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Investigation of the Effective Use of Lexical Collocation in Essay writing
The Case of Master One Students at the English Department of Mohammed
Seddik Ben Yahia University-jijel

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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2021-2022

Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Investigation of Effective Use of Lexical Collocation in Essay writing” is our own work and all the sources that we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied and plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents

Chetouane Rida Mahmoud

Dedication

“Any job very well done that has been carried out by a person who is fully dedicated is always a source of inspiration” Carlos Ghosn

This study is heartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source inspiration and who continually provided their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. It is also dedicated to my brothers, sisters, relatives, classmates, who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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Abstract

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners need to possess sufficient collocational competence to achieve a high level of writing proficiency. It is proved that EFL learners face a variety of problems that make their writing not proficient. The current research aims to investigate the use of lexical collocation in academic writing of Master One students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University; more specifically, it attempts to determine both the frequency and correctness of students' collocation use. To reach this aim, the researchers used content analysis to collect data. That is, the analysis of 20 out of 140 Master One exam copies. The results showed that students use lexical collocation to a large extent. In addition, it was found that students have the tendency of using verb + noun and adjective + noun collocations more than other types. With regard to collocational errors, it is noted that adjective + noun and verb+ noun are the most problematic. Moreover, it was revealed that the lack of collocational knowledge and the interference of the students' first language are the main reasons behind students' misuse of collocations in writing. Consequently, the current study suggests the need for an explicit and systematic teaching of this linguistic aspect of English language.

Keywords: Collocation Competence, Content analysis, EFL, Lexical Collocation, Writing Proficiency.

List of Abbreviations

CCED: Collins Cobuild English Dictionary

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L1: First language

L 2: Second Language

OCD: Oxford Collocation Dictionary

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

List of Tables

1-Table: Lexical Collocations

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General Introduction

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General Introduction

Vocabulary and grammar constitute the basic elements of foreign language teaching. However, it is noticed that for many years, a great focus had been put on the teaching of grammar since it had been maintained by many scholars that the mastery of the grammatical rules permits learners to speak and write properly. By contrast, vocabulary teaching was neglected and sometimes limited to memorizing lists of words in isolation. Recently, the study of vocabulary gained popularity among many researchers. Lewis (1993) believed that “lexis is the core or the heart of language” (p. 89) and acquiring enough vocabulary items helps learners improve their learning of a FL. However, putting all this lexical knowledge into practice is not an easy task, especially for foreign and second language learners; indeed, it results most of the time in the making of errors and one of the most frequent is the collocation misuse. Collocation is the natural combination of two or more lexical items. McCarthy and O’Dell (2005) defined “a pair or group of words that are often used together” (p. 06). Collocational knowledge plays a central role in learning a FL since the main purpose behind learning new words is to put them into “practical use”. Collocations sound just correct and natural for native speakers, but for foreign and second language learners they have to make efforts to reach this stage.

1. Background of the Study

Several studies (Nisselhauf 2003; Bahns and Eldaw , 1993 ; Howarth, 1996 ; Granger, 1998 ; Fan, 2009) were conducted on collocation all over the world and from different perspectives. Fan (2009) made two relevant observations, the first one studied the elicitation techniques or production data and the second one emphasized certain structures of collocations. This study has produced relevant results concerning practical types of collocations, yet it has not really resulted in a deep understanding of collocational use in general. Additionally, Hsu (2007) investigated the use of lexical collocation and their

impact to the online writing of Taiwanese college English majors and non-English Majors. The researcher collected the data by administering an online writing test. The results exhibited that there exists a correlation between writing proficiency and using collocations. Moreover, Zhang's (1993) tested 60 (i.e., 30 native and 30 non-native) speakers of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania by using one blank-filling collocation test and one paper-based writing test. In this study, Zhang (1993) found that native writers performed significantly better than non-native writers in terms of the use of collocations in writing. (Hsu, 2007; Zhang, 1993; Sung, 2003). Furthermore, Darvishi (2011) examined the collocational errors in the writing of EFL college learners by looking at 38 assignments and 38 in-class activities completed by 68 sophomore university students. According to Darvishi (2011), the primary cause of the collocational errors in the learners' production was their ignorance of rule restrictions. He also noted additional causes of errors, such as a lack of collocational notions, interference from the mother tongue, and a lack of collocational expertise. Another line of research relates to Brashi (2006) study. He examined EFL learners' receptive and productive knowledge of verb + noun collocations using a blank filling test and a multiple choice. The results showed that the participants performed better at the receptive level than at the productive level in regard to verb + noun collocation. Indeed, there is a set of studies about the topic of lexical collocations and language proficiency especially of EFL and ESL learners in several contexts. The existing literature indicated that the previous studies have examined learners' written production, testing lexical knowledge of collocations, analyzing errors problems encountered while translating English collocations. Significantly, the results obtained suggest the importance of conducting a further study which can focus on effectiveness lexical collocation use in essay writing in the Algerian context.

Finally, this study can be beneficial for both students and teachers since it can make the students aware of their errors to guide them for a better production of English and also

help teachers to find more effective ways to teach vocabulary in general and collocations in particular.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study of vocabulary in general and lexical collocations in particular has gained wide popularity among scholars and researchers. In most universities especially Algerian Universities, teachers depend on writing as a station for each evaluation and exam. Yet, unfortunately, most students are not aware of the value of collocations which are considered a pre-requisite for attaining an acceptable academic writing style. As pointed out by Hill (2000), “students with good ideas often lose marks because they do not know the four or five most important collocations of a key word that is central to what they are writing about “(p.80). That is, the more the students use them appropriately, the good their writing style gets. Another problem is that students are facing a variety of obstacles in their academic writing in particular. As Nunan (1989) claimed, producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing is very challenging task to do in language learning.

Since lexical collocations are considered as the core of language and the spine of writing, teachers must give their students enough information about them and learners themselves must give much importance to this combination of words and pay attention while using them.

3. Research Questions

For the sake of efficiency in handling the matter, the present work raises the following questions:

Q1. To what extent do EFL learners use lexical collocations in their writing?

Q2. Which types of lexical collocations are problematic for students?

Q3. To what extent do EFL students use lexical collocations correctly?

4. Hypothesis

This study is based on the assumption that EFL students at the Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University have serious problems in correctly using collocations and that they have problems with the use of lexical collocations.

5. Aim of the Study

This study aims at examining effective use of collocation and throw light on the problematic use of collocations by first year Master students of English on their essay writing. .Additionally, it seeks recognize the extent to which they can put them into practical use and errors that can be made.

All in all, this study seems to be beneficial for students since it can make students aware of their errors. Thus, it guides them towards better production in their writing.

6. Research Design

The present study will be conducted through the use of purely qualitative paradigm. To collect data that may help to answer the research questions, the researchers will make use of qualitative content analysis as a research instrument to obtain data from students' exam papers.

7. Organization of the Study

The current research is organized around two chapters. The first chapter will concern the theoretical part where the background about collocation will be reviewed in two sections. As for the second chapter, the practical phase will be presented in three sections. The first section will discuss the research methodology; the second section will present the analysis of data while the third section will be devoted to data discussion and interpretation.

Chapter One: Collocation

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Chapter One: Collocation

Introduction

This chapter includes two sections which are as follows: The first section takes as its major concerns some key issues related to collocation. It provides definition, approaches, characteristics, and types of collocation. Also, it deals with the concept of collocation and other word combination; and finally, it discusses collocational competence. The second section starts with the definition of the skill of writing and academic writing. It subsequently discusses the relationship between lexical collocation and academic writing. Then it highlights the main problems faced by students while using lexical collocations and revealed the main reasons for students mis-collocation. At the end, it highlights the materials and resources that support the learning and teaching of collocations.

1.1.1 Definition of Collocation

Researchers all over the world agreed on the concept of collocation as a type of prefabricated units which frequently occur via language. According to Martynska (2004), the term collocation originated from the Latin word “collocare” which intends to set in order, or to arrange.

Schmidt (2000) stated that the term collocation was coined by Firth (1937) and it started gaining significance since that time. However, Brashi (2006) agreed that the notion of collocation has been known since the pioneering work of Palmer (1938) who was the first to introduce the term collocation in his dictionary, “A grammar of English words”. Later, Firth (1957) was widely acknowledged to be the first who emerged explicitly “collocation” as a technical concept to linguistics when he clearly said “I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation and to apply the test of collocability” (as cited in Batsch, 2004, p.30). That is to say, the term collocation was coined by Palmer (1938) and then introduced to linguistics by Firth.

AL-Sakren (2001, p. 23) categorized the definition of collocation into two major views and perspectives: the frequently based approach or the statistical oriented approach (Sinclair, 1991; Stabbs, 1995; Moon, 1998) and the phraseology approach or the significance oriented approach (Cowie, 1993; Melcak, 1998; Hausman, 1989). Additionally, many researchers addressed the notion of collocation and different definitions have been proposed. In this regard, McCarthy (1990) stated that collocation constitutes a relationship which is “a marriage contact between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others” (p.22). In the same context of thought, Sinclair (1991) referred to collocation as “items that occur physically together or have stronger chances of being mentioned together” (p. 170).

For Carter (1992), “Collocation is a term used to describe a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language.” (p. 52). Also, collocations were defined by Choueka (1998) as “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” (p. 609 as cited in Abdoui, 2010, p.15).

To put it in a nutshell, even though there is no common agreed upon a single definition of the term collocations, all the mentioned definitions have at their core the sense that collocation is a combination of words that happens very often and more frequently in a language. For instance, the expression “make a decision” is named collocation since the word “make” co-occur frequently in the same location of the word “decision”. In other words, when you see the word “decision”, you strongly expect that the word “make” may be there too. The substitution of the word “make” by another word of the same meaning like “do” is not possible because it sounds natural to native speakers of English.

1.1.2. Approaches to Collocations

Previous studies have investigated different aspects of the phenomenon of collocation. These studies can be classified in terms of three main approaches to collocation research: the lexical approach, the semantic approach and the structural approach which they will be discussed briefly below.

1.1.2.1. The Lexical Approach

This approach was developed by the linguist Firth (1957) who is considered as the father of this trend and was the first scholar to introduce collocations into lexical studies. Firth (1957) was known by this definition to collocation "you should know a word by the company it keeps"(p. 157). It means that words obtain their meaning from the words with which they co-occur. Additionally, collocation are related to the co-occurrence of lexical items that are separated from grammar (Vashoniemé & Viciené , 2012 , p.11). Subsequently, Firth's concept of lexical meaning has been adopted and developed by his followers, known as the Neo-Firthians. The most prominent of those are McIntosh (1960), Halliday (1996) and Sinclair (1991). They developed the notion of meaning of Firth and emphasized the importance of lexical collocation. Halliday (1996) viewed collocations as example of word combination and he agreed that collocations as a systematic relation of lexical units for instance : " strongly, strength , and strengthened " can all be considered as the same item ; and "a strong argument , he argued strongly, the strength of his argument" are its syntactic relation (p.151). Besides, he considered that collocation as a lexical phenomenon rather than a grammatical. Like Halliday, Sinclair (1991) also considered grammar and collocations as two different facets. He explained that in grammar, language structure is organized by a system of choices (For example: choosing between active and passive voices), whereas collocation deals with individual lexical units and their co-occurrence. In other words, it is a matter of likeness of occurrence rather than a matter of choice (as cited in Alsakran, 2011, p. 17). In this context,

we can say that Sinclair changed his mind, claiming that grammar should not be completely ignored and should be considered a different aspect of lexis, and that grammar and lexis should be examined as two “interpenetrating way” of looking at language structure (Jaff, 2013).

1.1.2.2. The Semantic Approach

Researchers of this approach focused on what constrains the combinations of words. So, collocation here is used to refer to combination of lexical items and seeks to know why some words are combined together. The opponents of this approach such as Lyons (1997) considered the lexical approach an insufficient approach because of its inability to explain why some lexical items collocate only with certain terms. Furthermore, Ullman (1962) stated that “in this approach particular lexical area can be identified in which each term helps to delimit its neighbors and is delimited by them” (p.30). Thus, it is clear that to most native speakers of English the word *commit* will spring to mind readily when they use *murder* in a certain context. The semanticists believed that a lexical item’s semantic characteristics determine the words it collocates with. This perspective is criticized because it arbitrarily restricts a number of collocations. Lehrer (1974) gave the example of the word *drinker* that should make it collocate with *heavy*, rather than with *strong* or *power* (pp. 7- 12, as cited in Biskri, 2012, p. 17).

1.1.2.3. The Structural Approach

According to this approach, lexis and the grammar are two interrelated concepts and cannot be separated (Mitchell, 1971; Gitasky, 1996). In this regard, Mitchell (1971) stated that collocations are a grammatical lexicon which means that collocations and grammar are strongly related and collocation is studied within a grammatical matrix. In other words, Bahns (1993) clarified that lexis cannot be separated from grammar because the two are

distinctive, but related aspects of one phenomenon (as cited in Shoukouhi and Mirsalari, 2010, p. 3). Moreover, Mitchell was criticized by the Neo Firthians because He separated the lexical study from grammar. He pointed out that the lexis and the grammar are the tools that linguists count on in order to determine the nature of collocation. The leading figure of this approach created the notion of roots to the study of collocations. For instance, “think” and “smartly” are two roots, and every combination of them produces unacceptable collocations. Like “smart thinker” can be “think smartly” and “smart thinking”. Yet, Mitchell’s opinion was criticized by some linguists who considered his attitude towards collocations not valid for every combinations. For example, *faint praise* is a useful English but *praise faintly* is not.

To conclude, in the study of collocations, the structural trend emphasized both lexis and grammar. Furthermore, it was noted that proponents of both the lexical and semantic tendencies only looked at a tiny number of lexical items due to the separation of grammar and lexis. As a result, their findings were limited. In contrast, structural researchers looked at more patterns of collocations, resulting in a well-developed, practical, and systematic framework for collocation studies with a larger body of empirical data.

1.1.3. Characteristics of Collocations

Collocation is characterized by three main criteria which are as follows. These characteristics are identified by Bowels (2007).

A. Non-compositional

That is we cannot understand its meaning even if we understand the meaning of individual words. A good example of non-compositionality is the idiom for instance, ‘to have an itching palm’, which means to be ‘greedy for money’ (Kirpatrick & Shwaz, 1993).

B. Non-substitution

This means we cannot substitute near-synonyms for the components of a collocation.

For example, for "close the meeting", it is wrong to say "shut the meeting" because "shut" and "meeting" do not go together; however, one could say "shut the door".

C. Non-modifiability

Many collocations cannot be freely modified with additional lexical materials or through grammatical transformations. For instance, we cannot say "whiter win" instead of "white win" as we cannot say mother in laws instead of mother in law.

1.1.4 Types of Collocations

Since the term "collocation" has been discussed in many linguistic areas such as semantic phraseology, and corpus analysis, researchers have categorized collocations from different perspectives. The most common types are: lexical versus grammatical collocations, weak versus strong collocations, and opened versus restricted collocations.

1.1.4.1. Grammatical Collocation and Lexical Collocation

- **Lexical collocations**

Lexical collocations consist of adjective, verbs and adverbs. For example, acquire knowledge, arouse someone interest, and relieve pressure. They are patterns that help structure a sentence, but do not carry so much specific meaning by themselves. There are seven types of lexical collocations which are presented in table (1) below.

Type	Structure	Example
L1	Verbs (donation creation or activation) + Noun (pronoun of prep. phrase)	Compose music, inflict a wound, set a record
L2	Verb (meaning eradication and nullification + noun)	Break a code , reverse a decision reject an appeal
L3	Adjective +Noun	Strong tea , a formidable challenge
L4	Noun + verb	Alarms go off , blood circulates
L5	Noun 1 of Noun 2	A pride lions , a bouquet of flowers
L6	Adjective + adverb Adverb + adjective	Sound sleep, Hopelessly addicted
L7	Verb + adverb	Affect deeply, apologize humbly

Table 1: Lexical collocation types by Benson et al., (1986) (as cited in Farokh, 2012, P.

60)

- **Grammatical collocations**

Grammatical collocations are expressions containing a focal word. For example, noun, adjective or an adverb and a preposition or grammatical structure like an infinitive or condition. There are eight types of lexical collocations which are presented in table (2).

Type	Structure	Examples
G 1	Noun + preposition	Blockaded against + apathy towards
G 2	Noun + infinitive	It was pleasure to do it

G 3	Noun + that clause	He took an oath that he would do his duty
G 4	Preposition + noun	By accident , in advance
G 5	Adjective + preposition	Be angry at , be fond of
G 6	Predicate + adjective + to infinitive	It was necessary to work
G 7	Adjective + that clause	It was nice that he was able to come home for the holiday
G 8	There are 19 patterns in G8	

Table 2: Lexical Collocations by Benson et al., (1986) (as cited by Farokh, 2012, p.60)

1.1.4.2 .Strong versus Weak Collocations

Lewis (2000) further classified collocations into strong and weak collocations; the distinction between these two types is based on their fixedness and restriction (p. 63). Strong collocations such as “ drug addict “ and “ rancid butter “ are recognized as tightly linked phrases which function like a single word while weak ones like a “ nice day “ and “ a good chance “ can be combined with two common words and each of which occur with other words.

Hill (2000) classified collocations according to strength the following four categories unique, strong, weak and medium strength collocation (as cited in Lewis, 2000).

A-Unique Collocations: As an example, Hill gave 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 noun.

B -Strong Collocations: like "trenchant criticism" and "rancid butter" these are not unique because they are other things that can be trenchant or rancid but these collocations are very few.

C-Weak Collocations: to illustrate, adjectives like long, short, cheap, expensive, good or bad could be combined with many things (nouns) as in the example of *red car*. These combinations are more predictable and easy to the majority of students.

D- Medium-Strength: As an example, we have *hold a conversation* and *a major operation*. Hill (2000) thought that the students are concerned with this type which is neither strong nor weak.

1.1.4.3. Open versus Restricted Collocations

Cowie (1981) characterized "open collocation as combination in which both elements (verb and adjective or adjective and noun) are freely combinable. Also, in open collocations, each element is used in a common literal sense" (p. 6). Restricted collocation is defined by Aisenstadt (2007) as "combinations of two or more words used in one of their regular, non-idiomatic meanings following certain structural patterns, and restricted in their commutability not only by grammatical and semantic valence, but also by usage". (p.71). For Cowie (1981) "in such combinations – one word – has a figurative sense not found outside that limited context" (p. 6). This appears to contradict Aisenstadt, but in fact the two views are compatible since in restricted collocations one of the elements may be either literal or figurative.

1.1.4.5. Patterns of Collocation

The following tables represent the most common patterns according to Lewis, (2000: p.133) and McCarthy and O'Dell (2005, p. 12).

Patterns	Examples
Adjective + Noun	A difficultdecision
Verb + Noun	Submit a report
Noun + noun	Radio station
Verb+ adverb	Examine thoroughly
Adverb+adjective	Extremelyinconvenient
Verb+adjective +noun	Revise the original plan
Noun+verb	The fogclosed in

Table 3: collocations patterns according to Lewis (2000, p. 133)

Patterns	Examples
Adjective + noun	Bright color
Noun + verb	The economy Boomed
Noun + noun	The sense of pride
Verb + preposition + noun	Filledwithhorror
Verb + adverb	Smiledproudly
Adverb + adjective	Happilymarried

Table 4: collocations patterns according to McCarthy and O'Dell (2005, P.12)

The five parts of speech which are: noun, adjective, adverb, verb, preposition can be collocated. We notice from the two tables above that Lewis's(2000) patterns and McCarthy & O'Dell (2005) ones are nearly similar; indeed, in both classification, there are the following patterns :*adjective + noun, noun + noun, verb + adverb, noun +verb and adverb+ adjective*. However, in the first table, 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 of *verb + noun* and *noun +*

verb. As a result, we can deduce from the two tables mentioned above a new classification.

Learners need to be aware of the fact that words have their own collocational field, below are the most distinguishable types according to McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) and Lewis (2000).

Verb + noun	Launch a product/accept Responsibility
Adjective + noun	Bright colour/square meal /major Issue
Verb + adjective + noun	Take vigorous exercise/make steady Progress
Adverb + verb	Strongly suggest/barely see
Adverb + adjective	Utterly amazed/ completely useless
Adverb + adjective + noun	Totally unacceptable behavior
Adjective + preposition	Guilty of blame for / happy about
Noun + noun (also known as a compound nouns)	Pay packet/ Windows frame

Table 5: Collocations Patterns of McCarthy, O'Dell (2005) and Lewis (2000)

1.1.5. Collocations and Other Words Combination

There are some other words combinations that EFL learners cannot distinguish in using them since they are nearly similar to each other. These are idioms, phrasal verbs and colligation.

1.1.5.1. Collocation Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Collocation, idioms and phrasal verbs are considered among the most important word combinations for students learning a foreign language. These three terms are interrelated. Hill (2000) said " In one sense all collocation is idiomatic and all idioms and phrasal verbs are collocations " (cited in Lewis, 2000, p. 50). Following Hill's view, it can be noticed that there

exists a relation between collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs. Before we move on, it is required to define briefly the concepts of collocation, idioms and phrasal verbs. First, Deveci (2004) said "relationship between words is collocation. They involve structural patterns and combinations of words. So, take a break which is an example of idiom and word combinations like get on a bus are collocations" (as cited in Adelian et al, 2015, p.976). Second, an idiom is a phrase whose meaning is difficult or sometimes impossible to guess by looking at the meaning of individual words it contains. According to Fisher (1998), an idiom is an ensemble of two or more words which are subject to semantic and syntactic restriction. Its meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of its constituent. It forms a semantic entity. Thus; it may be substituted by a synonym. (p. 44) This means an idiom is an expression in which all the words do not have their literal Meaning; their sense is rather figurative or metaphoric (Abdaoui, 2010). As a result, it is difficult to understand its meaning. Wang and Shaw (2008) defined idioms as "relatively frozen expressions, the meanings of which can barely be derived from the meaning of their constituents parts such as sweeten the pill and kick the bucket" (2008, p. 205). For example, when we say *I was knocked on my heels* signifies I was surprised and when we say *hold your horse* it means wait and calm down. Third, a phrasal verb is a combination of words that consists of a verb and an adverb or preposition; it is used like a verb such as 'make up' or 'give in'. For Crystal (1991), as previously stated, who remarked "phrasal verb is a type of verb consisting of a sequence of lexical element plus one or more particle" (p. 263). From the above definitions, we notice that phrasal verbs and idioms definitions include words that go together as collocations. So, collocations are phrasal verbs and sometimes "idiomatic expression". Consequently, most EFL students are more familiar with idioms and phrasal verbs than collocations; it is more helpful to focus their attention on learning different forms of collocations.

1.1.5.2 Collocation and Colligation

The term colligation was introduced by the linguist Firth (1968). Martyniska (2004) referred to colligation as "the grammatical company and interaction of words as well as their preferable position in a sentence" (p. 4). Colligation is about the relationship between grammatical classes, while collocation concerns the words that belong to these classes. Similarly, Halliday and Hassan (1976) defined collocations as the "lexical items that regularly co-occur" (p. 278). Similarly, Hoey (2001) defined colligation "as the grammatical company a word keeps and the position it refers" (p.234).

Abdullah (1993) elucidated that collocations consist of individual lexical items functioning in an open set, whereas the colligations of grammatical classes such as 'noun, verb, adverb', and a preposition operate in a closed set (p. 15). When it comes to colligation, the primary concern is with items being members of word classes and not separate lexical items. For example, 'roaring success', 'missing link', 'working class', 'fighting spirit' are all colligations made up of the 'gerund + noun' structure and belonging to the grammatical classes of language.

1.1.6. Collocational Competence

Linguists have emphasized the importance of recurrent word combination, or more specifically of collocations. However, very few studies on learners collocational competence in EFL context have been conducted. As Lewis said (2000) "we are familiar with the concept of communicative competence, but we need to add the concept of collocational competence to our thinking" (p. 49). Partington (1998) added that the collocational competence refers to the "knowledge of what is normal collocation in a particular environment" (p. 18).

Furthermore, collocation competence indicated EFL learners knowledge or abilities to recognize which words co-occur frequently with other words within a specific

context..Bazzaz and Samad (2011) stated that “the most robust declaration of the importance of collocation, however, is that collocational competence is a vital element in the development of foreign/ second language teaching” (p.159). Unfortunately, many EFL learners are often deficient in collocational competence. This is why students, in most learning areas, are unable to express their ideas correctly. As Hill (2000) said “students tend to create longer sentences because they do not know collocations which express precisely what they want to say” (as cited in Lewis, 2000, p. 49). Thus, it is necessary to teach collocations in classroom in order to enhance learners’ collocational competence which in its turn would improve their development of language fluency and proficiency in writing.

1.2. Writing and Lexical Collocation

1.2.1. Skill of Writing

Mastering any foreign language requires mastering the four skills: listening, reading speaking and writing. The writing skill has been received as the most difficult skill because it requires a great ability to tie up words to produce, at the end, a coherent text. Hence, it is crucial part of communication by which people express their feelings, ideas, and thoughts in a written form. Heaton (1975) stated that “the writing skill is complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical rhetorical devices, but also of conceptual and judgmental elements”(p. 135). Another definition of writing is suggested by Harmer (1998). He approved that writing is a process in which the writer follows certain stages to finally build up words into a well-written form, and he adds that some factors may contribute to the production of these pieces of writing such as the content and the type of writing. For these definitions, one can say that writing is a creative process where language is being transcribed into symbols; it is, therefore, perceived as a problematic skill. Consequently, L2 learners should learn to write better by developing their capacities in writing, motivating them, and highlighting the importance of the writing skill as a vital communicative tool.

As introduced in many researches, the writing skill plays a fundamental role in the process of L2 acquisition. Therefore, it enhances the learners' capacities in expressing themselves and heightening their self-confidence by interacting with other members of society. Besides, it reinforces the language development at all levels such as grammar and vocabulary. In this respect, Nunan (1989) said that "writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writers required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously" (p. 36). So writing may be considered as an integration of many skills and sub-skills regarding its complexity.

Obviously, writing is a basic skill in language learning and is considered as one of the main pillars of mastering the L2. However, it is still affected by many factors that cause L2 learners to face difficulties in their writings such as lack of motivation and practice and L1 interference.

1.2.2. Academic Writing

Writing is not simply a choice, but a requirement in this highly competitive information age. Academic success depends on the capacity to write (Pablo & Laston, 2018). Academic writing refers to a particular style that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and specific areas of expertise (Hartley, 2008). In this sense, any writing that is related to research purposes or produced by college learners is considered to be academic writing. Ivrin (2010) argued that: academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks learners to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting and presenting. Scholars have shown that chunks and prefabricated units are of great importance to students' written production and the use of lexical collocations makes their writing effective and articulate.

1.2.3. Lexical Collocation in Academic Writing

Writing effectively in one's first language can be difficult, and writing in second language can be even more difficult. L2 writers, for example, must have a large vocabulary supply that they can actively employ. The utilization of lexical resources is one of the elements. More specifically, the use of multi-expressions and chunks are of great importance for EFL learners writing proficiency.

According to Laufer (1994), "writing progress can be measured through lexical progress since lexical quality and writing quality are interconnected" (p.22). She argued that there are other factors that contribute to good writing; however, "rich vocabulary is likely to have a positive effect on the reader"(p.22). Thus, mastering vocabulary and writing skill appropriately is very important in any language. In this context, Laufer and Nation (1995) confirmedthat" a well written composition among other things makes effective use of vocabulary "(p.307).

Writing for an academic purpose, learners should have vocabulary stock in their mental lexicon and should have lexis that is typically used in the academic writing. Nation (2001) noted that "vocabulary plays a significant role in the assessment of the quality of the written word" (p. 178). That is to say, students' lack of vocabulary knowledge affects their writing quality and it is considered problematic as some researchers affirmed. Kaur and Hegelheimer (2005) statedthat "formal writing in an academic setting required L2 learners to have a strong linguistic foundation, including a vast range of lexical skills"(p. 288). They emphasized that L1 learners do not have as much exposure to the target language as native speakers, resulting in a worse command of the language and a limited vocabulary.

Hinkel (2004) confirmed that " if NNS (Non Native Speakers) college and university students { were } to succeed in competition for grades and attain their educational objectives,

the level of accuracy in their writing needed to at least to approximate that of native speakers of similar academic standing” (p.34). Besides, teaching learners how to properly collocate academic terminology could be one strategy to assist them in writing accuracy. This understanding may help students cope with academic writing (as cited in Seesink , 2007, p. 19).

The relationship between lexical collocation and academic writing has attracted the attention of many researchers of EFL / SLA such as N. Ellis (1997),Gragner (1998) , Willis (1997) , Nattinger and Decario (1992) , Howarth (1998) . Hinkel (2004) concluded that “stock grammatical and lexical chunks can become an efficient means to expend L2 writers’ arsenals particularly when learners are also taught how to substitute discrete elements appropriately and in particular way” (P .38). Furthermore, Nation (2001) noted that “research on receptive and productive language processing indicates that learners may need to experience the language chunks in the medium in which they need to use them “(p.324). In other words, to develop the writing ability of students, it is necessary to make them aware of the importance of lexical chunks.

To sum up, lexical collocations are so important to improve the learners’ capacity to store foreign language information and then to retain these lexical collocations and use them appropriately and effectively. Consequently, teachers should make their students aware of such chunks and implement them in the teaching activities and tasks to prevent students from producing wrongly combined collocates.

1.2.4. Students’ Lexical collocation problems

It is essential to use collocations accurately to produce language like native accuracy or near native competency. However, combining words appropriately in the target language is one of the most difficult tasks for foreign language learners; students are often not aware

about which words are used together. Gitsaki (1996) stated that “Learners’ knowledge of collocations does not expand in parallel with their knowledge of general vocabulary”. It is noticed that collocations are more problematic when they are used in productive skills, such as speaking and writing. Even if learners can manage to guess the meaning of collocations in receptive process, they still miss the possibility to use them properly in reproducing the language either in speaking or writing. The latter is considered to be the most difficult.

Arbitrariness and the degree of restrictions are two things that presented problems to language learners. According to Lewis (1997), students cannot assume that a pattern is generalizable or that words that are similar in one aspect will act similarly in other ways due to the arbitrary nature of collocations (as cited in Koc, 2006, p. 24). For instance, if we take the collocation “commit suicide”, there is no justifiable rule for selecting “commit” as the standard form among the synonyms such as “do, perform, execute”. The arbitrary collocation restriction allows it to be acceptable while it causes “do suicide” to sound odd. For the degree of restriction, scholars have been shown to be more problematic for EFL learners (e.g., Conjett, 2000; Huang, 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003). Nesselhauf (2003) stated that the restricted collocation which contains fixed elements cannot be substituted by any other word even synonyms; they are the most problematic collocation rather than the less restricted ones. Additionally, there are perspectives that demonstrate that gaining universal awareness of acceptability in collocation and precise *rules* of collocation is very difficult or impossible in other ways. Gairns and Redman (1986) saw that “there are inevitably differences of opinion as to what represents an acceptable collocation in English”. Also, McCarthy (1990) argued that “knowledge of collocation is based on years of experiences of masses of data ... statement about collocation naturally typical patterns of co-occurrence of words can never be absolute” (p.15). In other ways, a number of specialists have attempted to reduce this burden of learning by putting forwards suggestion. For instance, Norbert Schmitt (2001) proposed that

collocational grids assist learners in studying the suitable collocational pairs of new words rather than guessing. For example, we feel that “beautiful proposal”, “a pretty furniture” and “a lovely bird” are all possible collocations. However, it is incorrect to substitute any constituent of a collocation by its synonym (cited in Biskri, 2012, p. 45).

Moreover, some researchers noted that EFL learners have problems in using lexical collocations and associating words that fit with each other. Chang (2018) examined how Korean L2 learners used six types of lexical collocations in L2 writing to address (a) the frequency and acceptability of learner collocation, (b) problematic constituents of deviant collocations, and (c) possible sources of the learner difficulties. He found that L2 influences on the learner difficulties mostly lie in confusion about synonyms, overuse of de lexical verbs and use of correct collocations in wrong contexts. Furthermore, Farghal and Al-hamly (2007) conducted a study with Kuwait University EFL learners essay writing. Collocational errors are first examined and found that the most frequent collocational errors belong to verbal and adjectival collocations, and it was also found that the main reason behind these errors is the output of L1 interference and creative construction. Equally, Park (2013) tested EFL Korean learners' use of lexical collocations as well as the five types of problematic lexical collocation of learners. Her study revealed that adverb and adjective types are tricky for learners and that it is due to the fact that EFL learners commit errors through L1 transfer or substituting the synonyms of collocates.

In brief, since collocational capacity cannot be spontaneously acquired, the teaching of lexical collocations is absolutely integral to the encoding and the reproducing of language by non-native speakers. Brown (1974) confirmed about the importance of teaching collocation in EFL setting for the purpose of making learners aware of lexical collocations and overcome learners' mis-collocation for language production in general and writing in particular.

1.2.5. The Causes of Lexical Collocations Errors

It is widely observed that foreign language learners always find themselves in situations where they do not know which words could be together. Thus, their compositions are full of mis-collocations due to the lack of collocational competence. Teachers nowadays focus mainly on grammatical aspects of language at the expense of vocabulary because learners are usually not aware of the use of collocations. In addition to that, learners often receive words in isolation rather than in combination. Many studies have investigated the issue of the sources of collocational errors and it has attracted the attention of many researchers of EFL/SLA such as: Howarth (1948), Zaghoul and AbdulFattah (2001), Phoocharoensil(2010).

The main sources of lexical collocational errors are: language transfer, learning strategy types and lack of collocational awareness.

1.2.5.1. Language Transfer

It refers to the use of the first language knowledge when speaking and writing in L2 production. It is also called L1 interference. According to Odlin (1948), “language transfer refers to the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (ascited in Bian, 2013, p. 200). That is to say, many lexical collocation errors happen through L1 or interlanguage influence on L1 collocation knowledge. Most of the time learners rely on their first language (L1) to produce the target language information. In this respect, Phoocharoensil (2013) pointed out that there is “no one to one correspondence between L1 and L2 collocational choices”(p 02). Learners tend to transfer the linguistic features of their mother tongue to express their thought in writing and this leads them to commit an infinite number of errors either in words use or in the structure of sentences (Darvishi, 2011). Also, Ünver (2018) claimed in her study that L1 has a negative influence on students’ acquisition of

lexical collocations because both languages do not have the same collocations neither semantically nor culturally. Language transfer is considered as a hinder for learners to acquire a language. Therefore, it may influence their learning process either in a positive or negative way. As claimed by Dougherty and Williams (1998) ,“ a learner’s previous linguistic knowledge influences the acquisition of a new language in a principled , if not straightforward , contrastive way” (p.26). To put it differently, L1 influence is fixed in L1- L2 similarities and differences, often conceptualized as congruency and incongruency. According to Choi et al (2015), “when L2 collocations have word for word L1 translation equivalents, they are considered to be more congruent or predictable, accordingly easier for learners to learn than those without L1 equivalence” (cited in Chang, 2018, p. 9). It can be said that learners commit errors in the target language due to the lack of collocation competence in the target language.

1.2.5.2. Learning Strategy Types

There are several strategies EFL learners rely on when learning collocations in general and lexical collocations in particular so as to produce correctly. The main learning strategy types are:

1.2.5.2.1. Synonymy Strategy

Synonymy strategy refers to the improper use of words because of their similar semantic meaning. For example, instead of saying “accept other people opinion “students say “receive other people opinion”. According to McCarthy (2010), a collocation “refers to how words collocate with other words that can show up differences” (p. 32). Therefore, synonyms cannot be substitute for each other as in strong views (not powerful view), powerful computer but not (strong computer) (cited in Hammadi 2015, p. 19). Other scholars confirmed the misuse of lexical collocations with the use of synonymy. For example, Zeghoul and Abdel-Fattah (2003) showed that EFL learners used contribute of lexical collocations by their synonymy because of the lack of collocations awareness, or in other words due to the bilingual

dictionaries. The latter, give the synonymy words without mentioning their contextual use in the target language. Similarly, Phoocharoensil (2013) said that students rely on synonymy strategy which aims at replacing a word with another of a similar meaning which is not always ineffective method and may cause collocational errors mainly lexical ones.

1.2.5.2.2. Repetition and Overgeneralization

Howarth (1998) stated that repetition is used by EFL learners as a strategy due to their lack of collocational knowledge and sometimes their fear of producing L2 wrong collocations. Hence, to avoid confusion and misuse of word combination, EFL learners tend to repeat a limited number of collocations with which they are familiar with (as cited in Phoocharoensil, 2010, p. 107). In addition to repetition, overgeneralization is a frequently used strategy by EFL learners which could be one of the reasons behind the deviation of collocations. Kaweera (2013) argued that, “this error can be made when the learner create one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. Once the writer learns a set of rule, he/she overuses one form in the set of and underused the other.” (p. 6). For example, learners tend to generalize the use of “commit” from the correct collocation “commit a crime” to make one expression like “commit a murder” or “commit a theft” which are both illegitimate examples of word combination as words following, “commit” all have a negative connotations.

1.2.5.3. Lack of Collocational Awareness

Another significant factor that affects EFL learners’ negative use of lexical collocations is the limitation and sometimes the lack of collocational competence. Through different studies, linguists have proven that many EFL learners have serious problems with collocational awareness. Similar to (Lewis 2000, Laufer 2005, Jiang 2009). For example, Eidian et.al (2014) carried out an experimental study where they examined the effect of

lexical collocation awareness on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. The statistical analysis shows that an experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test implying that raising collocations awareness improves students' writing proficiency. Similarly, Abdul Ridha and AL- Riyahi (2011) tested Iraqi EFL learners' written production. They found that the lexical collocation errors are mainly due to the lack of collocational awareness and the negative transfer from Arabic.

To conclude, in order to overcome learners' miss-collocations in writing, teaching collocation is necessary to enhance students' collocational competence which plays a crucial role in learners' language proficiency in general and writing in particular.

1.2.6. Materials and Resources for Teaching and Learning Lexical Collocations

Until recently, most materials for teaching collocations were found in reading comprehension programs (McCarthy et al. 1985) or grammar practice books (Kingsbury and Wellman 1985). However, Lewis (2000) believed that implementing the lexical method requires both teachers and learners to have access to teaching materials and tools. According to Lewis, collocations provide a more practical and less generic approach to language instruction syllabus design than grammar, because grammar only provides the most basic laws of language. Some of the variability not captured by the rules is accounted for by collocational patterns. They also give advice on how to use language that is grammatically valid through suggesting four suitable ways for teaching/ learning collocations process which will be analyzed as follows:

1.2.6.1. Textbooks

Despite the fact that collocations are common in oral and written registers, most English language textbooks ignore them. As Chacon et.al (2010) pointed out "text books have also been criticized for ignoring the most recent findings in applied linguistics [lexical

collocations](p. 157). She considered vocabulary to be an important component that must be taught with grammar. Collins COBUILD English Course 2 by Willis and Willis (1988), for example, is based on a lexical syllabus, allowing students to experience real English. As a result, Chomsky in his minimalist program (1995) argued that language development is primarily lexical. Despite this, most textbooks place a strong emphasis on grammar structure and single objects, overlooking the significance of lexical skills. Accordingly, teachers must select relevant devices, texts, or speech to encourage students to achieve native-like competency and to improve the way collocations are presented and taught. Because collocations can be discovered in any sort of text, the teacher's most important duty is to direct the learners' attention in such a way that they detect them. Furthermore, teachers can assist students in locating English collocations by utilizing actual language found in most collocation textbooks. They must, however, encourage children to rely heavily on dictionaries in order to obtain more collocational information.

1.2.6.2. Dictionaries

Another valuable source of data especially for more proficient learners is collocation dictionaries. Using dictionaries in the class enables developing learning strategies to further develop learners' collocational knowledge. For example, Fox (1998) revealed that "if learners have difficulty with the phrase *she made a fool of you*, they could be asked to look at the entry for fool in a good English-English dictionary" (p. 82). The entry for fool in the Collins COBUILD advanced learner's English dictionary (2003) provided the following information and examples: "If you make a fool of someone, you make them seem silly by telling people about something that they have done or by tricking them". This type of knowledge provides various advantages to students. They are given some background information on the use of expression, which should help them grasp it better, as well as the degree of restriction, which provides a learning opportunity for more advanced students. However, if learners are taught

how to properly use dictionaries, they will be better equipped to freely investigate collocation and increase their collocational knowledge outside of the classroom.

1.2.6.3. Concordances

With the advancement of computer technology, it is now possible to compile large corpora or select concordance lines, including authentic examples provided by data collections of authentic collocation patterning. Concordance is defined by Kousha and Jafarpour (2006) as “a database”. This tool helps students speak and write fluently and naturally. It is useful for raising awareness of delexical verb-noun collocations. The main advantage of computer concordances is that they provide a rich source of context. Frequent collocates raise students’ awareness and help them produce a particular word all at once (Willis, 1981).

1.2.6.4. Corpora

Corpora is a valuable tool in the hands of learners who want to know where we may find evidence of the behavior of many components of language, particularly the types of sentences they would encounter while using the language in real-life circumstances (Connor and Thomas 2004). In essence, a parallel corpus can locate equivalent sentences in source texts. It can also supply learners with critical information regarding the comparison of recurrent patterns, which is difficult to teach, but this does not negate the existence of other ways and means that teachers adopt to improve the level of education for their students such as contexts, consciousness raising, and exercises.

As a result, we have included examples of how collocation exercises might be used in this area and be utilized to have the students practice collocations through tasks that vary according on what they are learning. What students manufactured from the models provided

might assist teachers in creating their own exercises. As a result, teachers must think about their pupils' needs.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature about the present topic. The chapter comprises two sections. The first section is mainly concerned with the notion of collocation. It starts by defining the concept, listed its different approaches and highlights its significant features. Subsequently, it exposes the characteristics of collocation and its types. Then it discusses the difference between collocations and other word combinations like idioms, phrasal verbs, and colligations; and finally, it has dealt with the concept of collocational competence. The second section takes as its major concern lexical collocation and the skill of writing. It started by defining the skill of writing in general and academic writing in particular and then showing the relationship between academic writing and lexical collocation. Subsequently, it discussed the main problems faced by students while using lexical collocations and revealed the main reasons for students' mis-collocation; and finally, it highlights the materials and resources that support the learning and teaching of collocations.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

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Chapter Two:

Research Methodology and Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

The methodology section is exclusively devoted to expounding on such issues as the research paradigm, the setting, the sample of the study, data-gathering instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis. The research method used to carry out this investigation are delineated in what follows.

2.1. Research Methodology

This part deals with research methodology that contains the research paradigm, sample of the study, tool, and data collection procedures.

2.1.1. Research Paradigm

This present research work investigates the effective use of lexical collocation in essay writing. To investigate this topic, a qualitative research is used. Scholars have suggested different definitions for qualitative research. For example, Flick (2018) defined it as the understanding and formulation of textual or verbal content to create claims about the clear and ambiguous aspects. The processes of creating meaning in the content and what is represented inside it". (p. 420). According to Gonzalzs et.al (2008), "qualitative research provides an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomenon, attitudes, intentions and behaviors, and these are well served by inaturalistic enquiry" (p. 08). In contrast, quantitative inquiry data is recorded in numerical form and analyzed by statistical methods. In other words, qualitative paradigm is a successful design that exists in a natural context and allows the investigator to collect information from a high level of involvement in a specific profession. This type of investigation allows the researcher to choose content analysis as the basic tool to collect data and it is a suitable technique for gathering information about what texts contain. Hence, content analysis is the appropriate method for answering a great deal of research questions. According to Krippendorff (2004),

content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use... As a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases researchers' understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions. Content analysis is a scientific tool. (p. 19)

That is to say, the concept of inference is very essential. The researcher uses analytical constructs or rules of inference to move from the text to the answers of the research question. The two domains the texts and the context are logically independent, and the researcher draws conclusions from one independent domain (the texts) to the other (context) (White & Marsh, 2006).

2.1.2. Research Design

This part discussed the research design of this study; it covers the sample of the study and data collection instrument.

2.1.2.1. Sample of the study

It is impossible for the researchers to put the whole population to study the entire population so sampling is the best solution in order to save time. In content analysis, 20 exam papers were selected and analyzed. This sampling concerned Master one students of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. The reasons of this selection is that Master one students are more familiar with the process of writing, especially writing essays comparing to other levels, and they are supposed to have a better level in writing.

2.1.2.2. Data Gathering Instrument: Content Analysis

Content analysis is the primary instrument for collecting data for the research study. In its common sense, content analysis can be either qualitative or quantitative. Through this piece of research, analysts adopted a qualitative content analysis to assess the meaning of given patterns, words, or perceptions in a certain obtained data. There are several definitions of the term qualitative content analysis just as there are many researchers who have attempted to define the concept. Hsieh and Shanon, (2005) defined qualitative content

analysis" a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (p. 1278). According to Mayring(2000), qualitative content analysis is, " an approach of empirical ,methodological controlled analysis of texts within their contexts of communication following content analytic rules and step by step model without rash quantification"(p. 2).

That is to say, content analysis is a systematic method for analyzing data that come from both written and oral production . To put it differently, Kracauer (1952) provided a critique of quantitative analysis, asserting that it oversimplifies complex communications in order to be more reliable. On the other hand, qualitative analysis deals with intricacies of latent interpretations; Quantitative has a focus on manifest meanings. He also acknowledged an "overlap" of qualitative and quantitative content analysis (p. 322). Likewise, Dornei (2007) gave another concepts that differentiate quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The former refers to the manifest level analysis , because it is an objective and descriptive account of the surface meaning of the data, and the latter as latent level analysis because it is interpretive analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data (p . 246). Therefore , it deserves mentioning that qualitative content analysis is suitable for the present research since it helps to examine the use of lexical collocation in essay writing depending on the features mentioned above.

2.1.3. Data Collection Procedures

The recent piece of study is based on qualitative data collection and it is used to examine the use of lexical collocation in essay writing. Therefore, the analysts used exam papers of the TEFL module ; twenty copies have been randomly chosen to investigate the use of lexical collocation in the natural production of Master one students.

2.1.4. Data Analysis Procedures

As it is mentioned previously, the analysts used content analysis to collect data which is obtained from this tool and were analyzed qualitatively. Content analysis is concerned with the collection of exam papers from different groups of Master one students in order to find

out the frequency of the use of lexical collocation and to figure out if they use them correctly or not. After that, the correctness of lexical collocation was checked using Cobuild, Oxford collocation dictionary and online dictionaries, and then the researchers grouped them in a form of tables.

2.2. Analysis of the Data of Content Analysis

In order to investigate the topic at hand, 20 exam papers written by Master one students of English at Mohammad Seddik Ben Yahia University were gathered randomly and analyzed. The main aim of content analysis is to identify the frequency of lexical collocation use and examine the correct and incorrect ones in students' written production. The analysis of exam papers will be presented in form of tables. All possible lexical collocations use in the students' essays will be classified according to the seven subtypes of lexical collocation which are listed in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Frequency of Lexical Collocations Use in Students' Writings

Types of Lexical Collocations	Frequency of use	Correctness	
		Correct	incorrect
Verbe + Noun	40	19	21
Adjective + Noun	28	11	17
Noun + Verbe	10	07	03
Noun + of + Noun ²	17	15	02
Adverbe + Adjective	03	02	01
Verbe + adverbe	08	07	01
Noun + Noun	06	04	02
Total	112	65	47

The table above represents the analysis of lexical collocations uses that were identified from the students' exam papers. The table indicates that students' essays include lexical collocations with a frequency of 112 of the total number of papers. Therefore, the results revealed that Master one students use lexical collocation extensively. According to the results obtained, *verb + noun* scored 40, *adjective + noun* scored 28 and *noun + of + noun* scored 17. Indeed, the analysis demonstrates that *verb + noun*, *adjective + noun* and *noun + of + noun* were the most commonly produced by students while *noun + noun*, *noun + verb*, *adverb + adjective* and *verb + adverb* scored a frequency of 6, 10, 03, 08 which means that these patterns appear to be the least commonly used. Moreover, students' use of lexical collocations was grouped into correct and incorrect ones. The table above exhibits that there are 69 correct collocation and 47 incorrect lexical collocations. With regard to students' use of incorrect lexical collocations, *verb + noun* and *adjective + noun* are the top types in which students made mistakes.

2.3. Data Discussion

The third part of this chapter is mainly devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the results yielded by content analysis. The findings will be discussed in relation to the following research questions that have been posed in the introduction.

1. To what extent do EFL learners use lexical collocations in their writing?
2. Which types of lexical collocations are problematic for students?
3. To what extent do EFL students use lexical collocations correctly?

2.3.1. The Frequency of Lexical Collocations Use in Students' Essays

The first research question of the study is about finding the extent to which Master one students are able to produce lexical collocation as they are writing in the language. To this end, the frequency of lexical collocations occurrence in the students' corpus had been

examined with reference to the Oxford Collocation Dictionary (OCD), Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (CCED) and other online dictionaries. Table 2 illustrates the frequency of the use of lexical collocations written in the corpus.

As it is shown in the table 1, the frequencies of the *verb-noun* is 40 followed by *adjective-noun* with 28 collocations were the most used among different categories of collocations while *noun + noun*, *verb + adverb*, *adverb + adjective*, *noun + of + noun* 2 and *noun + verb* were less encountered with a frequency of 6, 8, 3, 17, and 10 respectively. This was probably because "verb + noun", "adjective + noun", are the two basic and required components of an English sentence whereas "adverb + adjective", "adverb + verb", "noun + noun" contribution are not. The finding is consistent with Siengsanoh's (2021) study. His study examined lexical collocation *used* by Thai EFL students in their writing with the aim of showing the proportion of lexical collocations types. The results showed that that verb + noun adjective + noun were the most frequently produced by learners. Some examples of lexical collocations written by Master one students include "enthusiastic endeavor", "deal the situation", "effort culminate" "chain of answers" "work collaboratively", and "largely intuitive". Besides, this finding may be interpreted by referring to Chang (2018) study that showed adjective + noun and verb + noun patterns were the most commonly produced by Korean learners occupying almost three-fourth of the total lexical collocation together. Moreover, this finding is analogous to that of Wu et.al (2010) reporting the highest frequency in verb + noun, adjective + noun collocation in L2 students' writing essays. The results of this study concurs with the research findings of Hsu (2007) that revealed that EFL students' produced high frequency of verb + noun, adjective + noun and a low number of noun + verb, noun of noun 2, adverb + adjective, verb + adverb, noun + noun.

2.3.2. Types of Problematic Lexical Collocations

This section addresses the second research question about the types of lexical collocations which are problematic for students leading to the deviant use of lexical collocations so as to specify the difficulties of Master one students' use of lexical collocation in L2 writing. To explore the nature of learners' inappropriate use of lexical collocations in their writing, the analyses of students' papers has shown that *verb + noun* and *adjective + noun* are the most problematic constituents for students' use of lexical collocations. That is to say, dominant production of *adjective -noun* and *verb-noun* can be confirmed, justifying the exclusive scholarly interest in these two types of collocation in collocation research. Additionally, it was found that the majority of students encounter a great deal of *difficulties in the use of verb-noun and adjective-noun* combination due to the lack of collocational knowledge and the arbitrariness of collocation.

- **Verb + Noun**

The examination of students' written papers reveals that the misuse of verb + noun pattern is a very common error. It was repeated 21 times in the exam writing compositions, and it is the most frequent incorrect category in the students' exam copies. This indicates that the EFL learners encounter many problems when it comes to choosing which verb co-occurs with noun. Nimb(1996) showed some of the verb + noun collocations that non-native speakers could semantically predict. For instance, if the noun is just a typical object of the verb for semantic reasons like *to build a house, to cure a disease* (p. 267). The following examples which are the incorrect verb -noun collocations have been written by Master one students within this pattern: some students wrote " feel culture "instead of "experience culture"; "treat the situation " instead of " deal the situation"; "apply the language " instead of " acquire the language"; " make the

curriculum " instead of " design the curriculum " ; and " establish work" instead of "establish frame work / organization".

Additionally, the deviant collocations used by students in verb-noun collocation were related to "de lexical verb". According to Unver (2018), "de lexicalized verbs such as do , make , get , keep, made, take, have and give are crucial in determining the meaning and the use of collocation because these verbs have little or no meaning outside of their context of particular meaning" (p. 117). Examples of these errors are "make effect"instead of "have effect"; " get knowledge" instead of "acquire knowledge" and " make a balance " instead of "achieve a balance ".

• **Adjective + Noun**

Adjective + noun is the second most erroneous category identified in the corpus with **17** incorrect patterns. This is a considerable number that implies that the learners encounter problems when it comes to putting these two items together to form a meaningful collocation.

The incorrect adjective – noun collocation could be further classified into two types based upon Ducali's (2018) study as follows :

1 - Wrong choice of adjective where the students opted for using the wrong adjective (adjective cannot be used to modify the head nouns). Examples of these errors are "grand improvement "instead of" significant improvement", "modern method"instead of " recent method".

2- Instances of using the wrong adjectives were errors linked to using the wrong register. In all these instances, the students opted for using adjectives to modify the collocating nouns which are acceptable to use in spoken language rather than in academic written English. For example , “old method” instead of “previous method”, “ancient period” instead of “traditional

period”, “ inusefull grammar” instead of “impractical / useless grammar “, “big popularity” instead of “wide popularity“.

This finding indicates that the learner had trouble choosing appropriate combination of adjective+ noun and verb + noun, which significantly contribute to their inappropriate use of lexical collocations in L2 writing. In addition, these results confirm what other studies found such as Laufer and Waldman (2011), Hong et.al (2011), Wang and Shaw (2008), Kim and Chon (2017). One possible reason to explain the above mentioned finding is that students might have learned and acquired the vocabulary of the language individually ; this always happens among English language learners as asserted by Shooshtari (2013) who said“ learners usually learn L2 words in single format without attending to ways through which words group together”(P. 772). That is to say, when learners acquire words individually, they still struggle to combine them properly.

2.3.3. Students’ Correct and Incorrect Use of Lexical Collocations in Their Writings

After finishing the process of analyzing all the twenty copies of the students’ essays, it was found that there were **69**correct and **47** incorrect lexical collocations. Looking at the results of lexical collocations use, it could be seen that the frequency of correct collocations were greater than incorrect ones. Indeed, there was a significant difference between the correct and incorrect lexical collocations.

It has been revealed that the interference of L1 is the primary reason behind students’ incorrect collocation. Through the finding of content analysis, a considerable number of erroneous lexical collocations have been found such as "new methods are very necessary to *gaingood education*which in Arabic signifies"المناهج الجديدة ضرورية لكسب العلم"insteadof saying "new methods are very necessary to receive/provide good education". Another student wrote ‘‘ give attention to grammar’’ which signifies in Arabic "اعطاء قيمة للقواعد"instead of saying

"pay attention to grammar". Also, one student wrote "the method has a big role" instead of saying "the method has a major /huge role" as shown in the literature. The findings of this study are in line with Farghal and Obiedat (1995), Phoocharonsil (2013), and Abdul Ridha and ALRiyahi (2011). Taken together, it can be said that students rely on L1 knowledge to write in the target language due to the lack of collocation knowledge. Additionally, students' deficiencies in writing relate to the lack of collocation knowledge and competence. As it was found in content analysis, a large number of students appeared to have a limited knowledge of collocations. A student wrote "bring the language" instead of saying "acquire the language"; another said "easy method" in place of "accurate method". Another student wrote "quiet and easy method" as a substitute to "practicable method". As it has been revealed in the literature review, students' lack of collocational competence leads them to fail in combining appropriate chunks. Previous studies such as Al dakhs (2015), Idian et al, (2013) and Laufer (2005) showed that the lack of collocational knowledge and competence leads to erroneous collocations.

In contrast, another main finding of the study was that the frequency of correct lexical collocations 65 outnumbers the frequency of incorrect lexical collocations 47. It seems that students have knowledge of lexical collocations and were able to produce correct collocations. Also, the study has provided some valuable evidence that learners have the ability to produce various and precise lexical collocations. For example, significant *echo*, *erroneous assumption*, *based mainly*, *largely intuitive*, and *time of progress*. In other words, it appeared that Master one students resort to use variety of lexical collocations that are more accurate and clear such as, *adopt new method*, *enthusiastic endeavor*, *process of industrialization*, and *depend mainly*. Moreover, the learners found it easier to produce some types of lexical collocations in appropriate way with less deviant form. For example, *noun of noun 2* produced exclusively with the frequency of 17 and two deviant forms. This finding supported the results of the

research done by Chang (2018) that showed that Korean learners found it easier to retain the noun -noun combinations as a whole chunk when encountering them in reading, perceiving that the both constituents are equally important in representing the meaning. Also, as it shown in table 1 the students had the ability to use correct *verb+ adverb* pattern with the frequency 8 and one deviant form. In fact, Master one students to a large extent used correct collocations but, in some cases they did not have a leading and decisive role in creating correct collocations. This finding may be interpreted by referring to the results obtained by Highuchi (1999) which demonstrate many Japanese EFL learners dislike inmaking errors in their production; consequently, they always write simple combinations in order to avoid making errors.

2.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we make the following recommendations:

- Assuming difficulty of collocations production, learners should be exposed to as much collocation input as possible. They need more practice to produce appropriate collocation.
- Teachers have to incorporate collocations in their syllabi. They should raise students' consciousness about the importance of collocations.
- Students must take a diagnostic test to measure their collocational knowledge at the beginning of the course in order to assess students' needs.
- Teachers should guide their students to recognize the effectiveness of using collocations in the language production.
- Feedback on collocational errors is crucial because it will enhance learners' collocational competenc.
- Activities and exercises that raise students' collocational knowledge are required

- Authentic materials are very useful in teaching collocation.

2.5. Limitations of the Study

When conducting this study, the researchers faced a number of limitations which are stated as follow:

- One of the limitations that the researchers confronted during this study is that online sources and electronic books concerning "lexical collocation and writing" were hardly found because the electronic books are not available for free.
- The researchers attempted to add an instrument to enrich the data. But, the suggestion was refused because of the short period of time.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the practical part of the study and investigated the effectiveness of using lexical collocation in essay writing. After analyzing and interpreting the data obtained from qualitative content analysis. The researchers found out that Master one students used a variety of lexical collocations in writing. According to these findings, the most common types of lexical collocations used by students are *verb-noun* and *adjective-noun* patterns. Similarly, the findings of this study revealed that Master one students face problems in using some types of lexical collocations which are *verb-noun* and *adjectivenoun* and these can be attributed to the interference of the mother tongue and the lack of collocational knowledge and competence. Additionally, students' performance of using lexical collocations was to a large extent acceptable, but some students performed better than others. Therefore, this fact revealed that Master 1 students do not share the same capacity though they belong to the same level.

General Conclusion

One of the most important aspects of learning a language is learning the vocabulary of that language and its appropriate use. Vocabulary learning lies at the center of language learning. In fact, vocabulary is considered to be the most significant and the most difficult language component for learners to acquire successfully. Therefore, great attention should be paid to the issues related to vocabulary awareness and the significance of using multi-words phrases or chunks including collocation. Because of the crucial role of lexical collocation in vocabulary acquisition, the researchers set out to investigate the effectiveness of using lexical collocation in essay writing of Master 1 students.

The present work comprises two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of the related literature; it comprises two sections. The first section discusses the notion of collocation, and then the second section reviewed lexical collocation and writing. The second chapter; on the other hand, is devoted to the field of investigation; it consisted of three sections. The first section described the research methodology used to carry out this study. Subsequently, the second section presented and analyzed the results obtained by means of qualitative content analysis. The third section was about the interpretation and discussion of the results obtained by qualitative content analysis. Ultimately, some recommendations were suggested and some limitations of the study were stated.

From the research results, it can be said that Master one students used lexical collocation in writing to a large extent, especially *adjective + noun* and *verb + noun* patterns. Also, the students use of lexical collocations were judged acceptable through the use of CCED and OCD dictionaries. It indicated that learners' ability of using lexical collocations were acceptable. Nevertheless, students' inappropriate use of lexical collocation was related to the students' first language interference and the shortage of collocational competence

which lead learners to commit errors because they do not know how to combine and choose words that fit with each other.

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Appendices

Appendix A

All possible lexical collocations use in the students essays will be classified according to the seven subtypes of lexical collocation which are listed in table below.

The seven Types of Lexical Collocation as suggested By Benson et al., (1986)

Patterns	Examples
Verb + Noun	Make an Impression
Adjective + Noun	Formidable challenge

Noun + verbe	Bombexplodes
Noun + of + noun2	A peak of wolves
Adverb + adjective	Strictlyaccurate
Verb + adverb	Apprecitesincerely
Noun+ noun	Companyuniform

Appendix B

TEFL Exam Question

Answer the following question in a form of an essay

Explain the consequences of equating foreign language teaching with first language acquisition during the second half of the 19 century and the beginning of the twenty century on foreign language teaching methodology, providing examples of specific methods featuring this new trend in applied linguistics.

Appendix C

Some examples of the students' production of correct and incorrect lexical collocations

Types of lexical collocation	Correct Types	Incorrect types
Verb + noun		
Learn knowledge		✓
Apply the language		✓
Do a role		✓
Feel culture		✓
Bring the acquisition		✓
Mark an attempt	✓	
Keep interest	✓	
Mark an echo		✓
Give attention		✓
Repeat action		✓
Enact action	✓	
Reach a goal		✓
Treat the situation		✓
Do a great effort		✓
Make the curriculum		✓
Pave the way establish methods		✓
Make conferences		✓
Establish work	✓	
Achieve an impact	✓	
Create a journal		✓

Overcome the shortcomings	✓	
Fill the gaps		✓
Acquire more time	✓	
Enacts the events		✓
Gain education		✓
Give attention		✓
Bring the language	✓	
Adopt method	✓	
loose the importance		
Adjective + noun		
Amateurish method		✓
Big popularity		✓
Certain offs		✓
Unuseful grammar		✓
Erroneous grammar	✓	
Good effect		✓
Modern knowledge		✓
Distinguished linguist	✓	
Excessive use	✓	
Total neglect		✓
Noticeable touch		✓
Ancient period	✓	
Old method		
Constant changes		✓
Quite method		✓

Important stuff	✓	
Significant echo	✓	✓
Tremendous endeavor		✓
Sufficient method		
Grand improvement	✓	
Enthusiastic endeavor		
Noun verb		
Years went		✓
Effort culminate	✓	
Method successes		✓
Methodcall off		✓
New languages enter		✓
Schools blossom		✓
Noun of noun2		
Time of progress	✓	
Flow of amateurish		✓
Chain of question	✓	
Chain of answers	✓	
Lack of collaboration	✓	
String of sounds	✓	
Time of progress	✓	
Methods of acquisition	✓	
Process of industrialization	✓	
Lack of resources		

Adverb + adjective Vastly different Largely intuitive Very used Eventually happened Very careful	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓ ✓
Verb + adverb Radically reform Work collaboratively Work collectively Understand easily Depend mainly Based mainly Contribute successfully Contribute significantly	 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
Noun + noun Oral practices Linguist principles Series method Reform movement		

Résumé

Les apprenants de langue étrangère anglaise (EFL) doivent posséder des compétences de collocation suffisantes pour atteindre un niveau élevé de compétence en écriture. Remarquablement, il est prouvé que les apprenants EFL font face à une variété de problèmes qui rendent leur écriture incompétente. Les travaux de recherche actuels visent à étudier l'utilisation de la collocation lexicale dans la rédaction académique des étudiants de Master one à l'université de Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia; plus précisément, il tente de déterminer à la fois la fréquence et l'exactitude de l'utilisation de la collocation par les élèves. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les chercheurs ont utilisé l'analyse de contenu pour collecter des données, c'est-à-dire l'analyse de 20 copies d'examen Master 1. Les résultats ont montré que les élèves utilisent la collocation lexicale dans une large mesure. En outre, il a été constaté que les étudiants ont tendance à utiliser la collocation verbe + nom et adjectif + nom plus que les autres types. En ce qui concerne les erreurs de collocation, il est à noter que l'adjectif + nom et le verbe + nom sont les plus problématiques. De plus, il a été révélé que le manque de connaissances en collocation et l'interférence de la langue maternelle des étudiants sont les principales raisons de la mauvaise écriture des étudiants. Par conséquent, la présente étude suggère la nécessité d'un enseignement explicite et systématique de cet aspect linguistique de la langue anglaise.

Mots clés : Collocation Compétence, Collocation Lexical, Compétence D'écriture, L'anglais comme langue étrangère,

الملخص

يحتاج متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية الاجنبية الى امتلاك الكفاءة الكافية اللازمة لتحقيق مستوى عالي من الكفاءة في الكتابة ومن الملفت للنظر إنه ثبت ان متعلمي اللغة انجليزية كلغة اجنبية يواجهون مجموعة متنوعة من مشاكل التي تجعل كتاباتهم غير بارعة. يهدف العمل البحثي الى التحقيق في استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية في الكتابة الاكاديمية لطلاب السنة الأولى ماستر في جامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. وبشكل اكثر تحديداً, فانه يحاول تحديد كل من تواتر وصحة استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية عند الطلاب. للوصول الى هذا الهدف, استخدم الباحثون تحليل محتوى لجمع البيانات, أي تحليل عشرون نسخة من امتحان ماستر واحد. وضحت النتائج ان الطلاب يستخدمون المتلازمات اللفظية الى حد كبير. بالإضافة الى ذلك, وجد ان الطلاب لديهم ميل لاستخدام المتلازمات اللفظية وهما الاسم + الصفة و الفعل + الاسم, اكثر من الانواع الخرى. فيما يتعلق بالخطاء متلازمات اللفظية, يلاحظ ان الصفة + الاسم و الفعل + السم هما الكثر اشكالية. علاوة على ذلك تم الكشف على ان نقص الكفاءة في توظيف المتلازمات اللفظية واعتمادهم على اللغة الام هما السببان الرئيسيان وراء استعمال المتلازمات اللفظية في الكتابة. وبالتالي تشير الدراسة الحالية الى الحاجة الى تدريس صحيح ومنهجي لهذا الجانب اللغوي من اللغة الانجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة في توظيف المتلازمات اللفظية, المتلازمات اللفظية, انجليزية كلغة ثانية, براعة كتابة