, 1986: 68).

Teachers urge learners to think in the target language as possible in order to avoid translating L1 collocations into L2 since these translations would lead to errors in writing or speaking. Translation exercises are advocated by Aston (cited in Vasiljevic, 2008: 49) as a reliable method to direct learners' attention towards the difference between the L1 and L2 collocations. Also, ignorance of collocations results from translating words and word collocations that negatively affect fluency as Philip argues:

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 problem which is more serious than 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).

We have noticed from the quotations that when a language feature is absent from L1, L2 learner fails to serve its existence in L2 or finds it difficult to use this feature because they are not

familiar with the structure of particular collocations of words they know well. For example, dry, oily, coarse and smooth are similarly collocate of hair in both languages Arabic and English, but the collocations damaged hair and brittle hair have no close equivalents in Arabic. In this point, students have to think and use the target language as much as possible in order to avoid translating Arabic collocations in English or French because what seems an acceptable in the Arabic collocations is not so in other languages (English and French) and vice versa. To illustrate, the Arabic term *sani-alqarar* has established itself as a translation for the English decision makers though it has a problem, *sani* and *qarar* do not collocate in Arabic. But in English deliver collocates with a letter or speech, while in Arabic *yusallimu* and *yalqi* collocate with *Risala* and *khitaban* (Darwish, 2003: 122).

Consequently, Arabic affects the 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 help the learners by making them notice the difference between collocations of each language. What is in Arabic is not necessarily so in English and vice versa.

2. 2. Interference of French as a Second Language

French, which is the heritage of the French colonization in Algeria, intervenes in the speech of the students. Thus, code switching/mixing is a common phenomenon in the Algerian society (Darwish, 2003: 120). Three codes are used by the Algerian speaker: Standard Arabic, French and Low Arabic (Darja) (Mhamoud, 2005: 119). The latter is replaced in some regions by Tamazight, Targuiya, Mezabut or Chawaya. This result is due to the political and social development of Algeria, the languages are connected in a dialectal process. Recently, English is introduced in the Algerian educational system and Algeria is regarded as a multilingual society.

Consequently, the interference of French in the production of English cannot be avoided especially that they are both Latin languages. However, transfer from it 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 do not mix English words with those that have different meaning in French.

As a result, Algerian learners of English are facing twodimensional problems which are: transfer from Arabic to French. And also, there is the influence of informal Arabic or Darja with all its sub-types: Tamazight, Targuiya and Chawaya. In such a multilingual society, avoiding negative transfer cannot be totally avoided.

As a final result, every language has its set of idiosyncratic words, expressions, and collocational ranges for its vocabulary. Thus, students use prior linguistic knowledge either from Arabic or French.

3. Challenges to Teaching Collocations

Teaching collocations has raised a huge problem which is the unlimited number of collocations in the English language that makes their teaching impossible. Bahns(cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 134) supposes“the teaching of lexical collocations in EFL should concentrate on items for which there is no direct translation equivalence in English and in the learner’s 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 a challenge or an advantage rather than a problem. He sees that teaching collocations, whatever is their number is an effective way in learning (ibid). At the same time,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, 2000: 128).

Moreover, much time has to be spent on teaching collocation. Therefore, the learner is exposed to a maximum number of collocations. Stockdale, (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. Hence, teachers could proceed to other collocations that are less frequent in speech/writing provided that there is much time.

To sum up, here are a number of challenges which would mean to teaching collocations:

- 1- Teachers should stop using out-of-date grammar rules which, if you are honest you have probably never really believed helped any way.
- 2- Forget any inhibitions about possible defects in your own English, and move the focus of your attention to helping students understand and speak English.
- 3- Don not use the exams as an excuse for conservative teaching.
- 4- Develop a real linguistic curiosity.
- 5- Learn how to identify multi-word items, help your students to develop the ability to do the same.
- 6- Make sure you are familiar with the modern corpus-based reference books which offer so many helpful insights into English and which have only become available in the few years.
- 7- Use the reference books regularly in class, and teach all your learners to do the same.
- 8- Pay more attention to fluency and communicative power and less to mere accuracy.
- 9- Remember the sheer size of the lexicon. Choose only what is useful for your learners.
- 10- Teach the spoken language, make full use of new media available to you, increase the time you spend talking naturally to your learners. Value the ability to speak English, even a little as a genuinely life enhancing skill (Lewis, 1997: 192).

4. Directions to Teaching Collocations

Mis-collocations are spread in foreign language learners' writing. This problem is solved by exposing the learner to highlight word combinations, and raising the attention to them on the basis of direct teaching that is conducted through noticing and consciousness-raising. The following sections are a discussion of the different directions or ways through which collocations can be taught.

4. 1. Teaching Collocations by Highlighting and Noticing

Language acquisition depends to a large extent on noticing. This view is confirmed by Ellis who says “no noticing, no acquisition” (cited in Thornbury, 1997: 326). Schmid and Frota 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, noticing exposes the comparison between the output and the input. According to (Thornbury, 1997: 327) noticing is “a conscious cognitive process”, therefore, it is up to the teachers to push their learners towards developing noticing strategies. This can be achieved 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 rebuild a text that is given by the teacher which helps students to develop their linguistic competence (ibid: 330).

Moreover, noticing is considered by Schmidt (1993) as “the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversation of input to intake”. He also claims that “noticing in the target language input becomes intake for language learning other than what learners consciously notice” (1990: 627). He further insists that our research should focus on what learners notice (ibid). In fact, another important factor that leads to noticing is consciousness/awareness which role is controlled by attention (Harley, 1994:58).

Consequently, the teacher can benefit from developing the learners’ noticing in teaching collocations by drawing their attention towards two or more words which are mentioned together. One way of making the students do so is highlighting. Also, it helps the learners to draw attention to any element. Highlighting can be achieved by underlining the collocation, coloring it, writing it in italics or in bold. These are the effective ways to draw the learners’ attention to collocations in order to notice them. We noticed that, the learners will not make progress unless they are trained to notice the words that go together. This training will increase their fluency in speaking and writing.

Noticing is an interesting factor in memorizing knowledge in long-term memory. Indeed, there are several factors that make it stranger. According to Lewis (2000: 117), noticing should be reinforced by homework, cooperation, involvement and motivation. Other important

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

As a result, noticing collocations facilitates the learners’ 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.

4. 2. Teaching Collocations through Consciousness-raising

In Krashen’s monitor model, consciousness is combined with learning and unconsciousness with acquisition (Krashen, 1981). This model has been severely criticized by Laughlin who proposes an information-processing model in which the difference between controlled and automatic process (Laughlin, 1990; 620). He claims that this « distinction is not based on consciousness and unconsciousness processing ». Consciousness is a monitoring factor in language learning.

According to Schmidt, there are four dimensions. Firstly, intention indicates the existence of purpose. Secondly, attention includes focusing and noticing. Thirdly, awareness .i.e to have a knowledge of. Fourthly, control represents authenticity in performing tasks. These four elements are interrelated and consequently independent. In addition, consciousness raising is based 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, 1993: 108-09). To illustrate, students have to avoid recording every collocation they meet. This means they must be discouraged from every weak collocation as: white house, nice holidays, black board, etc or strong ones which are unusual and are not appropriate for most learners, as Jane mentions that “the teacher has the responsibility to direct learners’ attention to the most useful collocations, those which hold high priority in the context” (cited in Lewis, 2000: 74).

Jane and Dave (1996: 64) identify among consciousness-raising characteristic that there are two main points: first, isolating a specific term to draw attention to it. Second, encouraging hypothesis’ testing about that term. Moreover, they identified seven types of activity categories:

- 1- Identify and consolidate patterns and usages.
- 2- Classifying items according to their semantic or structural characteristics.
- 3- Hypotheses building based on some language data and their checked against more data.
- 4- Cross-language exploration.
- 5- Reconstruction and deconstruction.
- 6- Recall.
- 7- Referencing training.

From the above seven types of activities, we notice that the first activity approaches language from a lexical point of view, the focus is on patterns and usages. In the second activity, the purpose 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 consciousness-raising 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 is to explore the meaning of language by trying to interpret it. The fifth one indicates that language has to be divided or deconstructed into its constituting item which is treated as isolated item. When the learner becomes aware of these deconstructed items s/he will be able to reconstruct the text. The sixth activity is recall. It is 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 referencing training in which the learner is involved in what the words refer; for instance by using a dictionary.

Since “there is no learning without awareness” (Laughlin, 1990: 626), the teacher develops the 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. As explained by Baars (1988), “when people pay attention to something, they become conscious of it”. Therefore, awareness is a prerequisite of acquisition. In other words, awareness helps the learner to acquire the language efficiently.

As a result, the aim of consciousness-raising activities is to help learners discover language chunks when they appear in the input. It is not necessary to end up in deliberate

production, but to develop an awareness of the form, function and meaning of lexical collocations.

4. 3. Teaching Collocations through Context

It is widely thought that a correlation exists between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Davis, 1944). Thus, vocabulary can be explained through reading. Another direct procedures to teach vocabulary are key words lesson, synonym drills classification, defining and sentence production tasks (Beeck, 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 collocations of a word are taught in context. It is remarked by Hoey (cited in Lewis, 2000: 230) that "learning items in context may be easier than learning them out of context. Here, it is the teacher who directs the learners' attention towards the meaning of word combinations in context because it is not an easy task to guess the meaning. It is claimed by Laufer (1997: 2) that "guessing word meanings by the use of contextual clues is far more difficult". So, we think that this problem is because of the fact that students do not have a rich vocabulary to use in guessing the words of the text.

As a result, to guess the meaning of the collocations successfully from the context is a complex and often a difficult strategy. Learners therefore need to know most of the words of the text. The learners should try to analyze them into parts and check if the guessed meaning matches the meaning of the whole text through isolating target collocations in sentences and creating new texts around them. They can use a dictionary to check the guess. The value of repetition cannot be underestimated. In general, teachers are aware of that new information need to be presented in systematic and meaningful context for retention to take place (Lewis, 2000). To teach collocations through context, it is better to supply students with a variety of exercises.

4. 4. Teaching Collocations through Exercises

The teacher can introduce a variety of exercises in the classroom to develop students' collocational knowledge. The following exercises are chosen from Michael Lewis's book *Teaching collocations* (2000). They are introduced by Lewis 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”. Here, the students have to find a word that goes with disappointment. The second exercise below, is to match the adverbs with the adjectives using a dictionary to check the adjectives.

List 1		List2
Bitterly		anticipated
Strictly		available
Lavishly	damaged	
Eagerly	disappointment	
Generously	illustrated	
Widely	influenced	
Heavily		limited
Extensively		rewarded

After that, the students are asked to complete a text of each expression. Another type of exercises is to cross out the odd verb-noun collocations.

We noticed that the previous exercises are effective in teaching collocations because they promote the learners’ awareness of the collocates a word has. However, it is noticed by Hoey (2000: 229) that the majority of strategies in teaching lexis rely on themed word lists which are ineffective in vocabulary learning. As an example we provide the following exercise:

Vocabulary: art, music and literature

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

Compose	poem	author	painter	oil painter
Instrument	band	palette	sketch	orchestra
Chapter	tune	bugle	biography	tune
Brush	banjo	portrait	fiction	play
Drawing	novel	pianist	pop group	
Art	Music	Literature		
.....		

.....
.....

Consequently, these exercises can become effective if the themed lists are related to collocational information. Here are the following exercises as an example:

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.

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

.....tennisathleticsfootball
.....exercisesvolleyballfishing
.....joggingaerobicsskiing

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

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

As a result, in this section we have provided examples on how collocation exercises can be made. The given models can help teachers produce their own exercises. Therefore, teachers have to make their students practice collocations through exercises and vary them according to the students' needs.

Chapter Three: The Practical Framework

1. Research Methodology

Many teachers of English do not give much importance to collocations; this leads students to have many problems in combining words. Moreover, the aim of study is to examine the collocational errors that EFL students commit while writing. The researcher aims to confirm the hypothesis which is if EFL learners know how to use collocations correctly, this will decrease the errors of misusing collocations in English language, or if the students at Adrar university do not pay attention to the English collocations, then they will commit errors in their writing. The researcher used the quantitative method to collect data from the results obtained from the questionnaire. Thus, the two questionnaires distributed to both teachers and third year EFL students at the English department of Adrar University. Furthermore, the two questionnaires are analyzed to see the students' ability of processing the meaning through using collocations. In addition, the study also aims at finding the factors that contribute to the occurrence of errors in the EFL context.

1. 1. Sampling

Sample is a number of people or things taken from a large group and used in texts to provide information about the group. Sampling is the process of taking a sample. This means that, sampling is connected with the quantitative method, where the researcher has to choose a group of people from the population to obtain the results that correspond to the whole people.

The participants that the researcher selected from the population are third year EFL students at the university of Adrar, and teachers as well. The two participants were given the questionnaire to answer. The researcher has distributed (17) questionnaire to (17) teachers. He also has distributed to third year EFL students, (08) males and (32) females.

1. 2. Research Design

The researcher used or applied quantitative method in the design to obtain a numerical result. This method is used to obtain results from a statistical analysis of data. The instruments that are used in this method are tests or surveys in order to collect data and also in order to confirm the hypothesis that correspond to the research questions

1. 3. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected his data from both questionnaires. He also collected data based on the analysis of both questionnaires. Firstly, he analyzed the teachers' questionnaires.

Then, second he also analyzed the EFL students' questionnaire. It includes 05 questions or exercises to see if students are able to use collocations or not. The purpose of the instruments analyzed in the study (questionnaires addressed to teachers are of number 17 and those addressed to students are of number 40) is to identify the mis-collocations that EFL students commit and the factors that cause such collocational errors.

The activities were distributed to students inside the classroom from teacher of oral expression who responded positively to the request. The students got information about the objective of the study and they answered immediately in the paper itself. After the teachers' explanation provided to the whole exercises, we have chosen third year EFL students because they have a certain level in English and expected to master the English language, and also they can use the English collocations correctly.

2. Analyses of Results and Findings

The answers collected from both questionnaires have been counted and organized in a table in order to quantify the results which are presented below:

Maximum	Minimum	Median	Mean
5.00000	2.00000	4.00000	3.91765
Ex. kurtosis	Skewness	C.V.	Std. Dev.
-1.36520	-0.303122	0.273481	1.07140

Source: the researcher based on Gretl Software (Statistics)

Table 01: The analyses of the questionnaire (Students and teachers) according to the general statistics

2. 1. Interpretation

According to table 01, the mean (3.91765) is bigger than the standard deviation (1.07140). This statistical result means that the objective of teaching collocation in classroom is fulfilled according to the conditions stated in the questionnaire. These conditions are the probable answers of the questionnaires refer to the desire to teach collocation and the independence of the learner (the extent to which the learner will be independent in his learning and writing process by the methods adopted of the collocations). This means that we

are looking for the best approach leading to learn and write independently. The mean is bigger means that it is possible for the learner to be independent in learning and writing at further stages.

The standard deviation is less than the mean; this means that the questions asked in the questionnaire serve the goal of the general issue tackled by the dissertation. This goal focuses on the best approaches of teaching collocations. By this way, teachers should teach collocations as a separate module in an attempt to make them aware of its importance.

Based on the results of the empirical study(table 01), we can state the following:

- The views of teachers about teaching collocations are important and suitable (they are convenient with the needs of the students) to improve the level of students in terms of independence and ability. This means that teachers should increase the level of their students by teaching them how to combine words correctly.

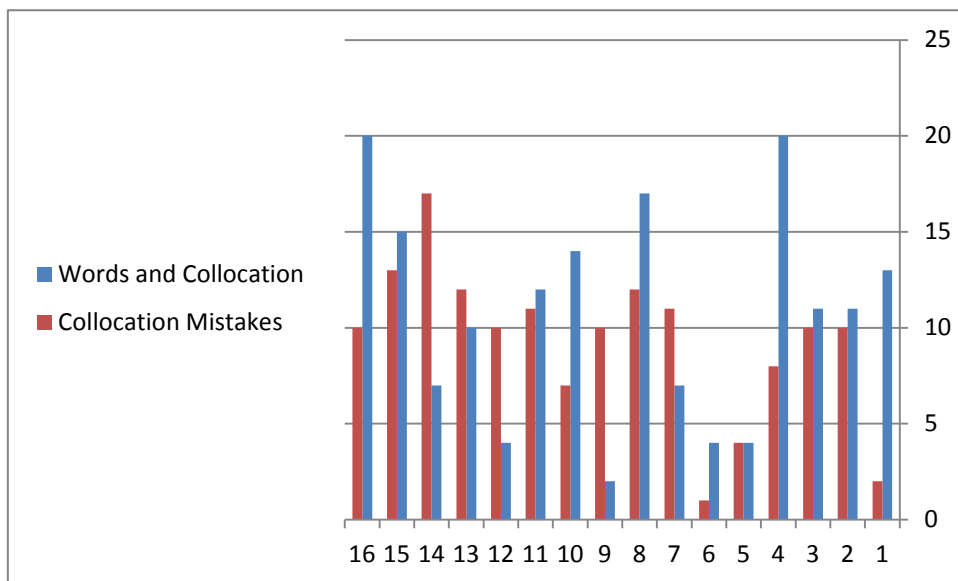
- These views impact the level of students via the activities proposed by the questionnaire (a good ability to deal with grammar and vocabulary activities). The general objective of the study (independence and ability are ensured only by the grammatical and vocabulary levels of the students). This means that grammar and vocabulary are considered as plat form or a background to improve the level of students through collocation approaches.

2. 2. Description of the Graphs:

The numbers of the vertical axis: the measurement degree of the variable (How far each qualitative variable is bigger or smaller than the other, these numbers are quantitative after codification).

The numbers of the horizontal axis: the cumulative number of the answers presented by the questionnaire (the number of answers in each case).

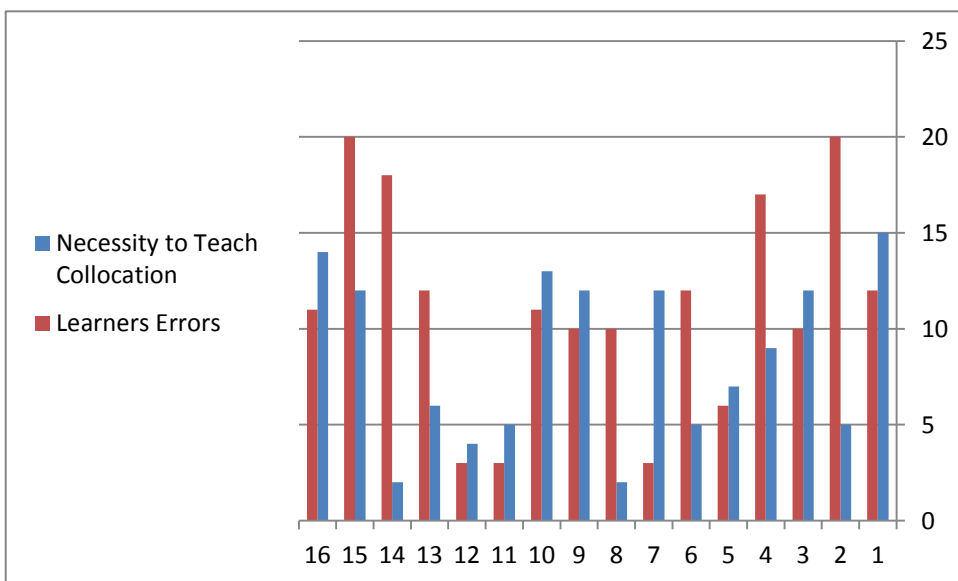
The red and blue colors are figured out by the software in each graph.



Graph 01: Best Ways of Teaching Collocation and The combination of Words:

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

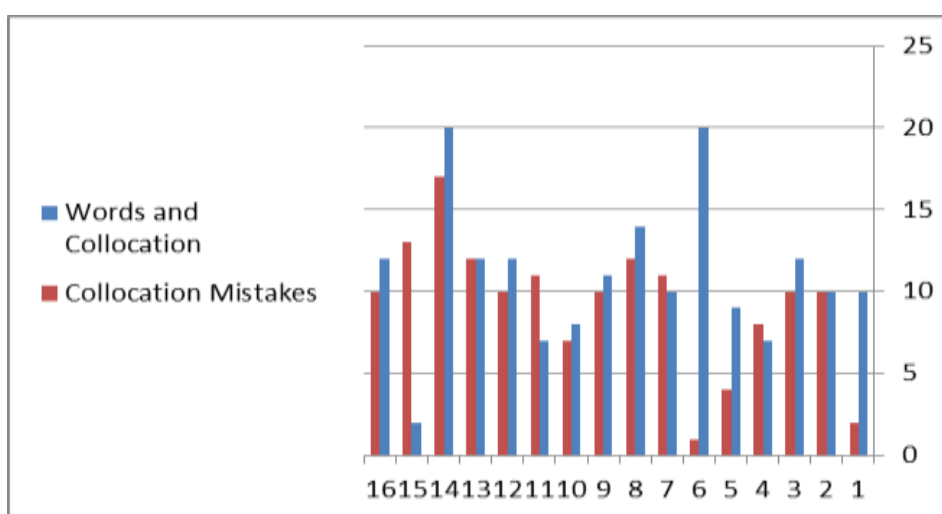
Graph 01 shows a strong correlation between words used in combination and the efficiency of teaching collocations. This result means implicitly that the right exploitation of the words in teaching (each discipline has its own words) leads inevitably to an improvement in the methods used by teachers to teach collocations.



Graph 02: Necessity to Teach Collocation and Learners' errors in teaching Collocation

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

Graph 02 illustrates the positive association between the volume of the errors committed by the learners and the desire to teach and learn collocations. This correlation means that the necessity to master collocations is a dependant variable affected by the magnitude of the errors presented (high level of errors is positively associated by a high desire to teach and learn collocations).

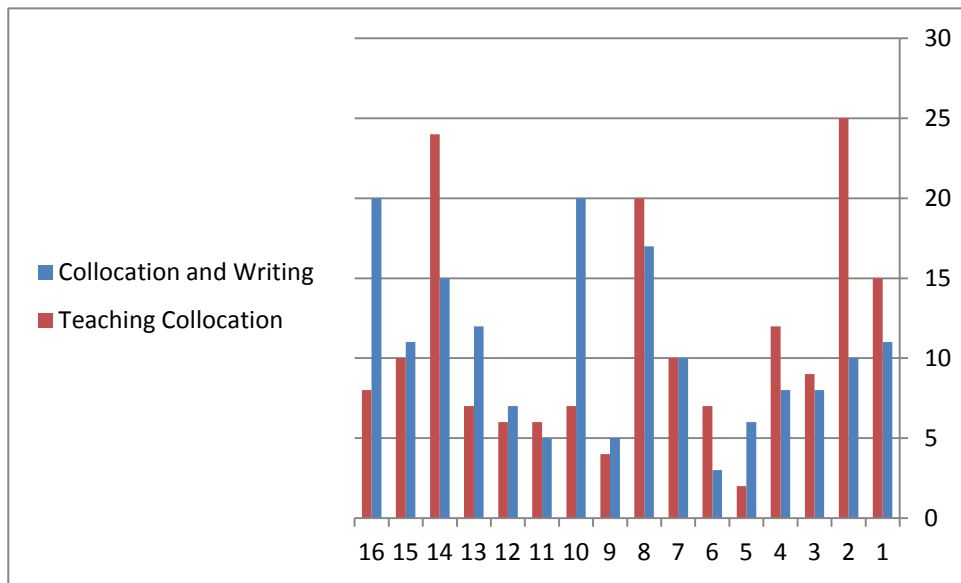


Graph 03: Words, Collocations and Mistakes

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

This means that there is a necessity to deal with errors and mistakes when words are used in combination.

The graph 03 is somewhat different from the first and second one in terms of analyzes. The investigation in this case is about the colloquial structure of the words and sentences. The strong and positive association (between words used in combination and the errors) refers to a strong link between the structural errors of the words (words not sentences) and the wide usage of the words in combination. The incapacity to reduce the combination errors is decreased by a hard and continual mastering.

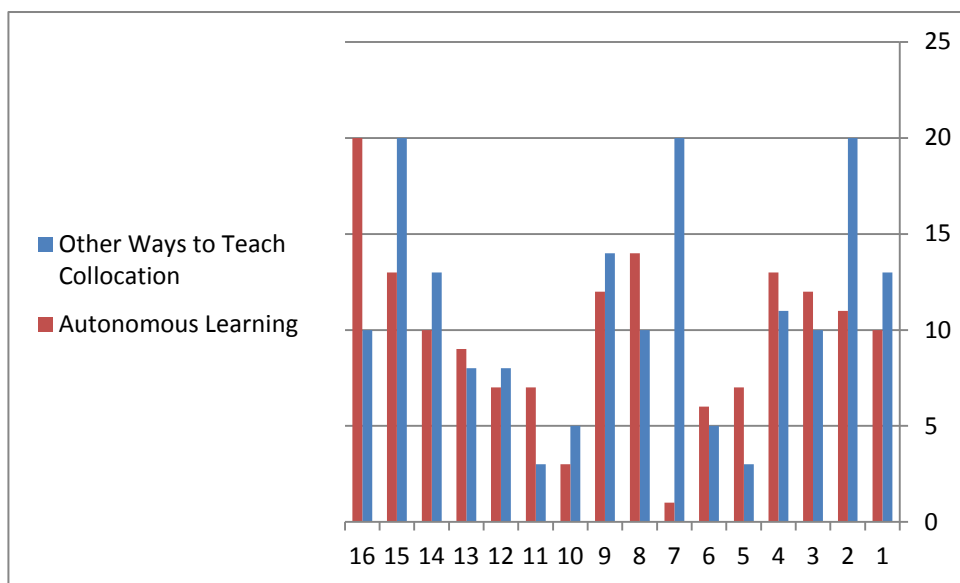


Graph 04: Writing and Collocation Teaching

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

This graph shows a strong correlation between different manners to teach collocations and writing correctly, also there is a positive impact of the collocations teaching on writing skills.

Graph04 means that the continual and organized teaching of collocations improves the capacity to use words and express the appropriate messages (As far as the collocation is taught regularly, the writing skills of the learners will increase automatically).

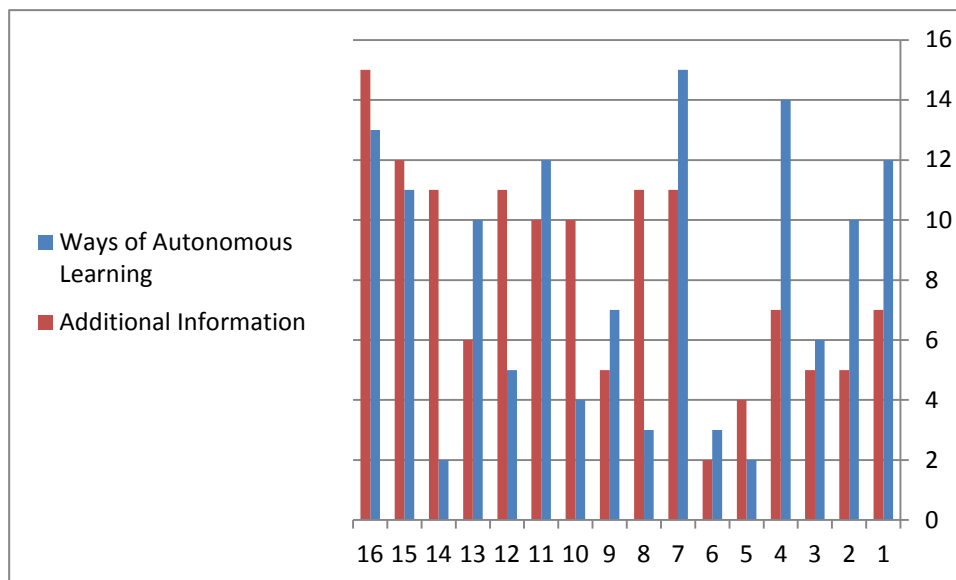


Graph 05: Different ways to teach Collocation and the Autonomous Learning

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

A strong correlation between diversifying the methods of teaching collocations and the increase in the students' ability to learn and write

There is a positive association between the independence in learning and the volume of the collocation taught. This expression means that the student will be more autonomous in his linguistic learning when the collocations are presented in an organized and studied manner (avoid the randomness in teaching collocation according to the requirements and needs of the students). It means what the students need from the teaching collocations.



Graph 06: Ways of Autonomous Learning and other Information Concerning the Collocation Teaching

Source: the researcher based on Amoss 24 Software

The diversity of the collocation teaching methods leads to increasing the ability to learn and write autonomously.

Graph 06 shows that the diversification of the means and methods to teach collocation is so useful to build an independent platform of learning and writing (Eg: the

usage of the new technology: electronic dictionaries in collocations enhance the capacity to learn independently).

2. 3. Interpretation

Teachers' questionnaire was handed to seventeen teachers of English at the department of English at the University of Adrar. It includes (17) questions delivered to (17) teachers. The first question investigates teachers' attitudes towards their teaching collocations. As a result, we found that all the teachers shared the same view that words combinations require more emphasis because, words combinations are very important in teaching and writing with regard to the other skills as well.

Moreover, we have got in the second question that (09) teachers stated the best way of teaching collocations is reading. According to them, it enhances the learners' awareness to learn word combinations through it. Then, according to the other (09) teachers the best way to teach collocations is context. For them, it is very important and it helps teachers to teach students collocations through reading contexts while (02) teachers said that listening is the best way to teach collocations because, it helps in acquiring words combinations and keeping in the mind. We found that there is only (01) teacher who chose translation as the best way to teach collocations. According to him it is the preferable way to learn and teach collocations, while (05) teachers preferred consciousness-raising as the best way to teach collocations because it is helpful for teachers to raise the students' awareness. By contrast, none of them selected noticing because they see that it is not the appropriate way to teach collocations.

As in the third question, we noticed that (14) teachers agreed that collocations have to be taught through other skills because, they cannot be taught as a separate module whereas, (03) teachers shared the same view that collocations have to be taught as a separate module because of the importance of teaching collocations and teachers are interested in teaching them.

The fourth question there are (10) teachers who thought that the major cause of the learners' errors in using collocations is L1 interference, because for them when two languages interfere with each other, learners will commit errors in using collocations, and (06) teachers said that learners do not have enough words because of lack of vocabulary. On the other hand, only (02) teachers thought that learners do not master grammatical rules because

they are weak in using grammatical rules, whereas (05) teachers said that learners do not know how to combine words because teachers do not train students how to combine words correctly.

As indicated in the fifth question that there is no one selected the first choice, because most of teachers make their students notice words that go together. As in the second choice, there is only (01) teacher who chose it because, he is not interested in words that go together while, (05) teachers said that sometimes they make students notice words that go together because teachers when they are teaching, they sometimes pay attention to the words that go. There are (07) teachers who agreed that they often make students notice words that go together because they are very important. We found in the last choice that there are only (03) teachers who chose it this is due to its importance in teaching.

As in the sixth question, the majority of teachers (15) confirmed with yes because when they are correcting papers, it is necessary to take the collocational mistakes into consideration while on the other hand, only (02) teachers who did not confirm with yes because, it is not obligatory to take the collocational mistakes into consideration.

As in the seventh question, there are (13) teachers who agreed that we have to teach students collocations to make them write correctly. According to them combining words is important in writing proficiency. As we noticed that there are only (04) teachers who did not agree because, for them students can write without using collocations.

We found in the eighth question that (03) teachers selected the first choice because, they noticed that collocations can be taught through highlighting word combinations while in the second choice, there are (07) teachers who shared the same answer because, for them it is better to raise the students' awareness towards collocations but in the third question we found (02) teachers who said that the third choice fits because collocations can be taught through feedback. As in the fourth choice, we have (03) teachers who stressed on exercises because, they thought that exercises are important in mastering collocations and also, we have got only (01) teacher who selected the fifth choice because dictionaries are helpful and necessary in using collocations whereas in the last choice, only (02) teachers who highlighted it because, for them recording helps students in memorizing collocations.

According to suggestions which are stated in the ninth question, we noticed that (09) teachers did not suggest anything because they thought that collocations are not important in

teaching and are not interested in teaching them. As we have got (08) teachers who suggested that collocations can be taught through different ways.

As noticed in the tenth question that there are (15) teachers who encouraged students to learn collocations on their own to make them know how to combine words correctly but those who said no are only (02) because they did not see it as important to encourage students to learn collocations on their own.

The final question shows that (10) teachers shared the same view of not having additional information about teaching collocations. Accordingly, (07) teachers only pay attention to teaching collocations from different ways because they are interested in collocation approaches.

2. 3. Activities Administrated to Students

A 1 Vocabulary activity

A 2 Grammar activity: tenses

A 3 Vocabulary activity: matching words that collocate

A 4 Syntax activity

A 5 Grammar: right verbs

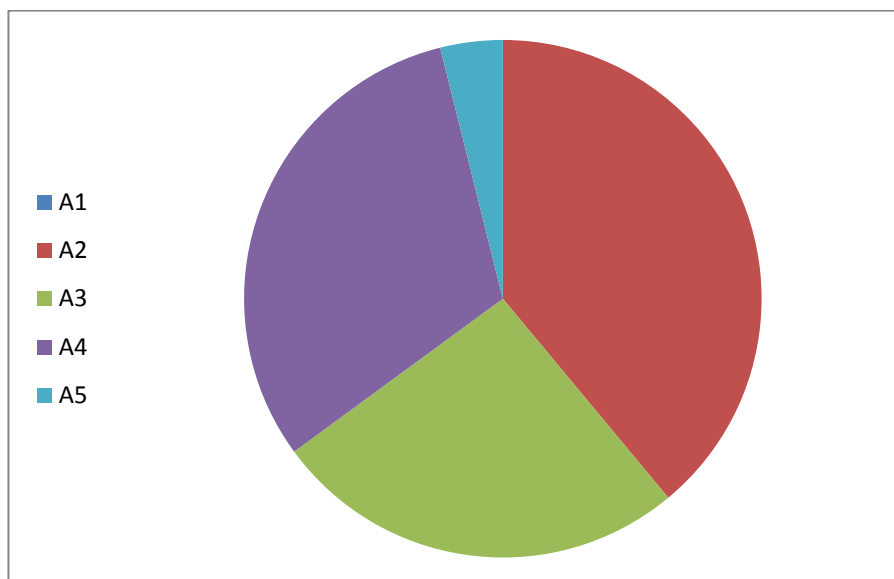


Chart 01: Activities and teaching collocations (correct answers)

Source: the researcher based on Excel 2007

The correct answers according the question classification

The pie chart N 01 shows that the correct answers vary according to the approaches of teaching collocations. It states that each approach has a specific contribution to enhance and improve the level of students.

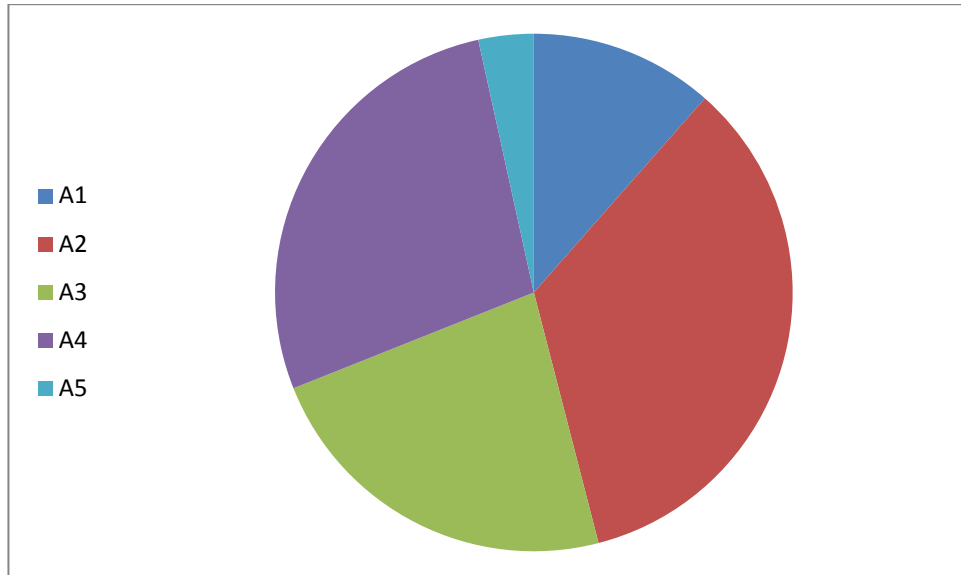


Chart 02: the false answers of the activities

Source: the researcher based on Excel 2007

The false answers according to the questions classification

The pie chart N 02 shows the variation of the false answers according to the questions classification. It pinpoints that the false answers do not follow a stable path. This fact is due principally to the difference of the students' level.

2. 4. Interpretation of the Results of the Students

2. 4. 1. The Correct Answers:

The charts present the percentage of both the correct and wrong answers in the questionnaire. The first question did not give any response from the students. The cause behind this is that the students were not able to deal with the questions asked. This incapacity stems from the lack of understanding and their weakness in vocabulary issues.

The second question was a grammatical activity in which the students present correct answers. The cause of the small percentage of this activity is due to the bad positioning of the verbs in their suitable places. This incapacity stems also from the non- understanding of the

deep meaning of the verbs and their contextual usage (the variability of the verb meaning according to the context).

The third question is about matching adverbs with adjectives. This percentage of this part is much smaller than the second question. The small percentage proves what is stated in the first and the second activities (the incapacity of dealing with grammatical and vocabulary issues leads inevitably to a relevant failure in analyzing the structure of words according to their variations)

The fourth question was a syntax activity. The result of this part is positive as the students show a good ability to place the words in their right places. This means implicitly that the contextual meaning of the sentences or the texts is much more helpful to specify the meaning of a word even if the word per se is ambiguous at first.

The fifth question gives in its own right the biggest percentage. This is due to the good capacity of students to understand verbs and use them appropriately in their suitable contextual positions. In order to enhance this skill, the students should focus on their verbs usage in the contextual paradigm not the *isolatic* (words or verbs used in isolation) one.

2. 4. 2. The Incorrect Answers:

The first question does not give any response from the students. This issue is based on the quality of the question per se as it is hard and not well understandable to the majority of the students concerned by the questionnaire.

The results show a high record of the incorrect answers of the second activity about grammar and verbs' tenses. In this context, it is worthwhile to mention that the activity was simple and easy. The weak result proves that the students are not yet able to deal with and differentiate between the verb, the right tense and the contextual meaning (the contextual meaning is the engine to understand the verb and its usage).

The third activity was about matching adverbs with adjectives. The number of false answers is bigger and the incapacity of the students to deal with this type of question is relevant. This issue refers to the weakness in the vocabulary and grammatical contexts. In this context, it is imperative to state that the levels of vocabulary and grammar shape the collocation capacity to deal with activities of this type (Vocabulary refers to the meaning and grammar is concerned by the good structure of the meaning).

The fourth activity presents a bigger number of the false answers than the correct ones (28 false answers and 12 correct ones). These results were due to the variation of the students' levels in understanding the words and the colloquial meaning of the passages (texts, paragraphs...). This does not mean that all the students are at the same level in using words but there are some exceptions proven by the number of the correct answers (12).

The last question was about positions of the right verbs in their right places. The result shows three false answers. The cause behind the small number of the wrong answers is based on the quality of the verbs used which were simple and easy (Ex: speak, say, tell).

3. Discussion of the Results and Findings.

The results and findings from both the students' and teachers' questionnaire have enlightened us about their views concerning the problem of mis-collocations in EFL students 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 through developing their collocation competence. Contrary to students, teachers' responses to the questionnaire in writing were contradictory. Although they claim that students face this problem and should be taught collocations, some teachers do not do any effort to teach them collocations. In addition, teaching collocations to the EFL students through exercises has improved their collocational competence.

Moreover, teaching collocations to students through activities has improved their collocation competence, restricted their mis-collocations and increased their awareness of combining words together. Additionally, we noticed from the findings and the results that there is a positive correlation between collocations' use and writing skills. In this context, the researcher claims that by using collocations, students can write more correctly. This leads teachers to direct their students' attention through noticing, context and exercises.

In addition to this, teaching collocation has a positive impact on writing skills. It is by this sense contributes in the improvement of this learning approach via the ways of how to use words in combination and how to use them in the right and meaningful position in the collocational context.

4. General conclusion

Learning collocations is considered as an important part in mastering English language. Thus, teachers and students do not pay attention to the notion of collocations in classrooms. EFL students do not notice the ideas that are expressed by collocations; therefore students' attention should turn to the way words combine into collocations. Teachers are able to present examples of collocations in English through noticing, context and exercises. In addition, teachers need to practise English collocations in classes and to make the students aware of collocations. Teaching collocations through context is important in teaching English language, this leads to increasing the attention of the teachers in an attempt to improve the level of the students and to make them aware of target language collocations. Knowing how collocations are learnt is essential for devising ways of teaching them and challenges to learning and understanding them.

Moreover, teaching collocations can be beneficial for students; also, teachers should help the students to develop communicative competence as well as their collocational competence, so that students will become fluent in English generally. This can be achieved through an explicit teaching of collocations that is based on building students' awareness of the most collocates of a word. Furthermore, students are not interested in learning collocations because teachers do not teach them how to combine words or how to use words that go together. In this respect, collocations can be taught through different ways, approaches and directions.

As indicated in the results of the practical part, teaching English collocations to EFL students would enhance their ability of writing and raise their collocational competence. As a consequence, dictionary will become an easier task when the learners have already made prefabricated chunks in their minds. What should be done is only recording this group of words or multi word for memory. According to the results of the empirical study, the hypotheses stated first in the introduction are fulfilled.

5. Recommendations

The results of this research work showed that the EFL learners commit errors in using collocations and in combining words due to the different factors including poor learning situation, lack of knowledge and the effect of the mother language. In this regard, some recommendations are directed to the EFL teachers as follows:

- 1- Teach collocations as a separate module.
- 2- Provide activities where collocations are used, and engage students to self correction.
- 3- Train students to combine words.
- 4- Give much time to collocations when teaching.
- 5- Pay more attention to the errors that are frequently misused.
- 6- Encourage students to learn collocations on their own
- 7- Provide the opportunities to practice collocations in writing where students have to respect the collocations rules.
- 8- Teach students about the importance of collocations in clarifying the meaning

Finally, it is better to teach collocations as separate module so that students 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 words combinations. As a result, EFL students would become more able to decode the meaning of word-combinations like collocations, idioms, etc which still constitute a major problem for them.

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Appendices

Appendix 01 : Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

Please answer the following questions as thoughtfully and specifically as possible. This form will be seen by your instructors and is meant to provide information needed in the fulfillment of my dissertation.

Collocations Exercises

Answer the following exercises carefully.

Male

Female

A- Cross out one 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 criticize
- 4- Absolutely convinced absolutely tired absolutely devastated
absolutely absurd

B- Choose the correct collocations

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

C- Match the adverbs with the adjectives

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1- Bitterly | anticipated |
| 2- Strictly | available |
| 3- Lavishly | damaged |
| 4- Eagerly | disappointed |
| 5- Generously | illustrated |

- 6- Widely influence
- 7- Heavily limited
- 8- Extensively rewarded

D – Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the following words

**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 Jack when he pleads.....
- 6- I was too shy to join in.....
- 7- When he arrived late he apologized.....
- 8- When I give my students a lot of homework, they always complain.....
- 9- It does not 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.....

E- Which of the verbs: speak, say, tell fit best into the gaps in these examples.

- 1- I can't.....for the rest of the staff, though.
- 2- As I....., they have already appointed somebody.
- 3- You'd better do exactly what the doctor.....
- 4- Don't worry. Everything you.....me is confidential.
- 5- These figures don'tus what will happen next month.
- 6- It's too soon to.....whether an agreement can be reached.

- 7- UN sources.....the agreement goes much further than any previous one.
- 8- To.....you the truth, I was half expecting it.
- 9- It may be that actions will..... Louder than words.
- 10- Can I.....to Mr. Harrison, please?

Appendix 02: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is intended to gather information about teaching and learning collocations in EFL. The collected information will help me to enrich my dissertation about mastering the English language through teaching collocations. Your responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported in the dissertation anonymously. I am grateful for your help.

Please, put a cross in the corresponding box and make full statement whenever necessary.

- 1- When you teach collocations, which of these require more emphasis?
Words in isolation words combinations
- 2- What is the best way of teaching collocations?
Reading listening context translation consciousness-raising activities noticing
- 3- Do you think that collocations have to be taught?
Through other skills as a separate module
- 4- What is the major cause of your learners' errors in using collocations?
L1 interference they do not have enough words they do not master grammatical rules they do not know how to combine words
- 5- When you are teaching, do you make your students notice words that go together?
Never rarely sometimes often very often
- 6- When you correct your students' papers, do you take into consideration their collocational mistakes?
Yes No
- 7- If yes, do you think that we have to teach students collocations to make them write correctly?
Yes No
- 8- How can collocations be taught?
Through highlighting word combinations to encourage the learner to notice them
by raising students' consciousness to them through feedback from the on
wrong word combinations in students' essays through exercises
by using collocation dictionaries by recording all the noticed collocations
in a note book in order to revise them later
- 9- If you have other suggestions for how to teach collocations, would you please write them down?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....

...

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

Yes

11- If your answer is yes, can you tell us how?

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

12- If you have additional information about teaching collocations, would you please add more details below?

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

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.