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**The Effect of Lexical Collocation Awareness-Raising
on
EFL Students' Oral Proficiency
Case study: First Year LMD Students, Department of
English, University of Guelma**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the
Degree of Magister in Science Du Langage**

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DEDICATION

With a deep affection, I am grateful to my family, my source of success and happiness.

I do offer my modest work to my dear family, precisely to my father, the source of the wisdom and the principal of my life, the candle that enlighten my darkness. Because of his continual guidance and advices, I preserve the same trend of success from the primary school until now.

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Abstract

The present research aims at investigating the use of English lexical collocations and their relation to oral proficiency of first year EFL students. Since collocational competence is an essential requirement for the overall mastery of English, students should be trained to notice which words co-occur together in order to speak a foreign language the way its native speakers do. Thus, we hypothesize that lexical collocation awareness-raising makes first year students of English sound natural and proficient. Data for the study were collected from 50 first year students at the department of English, university of Guelma. This empirical study was carried out during the academic year 2010 -2011.

The study sample was composed of two groups: an experimental group which was made aware of lexical collocations and a control group which was not trained at all. Firstly, two questionnaires were administered to both students and teachers. The results obtained reveal that most students as well as most teachers were not familiar with the concept of collocations. In addition, students mismatched English words and their miscollocations were caused by different factors, mainly lack of collocational knowledge and mother tongue interference. To confirm that students had limited knowledge of lexical collocations, we relied on a collocation test. Then, we administered a pre-oral test and a post-oral test. The former intended to determine students' use of lexical collocations, whereas the latter aimed at finding out the impact of collocation awareness-raising implemented during treatment on the subjects' ability to speak proficiently. To determine the nature of relationship between lexical collocation use and oral proficiency, the correlation coefficient (r) is calculated. It reveals a significant positive correlation between the study variables. In addition, the results obtained in the pretest and post test were analyzed and compared. The latter showed an improvement in oral proficiency and collocational knowledge in favour of the experimental group participants. Conclusions drawn from this work led to submit suggestions to help EFL teachers strengthen the collocational knowledge of their students, especially providing diverse collocation awareness-raising activities and strategies to improve students' oral proficiency.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

L3: Third / Foreign Language

PPP: Presentation, Practice, Production

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Vs.: versus

e.g : example

%: Percentage

*** :** unacceptable lexical collocation

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Foreign Language teachers often claim that their primary role is to teach grammar, and that vocabulary will somehow be learned subconsciously. EFL students thus depend on a set of grammar rules and a separate store of isolated words. However, while students attempt to produce the target language orally, they may notice that they do not know how to say precisely the meaning they wish to convey because they do not know how words are normally combined by native speakers. Thus, they heavily rely on paraphrasing their native language equivalents into English. In order to help students overcome such obstacle, students need to be trained to know how English words are used together. Interestingly, students have to notice and know how to use most common lexical collocations to enhance the development of their oral proficiency because EFL students in Algeria are currently required to be proficient speakers of English as future teachers of English. Nevertheless, acquiring oral proficiency has been a challenge for most EFL students. Therefore, collocational knowledge could be a key element in enhancing EFL students' oral proficiency. However, most collocation studies investigate only the students' written production in relation to translation. In addition, the available studies on collocations were set in a foreign environment to assess students' writing abilities and only few had looked at students' speaking performance. Hence, the present study examines whether or not making first year Algerian students of English aware of lexical collocations improves their oral proficiency.

As a teacher of English at the University of Guelma, we have noticed that collocations, in spite of their importance, do not receive much attention from teachers in the classroom. Also, students make errors whenever they encounter word combinations and more precisely have difficulties with collocations which are most commonly neglected. In this context, the focus is restricted to drills or repetition of individual words. Since most EFL classrooms have

fewer opportunities to notice collocations in their daily input, it is emphasized that students commonly resort to their first language (L1) whenever they lack English collocational knowledge. Consequently, students graduate with a very low ability to orally communicate or express themselves effectively in English. Accordingly, in this study, most of the importance is put upon oral proficiency since collocational knowledge is an essential part in speech to sound natural. The problem of the study can be stated in the following main question: Would making first-year LMD students, at the University of Guelma, aware of lexical collocations help them improve their oral proficiency?

2. Aim of the study:

This research aims at highlighting the importance of collocations among first year students of English; that is, drawing the students' attention to the way words are naturally combined in order to incorporate them into language curriculum as part of developing collocational competence. Such study will investigate the relationship between the students' collocational knowledge and their oral proficiency. We would attempt to discuss the effects of lexical collocation awareness-raising as a vocabulary strategy on the students' oral proficiency.

3. Hypothesis

This study is related to the nature of the relationship between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency levels. In conducting the present study, we hypothesize that raising first-year EFL students' awareness towards lexical collocations would improve their oral proficiency.

4. Means of Research

In order to test the hypothesis stated above, we intend to go through a mixed method. We carry out two questionnaires. While one will be given to first year LMD students of

English at Guelma University, the other will be addressed to their teachers. Another instrument designed and used to collect the data of this study is a collocational test. The whole sample is orally pretested and divided into an experimental group and a control group. In addition to that, we conduct an experiment to make the group under investigation aware of the importance of lexical collocations. Finally, all the participants will take a post-oral test. The posttest is intended to reveal the effect of lexical collocation awareness-raising on EFL students' oral proficiency.

4.1. Choice of Method

In our research, which investigates the effect of collocation awareness-raising on EFL students' oral proficiency, we opted for a mixed method. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. Lexical collocations have been analyzed from a qualitative perspective while their frequency and accuracy have been calculated quantitatively because the aim of this study is to examine and describe the effect of awareness-raising of lexical collocations on EFL students' oral proficiency. Also, we use the descriptive statistical method to analyse the two questionnaires. The choice of such a method is based on the nature of the concept investigated which is lexical collocation awareness-raising, and on our research main question: Does lexical collocation awareness-raising improve students' oral proficiency? because the experimental research is used to answer causal research questions as such. Accordingly, Ary. D; Jacobs, L; and Sorensen, C state that: "Experimental research involves a study of the effect of the systematic manipulation of one variable (s) on another variable" (Ary et al, 2010:26). Thus, our study involved a control group and experimental group.

Lexical collocations as a concept, although it is important and has significant role in achieving higher levels of proficiency, has been neglected. Hence, we have realized that the appropriate tool to gather data about both students' and teachers' collocational knowledge, and about collocation awareness-raising to improve students' oral proficiency, is by

questioning students as well as teachers about this issue . Students themselves, through their responses, help us to answer the research questions, investigate their knowledge and use of lexical collocations, and to collect data about their proficiency level. Teachers are more concerned with consciousness-raising of lexical collocations than their students to urge them dealing with such concept in their classes. It is by questioning teachers to know whether or not are aware of the importance of lexical collocations, and to collect data about their ways of improving students' oral proficiency.

In addition to the questionnaires, we relied on another research tool which is a collocational test to investigate students' collocational knowledge. Relying on questionnaire only would not allow us to understand what is going on students' minds; maybe they subconsciously know how words are combined without knowing that such combinations are labeled collocations. We prepared five collocation exercises extracted from O'Dell and McCarthy textbook (2008). Thus, before the experiment, the control and the experimental groups answered a collocational test made up of five exercises (matching words, sentence completion, correcting wrong collocations, collocation multiple choice, and multiple choice exercise based on distinction between near synonyms). That test would investigate respectively their collocational knowledge and whether there were differences between the two groups under study on the basis of knowledge and mastery of lexical collocations.

At the beginning of the experiment, both groups sat for a pre-oral test. Then, both the control and the experimental groups went through a series of lessons and used the same listening texts. However, the control group was exposed to learning new vocabulary through answering listening comprehension questions and doing varied tasks and activities; while the experimental group was introduced to lexical collocation. The researcher herself experimented with the explicit teaching of collocations in an effort to raise participants'

consciousness-raising of lexical collocations. After the treatment, participants of both groups took a post-oral test that is similar to the pre-oral test.

Consequently, the mixed method is the appropriate method to investigate lexical collocation consciousness-raising of first year EFL students and its impact on their oral proficiency levels.

5. Significance of the Study

The study examines Algerian EFL students' knowledge of lexical collocations and further explores the relationship between lexical collocations and students' oral proficiency. Since no study has been conducted to report such performance and the relationship between lexical collocations and oral proficiency, this study contributes directly to teachers' as well as students' understanding of the nature of lexical collocations in relation to oral proficiency.

6. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Throughout the literature review, we have presented the subtle details of the concept of collocations, discussing its origin, nature, and development until the learner tends to develop collocational competence. In this respect, two first chapters are set for the reviewing of literature related to the topic. The third chapter is devoted for the description and analysis of questionnaires. The fourth chapter deals with the description of the experiment and the analysis of pre-testing and post-testing results. The fifth chapter discusses the different pedagogical implications we draw out.

The first chapter introduces the topic of lexical collocations, providing different approaches to define collocations. It also sheds light on the different types and classifications of collocations. Then, it provides discussion of the main role lexical collocations play in EFL classes. Finally, it ends with a distinction between language knowledge and collocational knowledge, and collocational competence and communicative competence.

The second chapter continues its pursuit of the way the collocational behavior of words takes throughout awareness-raising of lexical collocations to master collocational knowledge and consequently to improve oral proficiency. This Chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the description of how oral proficiency proceeds through the two oral skills processes in relation to awareness-raising of lexical collocations. Emphasis in the second section, however, is placed on directing students' attention towards lexical collocations. Sources of collocations teaching along with a number of activities and strategies to overcome miscollocations are suggested. Autonomous learning is also stressed.

The third chapter describes and analyses research questionnaire. First, we analyse first year students' questionnaire, then we proceed to teachers' questionnaire. Data obtained from the two questionnaires are fully discussed.

The fourth chapter includes the experimental field investigation. It aims at investigating the nature of the relationship between lexical collocations use and oral proficiency and examines the effect of awareness-raising of lexical collocations on students' oral proficiency. This chapter deals only with the collection and analysis of data. In this chapter, we present the research variables, the population, sample of the study, materials and scoring. The different phases of the treatment are also described starting with the pretest, moving to the treatment in which experimental group participants' attention has been directed towards lexical collocations, and ending up with the posttest. Finally, it deals with the analysis of data to determine the relationship between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency and to examine the effect of the training on the experimental group subjects. The results are discussed and interpreted.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the discussion of the conclusions and findings that could be drawn from this work, recommending pedagogical implications. We also provide some suggestions for future research.

Chapter One

Reviewing and Understanding

Lexical Collocations

Importance

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Introduction

In an attempt to clarify the ambiguity and the vagueness concerning collocations and to stress their importance, researchers have investigated different aspects of collocations. Accordingly, in this chapter, we try to clarify the notion of collocation through a short review of its origin, and its development. To understand the phenomenon, we present the nature of collocation and the most common definitions of it. Then, a brief discussion of the three main approaches that guided the study of collocation is dealt. We also present the two significant approaches to define collocation: the statistically-oriented approach and the phraseological approach, with reference to collocation principles and criteria. In addition, we present collocation types. Also, an emphasis on lexical collocations is put through the precise definition and patterns of lexical collocations which are the main concern of the present study. We point out the position of collocation among other phraseological concepts: idioms, free combinations, phrasal verbs, compounds, colligation and prosody. Finally, we clarify the importance of collocation in vocabulary and language teaching as well as its importance among EFL learners, without forgetting the problems that learners face in acquiring collocational knowledge. Then, a newly-introduced expression that of collocational competence, as opposed to communicative competence, is presented.

1.9.Collocation's Origin and its Development

The origin of the term collocation is the Latin verb collocare, which means to set in order/ to arrange (Yvonne Müller, 2008:1).

The notion of collocation has been familiar since the pioneering work of Palmer (1938) who was the first to introduce the term collocation in his dictionary, 'A Grammar of English Words'. However, Firth (1957) advanced the word collocation as a technical term so that meaning by collocation became established as one of his 'modes of meaning' when he

said: “I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation, and apply the test of collocability” (Firth, 1957:194).

Later, Firth (1957:196) used the example of *dark night* as an adjective + noun collocation and asserted that one of the meanings of night is its collocability with dark, and one of the meanings of dark is its collocability with night. In other words, he thought that collocates of a word help us understand its meaning. He considered the word that needs clarification, here night, the node word and the words that could be combined with it collocates.

Lyons (1966) seemed critical of Firth's argument that a ‘word's collocations are of its meaning’. Based on a distributional theory of meaning, an alternative view posits that the meaning of collocation cannot be understood from all the components of the expression within which the collocation appears, and that part of the meaning of one word in the collocation does not depend on its collocability, association with the other word(s). However, he later explained that:

There is frequency so high a degree of interdependence between lexemes which tend to occur in texts in collocation with one another that their potentiality for collocation is reasonably described as being part of their meaning.

(qtd. in Lyons, 1977:613)

This means that Lyons later rejected his opposite view and accepted Firth's theory of meaning.

Firth's statistical approach to collocation is accepted by many corpus linguists including, for example, Halliday (1966), Greenbaum (1974), Wong Fillmore (1976), Nattinger (1980), Sinclair (1991), Hoey (1991), Stubbs (1995), Partington (1998), Mc Enery and Wilson (2001), and Hunston (2002). All of these linguists, known as Neo-Firthians, follow Firth in that they argue that collocation refers to the characteristic co-occurrence of

patterns of words. For instance, Halliday (1966:148) considered lexis as complimentary to, but not part of, grammatical theory. He introduced the notion of 'set' as an extra dimension of the collocability of words. A set, as he defined it, is “the grouping of members with like privilege of occurrence in collocation” (153).

Sinclair (1966:411) stated that language patterns are treated, in grammar, as if they could be described by a system of choices. However, according to Sinclair himself, the key issue is the tendencies of lexical items to collocate with one another. These tendencies “ought to tell us facts about language that cannot be got by grammatical analysis”. He then mentioned that the contract between lexical items is more flexible than that of grammatical classes because “there are virtually no impossible collocations, but some are much more likely than others”(qtd. in Gitsaki:1999:6).

In order to clarify the structure of a collocation, Sinclair distinguished between three items: *node*, *span* and *collocate*. A *node* is an item whose total pattern of co-occurrence with other words is under examination, and a *collocate* is defined as any one of the items which appears with the node within the specified span, whereas a *span* is the amount of text within which collocation between items is said to occur, disregarding the grammatical structures of which they form a part. For example, if we want to study the collocational patterns of the word accident, then accident is the 'node'. If we decide to have a 'span' of four, it means that we study the four lexical items that occur before and the four lexical items that occur after the word accident. All the lexical items that are within the 'span' of the word accident are considered to be its 'collocates'.

Michael Hoey(2004) pointed out that not only the lexical but also the grammatical and textual organization of sentences and texts rely on the very principle of expectancy or predictability, underlying the Firthian idea of collocation. Moreover, the central notion of

Hoey's Lexical Priming Theory is that of priming. Known as a basic psychological effect exploited by psycholinguists in so-called priming tasks, priming is understood as the property of pre-fabricated expressions to provoke in the minds of language users a particular target word or construction or textual organization. As proposed by Hoey, collocation is just the prime example of the more general principle of priming in language. Hoey explains that lexical items are not only primed for occurrence with other individual words, but also with semantically similar sets of words and certain pragmatic functions or moves, with grammatical constructions, as well as with textual structure. Briefly, according to Hoey, collocation, besides a statistical fact, is also a psycholinguistic reality. Thus, collocation can be seen as a general term covering all syntagmatic relations. We conclude that each lexical item is primed for particular collocational use, for instance, *today* is primed to occur in newspaper texts (Hoey, 2005:1-16).

Yet, not all linguists would agree with Hoey. Herbest, for instance, argues against the statistical approach to collocation, asserting that in Berry Rogghe's 72.000 – Word Corpus, the most frequent collocates of a word such as *house* include the determiners *the* and *this* and the verb *sell*, this is neither particularly surprising nor particularly interesting, Herbest (1996) insists on the fact that grammatical words sit on the top of a frequency list, and that this issue does not devalue the worth of collocation, referring to such combinations as colligations (see section 1.11.2).

Nevertheless, many linguists tried to limit the scope of collocation definition in order to understand well such linguistic phenomenon. Next, we point out this controversial view in details.

1.10. Definition of Collocation

To define the concept of collocation, many researchers come out with varied definitions, and studies have been insufficient to provide one single definition. Thus, many linguists who work on collocations cover different notions.

First of all, John Rupert Firth introduces the term collocation into linguistic theory as part of his theory of meaning. He (1957:196) mentions that meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to the meaning of words. One of the meanings of a word is its collocability with another word (dark night). According to Firth (1957:181), Collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or “customary places” of that word order but not in other contextual order and emphatically not in any grammatical order. Moreover, the collocation of a word or a ‘piece’ is not to be regarded “mere juxtaposition, it is an order of mutual expectancy”. Then, Sinclair (1970) defines it as:

The occurrence of two items in a context within a specified environment. Significant collocation is a regular collocation between two items, such that they co-occur more often than their respective frequencies.

(qtd. in Hori, 2004:05)

Sinclair just makes a distinction between the constituents of a collocation, with no remarks on the dependency between the items. In 1966, he defined collocation as the co-occurrence of two items, then, in 1970 he defined it through his distinction between casual and significant collocations. In this respect, an important feature in Sinclair’s theory is that he distinguishes between casual and significant collocations. Unlike casual collocation, a significant collocation is a collocation that occurs more frequently than would be expected on the basis of the individual items.

Halliday (1976) gives a definition of collocation under the framework of lexis and suggests that collocation is the syntagmatic relation of linear co-occurrence among lexical items which co-occur together with some measures of significant proximity, either with a scale or at least by a cut-off point. Halliday's definition was adopted by Sinclair (1991) in his book: *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*.

Greenbaum (1974) argues that collocation study should not only be based on Halliday's item-oriented approach but also on an integrated approach which integrates both local syntactic structures and sentence patterns. Mitchell (1975) further proposes to integrate grammatical generalizations, meanings, and grammatical functions. Also, Cowie (1978) defines it as a co-occurrence of two or more lexical items as realizations of structural elements within a given syntactic pattern (Yvonne Müller, 2008:24).

Kjellmer (1984), as quoted in Kam-Fai Wong, Wenjie Li and Ruifeng Xu (2009:96), defines collocations as lexically determined and grammatically restricted sequences of words. According to Kjellmer, only the co-occurred words that have both co-occurrence significance and well-formed grammar are regarded as collocations.

Benson (2009: XIX) defines collocations as recurrent, fixed, identifiable non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Benson categorizes them on the basis of grammatical and lexical collocations (see section 1.8.1).

Moreover, collocation is defined as "how words typically occur with one another" by Carter and McCarthy (1988:32) also as "a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language" (Carter, 1992:51) and as "the ways in which words regularly occur near each other" (Diegnan et al 1998:35).

Alan Partington (1998:16) cited that Hoey (1991) defines collocation as follows:
“Collocation has long been the name given to the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its context”.

Watson. D (1997: 7) provides the following definition: “Collocation is the placing together ... of words which are often associated with each other, so that they form common patterns or combinations”

Some researchers like Gitsaki (1999) emphasize the habitual and recurrent use of collocations. Gitsaki as well as Manning and Schutze (1999) state that: “A collocation is an expression consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things” (qtd. in Wong et al, 2009:97). Along the same lines, Sabine Bartsch (2004:76) defines collocation as: “Lexically and/or pragmatically constrained recurrent co-occurrences of at least two lexical items which are in a direct syntactic relation with each other”. The definitions provided by Manning and Bartsch emphasize the condition that collocations are syntactically well-formed constructions.

S. Thornbury (2002:07) mentions that words couple up to form compounds and to shape multi-word units. However, there is a looser kind of association called collocation. according to him collocation can be defined as:

two words are collocates if they occur together with more than chance frequency, such that, when we see, we can make a fairly safe bet that the other is in the neighborhood ... collocation is not as frozen a relationship as that of compounds or multi-word units.

Collocation, according to Oxford Collocations Dictionary, is defined as:
“Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing” (2009: V). Whereas, McCarthy, M. J and O’Dell, F (2005:06) say that: “A collocation is a pair or group of words that are often used together”.

Abdulmoneim Mahmoud (2005) defines it as:

We define collocations as two words belonging to different grammatical categories to exclude binomials where the two words are from the same category and are connected implicitly or explicitly by a conjunction (e.g. and, or) or a preposition such as “in” or “by” (e.g. push and shove, sick and tired, here and there, in and out, life and death, hand in hand, dead or alive).

From the above- mentioned definitions, it is clear that despite various attempts to capture the essence of collocation, the concept is still difficult one in linguistics. Furthermore, besides the characterization of collocations as frequently recurrent co-occurrence of lexical items, the structure and regularities behind this phenomenon are still unknown .Such problem of defining collocation raised by a lot of linguists, among them T.F. Mitchell (1975) who says: “The problem has been posed if not answered, and will arise again-and again, for the linguist’s job is never done” (qtd. in Sabine Bartsch, 2004:65).

Collocations, briefly, are notoriously difficult to define and different definitions proliferate in the literature. In spite of the difference in approaching and defining collocations, there is a common agreement among all the linguists that collocations are characterized by the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Collocations consist of two or more than two words which are habitual co-occurrences of words.

Criterion 2: Collocations have restricted semantic relation. That is why we can say *strong tea* but not* *powerful tea*.

Criterion 3: Collocations do not have meaning transfer in their Combination like idioms.

Therefore, we suggest that the definition of collocation should be simplified, and teachers should give some simple definitions and various examples to clarify this concept. To understand more the concept of collocation, we look at its nature.

1.11. The Nature of Collocation

The vocabulary of a language is organized according to two main structuring tendencies: paradigmatic relations and syntagmatic relations. The former “reflects the semantic choices available at a particular structure point in a sentence”, whereas the latter “holds between items which occur in the same sentence, particularly those which stand in an intimate syntactic relationship” (Cruse 2000: 148). According to the classification of lexical items, collocations constitute one type of syntagmatic relations. In literature, several different approaches to categorize lexical chunks covered the linguistic arena with varied figures. Chodkiewicz (2000) presents lexical organization as follows:

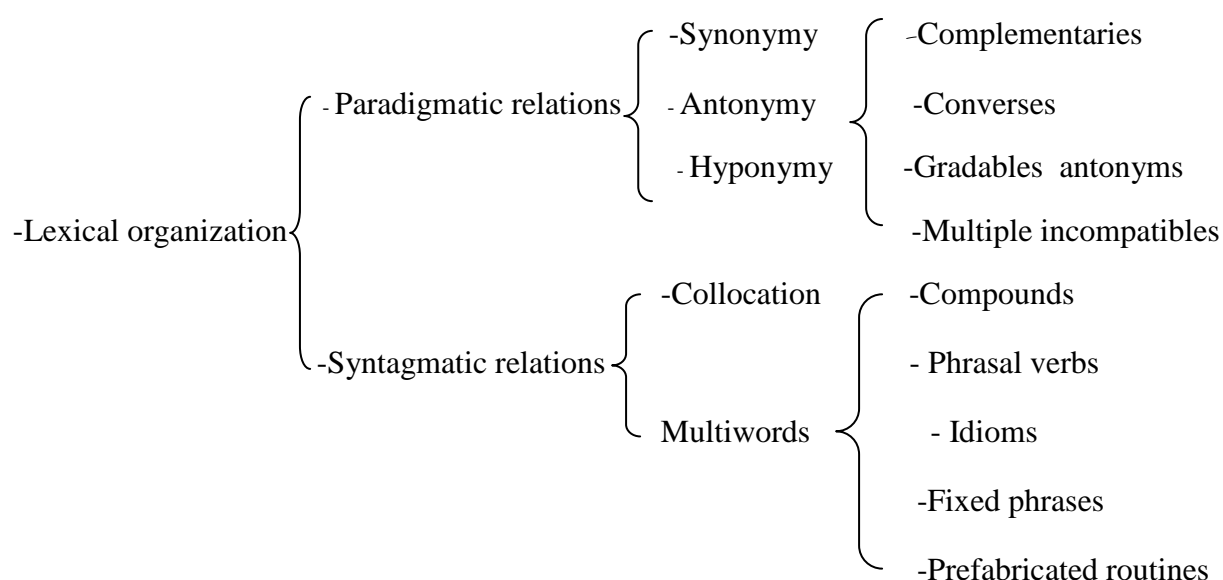


Figure 1: Types of Lexical Organization

(adopted from Arabski, J and Wojtaszek, A 2010:127)

However, Howarth(1998) presents his view on the nature of collocation in the form of a four-part model for collocation: free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative idioms and pure idioms. These combinations are overlapped as a result to the degree of fixedness,

idiomaticity, lack of analysis and stylistic conventionality. Each category was further divisible into lexical composites or grammatical composites (Nesselhauf, 2005: 15-16).

The nature of collocation begs an integrated multilevel description incorporating syntactic, semantic, lexical, and pragmatic criteria. That is why it is difficult to be captured in terms of one coherent linguistic theory. We then need to look at the different approaches that explain the habitual co-occurrence of words.

1.12. The Main Approaches to Study Collocations

Linguistic studies have investigated different aspects of the phenomenon of collocations. These studies can be classified in terms of three main approaches to collocation research: the lexical approach, the semantic approach and the structural approach.

1.4.1. The Lexical Approach

The lexical approach focuses on developing learners' proficiency with lexis: words, word combinations and particularly formulaic sequences. Micheal Lewis (1993) inspired by other linguists' works such as Willis (1990) and Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), formulated the basic principles of this approach. It focuses on the idea that words receive their meanings from the words they co-occur with. Lexis is also seen to be separate from grammar. However, the roots of this approach date back to Firth (1957) who mentioned that the example *give birth* is a collocation that has a different meaning from the individual meanings of both *give* and *birth*. The two words gain a new meaning when they co-occur together.

Lewis insists that his lexical approach is not simply a shift of emphasis from grammar to vocabulary. Rather, it is a shift of perspective away from both grammar and vocabulary. Lewis (1997:3) says that "language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary but often of multi-word prefabricated chunks. These chunks include such things as collocations".

Furthermore, whenever learners want to speak or write, they learn lots of words, an extensive vocabulary, predominantly nouns; and then they struggle to use grammar to talk about those nouns. However, the chunks of lexis, which include collocations, do more than just name things, they also have a pragmatic element. They enable the learner to talk about things and to do things.

1.4.2. The Semantic Approach

The semantic approach focuses on exploring collocations on the basis of the semantic framework without paying attention to grammar. In other words, it attempts to explain why certain words are found together.

The supporters of the semantic approach, such as Lyons (1966), described the lexical approach as an inadequate one because of its inability to explain why some lexical items collocate only with certain items. Furthermore, the meanings of collocations reflect the meaning of their lexical constituents and the sequences of lexical items frequently co-occur, even though most native speakers of English are not aware of collocations. Thus, it is obvious 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 consider the semantic properties of the lexical item to be responsible for determining the words it collocates with. This view is criticized because there are a number of collocations that are arbitrarily restricted. For example, there is nothing in the meaning of the word *drinker* that should make it collocate with *heavy*, rather than with *strong* or *power* (Lehrer, 1974:7-17).

1.4.3. The Structural Approach

The third approach stresses the importance of including grammar in the study of collocations. According to this approach, lexis and grammar complete each other and cannot be separated (Mitchell, 1971; Gitsaki, 1996). Thus, Mitchell (1971) states that collocations can

be described as *lexico-grammatical*. This means that collocations have to be studied within a grammatical matrix. Mitchell also considers collocations as roots rather than words that can be associated to other different roots. For instance, *smoke* and *heavy* are two roots and every combination of them results in acceptable collocations like: *heavy smoker* can be *smoke heavily* and *heavy smoking*. However, Mitchell was criticized by other linguists who found his view of collocations as roots cannot hold for every combination. For example, *faint praise* is an acceptable English collocation but **praise faintly* is not. But, without referring to syntax, the notion of collocations becomes vacuous (Greenbaum, 1974). For example, we can say, “I *much prefer* a dry wine,” when *prefer* collocates with *much* in a pre-verb position. However, we cannot say “I *prefer* a dry wine *much*” where *much* comes in a post-verb position. This confirms that certain items only collocate in certain syntactic relationships, e.g. *sincerity* can collocate with *frighten* but the acceptability of the combinations they produce can be judged only via syntax. Therefore, we can say, *his sincerity frightens us*, but we cannot say **we frighten his sincerity*, which is not syntactically an acceptable combination.

Collocation is determined by structure and occurs in patterns. Therefore, the study of collocation should include grammar (Gitsaki 1996), which contrasts with the two aforementioned approaches: the lexical and semantic ones. Lexis and grammar cannot be separated and, consequently, two categories are defined: lexical and grammatical collocations, which represent two distinctive but related aspects of one phenomenon.

A similar distinction was early made by Sinclair (1966), who once stressed the separation between lexis and grammar. Later, he changed his attitude and created an integrated technique that combined both lexis and grammar. He divided collocations into two categories, i.e. *upward* and *downward* collocations. While upward collocations include prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, and pronouns that collocate with words more frequently used than themselves, for example, *back* collocates with *at*, *in* and *up* that are used more

frequently than itself, downward collocations include verbs and nouns that collocate with words less frequently used than they are, like *commit suicide*.

The study of collocations is not interested only if grammar is included or not, but most interestingly in the degree of frequency. The next section examines such view in detail.

1.13. The Concept of Collocation and the Different Approaches and Interpretations

According to Nesslhouf (2005:11-18), among the many diverse usage of the term, two main views can be identified to define collocation. In one of these views, 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. This view has been called the “statistically oriented approach” or the “frequency- based approach” it goes back to J.R .Firth and has been developed further by M.A.K Halliday and J. Sinclair. Some researchers, adopting a frequency-based approach to collocation, consider co-occurrences of all frequencies to be collocations (Halliday 1966; Moon 1998), while others like Stubb (1995) reserve the term for frequent co-occurrences. Kjellmer (1987) and Kenedy (1990) use recurrence, i.e. co-occurrence more than once in a given corpus.

In the other view, collocations are seen as a type of word combination most commonly as one that is fixed to some degree but not completely. This view has been referred to as the “significance oriented approach” or the “phraseological approach”. This approach has its roots in the Russian phraseology. The main adherents of it are A.P. Cowie, I. Mel’cuk and F.J.Hausmann.

The most important variation in Cowie’s use (1994) of the term concerns the distinction between collocations and other types of word combinations. However, Mel’cuk and Hausmann have stressed that there is a difference in the nature of the elements in a

collocation (keyword-value according to Mel'cuk and base-collocator according to Hausmann). Unlike the frequency-based approach, the phraseological approach consistently requires that the elements of collocations should be syntactically related (adjective + noun, noun + verb, noun + noun...).

The frequency-based approach and the significance oriented approach are two outstanding and significant approaches that shed lights on collocations and provide linguists with basic analysis elements to classify collocations into various categorizations and distinguish the term collocation from other phraseological types. Yet, collocations and other phraseological classifications operate similarly. So, we need to look at this point in next section.

1.6. The Concept of Collocation and its Principles

Sinclair's endeavour to clarify the concept of collocation, on the basis of language production, goes beyond syntactic relations. Sinclair (1991), thus, points out that there are two interdependent organising principles: the open-choice principle and the idiom principle. These principles are models of interpretation which explain the way in which meaning arises from a text.

1.6.1. The Open-choice Principle

The open-choice principle (or 'slot-and-filler') model is the basis of most grammar. Slots open up whenever a lexical unit, whether it is a word, a phrase, or a clause, is completed and the only restraint is grammaticality as Sinclair (1991: 109) explains it as "the result of a large number of complex choices, at each point a unit is completed (a word, a phrase, a clause) a large choice opens up and the only restraint is grammaticalness". . In other words, the speaker/ writer uses single lexical items to create bits of language constrained only by

syntactic rules. Moreover, the learner is free to choose which lexical items go with which, without breaking the grammatical rules.

1.6.2. The Idiom Principle

While the basic units of the open-choice model are individual words combined within grammatical constraints; the idiom principle is related to prefabricated multi-word units. Thus, the combined effect of lexical chunks is called the “idiom principle”. Just as it is the case with idioms, the combined meanings of words are not equal to the overall meaning of the chunk. In other words, the speaker/ writer uses pre-fabricated bits of language as single lexical items; as it is assumed by Sinclair (1991: 110) “a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments”. This definition implies that idioms and collocations overlap to a considerable extent. (see section 1.10.1).

Sinclair is in favour of the idiom principle because the open-choice principle does not account for the limitation imposed on lexical choices. Thus, the idiom principle is also known as the collocational principle. We agree with Sinclair’s view that the most suitable principle is the idiom principle because collocations are not simple combinations to be captured by grammaticality and chosen randomly. Such view is better explained through the clarification of the criteria that strictly guide collocations.

1.7. Collocations’ Criteria

Collocations fall between at one extreme idioms and at the other extreme free word combinations. Also, they have very different behaviours varying from one perspective to another. They basically vary according to lexical statistics, syntax and semantics. Thus, the task of a researcher to categorize collocation into types is difficult and needs certain criteria.

First of all, one proposed criterion is ***non-compositionality*** which states that the meaning of the collocation is not entirely understood from the meaning of its 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*, strong has acquired the meaning rich in some active agent, which is closely related but slightly different from the basic sense having great physical strength. This criterion 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*.

Another criterion is ***non-modifiability*** which means that many collocations cannot be freely modified without fundamentally 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. It is impossible to modify them by adding extra words or through grammatical transformations. So, going from singular to plural can make an idiom ill-formed, for example in *people as poor as church mice*.

Finally, ***non-substitutability*** seems to characterize almost all collocations. It refers to the inability to substitute the words that constitute a collocation for their synonyms such as *powerful computer/ * strong computer*. Even if, in context, the components of a collocation have the same meaning, for example, we cannot say *yellow wine* instead of *white wine* even though yellow is as a good description of the colour of white wine as white (it is a kind of yellowish white).

Collocations and multi-word-units are assumed to follow semantic non-compositionality, syntactic non-modifiability, and non-substitutability of components by semantically similar words.

To sum up, the collocation '*in broad daylight*' which means with no attempt to hide one's actions, its meaning differs from the literal meaning during the day. The constituents of it cannot be modified. So, we cannot say *broad daylight. Also, we cannot substitute any element of this collocation by its synonym such as *wide daylight. Although most collocations share these aforementioned criteria, they widely vary in different degrees. Depending on such differences, we proceed to the different types of collocations.

1.8. Types of Collocations

There are several different types of collocations. Accordingly, numerous linguists made their analyses of collocations from different and varied dimensions. Each linguist attempts to shed light on the nature of collocations and the nature of relations between their constituents. These relations are analysed on the basis of different degrees: fixedness, strength, structure, the register under which they are used, etc. However, such relations are still largely overlapping because each collocation type is lying between two diverse extremes. Here are some most known types.

1.8.1. Lexical Collocations Vs Grammatical Collocations

On the one hand, lexical collocation, according to McArthur (1992), has been called a relation of mutual expectancy or habitual association of only lexical items (qtd. In Howard Jackson, 2000:114). On the other hand, grammatical collocation is defined as a phrase consisting of a dominant word plus a particle. Typical grammatical collocations include verb + preposition (*abide by* + *account for*), noun + preposition (*access to*), and adjective + preposition (*absent from*). Based on their definition of collocation, Benson et al (1986: xix-xxxiv) divide collocations into two categories: grammatical collocations (G) and lexical collocations (L). Each categorization has been divided into sub-categorization as follows:

	Combination	Example
L ₁	Verb + noun	Compose music, wind a watch
L ₂	Verb + noun (eradication and/or nullification and a noun)	Reject an appeal, reverse a decision
L ₃	Adjective + noun	Strong tea, a sweeping generalization
L ₄	Noun + verb	Bees buzz, bombs explode
L ₅	Noun + noun	A bit of advice, a pack of dogs
L ₆	Adverb + adjective	Deeply absorbed, strictly accurate
L ₇	Verb + adverb	Affect deeply, amuse thoroughly

Table 1: Lexical Collocations by Benson et al (1986)

	Combination	Example
G ₁	Noun + preposition	Blockaded against, apathy towards
G ₂	Noun + to infinitive	It was a 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 holidays
G ₈	Consist of 19 English verbs	Send (the dative movement transformation verb)

Table 2: Grammatical Collocations by Benson et al (1986)

1.8.2. Open Collocations Vs Restricted Collocations

Cowie and Howarth (1996) distinguish two types of collocations: ‘open’ collocations and ‘restricted’ ones. The former type is also called free collocation. Under this classification, constituents of the open collocation can be freely combined with other words. Typically, the elements of the collocation are used literally, for example, *fill the sink*. Simply put, open collocation refers to a combination of two or more words co-occurring together, without any specific relation between the two words. The latter type is known as fixed collocation in which one element of it is not used in its original literal meaning. Both, the open and restricted collocations resemble each other in that their elements may be combined with others. That means their literal elements can either be replaced by pronouns or are totally missing. However, the restricted collocation resembles the idiom insofar as its figuratively used elements cannot be combined with other elements such as *jog one’s memory*. Each restricted collocation carries potential of an idiom.

According to Howarth (1996), some classes of restricted collocations are probably stored as wholes, while others are not. Furthermore, it is possible that some subclasses of collocations behave as units, while other subclasses (less restricted or weak collocations) do not (Nesselhauf, 2005:25-27).

1.8.3. Weak Collocations Vs Strong Collocations

Classifying collocations according to strength refers to the degree of words’ association.

Weak collocations, on the one hand, are made up of words that collocate with a wide range of other words. For example, you can say you are *in broad agreement* with someone – generally in agreement with them. The constituent broad can also be used with a number of

other words: a broad avenue, a broad smile, broad shoulders, a broad accent, a broad hint and so on. These are weak collocations, in the sense that broad collocates with a broad range of different nouns.

On the other hand, a strong collocation is one in which the words are very closely associated with each other. For example, the adjective *mitigating* almost always collocates with *circumstances* or *factors*, for instance, although she was found guilty, the jury felt there were *mitigating circumstances*; it rarely collocates with any other word. Nevertheless, strong and weak collocations are not separated from each other but rather they form a continuum, with stronger ones at one end and weaker ones at the other. Most collocations lie somewhere between the two. The so strong collocations that cannot be changed in any way are fixed collocations. For example, you can say I was walking *to and fro*. No other words can replace *to* or *fro* or *and* in this collocation. It is completely fixed.

Hill (qtd. in Lewis, 2000:63-64) distinguishes four categories, defined in terms of collocational strength: **unique collocations**, for example, *foot the bill*, *shrugs one's shoulder*. The two collocations are unique because the verbs 'foot' and 'shrug' are not used with any other nouns. Then, the second type is called **strong collocations** such as *rancid butter*, *trenchant criticism*. These are not unique because there are other things that can be trenchant or rancid, but these collocations are very few. Thirdly, there are **medium-strength collocations**, for example: *hold a conversation*, *make a mistake*. According to Hill, students are more concerned with this type which is neither strong nor weak.

Finally, **weak collocations**, for example: *red car*, *big house*. Such combinations are 'more predictable' and easy to the majority of learners because the adjectives can be combined with many nouns.

1.8.4. Technical Collocations Vs Academic Collocations

Prefabricated expressions, or pre-cooked expressions as labeled by Nattinger and Decarrico 1992, are vital elements in daily use of language because many kinds of lexical items, including prefabricated expressions, function as powerful indicators of register, and in most circumstances it is important to signal the register. Also, because spoken language is retrieved from a stock of ready-made phrases help the speaker to cut down processing effort. These ready-made phrases approaching from a specific register are technical collocations that are different from lexical and grammatical collocations in that the former are used in a special field within a special register to help the learners acquire a specific language use (English for specific purposes or ESP). Whereas, the latter are academic and can cover both General English and ESP.

Furthermore, since each genre has its special collocations, what is a normal collocation within a specific genre could not be considered so in another genre. Sinclair illustrates such view through the use of the collocations “*vigorous depressions*” and “*dull highlights*” that are normal only in the register of meteorology and photography respectively. Aljandro Curado Fuentes (2001:118) claims that the level of technicality in word behaviour is closely related to subject domain, as he mentions: “The salient condition is that elements function uniquely in their corresponding field, describing the restricted setting”. According to him, for instance, there are specific combinations of the noun network such as: *U-network*, *access network*, *local area network*. Fuentes points out free collocations that appear in different registers are considered as semi-technical word combinations such as: *information system*, *information technology*, *digital information*, and *information about*.

To sum up, this means that we aim to provide learners with particular issues in Business, Technology... ,etc. Learners have to be exposed to significant word behaviour in

the form of both specific collocations and common lexical combinations. These are technical and academic elements, offering rich input for the learners to help them in future careers. The selection of lexical items is based upon a learner-centred corpus design that is effective at both academic and professional goals.

To better clarify the concept of collocation, we compare the different pairs of collocations. Among such pairs, the most interesting one is lexical collocations which are the main concern of this study. Thus, next section provides more details about lexical collocations.

1.9. Lexical Collocations

1.9.1. Lexical Collocation Types

The first theory of lexical collocations which should be presented is Benson's, even if it is not the first chronologically, because its classification is the strongest and is the basis with which other theories can be compared. Benson classified collocations into two groups: lexical and grammatical collocations. "A grammatical collocation, in contrast to a lexical collocation, is a phrase that consists of a noun, an adjective, or a verb plus a preposition or grammatical structures such as an infinitive or clause" (Benson et al, 1986:XIX)

Lexical collocations consist only of lexical words: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs. They normally do not contain prepositions and other structures. Lexical collocations usually not only appear in one sentence but often their positions are right next to each other. If a more detailed explanation or specification is given to one of the collocates, there can be words in between them, for example, *the dog which wanted to run without his lead started to bark*. The words dog and bark are collocates, even if there are nine words between them (large span).

Our research is based on this definition. Therefore, the terms collocations or lexical collocations are used interchangeably.

According to Yvonne Müller (2008:7), there are seven possible combinations.

L₁: verb (which means creation/action) + noun/pronoun/prepositional phrase e.g. come to an agreement, launch a missile.

L₂: verb (which means eradication/cancellation) + noun e.g. reject an appeal, crush resistance.

L₃: (adjective + noun) or (noun used in an attributive way + noun)

e.g. strong tea, a crushing defeat, house arrest, land reform.

L₄: noun + verb naming the activity which is performed by a designate of this noun e.g. bombs explode, bees sting.

L₅: quantifier + noun e.g. a swarm of bees, a piece of advice.

L₆: adverb + adjective e.g. hopelessly addicted, sound asleep.

L₇: verb + adverb e.g. argue heatedly, apologize humbly.

Lexical collocations between verbs and nouns are often fixed expressions, i.e. the synonymy of both collocates is restricted. To illustrate, Yvonne Müller (2008) gives the example “One can say *hold a funeral*, but not **hold a burial*” (8).

The collocates of an adjective-noun collocation usually occur right next to each other because the adjective describes the noun directly and therefore its position is in front of the noun, for example: rich imagination. One can say *rich imagination* but not * *wealthy imagination*.

The span of verb-adverb collocation can also be enlarged. But, there is no synonymy substitution, for instance, one can say *affected deeply* but not* *affected extremely* (with exception *deeply hurt*). The adverb also, directly, describes the adjective and any synonymy substitution leads to an unusual combination such as *bitterly cold* but not * *hardly cold* or * *bitterly frosty*.

1.9.2. Lexical Collocations' Patterns

All the collocations' patterns are classified in relation with parts of speech, particularly with content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. However, each linguist made his own classification according to his understanding and perspectives of collocation. Here are some patterns of collocation, of course, slightly differing from a linguist to another.

Grains and Redman (1986:37) propose that the most common patterns of collocation as follows:

Collocation pattern	Example
a) Subject noun+verb.	The earth revolves around the sun
b) verb+object noun.	She bites nails
c) Adjective+noun.	A loud noise, heavy traffic
d) adverb+past participles used adjectively.	Badly dressed, fully insured.

Table 3: Collocations' Patterns according to Gairns and Redman (1986)

In the first Pattern, if we want to describe the movement of the earth in relation to the sun, then "earth"+"revolves" is a likely combination. It would be less common, for example, to use "circulates". Secondly, we would not use "eat" instead of bite, though many other languages would.

Then, in the third pattern, we notice that a different collocation would give an entirely different meaning (a big noise). Similarly, the fourth type, any change of collocation constituents would affect the whole meaning.

Justeson and Katz (1995) rely on seven patterns to identify likely collocations among the frequently occurring word sequences. This method of distinction is known as ‘part-of-speech filter’. These patterns are exemplified in table (4), in this table A refers to an adjective, N to a noun, and P to a preposition, as suggested by Justson and Katz (1995 b: 17):

Tag pattern	Example
A N	Linear function
N N	Regression coefficients
A A N	Gaussian random variable
A N N	Cumulative distribution function
N A N	Mean squared error
N N N	Class probability function
N P N	Degrees of freedom

Table 4: Part of Speech Tag Patterns for Collocation Filtering

Adopted from Christopher D. Manning and Hinrich Schutze (1999: 154)

We observe that Justeson and Katz patterns are typically based upon adjective-noun collocations. Whereas, Gairns and Redman patterns are nearly similar to McCarthy and O’ Dell patterns (table5). As shown in the two abovementioned tables, we notice that in both classifications there are the following patterns: adjective + noun, noun + verb and adverb + adjective (adverb+past participles used adjectively suggested by Gairns and Redman). But, in the first classification, there is the pattern verb+object noun, while in the second one there are:

noun + noun, Verb + preposition + noun, verb + adverb. Additionally, Justeson and Katz confuse lexical collocations with grammatical ones because the last pattern NPN is a grammatical collocation.

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

Table 5: Collocations' Patterns according to McCarthy and O' Dell (2005:12)

According to Benson, Benson and Ilson, typical lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. They classify lexical collocations by structural patterns:

1. Verb + noun (quench one's thirst)
2. Adjective + noun (torrential rain).
3. Noun + verb (volcanoes erupt)
4. Noun 1 + of + noun 2 (a school of whales)
5. Adverb + adjective (closely acquainted)
6. Verb + adverb (apologize humbly)

From the above-mentioned patterns, we notice that most linguists agree that collocation patterns are considered as a source of information that requires a lot of insights into the structure of the English sentence. Needless to say, the most significant classification, according to which other patterns are compared, is that of Benson et al who suggest collocation patterns that seemed to be more useful and more generalized than others. Next, we proceed to distinguish lexical collocations from other phraseological concepts.

1.10. Collocations in Phraseology

According to Gitsaki (1999), many linguists state that semantic transparency appears to be the only criterion that could make a difference between idioms and collocations. However, considering three main phraseological combinations -idioms, collocations, and free combinations –not only semantic transparency but also collocational restriction is regarded as an important criterion by many linguists (Aisenstadt, 1979; Benson, Benson & Ilson, 1986; Carter, 1987; Cowan, 1989; Cowie & Howarth, 1996; Cruse, 1986; Fernando, 1996; Gramley & Pätzold, 1992; Korosadowicz-Struzynska, 1980). Furthermore, some linguists who agree with these two criteria to distinguish between idioms, collocations, and free combinations add one or two more criteria to differentiate these three combinations more clearly. They admit that those criteria tend to be expressed along a continuum and the boundary between the three categories cannot be clearly set.

1.10.1. Collocations, Idioms and Free Combinations

To understand clearly what lexical collocations are, it is helpful to distinguish them from idioms from one hand and from free combinations on the other hand. In one of the useful collocation dictionaries, The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English: A Guide to Word Combinations (2009), the word collocation is compared to other fixed expressions in the following definition:

In English, as in other languages, there are many fixed identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Such groups of words are called recurrent combinations, fixed combinations, or collocations, collocations fall into two major groups: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations.

(Benson et al, 2009: xix)

Furthermore, criteria which are frequently applied to distinguish collocations from free combinations and idioms are fixedness and semantic opacity (see section 1.11.3).

Therefore, free combinations, in line with Sinclair's open-choice principle, are sequences of words that follow rules of grammar and syntax of the language in question, and whose elements allow for free substitution. They are the least cohesive types of word combinations and the combination as a whole can be understood from the sum of the literal meanings of the elements. For example, the noun murder can be used with many verbs: to analyze, boast of, condemn, describe, disregard, film, forget, remember and so on. These verbs, in turn, can be combined freely with other nouns: accident, adventure, discovery, event, experience, etc. Simply speaking, free word combinations have the properties that each of the words can be replaced by another without seriously modifying the overall meaning of the lexical unit; and if one of the words is omitted, a reader or a listener cannot easily infer it from the remaining ones.

Idioms are relatively fixed and semantically opaque word combinations. The criterion of semantic opacity of idioms was defined by Sweet as early as 1899: "the meaning of each idiom is an isolated fact which cannot be inferred from the meaning of the words of which the idiom is made up" (qtd. in Skandera, 2004:24). In other words, idioms are made up of smaller group of word combinations and relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the basic literal meanings of their constituents. When we give somebody the *red carpet*, for example, we do not actually hand over a *red carpet* to them, but rather give them a special treatment as important visitors. Likewise, when someone makes heavy weather of something,

this has nothing to do with an atmospheric condition, but s/he makes things more complicated than they need to be.

Collocations, finally, are loosely fixed pairings between free combinations and idioms. For example, *commit murder* is not an idiom because the meaning of the whole chunk reflects the meaning of the constituents. Also, this word combination is different from free combinations in two ways. Firstly, the synonymy of the verb is restricted, in this word combination, *perpetrate* seems to be the only synonym to replace *commit*. Secondly, and more importantly, the combination *commit murder* is used more frequently; it springs readily to mind; it is “fixed phrase” in English (Benson et al, 1986:253).

There are, however, some lexical chunks such as *foot the bill* and *curry favour* which colligate collocations and idioms (Cowie, 1981:228). These units are called bound collocations or transitional collocations (Cruse, 1986: 41-46). Cruse explains that transitional collocations require a particular item in their immediate context. In other words, the constituents forming the transitional collocations are not likely to be separated. Transitional combinations are more frozen than ordinary collocations, i.e. less variable. However; unlike idioms these phrases seem to have a meaning close to that suggested by their component parts.

1.10.2. Collocations, Idioms and Phrasal verbs

These three terms are often used interchangeably. Therefore, it is interesting to point out the relation that may exist between them.

‘Phrasal templates’ are collocations which include very free elements within a restricted structure (prepositions used with other constituents, particularly numbers). These correspond to Renouf and Sinclair’s (1991) collocational frameworks and Nattinger and Decarrico’s phrasal constraints (1982). Phrasal verbs are very common in English, especially

spoken English. A phrasal verb is a combination of words, that is used like a verb and consists of a verb and an adverb or preposition, for example give in or come up with. Each instance of these combinations has several common meanings. These meanings are often extensions from the core meaning and they may be abstract. Moreover, a meaning of a phrasal verb is usually associated with a set of particular collocates within the sentence. For example, *complaints* is a collocate of *deal with* as in the sentence we had *to deal* with a lot of *complaints*. Also, the collocate *complaints* provides a clue to the appropriate meaning of *deal with* (Christopher J. Gledhill, 2000:200-14).

Phrasal verbs are often used in idioms. The meaning of an idiom is rarely understood (i.e. has a metaphoric sense). Similarly, the meaning of a phrasal verb is rarely guessed from the individual words. So, collocations are often idiomatic.

Idioms and phrasal verbs are somehow identical to collocations because they include words that go together. However, the verb-preposition collocation, as marked by Quirk et.al. (1989), consists of a lexical verb followed by a preposition with which it is semantically and / or syntactically associated, terming the combination a 'prepositional verb'. Furthermore, the verb-preposition collocation is usually regarded as different from the phrasal verb in some respects. That is, in the former, the relevant particle always functions as a preposition, not as an adverb. The collocation retaining the original senses of the relevant verb, and the verb preceding the preposition is usually intransitive (except for small cases).

1.11. Collocation and Other Phraseological Features

1.11.1. Collocations and Compounds

Many adjective + noun combinations are completely frozen combinations; no variations at all are possible. Such combinations are clearly identified from other combinations and are known as compounds (i.e. lexical elements consisting of more than one word) such as *alternating current*, *definite article*. Compounds may also consist of noun + noun combinations like *aptitude test*, *blood count*. A simple verb + one or two adverbs are so-called 'compound verbs'. Furthermore, compounds are technically referred to as 'endocentric' when the semantic head is inside the combination, i.e. the meaning of the whole combination characterizes the determination, for example, *wet suit* (a special type of suit) and *prime minister* (a special type of minister). 'Exocentric' compounds have their semantic head outside the combination and they denote an unknown variable, e.g. *white elephant* (something that is completely useless although it might have cost a lot of money) and *wet blanket* (a person who spoils the joy of others).

1.11.2. Collocation and Colligation

Collocation is often mentioned in the same breath 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 lexical item as Butler (2004:154) comments:

Originally coined by Firth to mean the co-occurrence relationship between grammatical categories such as noun and adjective, [colligation is] now used more widely to cover relationship between grammatical categories and particular lexical words as well.

(qtd. in M. Toolan, 2009:19)

As mentioned in this definition, slightly differing 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 necessarily work in parallel, the relationship between the two can therefore be seen on a scale of generality. The notion of colligation operates at the grammatical level of meaning, however, has recently been extended to cover the syntactic constraints, or even just preferences of particular words.

Firth (1957) in an attempt to clarify the difference between the two concepts, argues that collocations are actual words in habitual company. A word in a usual collocation stares you in the face just as it is; while colligation cannot be of words as such. Furthermore, colligations of grammatical categories related in a grammatical structure do not necessarily follow word divisions or even sub-divisions of words.

1.11.3. Collocation and Semantic Prosody

Contrary to Sinclair's approach that is based upon habitual co-occurrence, in other words, the collocates of a lexical item are used to indicate the immediate juxtaposition of words and nothing else, Hoey (Lewis,2000:232) argues that semantic prosody will include many items that are also collocations, in an effort to make the notion so useful. Semantic prosody, along with other aspects of phraseology precisely collocations, demonstrates how lexis, grammar, meaning, and usage are inseparable. Words do not just combine with other words, they combine with chosen meanings. However, not every lexical item has a recognisable or strong semantic prosody. Semantic prosody, moreover, refers to the general tendency of certain words to co-occur with either negative or positive expressions. Similarly, Louw (1993,157) defines it as follows: "the consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates". To illustrate, '*set in*' is a famous example given by Sinclair. '*Set in*' has a negative prosody, and *rot* is a prime exemplar for what is going to set in. Also, '*cause*' (something causes an accident / catastrophe/ other negative event), '*commit*' (suicide, crime,

offence), and '*happen*' (things go along smoothly, then 'something happens', shit happens) similarly all have a negative semantic prosody. Whereas, there are no defining aspects of the meaning of *cause*, *commit*, or *happen* which entail that they will take negative rather than positive objects. These patterns come from usage. Hoey (2005) refers to such generalizations when a word or word sequence is associated in the mind of a language user with a semantic set as 'semantic association'.

Despite the fact that the term collocation is widely used differently and often with vague meanings, it is very important to put this concept into practice along with grammar.

1.12. Collocation and Language Learning

1.12.1. Vocabulary Teaching and Grammar Teaching

Traditionally, knowing a language involves two types of knowledge: grammatical rules and individual lexical items. In learning a foreign language, it is evident that we have to learn both grammatical correctness and lexical component. However, in favour of emphasis on syntactic structure in the tradition of language teaching, it is not surprising that vocabulary has often been considered only as a reading problem, Rudzka et al(1981:i) point out, about the general tendency of EFL teaching, that vocabulary has been considered as "the area where relatively little has been done". Also, Carter and McCarthy (1981) claim that vocabulary study has been neglected by linguists, applied linguists, and language teachers. This is the fact that grammar should be taught and that in due time learners would 'acquire' the vocabulary necessary to deal with specific communicative situations through their exposure to the target language. In addition, under the influence of structuralism, second language (L2) teaching approaches and methods often preferred to conceive language as a 'closed' and manageable system with a limited number of communication options to be taught, that is, a series of grammar rules rather than an 'open' and unlimited subsystem such as vocabulary.

During the 1980's, however; interest in vocabulary teaching and learning grew, and during the 1990's, a great deal of attention was given to vocabulary as an important factor in L2 learning for successful communication. Laufer (1986:73) points out:

Until very recently vocabulary has suffered from step- child status in language acquisition research. The reasons for this plight might have been the linguist's preference for closed systems describable by rules, the reaction of psycholinguists against the associative and the stimulus – response theories of learning and the interest of the methodologists in the beginning stages of language learning.

(qtd. in Ruben Chacon-Beltran, 2010:1)

Nevertheless, vocabulary is still not given the same importance as grammar. Next, we proceed to discuss the pedagogical importance of vocabulary in general and collocations in particular.

1. 12.2.Vocabulary Teaching and Collocations

Vocabulary, in fact, is a wide area and a learner keeps on increasing his vocabulary throughout his life. It is not possible for an English language teacher to teach a large stock of vocabulary of English to the learners within a specific period of time. But, students can be taught some lexical collocations in such a time. When the L2 learners develop the ability to use the vocabulary of L2 making proper use of its collocations, then we can say that they have developed the sense which the native speakers possess and which helps them in collocating different vocabulary items accurately.

In terms of practice of collocations, the tendency is to include more lexical collocations in intermediate and advanced textbooks than in beginning textbooks. Hill (Lewis, 2000:48) considers that the intermediate level is the starting point for the teaching of collocations containing words that students have already learned as isolated words, whereas Higuera (2004) and Castillo Carballo (2009) state that explicit collocations should be taught from the beginning level. Gitsaki(1996:31) criticizes the lack of scientific rigor in L2

collocation teaching with respect to what and how many collocations should be taught, how to practice them, and the level at which they should be introduced (Ruben Chacon-Beltran, 2010:172). In addition, textbooks concerning lexical collocations are not provided for use in EFL classes. Accordingly, Nesselhauf (2003) proves that it is necessary to teach collocational phrases explicitly, at least those that are different in the students' first language (L1) and L2. She adds that verb + noun and adjective + noun or noun + adjective collocational combinations are the most frequent types in English textbooks.

Moreover, most of the vocabulary listed in English textbooks presented in the form of lists of words related only to the context in which they are used. Such lists do not include words frequently used in the real world such as words describing feelings or needed in shopping, and so on. However, even if they include daily words, students may still not be able to use the words. The reason is that there is an important element missing from vocabulary course books which is the notion of collocation.

Collocation is not only lacking in the vocabulary books, but also omitted in English classrooms. Teachers have been demanding students to remember words listed in the textbooks. Rarely, teachers discuss how the students should learn lexical items. Thus, teachers have not paid much attention to how to build vocabulary and have not taught the notion of collocation. Unfortunately, they do not help student to develop ways of learning words effectively.

Languages are full of strong collocational pairs and, therefore, the study of collocation is fundamental in the study of vocabulary as McCarthy (1990:12) mentioned "collocation is an important organizing principle in the vocabulary of any language". Therefore, vocabulary teaching with collocations is more important rather than grammar teaching for intermediate or advanced learners; it is also essential to identify the problems that learners have in dealing

with collocations. However, little work has been undertaken on the use of collocation in the class. Thus, it is unclear how and which collocations should be taught rather collocations are completely neglected.

1.12.3. Collocation as a Neglect Phenomenon

Collocation, despite its pedagogical importance and significance, has been treated with considerable neglect. According to Bartsch (2004), some researchers basically Altenberg (1991: 127), argue that collocation is really a vastly neglected phenomenon because of the diversity of structures subsumed under the term collocation. Also, the phenomenon ranges on the borderline between grammar and lexicon. Collocations have tended to be neglected in language teaching, despite the fact that linguistic researchers and language teachers are continuously searching for a new approach that copes with the learners' needs – this is a surprising fact because the emergence of such phenomenon is purposely pedagogical, dating back to the work of Harold Palmer (1933: ii) as a language teacher in Japan. Palmer suggests that a collocation is a succession of two or more words that must be learned as an integral whole and not pieced together from its component parts; and that a mere selection of common collocations is found to contain thousands of examples “and therefore to exceed by far the popular estimate of the number of single words contained in an everyday vocabulary...” (Palmer, 1933:13, qtd. in Sabine Bartsch, 2004:26-27).

Palmer's language teaching methodology involved urging his Japanese students to learn large numbers of collocations by heart as if they are single lexemes. More recently, Firthians and Sinclairians have kept reminding us that learning a language involves learning many multi-word expressions. Despite of the spread of corpus-based researches, collocations remain neglectful phenomenon in real practice in foreign languages classrooms. Thus, collocational knowledge is an interesting necessity for any learner of English.

1.13. Language Knowledge and Collocation Knowledge

According to Chomsky, a person who speaks a language has developed a certain system of knowledge represented somehow in the mind. This language knowledge, using prior knowledge of language and its principles, would function perfectly well for the purposes of communication, expression of thought, or other uses of language. Knowledge arises in accordance with general principles of induction, habit formation, and association (collocation is not mentioned explicitly in Transformational Generative Grammar).

For vocabulary instruction, two main strategies are used to help learners gain language knowledge: implicit teaching and explicit teaching. Implicit teaching (incidental teaching) of vocabulary is done mainly by providing a context to the learners, for example, presenting vocabulary through reading materials. Teachers do not directly teach vocabulary, but the learners are acquiring unconsciously information about the language simply through exposure to the language being used in speech and writing (habit formation).

Norbert Schmitt and McCarthy (1997: 237) point out some inadequacies of this implicit teaching. They assert that:

Acquiring vocabulary mainly through guessing words in context is likely to be a very slow process. Considering that many L2 learners have a limited amount of time to learn a body of words, it is not perhaps the most efficient way to approach the task

Whereas, learning explicit knowledge is learning with awareness. It typically includes explicit instruction on the language code (phonology, grammar and vocabulary), and on how to develop proficiency in the skills of listening or speaking, and reading or writing. Whatever strategy a teacher adopts, there is a strong need of proper planning and selection of appropriate collocations needed to acquire collocational knowledge and therefore language knowledge.

Language knowledge can be controlled relatively according to native speakers' intuition, in terms of their possession of richly detailed knowledge about lexical items and chunks in their language (especially meaning). Native speakers have extensive knowledge of how words combine in their language, and they use this knowledge when they retrieve lexical

items and link them appropriately in language production. Systematic use of these combinations is considered an important element of native speaker competence, and in the case of L2 learners of native-like L2 production (McCarthy, 1990). Learners have to be taught that in English we are likely to say *completely forget* to ring people, not just forget, and we might become *deeply suspicious*, or *highly* (rather than heavily), etc. Such collocations are an unstated part of any curriculum for language learners.

Moreover, collocation knowledge is deeply related to language knowledge. In other words, language knowledge is collocational knowledge. N.Ellis (2001) is in favour of such view, arguing that language knowledge and language use can be accounted for by the storage of chunks of language in long-term memory and by experience of how likely particular chunks are to occur with other particular chunks, without referring to underlying rules. Language knowledge and use are based on associations between sequentially observed language items. So, collocation knowledge is the essence of language knowledge. Learners either store many chunks in their memories or apply collocational restrictions (prosodies) to use them later.

To sum up, the necessity of teaching collocations arises from the need for collocation knowledge in order to know how to articulate oneself in a right way. Learners need to know more collocations because they usually know the nouns, but lack the right adjectives or verbs to explain their thoughts (Hausmann, 1984:399, qtd. In Mehburger,2010:06). Moreover, better collocation knowledge would help basic level learners as well as advanced learners with proper knowledge of English, improve their language skills, despite the fact that having good grammatical and vocabulary knowledge, in terms of their ability to sound natural which is the goal of learning a foreign language. Similarly, Bahns (1997:68) points out that “it is not very important for learners to use many idioms when producing oral or written language, but that

knowing the right collocations and using them in a right way is by far important” (qtd. In Mehbürger, 2010:07).

1.14. Collocations as a Learning Problem

Even among the best language learners, those completely native- like in their grammar and pragmatics, low frequency lexical items and restricted collocations will always present problems. Therefore, the task of acquiring native-like collocational knowledge in an L2 is a long and a difficult one because learners do not have adequate collocational mastery to produce acceptable collocations.

Gairns and Redman (1986:37) see that “there are inevitably differences of opinion as to what represents an acceptable collocation in English”. Also, McCarthy (1990:15) argues that “knowledge of collocation is based on years of experiences of masses of data ... statement about collocation, namely typical patterns of co-occurrence of words can never be absolute”. These views reveal that it is very difficult or in sense even impossible to gain universal recognition of acceptability in collocation among adult native speakers of English. In addition, there are no precise ‘rules’ of collocation. Teachers and learners are generally more successful when they deal with common collocational problems in isolation or as they arise. Norbert Schmitt (2000, 88) believes that providing students with collocational grids helps them study the appropriate collocational pairings of new words rather than guessing blindly. It is difficult to group items by their collocational properties, for instance, in table (6) below, we feel that a ‘*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.

	beautiful	Lovely	Pretty	Charming	attractive	Good-looking	Handsome
Woman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Man				+	+	+	+
Child	+	+	+	+		+	
Dog	+	(+)				+	
Bird	+		+				
Flower	+	+	+				
Weather	+	+					
Landscape	+						
View	+	+	+				
Day	+	+					
Village	+	+	+	+	+		
House	+	+	+	+	+		
Furniture	+	+					
Bed	+	(+)	+				
Picture	+	+	+				
Dress	+	+	+		+		
Present	+	+					+
Voice	+	+		+	+		
Proposal							

Table 6 : Collocational Grid

Adopted from Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman (1986: 38)

In speech, **beautiful**, **lovely** , **charming** ,and **attractive** are often used for situations in which their real meaning would be too strong in order to express enthusiasm such as:

The walls were covered with a most **beautiful/lovely /charming/ attractive** wall paper.

From the examples mentioned in table (6), it is clear that collocations do not mean mere habitual co-occurrences, but rather there is limitation in choice of adjectives that cope with certain nouns. Thus, the meaning of lexical collocations in accordance with the meaning of their constituents raises great problems for foreign language learners. So, it is necessary to consider such contrasts of meaning.

Since it takes years of exposure to the language, for its native speakers, to get a competence sufficient to acquire acceptable collocational knowledge, and because competence of collocational knowledge belongs to native speakers' intuition, it may be natural for L2 learners to have this area remains tricky and unmanageable for quite a long time. Accordingly, McCarthy says that "even very advanced learners often make inappropriate or unacceptable collocations" (McCarthy, 1990: 13).

Partington (1998:18) also observes that "there is no total agreement among native speakers as to which collocations are acceptable and which are not". Hunston (2002:68) argues, while collocation can be observed informally using intuition, it is more reliable to measure it statistically, and for this a corpus is essential. This is because a corpus can reveal such probabilistic semantic patterns across many speakers' intuition and usage, to which individual speakers have no access (Stubbs, 2001).

Most EFL learners do not have the opportunity to live in English-speaking countries, and their teachers are also non-native English speakers. Therefore, they generally do not have sufficient competence in this area; moreover, they are unable to both teach and learn collocations. They even sometimes avoid tackling this matter. The ability to use lexical collocations is, thus, essential for the language learner. Unfortunately, however, they also pose considerable difficulties, even for the advanced learner. Such problem is repeatedly

pointed out by numerous linguists like Smadja (1989) who says, “Language learners often stumble across co-occurrence relations”. Wray (1999) ,similarly, mentions that knowing which subset of grammatically possible utterances “is actually commonly used by native speakers, is an immense problem for even the most proficient of non-natives”(qtd.in Nesselhauf,2005:02). According to McCarthy (1990):

collocationnal knowledge is part of native speaker’s competence, and can be problems for learners in cases where collocability is language-specific and is not solely determined by universal semantic restrictions.

McCarthy (1990:15)

Simply put, it is so important to learn lexical collocations to get rid of such problematicity.

1.15. The Importance of Collocations

Collocations are word combinations which are made up of more than one word and are lexically or syntactically fixed to a certain degree (Nesselhauf 2003). These combinations, occurring together habitually, are so beneficial for the enrichment of learners’ language knowledge. Collocations play crucial role for foreign language learners. Collocations help learners speak and write the target language in a more natural and accurate way. In addition, learning collocations will help learners increase target language vocabulary and also help them understand and express sentences at a much faster rate. According to Lewis (2000;8), collocations are essential for learners to expand the proficiency of vocabulary in both spoken and written language.

There are two main reasons why collocations have been considered linguistically interesting. The first is that a word’s typical collocates are thought to give us important information about its semantics. The collocational setting in which we encounter a word enables us, it has been argued, to choose between the various possible senses of an ambiguous

word. It has the potential to provide important clues to the clarification of ambiguity (Bartsch, 2004:21). Then, the typical collocates of a word provide a profile which can differentiate it semantically from other words with similar meanings. This possibility was pointed out by Halliday (1966), who noted that apparent synonyms, such as *strong* and *powerful*, can have characteristically different collocations (e.g. *strong*/**powerful tea*, **strong/powerful engine*). This idea has been developed by, among others, Partington (1998) who shows how near synonyms like *sheer*, *pure*, *complete*, *utter* and *absolute* can be distinguished in terms of their typical collocates.

Many researchers have stressed the importance of collocations for L2 learners learning. Brown (1974) suggests that learning collocations improves the learner's oral proficiency, listening comprehension, and reading speed. In addition, we speak and write in chunks, and learning collocations helps learners observe how native speakers in both spoken and written contexts use language. Moreover, Brown has contended that this knowledge helps language learners use these expressions themselves.

Similarly, Pawley and Syder (1983) point out the significance of collocations in language learning, especially in the production of native-like language structures. Laufer (1988) also stresses the importance of collocations in improving learning strategies, such as guessing (hearing a word, the learner will guess its collocates). Along the same lines, Lewis (2000) states that learning chunks of words helps learners develop their communicative competencies better than learning words in isolation. Nesselhauf (2003) stresses a similar issue that of the importance of collocations for learners striving for high degree of competence. Also, collocations represent an important aspect of L2 vocabulary development.

In order to acquire natural and native-like language, foreign language learners are advised to learn more collocations because the more they learn collocations, the more they

master L2. Collocations probably have great importance for many aspects of language competence, most importantly in speech production. To summarize the above mentioned importance of collocations, we cited Benson; Benson and Ilson (2009:XIII) who highlight the importance of this as follows:

Learners of English as foreign or second language, like learners of any language, have traditionally devoted themselves to mastering words-their pronunciation, forms and meanings. However, if they wish to acquire active mastery of English, that is; if they wish to be able to express themselves fluently and accurately in speech and writing, they must learn to cope with the combination of words into phrases, sentences and texts.

1.16. Communicative Competence and Collocational Competence

The knowledge of which collocations are normal in which contexts, i.e. collocational competence is part of a native speaker's communicative competence that is developed by Hymes (1971). Hymes disagrees with Chomsky's (1965) binary division of language use into linguistic competence and linguistic performance (the former refers to one's knowledge of language, and the latter to the actual utterances of speech, i.e. language actual use). Later, Chomsky (1986) has reformulated the competence-performance distinction in terms of I-language (internal) and E-language (external). The former is individual knowledge, whereas the latter is the realization of language in social interaction. So, language can be analysed on the basis of 'sociocultural dimension'. Widdowson also points out implications of Hymes' distinctions for corpus linguistics. Hymes is so convinced that competence covers a much wider range of skills and knowledge rather than the internalization of grammatical structures. Moreover, Hymes' concept of communicative competence, later on, shows how collocations can be located within a general model of language use. Through repeated exposure, use and feedback, the collocations used in successful communication (social interaction) are internalised by language users. Crystal maintains that:

Communicative competence focuses on the native-speaker's ability to produce and understand sentences which are appropriate to the context in which they occur-what he needs to know in order to communicate effectively in socially distinct settings. (Crystal, 1985:59)

Also, it is defined as “contextually adequate communicative behaviour, both with respect to production and comprehension” (Schmid 2003, qtd. in Schmid and Handl, 2010:119). Simply, communicative competence means knowledge needed to know how to use language appropriately, i.e. to know what to say in what circumstances, at what time and in what manner.

Similarly, Michael Lewis (1997), Partington (1998) , and Hill (2000) support the view that, in addition to communicate competence, learners need to develop a new competence to achieve fluency, as it is cited here: “we (teachers)are familiar with the concept of communicative competence, but we need to add the concept of collocational competence to our thinking.” (qtd. in Lewis, 2000:49).

The function of collocations is, on the basis of communicative approaches, threefold for the language user. From a cognitive perspective, they reduce the cognitive load for speakers, as stringing words together and storing them as units in the mental lexicon functions because they require less processing work than combining them a new on each occasion. According to Wray and Perkins (2000:17), they can be seen as “time-buying sequences”. They are, also responsible for fluency and thus help speakers in keeping their turn in conversation. Then, from a pragmatic perspective, collocations form a part of a native-like communicative competence as pointed out by Pawley and Syder (1983: 208). Finally, from a developmental perspective, collocations are an important ‘acquisitional aid’ (Wray, 2002: 119), like step-by-step children acquisition, language learners learn more vocabulary and understand better the grammatical structures trough their analyses of such lexical chunks.

Hence, communication is a matter of co-occurrence and repetition of lexical chunks used in daily life conversations. A collocational competence is necessary to be acquired to enhance foreign language learners to improve, precisely, their oral proficiency levels and, in general, their foreign language learning. However, the use of collocations in certain communicative situations should not be seen as clichés, which are felt to have lost their force through over-use.

Conclusion

Collocation is gradually developing, beginning with Firthians till contemporary linguists, from different perspectives and is spreading out to a greater extent. It is recognized as an important academic discipline in linguistic studies. Thus, knowing frequent collocations is essential for gaining both language knowledge and collocational knowledge. For the foreign language learner, choosing the right collocation will make his or her speech sound natural. A language that is collocationally rich is also more precise. This is because the precise meaning is determined by the words that surround and combine with the core word by collocation.

However, a student who wrongly combines words may make himself/ herself understood, but it requires more effort on the part of the listener and ultimately creates a barrier to communication. Because students are not aware of the existence of the middle ground between free combinations and fixed idioms, it is highly desirable to draw their attention to the effectiveness of collocation use. Next, we look at how teachers can make their learners aware of collocations through consciousness-raising activities and how it is effective for future oral production.

Chapter Two

Developing Oral Proficiency

and Building Students'

Collocational Competence

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Introduction

While English is taught over many years in secondary schools and universities, many teachers feel that Algerian learners of English still cannot function properly in English for communication. Therefore, we will talk about lexical collocations and their effects on comprehending and using spoken English which is composed of listening comprehension and oral language production. These two skills together lay the groundwork for the development of foreign language oral proficiency. To explore this issue, we begin with a discussion of listening comprehension and the role of listening in collocation acquisition. Then, we look at how speaking skills can be developed and how they are improved through consciousness-raising of collocations. We also look at how teachers can support developing oral proficiency in the classroom as a path to collocation conscious-raising, providing the appropriate tasks and exercises. Finally, we address the different language functions that can be promoted through the learning of lexical collocations.

2.1. Oral Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to the degree of skill with which a student can use a language such as how well a student can read, write, speak, or understand a language. The concept of language proficiency would then represent a process-like ability to use language competence. According to Taylor (1983), If we admit that competence in its restricted sense is still a useful concept, referring to some kind of ‘knowledge’ or, better, ‘state of knowledge’, then we can draw a distinction between competence and proficiency as follows:

The latter term [proficiency] designating something like ‘the ability to make use of competence’. Performance is then what is done when proficiency is put to use. Competence can be regarded as a static concept, having to do with structure, state, or form, whereas proficiency is essentially a dynamic concept, having to do with process and function. We can thus avoid the difficulties that arise from confusing these things.

(Taylor, 1983:166)

That is, language users who know the same language (the static sense of competence) can use this language (the dynamic sense of competence) and, as a result, show their proficiency in performance.

Therefore, a very general definition of oral proficiency in English is the learner's ability to speak and use English in actual communication with an interlocutor. Given such definition to oral proficiency implies that there is a close relationship between speaking and listening, which make up two of the four language skills. These two skills are interrelated since both fall within the oral/ aural mode of language.

We can say that a proficient speaker of English is someone who effectively asks or responds to questions, understands teachers, expresses his/ her thoughts easily and accurately, and tends to interact more with an interlocutor. He /she is also the one who is capable of using oral language appropriately and in a skilled way because of practice, especially because of the practice to use larger units of language correctly.

Oral proficiency is a multifaceted concept. That is, oral proficiency involves several aspects of language such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, prosody, fluency and interactional skills. William M. Saunders and Gisela O' Brien claim that: year

Developing proficiency in oral English involves acquiring vocabulary, gaining control over grammar, and developing an understanding of the subtle semantics of English. At the same time, acquiring proficiency in English involves learning how to use the language to interact successfully with other speakers of the language.

(qtd.in Fred Genesee, 2006:14)

Since Oral proficiency is the ultimate goal of EFL learners, we need to look at such concept with more details.

2.2. Lexical Collocations Effects on Oral Proficiency

Referring to researchers such as Gass (1988), Schmidt and Frota(1986), Swain (1995) and others, Schmidt states that attention is what allows “speakers to become aware of a mismatch or gap between what they can produce and what they need to produce, as well as between what they produce and what proficient target language speakers produce” (qtd. in P. Robinson, 2001:06). In other words, attention enables learners to become aware of where they are and where they need to be if their goal is to become proficient in the L2. Also, Nesselhauf (2003:223) comments Collocations are of particular importance “for learners striving for a high degree of competence in the second language, but they were also of some importance for learners with less ambitious aspiration, as they not only enhanced accuracy but also fluency”. In addition, Butler (1995) explores that comparison of written and spoken corpora demonstrates that collocations are even more frequent in spoken language (Peter Robinson, 2001:45).However, frequency only will not get the learner to an advanced level of proficiency, importance and usefulness as Boers and Lindstromberg (2005) recommend “ giving special attention to idioms and collocations which incorporate phonological repetition with mnemonic potential” (qtd. in P. Robinson, 2001:11).

According to Boers et al (2006), drawing learner’s attention to specific prefabricated chunks has positive effects on oral proficiency. They report that formulaic sequences help students become fluent and more generally proficient speakers. Lexical collocations are therefore a necessary element of the L2 learner’s ability to use the target language in an appropriate and effective way. Thus, the problems foreign language learners encounter are immediately relevant to their insufficient mastery of lexical collocation use.

Lexical collocations have an effect on both FL comprehension and FL production. The use of collocations, significantly, enhances comprehension in L2 students’ mechanism as

proved by Mel'cuk(1993). Also, the importance of collocation teaching methods for achieving a more proficient L2 speech has been underlined by several other researchers: Pawley and Syder (1983); Nattinger and Decarrico (1992); Wray (2002); Schmitt (2004). Pawley and Syder, for instance, state that the appropriate use of lexical collocations enables L2 speakers to approximate a native- like level of proficiency. According to Schmitt, learning FL involves sequencing the lexical units of the language: phrases and collocations as cited by Cathercole et al (1991):

Nonword repetition ability and vocabulary knowledge develop in a highly interactive manner. Intrinsic phonological memory skills may influence the learning of new words by constraining the retention of unfamiliar phonological sequences, but in addition, extent of vocabulary will affect the ease of generating appropriate phonological frames to support the phonological representations.

(qtd.in N.Schmitt and M.McCarthy, 1997:127)

Learners' L2 vocabulary extends as they practise hearing and producing L2 chunks, so they automatically and implicitly acquire knowledge of the statistical frequencies and sequential probabilities of the phonotactics of the L2. They will become more proficient at short-term repetition of novel L2 collocations. It is increasingly clear that fluent language is not so completely open-class as Chomskians would have us believe. Consequently, Sinclair (1991) proposes that a language user has available to him or her a large number of "semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices", even though they might appear to be analyzable into segments. To some extent this may illustrate a natural tendency to economy of effort, or it may be motivated in part by the exigencies of real time conversation. "However it arises, it has been relegated to an inferior position in most current linguistics, because it does not fit the open- choice model" (qtd.in N.Schmitt and M.McCarthy, 1997:128).

Furthermore, Peter Skehan (1998) argues that we draw on phrases to facilitate the processing between speaker and hearer. The use of whole multi-word units helps language

users to anticipate the content of incoming messages and the linguistic form of what they are about to say as he argues “...memory can store lexical items in a multiple way in terms of formulaic phrases so as to facilitate a fast retrieval system” (qtd. in Geoff Jordan, 2004:257).

Along the same lines and according to N. Ellis (1997), collocational chunks can consist of entire memorized sentences or phrases that can allow learners to create new constructions to add to their stock of expression. Wray (2002) holds the same view that phrases are retrieved holistically, i. e. as single meaningful unit from memory.

Teachers need to create an environment where oral language is modeled, encouraged, and accepted through a variety of rich and engaging lexical collocations activities. Often, pairing a learner with one who is already proficient is beneficial and helps to promote oral language development. Particularly, teachers need to urge students hearing and using lexical collocations to enhance their overall oral proficiency. Lexical collocations are thus crucial to help students develop their oral skills.

2.3. Listening and Speaking Skills

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are communication skills that are important in all subject areas in the curriculum. So, differences between students' levels of proficiency mean that some students fail to acquire the language skills that enhance second language acquisition (SLA). Hence, the more time students have to practise a skill, the better they learn. In school and in life, students face a diversity of circumstances that require language skills. For this reason, experience with a variety of reading, writing, listening and speaking activities can help learners acquire the skills they need to be successful. Inside the classroom, listening and speaking are the most often used skills (Brown, 1994). That is, English oral proficiency is developed through: listening and speaking. Oral language activities (listening and speaking activities) that include oral interaction can be used to promote

acquisition of academic English and provide critical opportunities for the development of oral proficiency. Next, we look first at listening skills.

2.3.1. Listening Skills

2.3.1.1. Collocations and Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension, which is sometimes referred to as comprehension of oral language or auditory comprehension, is the ability to understand spoken language, in this case the spoken language of English.

Listeners hold the spoken message in short- term memory and later store it in long-term memory, so that it can be retrieved for later use. Listening comprehension requires construction of meaning and phonological awareness. To achieve these two requirements, listening process benefits from larger vocabulary, having the concept of lexical collocations as a unit of meaning. Thus, the more collocations learners know, the better they are able to comprehend spoken English (Esther Usó-Juan, and Alicia Martínez-Flor, 2006:55).

It was assumed that just by repeating, imitating and memorizing what listeners heard, listening comprehension took place. Morley (1999) looks at how audiolingualism emphasized the practice of listening by engaging learners in a series of exercises that focused on pronunciation drills, memorization of prefabricated patterns and imitation of dialogues. The listening process, particularly the process of lexical recognition, is highly influenced by linguistic environment. Vandergrift (1999) holds the view that “the listener is actively engaged in constructing meaning from a variety of contexts and input sources” (qtd. in Usó-Juan and Alicia Martinez, 2006:35).

Rost (1994) views that listening comprehension recognizes relatively powerful lexical effects. Accordingly, listening can involve sampling the sound signal and matching it

with expectations, rather than the careful hearing and identification of each morpheme. In addition, habitual and frequent linguistic patterns yield to quick top-down processing of language. Paying attention to such patterns simplifies the task of a listener since lexical access can occur without focused attention on all aspects of the stream of speech as P. Santillan Grimm addresses that learners can recognize correct- in the sense of naturally co-occurring - lexical combinations because “they have heard them combined that way plenty of times; they have interiorized those pairings as unanalyzed chunks over the time” (Santillan Grimm, 2009:170). Thus, we need to look at this relationship, between listening and lexical collocations, in next section.

2.3.1.2. The Role of Listening in Collocation Acquisition

With the transition from the grammar- translation method to the audio- lingual method in the 1950's, when there was a move away from the written language to the spoken language, so much emphasis was placed on speaking. It was often overlooked that communication is a two- way process, and comprehension, i.e. listening was given attention to notice the pre-fabricated chunks. Listening was and still is considered as a subordinate activity to achieve speaking proficiency as Kelley (1985; 51) points out “the main preoccupation was with improving learners’ knowledge of spontaneous spoken language by the use of "authentic" materials”(qtd. in Quing Ma, 2009: 137). Furthermore, linguists mainly Whitson (1972) and Kelly (1992) demonstrate that the main obstacle for advanced learners in listening comprehension was a lack of lexical knowledge, not a poor auditory perception.

Accordingly, Kelly (1992) mentions:

Even if the foreign language learner could acquire the highest degree of auditory Perception attainable by the native speaker, he would not find it much of an advantage: unless he can learn to use his language knowledge and other available or previously acquired information to predict or anticipate what will be said, to deduce or recognize words on the basis of absent or incomplete sound indicators, to bring into play his knowledge of the sound patterns of language, a keen ear will be of little use to him.

(qtd.in Quing Ma, 2009: 138)

Besides the most notable linguists, according to Quing Ma (2009:78), who are in favour of listening to improve second language acquisition (SLA), Lozanov (1979, suggestopedia); Asher (1983 total physical response); Winitz (1978, listening based language course); Nord (1978, listening based paradigm), Ostyn and his colleagues (1989) developed the listening based approach through which learners are required to listen to the target language and then to perform oral and other exercises. Listening, also, is the basic skill because of the transfer effects of listening to the other skills. In terms of the importance of listening, Ellis (2002) mentions that “ through language frequency input, particularly listening, that learners master thousands of words, multi- word items and longer strings of language”(qtd. in Quing Ma, 2009:82). Furthermore, because of the learning of lexical chunks, if the sound input is provided, learners retain the vocabulary longer than when it is learned only visually.

Furthermore, two major characteristics associated with listening in L2: unfamiliar topics and the foreign linguistic code. Advanced learners of foreign language study are more likely to encounter speeches with unfamiliar topics such as cultural beliefs or social changes currently taking place in the target society, including collocation expressions that reflect day-to-day experiences. Challenges brought by unfamiliar topics and difficult language simultaneously can be overwhelming to second language listeners and severely affect their comprehension. However, the listening process is an active, constructive one in which listeners actively interact with the speech by using all available resources, both from

information presented in the speech and from their previous knowledge. Collocation is the tool that supplies the listeners with the appropriate information to the unfamiliarity of the English linguistic code to promote students' success. Interestingly, such tool helps the FL learners speak appropriately.

2.3.2. Speaking Skills

2. 3.2.1 Lexical Collocations and Speaking

Speaking is a unique form of communication which is the basis of all human relationships. In addition, more than the other language skills, speech production is considered difficult for all learners, and particularly for the second language learners. Reluctance to speak the new language can be caused by many factors other than abstract language proficiency. Thus, to become a proficient speaker in spontaneous conversations, the foreign language learner needs to acquire skills and knowledge concerning vocabulary, grammar, fluency and pronunciation. In particular, learners have to acquire collocations and retrieve them when necessary as they once heard them used by a native speaker. Therefore, learners need to make a balance between informal day- to-day encounters, and formal uses of spoken discourse such as presentations, examinations and interviews. Most learners learn a foreign language best when they are provided with opportunities to use the target language to communicate in a wide range of activities as it is mentioned by Thornbury (2005:131): “learners cannot learn to speak simply through doing reading and writing activities on vocabulary and grammar. Where speaking is a priority, language classrooms need to become talking classrooms”. Teachers have to provide learners with opportunities for practising specific speaking skills. Learners need to know how speakers differ from one another and how particular circumstances call for different forms of speech. They can learn how speaking styles affect listeners. Thus, the rate

at which they speak, the precision of pronunciation may differ substantially from one situation to another.

Moreover, vocabulary is an essential element in the development of each of the language skills. The development of vocabulary and related skills is therefore emphasized through making learners aware of collocations. Accordingly, learners need to know which collocation is more convenient for which circumstance. They effortlessly pick up the regular collocates in speaking, with the purpose of being able to produce output such as the one produced by a native speaker. In other words, it is important to direct students to examples of collocations in real speeches because through illustrating to students that collocations are truly part of the language, and that by making use of such combinations the students will add fluidity and a native-like trait to their spoken language. By helping learners understand and encouraging them to use collocations, the teacher will provide them with a tool which can be used inside the classroom and throughout their academic life as Lewis (2000:196) mentions: “equip learners to expand their individual mental lexicons in a way which is relevant, personal and a skill which can be taken away as a tool for life”. Also, the relative significance of collocations pointed out in Oxford collocations Dictionary (2009), addressing that when learners select appropriate collocations they not only “express themselves much more clearly”, but also convey meaning more accurately.

It is worth stressing that the largest part of an English speaker’s lexicon consists of lexical chunks. As Hill mentions, it is possible that up to 70% of everything we say, hear, read or write is to be found in some form of fixed expression (Lewis, 2000:53). Nation (2001:324) argues that Collocational sequences are important and need to be encountered many times, “certainly in normal meaning-focused use with some pressure or encouragement to perform at a faster speed than a struggling learner usually performs at”. Similarly, According to Oxford

Collocations Dictionary (2009: vii), collocations spread through the whole of English language and no piece of natural spoken or written English is totally free of collocations.

Furthermore, Yorio (1989:113-14) mentions that collocability in a speech community is also dependent upon target like lexical knowledge or native-like selection as Pawley and Syder (1983) labeled, and according to Howarth (1996), it means: among other things that speakers or writers are able to choose and recognize, appropriate vocabulary and expressions for the social situation and register are needed. This native-like selection of vocabulary has great importance for many aspects of language competence, most importantly in speech production. Yorio (1989:115) suggests that “conventionalized language in appropriate amount and accuracy gives speakers the impression of control and fluency, while a lack or overuse of it can make a text seem very accented”. Moreover, the lexical collocation effect on speech production has been the focus of many linguistic studies. Such issue is looked at in the next section.

2.3.2.2. Speaking Production

According to Levelt (1989), vocabulary is a crucial factor in sentence production: “The assumption that the lexicon is an essential mediator between conceptualisation and grammatical and phonological encoding will be called the lexical hypothesis” (qtd. in Judit Kormos, 2006:167). In addition to aiding production, the lexicon acquires significance in the comprehension of input as well (as explained in section 2.3.1). Some speech processes can be observed more clearly in multilinguals than in monolinguals because the former have more than one set of representational symbols. Most of the models in speech processing have taken much of their impetus from studies of errors. Speakers are sometimes forced into saying something that they had not originally planned. In addition to that, there are also phenomena of choice of words to consider. Levelt’s model has been considered the basis to explain how speech of multilinguals is produced. Since this processing model satisfies many linguists, it is

adapted to maintain that the speaker stores the possible sounds and prosodic patterns, specifically collocations and idioms of all the languages to which he is exposed. Thus, the more collocations learners can use in speaking, the better they can develop their language styles and self- expression.

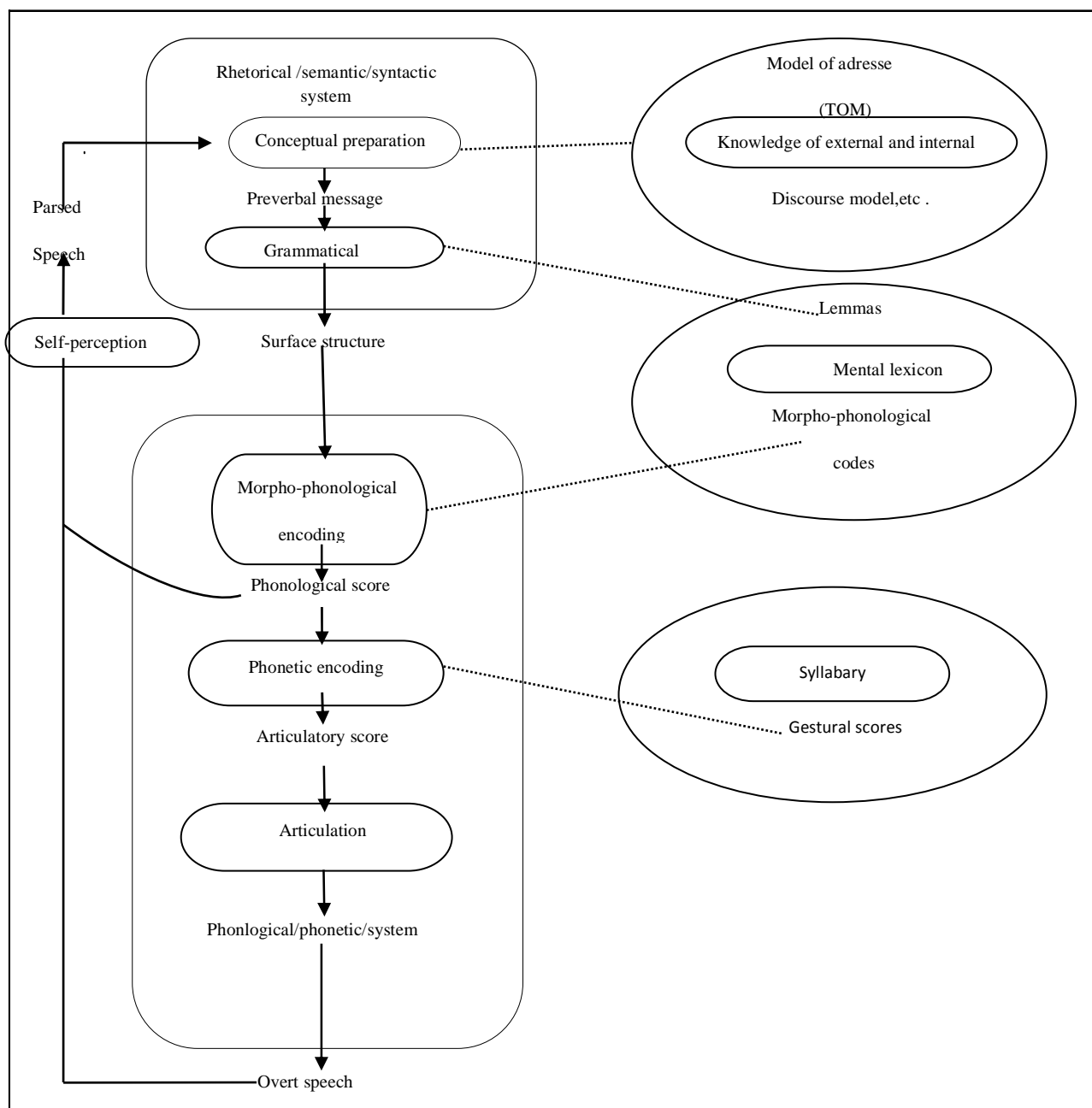


Figure 2 : Levelt' s Speech Production Model (1989)

Adapted from Judit Kormos (2006:168)

Also, Levelt (1989) acknowledges the importance of the short-term storage of information in language production, but this aspect has not been fully developed to retain language sequences. Working Memory Capacity is, generally associated with speaking a second language, a verbal span or the ability to maintain phonological information in memory.

According to George Miller (1956), learners' phonological memory systems automatically and often unconsciously abstract patterned chunks from the stream of speech to which they are exposed. Newell (1990) argues that chunks lead to automaticity and fluency in language:

A chunk is unit of memory organization, formed by bringing together a set of already formed chunks in memory and welding them together into a large unit. Chunking implies the ability to build up such structures recursively, thus leading to a hierarchical organization of memory chunking appears to be a ubiquitous feature of human memory. Conceivably, it could form the basis for an equally ubiquitous law of practice.

(qtd.in N.Schmitt and M.McCarthy, 1997:124)

As it is explained in such quotation, chunking is a very important practice that helps the FL speaker's retention of larger lexical units. So, repetition of sequences in phonological short-term memory allows their consolidation in phonological long-term memory. Also, repetition of foreign language sequences promotes long-term retention.

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.

2.4. Miscollocations

Collocations allow learners to think more quickly and communicate more efficiently. However, foreign language learners need to be exposed more to the target language in order to be familiar with these frequently-occurred lexical chunks to develop their collocational competence. Hill(2000) explains that the lack of competence in this area forces students into grammatical mistakes because they create longer utterances, without knowing the collocations which express precisely what they want to say. Teachers often focus on correcting the grammar mistakes, failing to realize that it will make no difference because the mistakes are not made because of faulty grammar but a lack of collocations. This problem expresses the example, mentioned by Lewis (2000:50): A student easily invents the structure, *his disability will continue until he dies*. The student has to invent this example because s/he lacks the collocation: *He has a permanent disability*.

Moreover, Wang (2003) comments that the weakness of collocation use is that foreign language learners can often grasp the first dimension of collocation that of conventional pairing, i.e. co-occurring of words together, but cannot appropriately use the second one that is referred to as non- substitutability. Thus, foreign language learners as they supply the correct collocate for a specific focal word, they incorrectly judge the counterpart miscollocation to be acceptable as well, such as *take medicine* and **eat medicine*. So, although learners have the ideas and the lexical words, they do not know which words could be joined together to form correct expressions.

Howarth(1998:28) concludes that “ the evidence of non-native speakers collocation deviation...[showed] that many learners failed to understand the existence of the central area of the phraseology spectrum between free combinations and idioms”.

Moreover, students, even at an advanced level, are usually not aware of the collocational

properties of words. In other words, they are not familiar with the naturally occurring of words. Consequently, although they may have a large reservoir of vocabulary knowledge, they sometimes produce patterns that simply do not sound English. A foreign language learner must learn not only what is possible to say grammatically, but also what a native speaker is likely to say. Michael Lewis (2000:8) observes that “every word has its own grammar ... and knowing a word involves knowing its grammar -the patterns in which it is regularly used”.

To get rid of such problem, little can be done besides noticing such faults as have been observed to avoid them in future to help the learners achieve fluency as claimed by Nesselhauf (2005). Students’ attention must be directed towards the collocational errors they made. Teachers, thus, have to make students aware of the most common collocations that are frequently used by native speakers. Miscollocations can be caused by different different factors, particularly linguistic transfer and the misuse of near synonyms.

2.4.1. Linguistic Transfer and Learners’ Miscollocations

Collocations are a pervasive feature of many languages and English seems to be particularly rich in such multi-word expressions. It is worth noting that many students do not know how to use them. Students have serious problems with the production of collocationally correct language. Nesselhauf’s results show that even advanced students have considerable difficulty in the production of collocation (2003:237).

Collocations can interestingly present both intralingual and interlingual challenges as Gitsaki and Taylor (1997) contend. Collocations, on one hand, describe lexical relations and word combinations, but joining words that are semantically compatible does not always produce acceptable combinations. For instance, *many thanks* is an acceptable English collocation but **several thanks* is not. On the other hand, collocations can differ from

language to language. Significantly native speakers spontaneously, for instance, collocate the noun money with a small verb-set: earns, makes, saves, has, likes, wants, spends and needs (Seal, 1981). Ideally we want L₂ learners to form the same word combinations (or lexical chunks) but often this does not happen because of interference from the mother tongue. Thus, learners are most likely to face great obstacles in cases where they negatively transfer their linguistic knowledge of the L₁ to an L₂ context (Pavlenko, 2009).

The influence of the learners' first language on the additional languages they acquire is referred to as cross- linguistic influence, which succeeded the traditional notion of language transfer.

2.4.1.1. Mother Tongue Interference

Concerning the interlingual problems, Martelli (1998) points out that mother tongue interference accounts for the generation of wrong collocations. In the same way, Shalev (2000) believes that EFL students tend to make mistakes because of the differences between English and their mother tongue, David Crystal (1985) mentions that collocations differ greatly between languages and provide a major difficulty in mastering foreign languages.

Unlike young children, older foreign language learners have already developed rich conceptual and semantic systems which are already linked to L1. Thus, the acquisition of L2 vocabulary usually involves a mapping of the new word form onto pre-existing conceptual meanings or onto L1 translation equivalents as approximations. Ringbom (2007) describes semantic transfer in terms of the learner's knowledge of the L2 system which includes both grammar and vocabulary, and also includes collocational restrictions and links between words. He thinks that the types of methods used for eliciting learner's knowledge collocations have involved translation and fill-in the blank tasks as well as unguided essays. These studies have documented a great number of instances of collocational transfer and have

confirmed that the “lemma-lemma associations that learners have in their L1s are indeed often carried over to the corresponding lemmas in the L2” (qtd. in Pavlenco, 2009 :116). However, according to Ringbom, proficiency does not completely prevent collocational transfer from occurring. Ijaz also demonstrates that even advanced adult EFL learners are heavily influenced by native language transfer:

The second language learners essentially relied on a semantic Equivalence hypothesis. This hypothesis facilitates the acquisition of lexical meanings in the L2 in that it reduces it to the relabelling of concepts already learned in the L1. It confounds and complicates vocabulary acquisition in the L2 by ignoring crosslingual differences in conceptual classification and differences in the semantic boundaries of seemingly corresponding words in the L1 and L2.
(Ijaz, 1986:134)

But, such mapping inevitably leads to negative transfers or errors. Additionally, a learner’s interlanguage is distinguished from the full-fledged language of a competent speaker by the fact that the former exhibits features indicating the incomplete mastery of the code. The learner’s language is characterized by linguistically incorrect and /or contextually inappropriate forms and expressions .Both types of deviations are labeled “errors” when they result from a lack of competence in the language. In addition to linguistic and pragmatic deviations, an interlanguage may produce certain expressions that are linguistically and pragmatically correct but still sound ‘unnatural’ or ‘strange’ .This strangeness is captured by an inclusive definition of “error” such as the one proposed by Lennon (1991: 182) “a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all likelihood not be produced by the speaker’s native speaker counterpart”.

Moreover, when a language feature is absent from the L1, the L2 learner fails to notice its existence in the 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 common collocates of *hair* in both languages Arabic and English, but the collocations *damaged hair* and *brittle hair* have no close equivalents in Arabic (Baker,1992:60). In this respect, Farghal and Obiedat (1995) claim that Arabic learners exhibit poor knowledge of collocations, making use of lexical simplification through synonymy, avoidance, transfer and paraphrasing. Particularly, a lot of collocational errors that EFL Algerian students commit are due to negative transfer from either Arabic as a mother tongue or French as a second language. students have to think in and use the target language as much as possible in order to avoid translating Arabic collocations into English because what seems an acceptable Arabic collocation is not so in English and vice versa. To illustrate, the Arabic term *sani'u al-qarar* has established itself as a translation for the English *decision-makers* despite the fact that it has a collocation problem, *sani'u* and *qarar* do not collocate in Arabic. Also, in English *deliver* collocates with *a letter* or *speech*; however, in Arabic *yusallimu* and *yulqi* collocate with *Risala* and *Khitaban*, respectively. (A.Darwish,2003:122)

Many Arabic linguists shed light on such errors (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989; Farghal and Obiedat ,1995). It is argued that, a study reported by Abdul Moneim Mahmoud (2003), after a long period of foreign language study, many Arabic students of English make collocational errors such as **pray the prayer* and **complete life*. According to Thomas (1984), “This is hardly surprising, given the vast scope and very idiosyncratic use of lexical items and collocations” (qtd. in A. Mahmoud,2005:119). Nevertheless, some correctly produced collocations are positively transferred from Arabic like *valuable advice*, *break relationships*. So, advanced learners have a relatively large stock of target language vocabulary, they may think it would be easy for them to find equivalents to their mother tongue collocations. He mentions that there are two varieties of Arabic from which they can transfer: Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)and Non- standard Arabic (NSA); and due to the similarity of the two varieties, many collocational errors could be attributed to both MSA and

NSA. Most of the students rely on word-for-word translation from Arabic; and they basically rely on NSA transfer because transfers from MSA have led to the selection of different English equivalents such as: * say his opinion that is transferred from NSA: yaqool and not from MSA: show (yubdi) or express (yu'abbir).

Arab -speaking students make errors when producing collocations in English . Such errors indicate that EFL students depend on interlingual translations to facilitate learning. In other words, students transfer negatively from Arabic whereby they replace the Arabic words with the English ones, expecting that Arabic common collocations are the same with English collocations, or they are not familiar with collocations. Thus , teachers have to make their students aware of collocations through direct teaching and exercises aimed at raising awareness of collocations, depending on simplified contrastive comparisons between English and Arabic collocations, to help them see when to transfer and when not to. In addition, they need to be exposed to the target language collocations through reading and listening. Particularly, since Algerian EFL students live in a society where three languages simultaneously used, they need to be aware of the differences between English collocations and Arabic ones as well as English collocations and French ones.

2.4.1.2. French Interference

French, the language of the colonial ruler, plays an important role in education as well as in administration; particularly, during French colonialism and early years of independence. As a result of the political and social development of Algeria, the two languages are connected in a dialectal process. Recently, English is introduced in the Algerian educational system and Algeria is regarded as a multilingual society. David Crystal (1997:310) mentions such fact: “In 1996,for example, English replaced French as the chief foreign language in schools in Algeria (a former French colony)” .

Because of the close similarities between English and French languages which are derived from the same language family (the Indo-European language family), Algerian students of English think that one would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. If languages were like this, the task of learning a new language would also be much easier than it is. Students negatively transfer from French to English, specifically in the case of false friends as Ellie Malet (2010:1) says: “be aware of false friends: attendre means to wait and not to attend ; also assister à means to attend not to assist which means to help (aider)”. Moreover, Qing Ma (2006:96) points out:

If the L1 and L2 share a lot of vocabulary like French and English. There is a high probability of the L2 learner using an L2 word frequently in the L2 if it occurs in the L1, while in fact the L2 word may actually much less frequently, thus the L2 word becomes overused. For example, augmenter is a frequent word in French, but enlarge or increase will be more appropriate in similar situations in English, ‘augment’ being reserved for very formal usage.

Languages also differ in the way they choose words to co-occur with other words, expressing certain meanings but not others as it is mentioned by Mona Baker(2006:10): “the concepts ... of one language may differ radically from those of another ... each language articulates or organizes the world differently”. Accordingly, a large number of transfers from French to English would coincide with high incidence of miscollocations. Success in finding the right collocation seems simply to depend on native speaker’s speech. For example “répondre d’un ton sec”, native speakers would simply say “to reply sharply” rather than “drily”. Another illustration, among many others, is the adjective blanc :

Une nuit blanche	A sleepless night
Une colère blanche	A towering rage
Un jeu blanc	A love game

Baker(1992:53) has the example of the english adjective “dry” which would require a different french collocation : Dry voice /book/ humour/wine/bread/run; to illustrate the

concept of collocational meaning, the phenomenon whereby an adjective needs a different translation according to the noun it qualifies. However, learners have to be aware of collocational restriction that operates to produce largely arbitrary variation between near-synonyms. Astington (1983, qtd. in Armstrong, 2005 : 121) provides the following example :

-Notre civilisation est tout simplement incapable de résoudre les problèmes qui nous préoccupent.

-Our culture simply doesn't have the answers to our problems.

Astington makes the point that while English has the possibility of combining 'problem' with 'answer' and 'solution'. French has a narrower scope, being limited to the related terms 'résoudre' and 'solution'. This narrowness of expressive possibility may of course work in either directions between English and French ;that is , French may have more than one collocative option where English has only one in other examples. For instance, the French collocation "l'exégèse dominante", although exegesis and dominant exist in English, is not a characteristic of an everyday register. But in English, speakers combine the prevailing with theory / hypothesis / explanation. Yet, students do not know such collocational problems caused by French influence because they think that English and French have similar lexical collocations, referring to the cases when a word has the same meaning in the two languages such as : solution, presentation, introduction...

Every language has its own set of idiosyncratic words, expressions, and collocational ranges for its vocabulary. However, students use prior linguistic knowledge either from Arabic or French.

2.4.2. Near-Synonyms

Two or more words which have closely related meaning are called synonyms. Thus, one could be substituted for the other without affecting the meaning of a sentence. Synonyms help to explain difficult words with easier ones. Sometimes one word is appropriate in a sentence, but its synonym would be odd. It can however be maintained that there are no ‘total synonyms’. That is, no two words have exactly the same meaning (palmer, 1981: 32). In other words, near synonyms are not collocationally interchangeable in all their contexts. This is why near or partial synonyms refer to words which are similar in meaning but which are not always interchangeable in all contexts.

Sinclair (1970) notes that each meaning of a word can be associated with a specific collocation or pattern. Along the same lines, Hoey (2005:82) argues that “where two senses of a word are approximately as common as each other they will both avoid each other’s collocations”.

Muler (2008 : 09) explains that even though rich and wealthy are synonyms, but only rich can collocate with imagination (not * wealthy). FL learners should be made aware that lexical meanings cannot be determined only by semantics. Therefore, it is helpful to examine the effects of collocation information on lexical meaning and lexical choice. Accordingly, stubbs (2001) mentions that there are always semantic relations between node and collocations and among collocates themselves.

To sum up, we can say that the proper use of collocation information leads to learners’ successful comprehension of lexical semantics. Although synonyms are similar in meaning, they have different collocational restrictions when they co-occur with different words in a sentence. Thus, it is very important to extend students’ language by including near synonyms where appropriate. Students also have to rely not only on dictionaries with

denotational meaning but on those with collocational behaviour as well; because the collocational behaviour provides the necessary information for them to compare and discriminate near synonyms. Collocational knowledge affects not only the semantic properties of lexical patterns but their pronunciation as well to avoid odd accents.

2. 5. Collocation Accent

Attitudes towards different varieties of language can be remarkably powerful. Crystal (1997) mentions that learners need to be exposed to the many varieties available today, especially those they are likely to encounter in their regions. Interestingly, people listened to the same speech, for instance, listened to the same argument against capital punishment spoken with different accents. Some accents (of high prestige) were effective in changing people's views on this matter, while others were not (accents of low prestige). So, accent merely means a loud stress of voice. In addition, the accent of monosyllables depends upon their collocations, falling on its principal word. Certain collocations indicate one accent pattern; while different collocations will tend to indicate another. For the purpose of calling attention to the meaning, many linguists argue that collocation information is a useful predictor of pitch accent placement (Marsi, Erwin 2001:264)

David Crystal (1997) argues that although most English textbooks, concerned about tones, compose of illustrations of connected speech and conversation dialogues, the jump which has to be made between satisfactory performance of single tone-units or pairs of tone-units is too great to be coped with by the majority of students. There is great difficulty in applying the information learned about the individual tone-units to produce acceptable versions of longer units. All one has to do is string independently learned tone-units together, and without any further modification, one produces natural English speech. However, acceptable connected speech is not simply a matter of degree from acceptable tone-unit

pronunciation, but involves modifications, additions and deletions within the tone-units. Moreover, As soon as tone-units begin to be juxtaposed in connected speech, one has to consider the questions of what might be called tonal Collocation, i.e. the extent to which the formal co-occurrence of tones display predictable restrictions.

Palmer (1933), on the basis of his pedagogical approach, makes a major distinction between two types of tone sequences: coordinating and subordinating. The former refers to tone groups of the same type (adverbials especially), whereas the latter refers to disparate sequences of tone groups (two prominent elements of different importance). We can say that even early linguists such as Palmer want to make EFL learners aware of the necessity of collocation to produce an acceptable tone as he called it.

Also, many of the most familiar concepts and speech acts can be expressed collocationally. If a speaker can pull these formulas readily from memory, that is, if they are automatised, or if clauses can be retrieved and reproduced automatically, without a need for individual planning, syntactic processing and encoding needed within clauses, fluency is enhanced. Since speech is therefore not produced word- for word, the speaker can focus on rhythm, variety, combining memorized chunks or producing creative connections of lexical strings or concepts.

Teachers need to be careful about how far students' reaction to other people is affected by their speech. Thus, students have to encounter the truly acceptable accent to get rid of mis-chunking that leads to miscomprehension and to unnatural reproduction of English. The common factor in the new varieties of English is the reality that they are spoken as L2 by those who speak genetically unrelated languages .Even if English is learned from childhood, the models for language use (teachers) are L2 speakers of English not native speakers. Hence, it is the teacher's task to facilitate to his/her students the learning of lexical collocations to

acquire the acceptable combinations with a natural sounding or native-like accent. Next, we proceed to explain this task in detail.

2.6. How to Facilitate the Acquisition of Lexical Collocations

The most important task facing foreign language learners is acquiring a sufficiently large vocabulary which makes them more proficient. Yet, most learners are unable to express their ideas and thoughts efficiently because they lack collocational knowledge. They can overcome such problem by being exposed to lexical collocations through noticing and consciousness-raising. But, the teacher has to be selective in highlighting collocations to draw learner's attention to them. In addition, encountering them in different contexts leads to the consolidation of their forms and meanings. Concerning the idea of explaining less and discussing more and how to facilitate the learner's task, Morgan Lewis writes:

the reason so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply because they have not been trained to notice which words go with which, they may know quite a lot of individual words which they struggle to use, along with their grammatical knowledge, but they lack the ability to use those words in a range of collocations which pack more meaning into what they say or write. Teachers continually bringing useful collocations to students' attention and helping them remember them, rather than trying to improve their grammar or giving them a lot more new words, which can so easily mean obscure, rarely used words.

(qtd. in Lewis, 2000:14)

First of all, we are going to focus on how to draw the students' attention towards two words or more that are likely to be found together.

2.6.1. Collocation Awareness-Raising

Consciousness is commonly equated with awareness. Ellis Claims that consciousness-raising is based on providing the learner with an opportunity to be exposed to a specific feature of the language. He views: "consciousness-raising refers to a deliberate attempt on the part of the teacher to make the learners aware of specific features of the L2" (Ellis, r,

1993:108). Consciousness-raising aims at sensitizing learners to the general difficulties involved which may help them to understand these features in the future. An important target of consciousness-raising mentioned by Wills and Willis (1996:66) is collocation. So, to make ‘the word partnership’, or collocation, clearer; the teacher might show to the students these word combinations or even their concordances. Also, having been asked to identify the common patterns, the student will retrieve them later to be used appropriately.

Most lexical items may not be new, but the fact of occurring together is not observed. Collocations are therefore missed by any EFL teacher because the teacher’s approach to dealing with vocabulary is to ask the students: Are there any words you do not know? Peter Skehan argues that collocations must be pointed out by the teacher to make it possible for the learners to expand their mental lexicons. He says: “the role of instruction is not necessarily therefore in the clarity or in the explanation it provides, but rather in the way it channels attention and brings into awareness what otherwise would have been missed” (qtd. in Lewis, 2000:23).

George Woolard (2000) believes that the effective way for raising awareness of collocations is to focus on a selection of students’ miscollocations. By focusing student’s attention on miscollocations, teachers make them aware that learning more vocabulary is not just learning new words, it is often learning familiar words in new combinations.

Accordingly, Woolard states that:

The teaching of grammar and vocabulary has not sensitized our students to the collocational constraints on word combinations. For instance, “make and do” collocations provide a useful starting point for introducing the notion of collocation to learners...there is no reason why it should be make a decision rather than do a decision. We need to make them aware that this is simply the way we say things in English.

(qtd. in Lewis, 2000: 30)

Furthermore, students have to avoid recording every collocation they meet. This means they must be discouraged from recording every weak collocations (nice house, good vacation), or strong ones which are very unusual, and probably not appropriate for most learners (reduced to penury), as Jane Conzett mentions: “the teacher has the responsibility to direct learner’s attention to the most useful collocations, those which hold high priority in the context” (qtd. in Lewis, 2000: 74).

Traditionally, learners firstly need to learn some central grammar structures and master these structures, and then they would move to more proficient speech and writing. The approach that tries to combine practising rules in a sort of communicative way is called presentation, practice and production (PPP). Willis (1996) claims that it is unsatisfactory teaching methods because P-P-P focuses on a specific target forms. Also, the production is an exercise in producing a language expected by the teacher rather than using language for real communication. An alternative paradigm is Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment.

Consequently, teachers help the learners to observe the language to which they are exposed. Observing the language means learners are aware of lexical chunks. This awareness involves a clear understanding of collocation. For spoken English, it means identifying the meaning of the whole chunk. Hypothesize means sorting the input in terms of significant similarities and differences. It implies sorting, matching, identifying and describing (Willis and Willis cited in Lewis, 2000:177-178).

Lewis (2000:60) points out that it is worth emphasizing to students that they do not really know a word unless they also know its collocational field because there are many groups of words such as date/ appointment / meeting or broad / wide which can be clarified only on the basis of their different collocational field. Experiment involves using the language on the basis of the learner’s current hypothesis. In other words, it involves the creation of appropriate materials and tasks that emphasize learners’ experiment and creativity.

Tomasello and Herron (1989) found that learners who made an error and were immediately corrected learned more than learners who simply had the correct form explained to them. They comment: “Students learn best when they produce a hypothesis and receive feedback, because this creates maximal conditions under which they may cognitively compare their own system to that of mature systems” (qtd. in Nation, 2008:140).

Ellis (2006) views that collocation acquisition is mainly an automatic and implicit process that takes place as learners’ vocabulary extends, or as a result of being conscious and aware of lexical collocations as they practise hearing and producing the patterns. He says: “...general learning mechanisms of chunking and sequence analysis, operating in the particular domain of phonological memory allow the acquisition of formulas, phrases, idioms and collocations” (29). Furthermore, according to Gabys-Biskup (1992) , Probably the best and easiest way for students to acquire the collocational system of a foreign language is“ to be extensively exposed to a live language spoken and used by native speakers at a certain period of time”(qtd. in Schmidt,1991:131).

The teacher has to focus on lexical collocations and to draw the learners’ attention to patterns that exist in speeches or dialogues they have already listened to. Thus, developing an awareness of collocation as an important level of language is necessary because of its effectiveness.

2.6.1.1 Consciousness -Raising Activities

Lewis (1997) introduces the idea of observing the language as it was mentioned above in the Observe- Hypothesize-Experiment Paradigm. He adds to this idea the fact that teaching lexical collocations can help learners acquire the language by encouraging the transition from input to intake. This transition can be supported by activities which help learners observe the language more accurately and formulate the hypotheses about the language. Conscious-raising

activities encourage learners to notice particular features of the language, to draw conclusions from what they notice and to organize their views of the language.

Willis and Willis (1996) suggest operations to ask students to:

- . Search a set of data to identify a particular pattern or usage and the language forms associated with it.
- . Work with a set of data and sort it according to similarities and differences based on formal or semantic criteria.
- . Make a generalization about language and ask to check this against more language data.
- . Find similarities and differences between patterning in their own language and patterning in English.
- . Manipulate language in ways which reveal underlying patterns.
- . Recall and reconstruct elements of a text. The purpose of the recall is to highlight significant features of the text.
- . Learn to use reference works-dictionaries, grammars and study guides.

The outcome of these operations would be an increased awareness of and sensitivity to language.

The goal of consciousness-raising activities is to help learners notice language chunks when they appear in the input .There is no need to result in deliberate production, but develop an awareness of the form, function and meaning of lexical collocations.

2.6.1.2. Collocation Activities and Oral Production

Students may learn collocations as they are reading or listening. Teachers may ask students to look for collocations in a reading. Other students may add their own collocations when they know them. Teachers can also give lists of collocations to students as they come up in class. Students may locate collocations in collocation dictionaries or in concordance programs as well. Here are some lexical collocations exercise examples, basically related to speaking :

-students can be asked to identify which words go with.

-students can finish set expressions.

-students can be given cards with nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and asked to create expressions or sentences with the words on those cards.

Teachers may also introduce collocations by making word charts that show with which other words can be used. Then, asking their students to discuss in a team work certain daily life topics related to the collocations presented before. Students may also be introduced to concordance programs on computers. Furthermore, students can also do various exercises in which they are asked to recognize collocations listened in a tape, and then reproduce certain collocations.

Teachers should make students aware of collocations as a vital key to language learning. Asking students to sort out all verb + noun collocations in a text they heard will be a typical exercise. Another typical activity in awareness-raising can be taking a common word and asking students to find as many collocates as they can. Teacher can supply students with a text full of near synonymous words and ask them to fill in the gaps, discussing the collocational behavior of synonymous words. Such activity clearly explores the difference in meaning with words of this kind rather than any explanation of the supposed differences. To

raise students' awareness of collocations, teachers need to strengthen it through the development of the students' abilities to notice such lexical combinations. Simply put, once the students are made aware of lexical collocations, they need to notice them.

2.6.2. Noticing Lexical Collocations

How collocations should be treated in the classroom needs to be made and clarified to help learners acquire the foreign language. An efficient way to help learners encounter collocations is to notice them whenever they read or listen to anything in English or look them up in a good learner's dictionary. Encouraging learners to notice all such patterns in input rather than making an attempt to present just a few specific instances out of the tens of thousands that exist, with the false expectation that learners will remember and use them. The term noticing can refer to both accidental awareness and deliberate focusing of attention. So, it is the case that sometimes learners are able to recall what they accidentally noticed, while on other occasions they cannot recall something to which they paid deliberate attention because they frequently do not notice the precise way through which an idea is expressed. Lewis (2000), the pioneering linguist who urges these stages to facilitate the acquisition of lexical collocations and to implement their teaching, says: "it is likely to be helpful to make learners explicitly aware of the lexical nature of language. this means helping learners develop an understanding of the kinds of chunks found in the texts they meet" (161).

Lewis also views that noticing language helps learners to sort it into categories or patterns rather than wasting endless hours concentrating on descriptions of lexical chunks. Thus, some training in the sorts of chunks found in the texts they hear or read helps the learners notice useful language as Peter Skehan (1998) observes:

Input contains many alternative features for processing, and the learner's task is to extract relevant features which can then be focussed on fruitfully...Instruction can work...by making salient less obvious aspects of the input, So that it is the learner that does the extracting and focussing, but as a function of how he or she has been prepared.

(qtd. in Lewis, 2000:162)

Similarly and according to Nation (2001:64), noticing means paying attention to the target lexical chunks in language input via “decontextualisation, i.e., separating it from the flow of language message in which it is situated”. Along the same lines, Schmidt (1992) argues that learning without noticing is impossible. He claims:

Conscious- awareness at the level of noticing is a necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake, and that the requirement of noticing applies to vocabulary as well as syntax, phonology, and pragmatics. However, if noticing applies to vocabulary, it should therefore apply to formulaic sequences [collocations].

(Schmidt, 1992:131)

What is essential for lexical acquisition is learner's noticing of lexical collocations explicitly. Clearly advocated by Lewis (2000)-in line with Krashen's acquisitional theory, input-noticing-intake-output paradigm, the only difference (between the two paradigms) being noticing between input and intake. According to Lewis, intake is what learners consciously notice. The input or the language met by learners can be turned into language they acquire and have access to for spontaneous use-intake- it is necessary for learners to be able to notice the linguistic wrapping in which the message is delivered. First, they need to notice and focus attention on the input rather than on the message delivered by this input. Then, they need to see the difference between their unnatural language and a similar natural version which expresses exactly the same content. Through such noticing - seeing or hearing-, the input can contribute to intake as Lewis mentions: “Noticing probably has at least a facilitative, helpful effect. Explicit noticing is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to ensure that input

becomes intake”(Lewis, 2000:161). Students significantly need to notice similarities and differences, restrictions and examples of collocations related to the topic either heard or discussed. Also, understanding the input is a necessary condition. But, the purpose of input is for it to become intake, and that in turn, must be available for productive use. The ultimate purpose of input is learner output.

Noticing alone is not sufficient; students have to record collocations according to their needs. Accordingly, George woolard views that collocation is mostly a matter of noticing and recording, and trained students should be able to explore texts for themselves. Not only should they notice common collocations in the texts they meet, but more importantly, they should select those collocations which are “crucial to their particular needs” (Lewis, 2000:35).

Therefore, teachers have to encourage and develop the students’ ability to notice the collocations which are significant and useful for them, and they need to express a specific topic, using a special genre, under a given register, woolard’s view is that students need to spend time in identifying the basic parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective and adverb) as well as their structural categories. Then, they have to make emphasis on the role of the noun (nouns are the focus of information in a text). Students have to be encouraged to follow the steps below; to help them record interesting collocations :

- isolate key nouns in the text.
- look for unexpected verb collocates
- look for unexpected adjective collocates
- look for unexpected adverb collocates

George woolard ,here ,uses the word ‘ unexpected ’to remind us that the purpose of these search strategies is not to notice all possible collocates of a word, but students have to select

and record those that are not already known or expected. He illustrates that ‘big disappointment’ is not unexpected collocation, whereas ‘bitter disappointment’ is likely to be and needs to be recorded.

To sum up, we can say that authentic language input provides the major source of acquisition, and that noticing different language patterns and sequences, particularly lexical collocations, is the prerequisite for the acquisition of such patterns. Thus, teachers should intervene to help the students notice them because noticing is necessary for converting input into intake or simply for acquisition to helpfully take place. An effective way to draw the learners’ attention to collocations in order to notice them is highlighting. Highlighting could be achieved by underlining the collocation, coloring it, writing it in italics or in bold. Awareness-raising of lexical collocations should not be the only emphasis in the classroom. Students also need to know more about lexical collocations through explicit teaching.

2.7. How to Teach Lexical Collocations

2.7.1. Teaching Collocations Through Context

It is very important to teach collocations in context. Context is very effective because collocations, like other words, get their meaning because of their use in context.

“some of the words which make up the collocations will be items we might want the learner to acquire anyway, and learning items in context may be easier than learning them out of context” (Hoey, 2000: 230). McCarthy and O’Dell (2005) view that learners do not need only to know the meaning of a word, but they need to know their collocations in different contexts. They also need to note any grammatical characteristics of the words such as noting when a verb is irregular and when a noun is used in the plural. In addition, they need to know how they are pronounced. Like a structural approach teachers who did not comment on every grammatical point in a text, lexical approach teachers also have to point out the most common

collocations and according to their students' level as M. Lewis (2000: 58) mentions through the illustration of '*spend time*' which is convenient for an elementary level, whereas 'awarded the ultimate accolade' is better to be highlighted in a text chosen for advanced level. Once the students read or listen to a text, the teacher has to help them noting how these lexical collocations are used in context and how the meaning of the whole combination should be understood as a single unit. Lewis suggests that teacher talk is a major source of learner input in demonstrating how lexical phrases are used for different functional purposes. According to J.C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers (2001:6), learners can explore the contexts of lexical use that occur in different kinds of texts and language data, referring to computer concordance databases (see section 2.8.3).

In Nations view (1994), "teachers should create opportunities to meet these useful, recently learned words in new contexts that provide new collocations" (qtd. in Richards and Renandya, 2002:261).

Nevertheless, to guess the meaning of the collocations successfully from a context is a complex and often a difficult strategy. Learners therefore need to know 95% of a text as Nation mentioned (2001: 262). 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 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.

2.7.2. Teaching collocations Through Exercises

In order to develop students' collocational knowledge, teachers have to introduce collocations in their classroom exercises as George Woolard views: "Teachers should re-examine their books for collocation, adding exercises which focus explicitly on co-text and which draw the students' attention to significant verb + noun, adjective + noun, verb + adverb collocations" (Lewis,2000: 32).

The following exercises are suggested by Michael Lewis; Jimmie Hill; and Morgan Lewis as beneficial tools to teach collocations. They point out that F L teachers have to exploit the collocational content of any text (spoken or written). They further suggest that in order to find collocations in a text, learners have firstly to extract the noun, then, the verb which is used before the noun-if there is one. They can also extract the adjective which is used after the noun. In general, learners have to find different types of collocation depending on the classification given by Benson & Benson. Then, they should check the meaning of the whole combination. As learners master more collocations, they can be asked which collocations they think are of interest; and then to sort them out. But, teachers have to draw attention to some collocations, rather than trying to draw attention to all. It is better to draw attention to a particular kind of collocation.

The second activity suggested by Lewis et al is reconstructing the content of a text. Learners make notes while listening, then reduce their notes to 15 words (choosing the words and order carefully). Teachers have to guide students by reminding them that the most helpful notes will usually be some 2 or 3 collocations, and perhaps only three or four individual words. Learners exchange papers and try to expand the notes to recover the main content of the original text.

Some activities can be easily adapted for use with a collocation dictionary as Lewis, Michael; Lewis, Morgan; and Hill; Jimmie mention: “teachers will find, however, that using a collocation dictionary will be a great help, and such a dictionary is essential for some of the activities” (Lewis, 2000: 99). Thus teachers have to ask learners to work in groups and select items from a collocation dictionary entry using a rule.

Teachers can also take two or more words with similar meaning (near synonyms), for example: injury wound

Ask learners to look carefully at the adjective and verb collocates of both words in a collocation dictionary. The difference in the way similar words are used is often largely the difference in their collocational fields. Ask learners to translate some of the collocations into their own language; this will help learners build an understanding of how the English words are used. More advanced learners can use groups of words of similar meaning, for example:

1-answer, conclusion, explanation, result, solution

2-mistake, error, fault, problem, defect

3-instructions, guidelines, rules, regulations, directives

4-ability, talent, gift, skill, aptitude

5-pattern, shape, form, design, structure

6-document, report, file, article, story, account

7-task, job, work, career, occupation, profession

8-number, quantity, amount, size, dimensions, proportions

Furthermore, when an interesting noun comes up in class, teachers can read out a list of about ten verbs which may collocate with it and ask learners to note all the correct

collocates as they read. Here again a collocation dictionary will provide the teacher with a helpful list, then, the teacher adds two or three others which do not make correct collocations. For instance, a teacher may choose the word money, then use the following list in which the non-collocates are marked*: **money**: borrow, change, earn, *gain, invest, make, *reduce, save, spend (Lewis, 2000: 103). This activity provides an opportunity to remind learners of words they often overuse such as do, make, have take.

Another exercise is correcting common mistakes. Here, learners are given sentences in which they are asked to correct a collocation mistake in each sentence using a dictionary. To illustrate, the sentence: ‘the holiday I went on last year was a **full disaster**’. Students have to correct the miscollocation* full disaster; in other words, they have to find a word that goes with disaster. (Lewis, 2000:106-107).

Lewis et al, also, provide teachers as well as learners with the exercise of matching the adverbs with the adjectives (or any other type of Lexical collocations), using a dictionary to check the adjectives (109).

List 1

1-delicately

2-closely

3-enthusiastically

4-highly

5-carefully

6-ideally

7-badly

List 2

a. Associated with

b-balanced

c- chosen

d-mistaken

e-overcrowded

f-qualified

g-received

8-dangerously

h-situated

Then, teachers ask students to use each expression in a sentence or to complete a text with each expression.

Lewis et al supply teachers with fill-in the gaps exercises. These exercises are labelled according to the missing word such as the missing verb exercise, the missing adjective exercise... (112-13).

Odd verb out is another exercise in which students have to cross the odd verb out, for example:

Accept, answer, come in for, give rise to, make, and reject **criticism.**

Teachers also can do the same with other lexical collocations types.

Teachers may also construct a collocation game in which learners are grouped into two teams, competing against each other. Then, teachers choose a noun with a lot of verb or adjective collocates. This activity works properly if the teacher chooses the order of collocates carefully (from more general to stronger collocates). Teachers have to include a collocate that makes the task as easy as possible to not frustrate the learners. So, as team A students have to read out the list; team B students have to guess the noun, for instance :

Team A

Plain, dark, white, bitter, milk, bar of

Test, advance, build, outline, put forward, corroborate

Team B

chocolate

theory (p.104)

However, Hoey notices that the majority of strategies used in teaching lexis rely on “unthemed lists”. Consequently, he views that these exercises may become effective if the collocational information is used in themed lists such as art, music, literature... He claims :

“Learning the [collocates] in a list will not guide the learner into producing natural sounding sentences... .The strategies for teaching lexis are less natural. Often the chosen method is similar to that of using unthemed lists” (Lewis,2000: 228).

In Hoey’s view, the dictionary is only used as a device of checking rather than to be used as a means to provide the needed sentences. To exemplify this view, he mentions the following exercise:

In an attempt to help students become more aware of collocations, Lewis suggests to supply students with translating collocation exercises. Teachers ask them to translate a list of collocations, as well as the collocations they met in language input, into their own language, as single units to avoid translating word- for word.

We notice that the abovementioned varied exercises are effective in making the students aware of collocations. Also, they provide the essential information to improve the students’ collocational knowledge. Interestingly, students’ mental lexicon will be expanded, and therefore input will be retrieved as long term intake. But, teachers may write their own exercises, depending on their students’ needs as it is advocated by Michael Lewis(2000:116):

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

We also suggest that learners need to record the collocations they met either in a text or exercise. The significant device to do so is a notebook in which collocations are classified on the basis of topics to avoid the unthemed lists and to make it clear when they want to retrieve them for later use. As general comment, we can say that the exercises that can deepen students’ knowledge of word combinations in general and collocations in particular include the following: identifying combining phrases from several columns; matching parts of collocations using two columns (Muller refers to this exercise as ‘collocation quizzes’ in

which the learners see some nouns on the left and some verbs on the right, and have to make possible combinations); completing collocations as a cloze activity; playing collocation crossword puzzles.

Such exercises recycle already known word patterns, so that students can focus on recognizing or using collocations without hesitations.

2.8. Materials and Resources to Support the Learning of Lexical Collocations

Materials for teaching collocations were until recently generally found as part of reading comprehension programmes (McCarthy et al 1985) or grammar practice books (Kingsbury and Wellman 1985). However, Michal Lewis holds the view that to implement the lexical approach means to have teaching materials and resources available for both teachers and learners. Lewis argues that collocations provide more practical and less general approach to language teaching syllabus design than grammar, because grammar provides only the most general rules of language. Collocational patterns account for some of the variability not captured in the rules. They also provide guidance for language use which may be grammatically correct, but not acceptable. Collocational syllabus plays crucial role for both non-native speakers –whose collocational knowledge may need to be enhanced –and native speakers- as they may forget the right collocational pairings. P. Santilla Grimm affirms that “words with a broad collocational range should become a priority at all levels of language teaching: in curricula and materials design, in class procedures, and in testing”. (Santilla Grimm, 2009:170). Along the same lines, Marthar Jones and Norbet Schmitt argue that the development of appropriate teaching materials is essential for collocation acquisition, and learning in general to take place. Therefore, the use of such materials adequately can result in native-like proficiency.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:137) identify four types of teaching materials for the lexical approach in general, and for collocations in particular. The first type contains complete course packages (texts, tapes, teacher's guide, etc...). The Collins Cobuild English Course developed by Willis and Willis is such a case. The second type is a collection of lexical teaching activities/ exercises proposed by Lewis. The third type is made of a printed version of computer corpora in the form of texts. The last type is computer Corpora attached to concordancer programs so that learners can perform their own analysis with the teacher's help or independently. Resources of this type are often on CD-ROM or can be downloaded from websites.

2.8.1.Text books

Most textbooks of E L T do not take account of collocations, despite the fact that they are frequent in oral and different written registers as Maria Dolores Lopez mentions "text books have also been criticized for ignoring the most recent findings in applied linguistics [lexical collocations]" (Rubén Chacón Beltrán, 2010 : 157). She believes that vocabulary is an essential component that has to be taught alongside grammar. To illustrate, Collins Cobuild English Course² by Willis and Willis (1988) is based on a lexical syllabus, helping learners to be exposed to real English. Accordingly, Chomsky, in his minimalist program (1995), maintains that language learning is primarily lexical learning. Yet, most textbooks put great emphasis on grammar structure and single items, neglecting the importance of lexical collocations.

Interestingly, some E L T books include phraseologically-oriented sections, particularly sections about idioms and collocations, such as Cutting Edge, Initiative, Inside Out, New Cambridge, New Headway. However, these text books except Initiative and New Cambridge do

not provide teachers and/or learners with definitions or explanations about what collocations actually are and about the best ways of teaching and learning them.

Hoey (2005) stresses the point that language teaching materials can provide essential shortcuts to collocational information; and this can happen in a multitude of ways : “Usage notes, drilling exercises, texts or tapes with repeated instances of a word sequence and collocational observations” (186). McCarthy and O’Dell provide two complementary textbooks on collocations in use, viz. *Intermediate* and *Advanced* (2005-2008). Furthermore, they include varied texts and exercises. The texts include combinations of words frequently used in the real world such as names of food, collocational pairs needed in shopping or describing emotions and feelings. Students can be asked to look for the possible collocates of a given word. Then, they read a text and check their answers. After that, teachers help them to look further into the given word, and introduce other collocates of it. Teachers can also encourage students to record the common collocations in notebooks.

We can say that teachers have to select the appropriate tapes, texts or discourse to encourage students to reach native-like proficiency, and to improve the way of presenting and teaching collocations. Since collocations can be found in texts of all types, the teacher’s most important task is guiding the learners’ attention so that they notice them effectively. In addition to that, teachers can help students find English collocations through the use of authentic language included in most collocation textbooks. Nevertheless, they have to encourage them to rely largely on dictionaries for getting more collocational information.

2.8.2. Dictionaries

The most available and useful tool for teaching collocations is dictionaries.

Learners’ dictionaries such as the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, or the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* are very good at capturing grammatical

collocations (for instance: which specific preposition a given lexical item requires...). These dictionaries, however, often provide little help and few instances of lexical collocations. As a result, most linguists feel the need for specialized dictionaries based on collocational information. Thus, McCarthy and O'Dell (2008: 12) mention that "good modern dictionaries include example sentences which make a point of illustrating each word's most frequent collocations".

It is significant to urge students to use English-English dictionaries that present collocations in use in natural English. Learners, therefore, get not only information and examples of a given word, but its collocational pairs also.

A collocation dictionary will give information on the most common collocations. A good dictionary will also provide a learner if a collocation is formal or informal. Generally speaking, collocations dictionaries are regarded as reliable source to refer to as François Maniez (1998: 102) mentions:

The use and function of collocation dictionaries will be obvious to anyone who has taught English as a Second language. Having access to a data base which Lists pairs of words that co-occur frequently will prove an asset both for expression and Comprehension purposes...compiling dictionaries that are strictly devoted to collocations provide several advantages.

Harald burger(2007) illustrates some dictionaries of collocations, and he considers them as excellent dictionaries for foreign language learners. Therefore, it is valuable to mention some of the well-known names:

The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English by Benson ,Benson and Ilson (1986).It was designed to help advanced learners of English by providing both lexical and grammatical collocations which are searched easily and quickly. Also, the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary by Sinclair (1987,2001). LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations by Hill and Lewis(1997).In addition, Leas' (2002) Oxford

Collocations Dictionary for Students of English .Without forgetting the first English Dictionary that includes collocations compiled by Sterkenburg (1982) :Selected English Collocations. Teachers can also rely on Bilingual Collocation Dictionaries to clarify collocations that are common between the two languages; and the collocations that are specific to one language and have no equivalent in the other language such as Hafiz(2004)Arabic Collocations Dictionary and Ghazala (2007) English Arabic Collocations Dictionary.

Dictionaries are not only available on paper, learners can access them on CD-ROM and online. They make it easy and quick to search for collocations like the CD-ROM Cobuild English Collocations (1995). In whatever form, a dictionary is a useful tool for developing collocation knowledge. Zimmerman (2009) argues that in order to get complete information about collocations, teachers as well as learners can access easily to dictionaries or to online concordances. Therefore, teachers can allow students do in-class activities using dictionaries effectively; also, they provide them with independent learning strategies to help them develop their collocational knowledge outside the classroom. Despite the usefulness of dictionaries to illustrate the appropriate collocations, Schmitt (2000: 85) argues that teachers can rely largely on a corpus and concordancing program as sources of collocation information.

2.8.3. Concordances

The advent of computer technology has made it possible to gather huge corpora, or collections of authentic collocation patternings. As a result, another useful tool for teaching collocations is concordancers , i.e. lists of examples of a particular word or group of words used in context. Concordances are available either as software packages or online. Teachers can choose the needed concordance lines that consist of authentic examples supplied by Data Driven Learning (DDL). According to DDL approach that focuses on using computer

concordancers to process and analyse large quantities of language data (computer corpora) to learn language and specifically formulaic sequences; Johns and King give the following definition of it : "...the use in the classroom of concordances to get students to explore regularities of patterning in the target language ,and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output" (1991:3). Concordances are meant to arouse learner's language awareness and raise their consciousness of the language features to be learned .Furthermore, learners will be able to search for language patterns rather than being presented with the language patterns to be learned by rote. Thus, working with computer concordances and browsing quickly frequent collocates raise students' awareness and help them to produce accurate language more easily as Lewis (2000:199) mentions, by quoting what Brian Poole said after using concordances with a group of university students, "The great virtue of concordances is that they provide learners with the opportunity to see lots of examples of a particular word all at once -not something available in day -today target language exposure".

The main advantage of concordances is they provide a rich source of context. To illustrate this goal, we present the meaning of fantastic, relying on Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, and on a concordance sample retrieved by the online concordancer British National Corpus.

Dictionary definition :

Fantastic adj 1(infml) extremely good; excellent : win a fantastic new car. A fantastic opportunity. She is a fantastic swimmer. You passed your test? Fantastic

Here are the first nine(9) lines copied out of a hundred (100):

- ave my guitar to strum And books to read **and** some FANTASTIC grass That Tony
got me. I sit here and h
002. ☐
ogy, like that of all religions, was **expressed** in FANTASTIC terms, the Sib
erian natives, like the "p
003. ☐
he asked. "No," I answered. "Please stay. I have FANTASTIC news for you.
Listen to what just happen
004. ☐
oked in a mirror, I couldn't believe it. I looked FANTASTIC! When I got ou
t of the spaceship, I wasn
005. ☐
ey occur within human experience but **involve** some FANTASTIC happening that
is not quite of this worl
006. ☐
" birthdays they have had. Golden **Island** "Malta's FANTASTIC!" said Elizabe
th, trickling silvery sand
007. ☐
Remembering gives names for thousands **of** animals. FANTASTIC! Could there r
eally be thousands of anim
008. ☐
s second coming. But the reality is **probably** less FANTASTIC, as the prescr
ibed remedy appears in the
009. ☐
xceptionally shrewd and, you will find, **They** make FANTASTIC lovers, warm a
nd gentle. Amazing, really

Figure 3 : Concordances of Fantastic Taken from British National Corpus

We notice that the dictionary provides information about sense, grammar, and use of the word. By contrast, the concordance lines help the learners to understand how a lexical item is used in various real-life situations.

Woolard (Lewis, 2000) mentions that despite the learning benefits of using concordances, they may confuse less proficient learners. Teachers; therefore, need to carefully consider how to use them according to students' levels. Interestingly; Hoey (2000) argues that even without access to a computerized corpus, it is possible to use a text to produce manual concordances. He suggests an activity that involves doing a keyword in

context search, collecting the instances of use and lining them up just as a computer concordance; then having the learners reflect on the patterns they found (Lewis, 2000:240). Simply, we can conclude that such concordance websites may present multiple uses of the same item. These concordancers are taken from larger language banks that are based on real language situations.

2.8.4. Corpora

According to Schmitt (2000), collocation is an advanced type of vocabulary knowledge that is difficult to know how to teach, but corpora provide a convenient source from which we obtain evidence of the behaviour of many facets of language specifically collocations. Thus, corpora are a powerful tool in the hands of learners who want to know how native speakers of English really use the language. A corpus provides the learners with the kinds of sentences that they will encounter when using the language in real life situations. Basically, a parallel corpus is able to find the equivalent sentences in the source texts. It can also provide learners with vital information about the comparison of recurring patterns better than the dictionaries or textbooks. Students themselves can explore corpora and look for collocations.

In addition, corpus-based teaching materials try to demonstrate how the target language is actually used in different contexts. Corpora are useful to expose learners to authentic data in a structured way because foreign language learning is a process of learning explicit knowledge with awareness which requires a great deal of exposure to language data. The usefulness of computer corpora for FL is widely acknowledged by many linguists. Significantly, Ulla Connor (2009) agrees with Aston (1995) that “corpora constitute resources which placed in the hands of teachers and learners who are aware of their potential and limits, can significantly enrich the pedagogic environment.” (Ulla Connor, 2009 :136). Similarly,

Lewis (1997: 35) stresses the point that Sinclair's Cobuild project which contains examples drawn from the Bank of English Corpus "contributed to our knowledge of natural language use". Later, Lewis (2000) points out that if teachers use corpus data with their learners, they may need to make a suitable selection of examples, depending on the learners' vocabulary needs and interests. Thus, the use of these naturally occurring examples is to ensure how a particular word is used. Interestingly, teachers have to rely on smaller genre or subject-specific corpora to select the appropriate teaching materials. Tricia Hedge mentions the same point, addressing the idea of exclusivity that is the exclusive focus on collocations. Nevertheless, Lewis (2000) argues that native speaker corpora, however, need to be used in conjunction with other reference materials such as collocations dictionaries.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2008: 12) address that the real corpus that produce a more accurate result than any other web corpus is the British National Corpus at www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk . Another site is www.webcorp.org.uk, but the problem with using the latter is that it includes a certain amount of a language that is not standard . Nevertheless, both sites are considered as useful resources for in-depth investigations of specific collocations.

It is necessary to develop different types of resources for vocabulary teaching in general, and collocations teaching in particular. Also, corpora and computerized software (concordancers) are important tools for foreign language teachers. Simply put, materials should contain plentiful spoken and written texts which provide extensive experience of language in a variety of text types and genres in relation to topics, events, locations, and activities that make the learners think about what they read or listen to and respond to it personally. Learners need to experience particular language features many times in meaningful and comprehensive input in order to eventually acquire them. Learners can beneficially depend on the abovementioned materials or the teacher-developed ones. In order to acquire the ability to use the language adequately, the learners need a lot of experience of

the language being used in a variety of different ways (materials) for a variety of purposes (to be aware of, to record, to retrieve, or to use collocations). Advanced learners may simultaneously access to a wider range of resources. Besides providing learners with greater autonomy, the collocation resources enable them to extend their mental lexicons because of the availability of huge amounts of authentic examples.

2.9. How to Make Students Autonomous in Dealing with Collocations

2.9.1. Autonomy and Collocation

Autonomy is a complex construct on the top of foreign language proficiency as Little Wood (1996) mentions: “There is a sense in which personal autonomy may be a desired outcome of education generally and foreign language learning especially”. According to Phil Benson (2001), autonomous learners are those who are in some control of important dimensions of their learning process. Moreover, when reading or listening to a text, students may, through control of intentional processes, choose the elements of linguistic input that they will pay most attention to, or these may be selected somehow by others (teachers’ materials) or not at all. Students may also exercise control over the kinds of learning activities they participate in and the extent of their participation. At any particular moment of learning, there is always some degree of control which will usually be shared between the student and teachers. Thus, students may be either more or less autonomous in different ways. However, teacher’s monitoring and guidance may even help the student exercise his control in a desirable way. So, autonomy does not imply a self-directed learning.

Sinclair (1999) as well as Holec and others argue that autonomy describes a potential capacity to act in a given situation, and not the actual behaviour of an individual in that situation. Sinclair illustrates this view through the example of English student who comes across the phrase ‘power distance’, knowing the meaning of the words power and distance,

but not the collocation. So the student, according to Sinclair, has been using his capacity for autonomy (here to understand power distance), but the teacher cannot see this process, only the outcome. Moreover, autonomy is not only control or capacity over the learning process in general, and the learning of lexical collocations in particular, but a developmental process as well. This process can be either 'lost' or 'gained' as LittleWood argues: "The fact is that autonomy is likely to be hard-own and its permanence cannot be guaranteed; and the learner who displays a high degree of autonomy in one area may be non-autonomous in another" (Little, 1991: 5). Indeed, through autonomy teachers attempt to make the students conscious of the demands of a particular task-here the task to be familiar with the use of collocations.

2.9.2. Teacher's Control and Collocation

The teacher is responsible for directing learners' attention towards lexical collocations and urging them to build autonomy in learning, so they can notice collocations themselves and become aware of these lexical chunks. Students need to know that learning collocations help them to sound natural in English. Moreover, teachers have to make their students aware of the use of certain collocation materials to help them learn more about collocations. For instance, they train their students to use collocation dictionaries properly. Students should be able to understand the co-occurring of lexical items. Also, they can visit the Cambridge Dictionary website at www.collocationdictionary.cambridge.org or other online dictionaries. In addition, teachers may encourage students to use a notebook or a file on disk to jot down important collocations. Writing common collocations in a notebook will help the learners memorize them. If the students put words in categories, it will be easier to find them again later. These lexical prefabricated units can be stored under topic headings: leisure, sport, music, food..., etc.

Students can also develop their own organizational system on the basis of lexical collocation patterns; accordingly, Lewis (2000: 51) suggests that teachers should draw learners' attention to collocation of different kinds:

- Verbs that go with certain nouns (do homework, finish homework, correct homework)
- Adjectives that go with certain nouns (hard work, interesting work)
- Nouns that go with certain nouns (transport costs, overhead costs, labour costs)
- Verbs that go with certain adverbs (drive fast, drive carefully)
- Certain expressions (I should emphasize that, I should point out that, I should remind you that)

Lewis purposely, based on his lexical approach, acknowledges the conscious noticing of linguistic features of input, such as lexical chunks and patterns or collocations, which has a facilitative value. Students have to notice the similarities and differences restrictions and examples between English and the mother tongue to turn input into intake. Regarding classroom teaching practice, Lewis (2000) rejects the traditional Present-Practice-Produce paradigm and proposes an alternative Observe-Hypothesis-Experiment paradigm. Observe means learners must meet and notice the new language; hypothesis means learners have to sort out the input in some provisional way; experiment involves using the language based on learner's current interlanguage. In the classroom, the teacher's role should be changed from that of instructor to that of learning manager. The teacher consequently should help learners notice useful lexical chunks (by providing real, natural collocations.) ,guide learners' choice of materials and activities and, most importantly, maintain learners' motivation and provide feedback of miscollocations without hindering the collocation learning process.

In short, teachers have to rely typically on classroom procedures involving the use of activities that draw students' attentions to lexical collocations and seek to enhance their retention and use. Collocations learning is very important to develop autonomous learning. That is why Woolard suggests that teachers should reexamine their teaching materials for collocations; he mentions the following comment:

The learning of collocations is one aspect of language development which is ideally suited to independent language learning. In a very real sense, we can teach students to teach themselves. Collocation is mostly a matter of noticing and recording, and trained students should be able to explore texts for themselves. Not only should they notice common collocations in the texts they meet, but more importantly, they should select those collocations which are crucial to their particular needs.

(qtd. in Lewis, 2000:35)

2.9.3. EFL Students and Collocations

The more students are exposed to good quality input the more awareness they develop of the lexical nature of language. Particularly, Students have to be able to produce longer chunks, specifically lexical collocations. The great advantage of knowing a large number of collocations and other longer expressions is that learners learn the meaning and the use of a phrase as a whole. Students thus learn to comprehend and to produce a native-like language as Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) suggest : students need to learn words and sentences not as isolated, or planned answers to classroom exercises, but rather to learn how to use these patterns to create fluent and spontaneous conversation. Moreover, in order to be able to speak English, learners need to know many collocations. Significantly, Bahns (1997: 62) points out that “it is not very important for learners to use many idioms when producing oral or written language, but that knowing the right collocations and using them in a right way is by far more important”. Accordingly, students' role is mainly based on taking notes and paying considerable attention to the teacher as well as organizing data driven from

the course. Consequently, students can express more clearly and, at the same time, more precisely the message they want to convey. Collocations are, therefore, necessary language patternings that need to be learned inside and outside the classroom in order to promote the accuracy and proficiency of English as a foreign language.

2.10. Collocations and Communication

Collocations allow speakers to think more quickly and communicate more efficiently. Thus, native speakers can easily communicate and speak at the speed they do because their readymade language is recorded and stored in their mental lexicons and is immediately available to be used. Likewise, knowing collocations will help foreign language learners to achieve communicative competence in English.

A powerful reason for the employment of readymade language probably lies in the way it facilitates communication processing on the part of the hearer. In real time language decoding, hearers need all the help they can get (redundancy in communication is often explained in this way). Significantly, on the part of the speaker, collocations are necessary to get rid of the struggle to think of what to say, and the hesitation to find the right words to express oneself clearly.

Moreover, “in order to speak natural English, you need to be familiar with collocations, you need to know, for example, that you say a heavy smoker because heavy (not big) collocates with smoker, and that you say free of charge because free of collocates with charge (not cost / payment, etc.). if you do not choose the right collocation, you will probably be understood but you will not sound natural,” Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1987:193). Thus, most linguists make emphasis on the idea of naturalness. The most outstanding one in such arena is Hoey who, like Sinclair, associates collocation with

naturalness. That is, phrasings that a native speaker would regard as normal, fluent, and proficient. Non-natural phrasings, insensitive to or neglectful of collocation norms, tend to be judged non-fluent or clumsy, i.e. they are correct, coherent and meaningful but not fully satisfactory. Hoey supports his argumentation by taking a Bill Bryson sentence which is said to flow easily and naturally thanks to its numerous interlocking collocations:

. In winter Hammerfest is a thirty-hour ride by bus from Oslo, though why anyone would want to go there in winter is a question worth considering.

Hoey shows us what happens if this is rewritten as a sentence that is equally grammatical and meaningful, but quite awkward:

.Through winter, rides between Oslo and Hammerfest use thirty hours up in a bus, though why travelers would select to ride there then might be pondered.

By comparing the two sentences, one would be convinced that the conversation has removed all the smooth collocational phrasings, the primings that make Bryson's sentence an easy, natural read or heard. Therefore, learning collocations is necessary because they supply learners with the most natural way to say something. Also, they give them alternative ways of expressing an idea more precisely, for instance, instead of repeating "it was very cold and very dark". Speakers can say: "it was bitterly cold and pitch dark". Simply, collocations improve the learners' communicative abilities and make their speeches better. In addition, EFL students who know how to combine lexical items appropriately and later on master collocational knowledge, they can use the language fluently. We proceed to this point in more detail.

2.11. Collocations and Fluency

In order to talk about someone as being a fluent speaker of English or to say he/she speaks the language fluently, researches into listeners' perceptions of a speaker's fluency suggest that pausing is important as well as speed, and most important the use of prefabricated chunks, the most frequent units in spoken English (Thornbury, 2005). There have been several linguists who support this position: Nation (2003), Wood (2001), Brown (2003), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992). They argue that fluency involves natural use of language, continuity, and speed rate. According to McCarthy, a conversation can be judged as a model of fluency if the speakers talk continuously, appropriately, without awkward pauses. Such conversation contains high-frequency chunks as McCarthy points: "...both speakers use formulaic chunks [collocations], one of the key elements contributing to speech rate and conversational flow, but only recently beginning to be fully researched in corpora of spoken language use" (McCarthy, 2006: 4).

Sabine Bartsch (2003:20) claims that collocations are considered as the primary needs for all speakers, seeking to attain native-like fluency and proficiency in the use of language. Therefore, all fluent and appropriate language use requires collocational pairings. Pawley and Syder (1983) argue that the best way to explain how language users produce native-like sentences and use the language fluently is that in addition to knowing the rules of the language, they store hundreds of thousands of preconstructed clauses in their memory and draw on them in language use. These prefabricated pieces are often chunked together in a way appropriate to the communicative situation. Both linguists consider that the best explanation of how language users can choose the most appropriate ways to use language fluently is that units of language are stored as chunks. Pawley and Syder refer to the need for the mastery of a body of lexical chunks to achieve fluency:

Memorized clauses and clause sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation...Speakers show a high degree of fluency when describing familiar experiences or activities in familiar phrases...we believe that memorized sentences and phrases are the normal building blocks of fluent spoken discourse

Pawley and Syder (1983:208)

Along the same lines, Nesselhauf (2005: 2) explores that prefabricated units are essential for fluency in both spoken and written language, and that these units reduce the processing effort. Similarly, Nation (2001: 323) views that “the puzzle of native-like fluency” is based on familiar combinations that speakers need to use without hesitations. He, significantly, points out that collocations are important for any EFL learner who wants to be fluent, and need to be encountered many times, with some pressure or encouragement to perform at a faster speed than a struggling learner usually performs at (324).

To conclude, native-like fluency means the ability of speakers to convey meanings by expressions that are not only grammatical but also natural and collocational. Moreover, lexical collocations form a high proportion of the fluent speech (generally consists wholly or partly of familiar collocations). As mentioned before, speakers are considered highly fluent when they describe familiar experiences or activities, using familiar combinations. So, speakers can put emphasis upon other activities (tone, rhythm...). Indeed, the memorized collocational sequences are the normal construction of fluent spoken discourse.

Other linguists such as Schmidt (1992) includes, to refer to fluency, automaticity, or the ability to retrieve language forms immediately without hesitation or effort. Automaticity presumably brings with it accuracy of forms which the fluent speaker seems to display effortlessly.

2.12. Collocations and Accuracy

Language proficiency entails slightly greater speed and accuracy of performance, briefly, the ability to communicate fluently and appropriately. Thus, both fluency and accuracy are the desired goal of any learner of English as a second language (ESL).

In an attempt to foster the development of proficiency, Omaggio (1986) claims that linguistic accuracy is a necessary element; and she relates accuracy to the correct use of linguistic structures (grammatical accuracy), appropriate use of register (sociolinguistic accuracy), precision of vocabulary (semantic accuracy), and proper use of cohesive devices (rhetorical accuracy). Significantly according to Lennon (1990: 4), more proficient second language learners are more fluent, accurate, and complex in their production than less proficient ones. That is, fluency refers to speaking with “native-like rapidity”, accuracy refers to being “error-free” and complexity refers to “using a wide range of structures and vocabulary”. Accuracy can be defined as the degree of correctness (grammar, pronunciation, intonation, syntax...) with which the message is delivered.

Moreover, to acquire the ability of native speakers (particularly native-like selection), learners have to be able to select accurate collocations, to convey their ideas naturally. Language accuracy is achieved largely by retrieving and combining chunks of language as Lewis mentions: “the ability to chunk language successfully is central to understanding of how language works”. (1997:60). According to Williams J. Bonk (2001: 115), collocational knowledge is essential for grammatical accuracy. So, routinized collocations mean less reliance on grammar and lexis, and accordingly less attention and less processing effort. The choice of the appropriate lexical collocations determines the grammatical structure as Lewis (1993: 89) puts it “language is grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar”. Thornbury views that “the ability to deploy a wide range of lexical

chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones” (2002: 116). Hill notes that learners lacking collocational competence often express their ideas in longer wordier sentences which often contain several grammatical errors. Therefore, many grammatical errors are caused by lexical deficiency. Pawley and Syder (1983:191) refer to the need for mastery of a body of lexical chunks to achieve accuracy: “A lexicalized sentence stem is a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed; its fixed elements form a standard label for a culturally recognized concept, a term in the language .”

Lewis (2000) mentions that lack of collocational knowledge leads not only to miscollocation but grammatical errors also. Consequently, an effective way to encourage accurate oral production is by providing the students with an immediate feedback to let them know that something is not accurate to a native speaker. In this way, teachers make students aware to meaning and form at the same time.

It can be concluded that lexical collocations may have many advantages to enhance the development of language proficiency. They promote the communicative abilities to make the students able to listen to others and communicate in an effective way. Most important, they enable the learners develop fluency and accuracy to sound natural.

Conclusion

Lexical collocations learning has been one of the significant issues of ongoing discussion. There is no doubt that virtually EFL learners and teachers need to be aware of the fact that foreign language proficiency involves the learning of a large number of lexical collocations. Yet, how such lexical chunks are acquired and how to accomplish this task are often of considerable concern. We have dealt with different directions to teach lexical collocations: consciousness –raising, noticing and highlighting, teaching through exercises,

and teaching through context, focusing on the former that is the basic concern of our study. Since EFL students do not have the ability to match words correctly, teachers have to raise their awareness of lexical collocations to help them avoid Arabic and French interference. In addition, we have described the teacher's role and the student's role in developing students' autonomy. In general, the mastery of lexical collocations is a necessary component of foreign language acquisition/learning, and in particular is a cornerstone in the development of oral proficiency. On the whole, depending on the language naturalness, they are very essential to promote oral fluency and accuracy. Next, we proceed to put these theoretical issues into practice to assess the impact of collocation awareness-raising on L2 oral proficiency.

Chapter Three

Description and Analysis of Questionnaires

Lexical Collocation

Awareness-raising: Students' Understanding and Teachers' Views

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Introduction

The previous two theoretical chapters show that one of the fundamental components of oral language proficiency, which makes a positive contribution to the ways learners speak and adequately use the target language, is a sufficient knowledge of lexical collocations. Focusing on the importance of collocations to language proficiency, we contend that learners' proficient use of word sequences is a very important index of native-like competence and proficiency.

The aim of this study is to see whether making students aware of lexical collocations improves their oral proficiency levels or not. Thus, the present work is designed to investigate the effect of collocation awareness-raising on oral proficiency of first year Algerian EFL students, at Guelma University (2010-2011). To reach our aim, we relied on a mixed method. At the beginning of the experiment, we administered two questionnaires; one is addressed to first year students of English in the department of English at the University of Guelma, the other is designed for the English language teachers at the same department. This chapter presents the situation design, namely the population to whom the questionnaires were administered, administration of both questionnaires, and the pilot study. It also includes the presentation and the analysis of data obtained from the two questionnaires.

3.1. Population and Sampling

The present research is concerned with two types of population: students and teachers. Participants of the first target population are first year LMD students of English at Guelma University. Their overall number for the academic year 2010-2011 is two hundreds (200) divided over eight groups (08). The sample consists of 50 Algerian first year students of English, making up two classes: 25 students in the control group and 25 students in the experimental group. They are aged between 19-25. The students were randomly assigned to

groups of comparatively equal size by the administration in sense that the lab is equipped with a size of 25 seats.

As regards the time allocated to English, Algerian pupils are supposed to have had enough exposure to English to enable them to cope with English lectures at university level, and that their English background knowledge is supposed to be acceptable. Therefore, first year students of the population under study were studied English before (in middle schools and secondary schools) through the implementation of competency-based approach which focuses on making learners able to communicate and gain better future achievements. This is the main reason for the choice of this population.

When we started our research, we decided to make a comparison between the results obtained from first year students and fourth year students. However, fourth year students did not accept to participate in the study. Also, most of third year students did not show readiness to participate. Concerning second year students, their teachers refused to administer both the questionnaire and collocational test because they have to finish their syllabi in due time.

The second population targeted in this study is composed of all English language university teachers. The sample is composed of 21 teachers; all of them are first- year level teachers because they taught the population under study. We chose all the teachers because all are supposed to know about students' use of collocations and their abilities to comprehend / answer questions, to discuss different issues and to communicate with other interlocutors in English. Simply put, this is the definition of oral proficiency we relied on in this research.

3.2. The Pilot Study

We selected the questionnaire as a method of data collection. The questionnaire is easy to administer because it requires little time to administer. The questionnaire, therefore, is an

easy and practical means of gathering data from a large population (Brown, 1988:03).The reason for utilizing questionnaires as the first phase of the study was to gather data from the whole population, students and teachers. Questionnaires are composed of likert-skale items which are a useful and effective means of determining opinions and attitudes; yes/no and other close-ended questions. The open-ended questions are followed by respondents' comments. Asserting the necessity to rely on pilot study, W.Shadish ,T .Cook, and D.Campbell confess:

The tradeoff between the researcher's desire to measure many relevant constructs as accurately as possible and the respondents' desire to minimize the time spent answering questionnaire...Researchers can identify such problems in pilot studies.

(2002 :325)

Along the same lines, Brown (1988:38) points out that a well-planned pilot study provides thorough understanding of measures involved in a study.

Five students and three teachers, accordingly, had taken part in the piloting of the questionnaires. Feedback from these students and these teachers was taken into consideration in rewording questions, adding new ones, and modifying ambiguous wordings.

3.3. Administration

The students' questionnaire administered at the beginning of the experiment on November, 2010.We did not administer it at the beginning of the academic year because the department of English personnel moved to a new campus. While students were answering the questionnaire, the researcher was present to clarify and simplify things. However, students understood all the questions because we used less difficult and clearer terms. Also, we stressed the point that of honestly answering, mentioning to the students the necessity of their collaboration. Students were not allowed to talk to one another or to look at each other's

questionnaire sheets in order to obtain personal answers .The students were given 60 minutes to respond to the questionnaire.

With teachers, the questionnaire was administered three months later to ensure that teachers have got on well with their students. Teachers were given enough time to respond to the questionnaire. We personally handed it to the teachers who gave it back to us a week later.

3.4. Students' Questionnaire

3.4.1. Description

The first data gathering tool is a questionnaire designed to fifty (50) EFL students of Guelma University, for the academic year 2010-2011. The questionnaire contains 25 questions. In general, there are two types of questions: close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The participants were required to tick in the appropriate answer box for some questions, and express their opinions in other questions(see appendix I).

The questionnaire is made up of four sections structured as follows:

Section one: The Students' Profile

This section is meant to get information about students' personal information, concerning their age (Q1) and their sex (Q2).

Section two: Background knowledge

This section aims at gathering information about students' previous knowledge in English to determine which background they have (Q3).In order to know whether or not students are motivated to learn English, this section assesses students' choice of English (Q4).It also collects data about students' use of dictionaries (Q5), about dictionaries types they rely on (Q6), and about the frequency of their use of dictionaries (Q7).

Section three: Students' Oral Proficiency

This section is formed of five questions to gather information about students' oral proficiency level. It illustrates the students' appreciation of their speaking level (Q8). Then, the students were required to mention whether the reason behind their inability to express themselves due to lack of vocabulary or they had sufficient vocabulary but they did not know how to use words together (Q9); and whether or not the miscombination (misuse) of words would affect their oral proficiency level (Q10). This section, also, investigates the effect of other factors on oral proficiency: mother tongue interference (Q11), and French interference as a Second Language (Q12). Finally, the students were intended to think about the use of two words together and consider whether they face difficulty in using such combinations in oral or written production. To better explain their areas of difficulty, a brief explanation is needed (Q13).

Section four: The Role of Lexical Collocations

This section aims at investigating the important role that lexical collocation, a fundamental component of vocabulary, plays and assessing its impact on EFL students' oral proficiency. The students were intended to answer twelve questions. (Q14) investigates which language system represents a difficulty for students' language mastery. Also, we investigated whether students knew or not that vocabulary lack leads to major mistakes they made and not always they made mistakes because they did not know grammatical rules (Q15). We wanted to know how students think of the best way to learn vocabulary (Q16). Then, we introduced to them the term lexical collocation to know whether they knew it or not (Q17); and in the case that they knew such concept, we wanted to know whether they get collocational knowledge through structured or unstructured way of learning (Q18). We also investigated whether they were aware or not when they miscombined/miscollocated words, or they were aware but they

were unable to correct the miscollocations, or they simply did not care if words miscollocated (Q19). We looked at the different factors behind the problem of miscollocations: Arabic interference (Q20), French interference (Q21), and near-synonyms (Q22). In an effort to avoid such problem, we assessed the importance of lexical collocations and their impact upon students' oral proficiency (Q23), suggesting four options ordered from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and a neutral option for those who neither disagree nor agree, do not know was finally added if the participants had no answer and were not aware of the necessity of collocation awareness. To see whether students understand the importance of lexical collocations or not, we asked them if it is possible to teach lexical collocations as a separate module (Q24). Finally, we gave them the chance to express their suggestions about the issue in question (Q25).

3.4.2.Presentation and Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

For each questionnaire item, experimental and control group students' responses were given respectively.

Section one: The Students' Profile

Q1- Age: years old

Age/Years	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
18	01	04%	00	00%
19	13	52%	15	60%
20	04	16%	08	32%
21	03	12%	01	04%
22	03	12%	00	00%
23	00	00%	01	04%

24	00	00%	00	00%
25	01	04%	00	00%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 7: Students' Age

This table displays the students' age .It is between 18 and 25 years. We notice that the majority of students are 19 years old. In the experimental group, the percentage is 52%; and in the control group, it is 60%. 19 years old students went to school in time (at a normal age: 6 years old) and never failed. The other age differences can be explained by a failure either in the baccalaureate exam, more probably, or in any other school year.

Q2- Sex:

a-Male ☐

b-Female ☐

Gender	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	02	08%	05	20%
Female	23	92%	20	80%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 8: Students' Gender

The results show that the female students outnumber the male students in both groups. The female population represents 92% in the experimental group, and 80% in the control group. Whereas, the male population represents only 08%in the experimental group, and only

20% in the control group. Thus, the great majority of the population under investigation is female. This indicates that females tend to study literary branches in general, and English as a foreign language in particular. Females are more interested in studying English than males. Maybe, for them learning a FL means they were already good in English and want to be able to speak it adequately. The low percentage of males indicates that males are not really attracted by studying a FL because most of the male students prefer to study scientific branches.

Section two: Background knowledge

Q3- How long have you been studying English?

Years	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
08	19	76%	23	92%
09	02	08%	02	08%
10	01	04%	00	00%
11	02	08%	00	00%
13	01	04%	00	00%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 9: Student's Experience in Learning English

It is significantly important to know about the differences in years of experience studying English. It helps us know how long students have been exposed to English, and it can reveal differences in level between students. It is indicated in table (9) above that most of the subjects have been studying English for 8 years. Accordingly, there are 76% and 92% in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. This is the traditional situation in Algeria, in general, for students who started studying English in the first year at the middle

school .Then, students who mentioned 9 years (8% in both groups) and 10 years and 11 years (4% and 8% respectively in the experimental group only) had, may be, repeated one year, two years or three years respectively. In addition, only 4% of the experimental group students who have spent 13 years studying English. Maybe that student has studied English from the primary school (4th years AM). In general, the subjects of both groups are familiar with the English language and have an acceptable English background. Therefore, these differences among students' experience in studying English have an effect on students' target language proficiency and particularly on students' English oral proficiency. That is, the subjects who have not faced academic failure are more proficient than those who have because these subjects were good in all learnt modules. Also, the subjects who have faced academic failure, maybe, did not succeed because they were not good in other modules but not English, and these years of exposure to English make them more proficient.

Q4- Is it your choice to study English?

a- Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	22	88%	21	84%
No	03	12%	04	16%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 10: Students' Choice of English

Through their answers to this question, the majority of the subjects in both groups (88% and 84%) personally chose to study English at the university level and were not oriented to study it .This means that they are motivated . Accordingly, such motivation has a positive effect on the process of language learning in general and on the improvement of

students' oral proficiency in particular .While 12% of the respondents in the experimental group and 16% of the respondents in the control group did not choose to study English. Maybe, they wanted to be directed to another field of study which requires a higher average than theirs or English is a parental choice.

Q5- Do you use a Dictionary?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	84%	23	92%
No	04	16%	02	08%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 11: Students' Use of Dictionaries

84% of the subjects in the experimental group and 92% of the subjects in the control group largely relied on dictionaries to learn English. They preferred to use dictionaries to check them for new words with new meanings or to confirm their pronunciation .Thus, despite the type of dictionary they relied on, students were unconsciously made aware of how words go together .In order to understand whether or not students check English-English dictionaries, we need to look at the results of the next question .

Q6- If yes, which dictionary do you use?

a- English-English dictionary ☐

b- English-Arabic dictionary ☐

c-English-French dictionary ☐

d-All ☐

Dictionaries	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
English /English	10	35,71%	14	40%
English/French	03	10,71%	02	05,71%
English/Arabic	11	39,28%	15	42,86%
All	04	14,28%	04	11,43%
Total	28	100%	35	100%

Table 12: Students' Reliance on Different Dictionaries

Concerning this question, we provided four options. The overall number of answers is more than 25 because there are some students who selected more than one option. The results show that most students commonly checked English -Arabic dictionaries .However, there is a slight difference between the experimental group and the control one (39,28% and 42,86% of the subjects in the experimental group and in the control group respectively) . It seems that these students either did not understand English well and depended upon Arabic equivalents or confirmed their understanding through Arabic for a second check.

To lesser extent, as the percentages reveal, 35,71% and 40% of the students in both groups checked English -English dictionaries .This indicates that students' attention was subconsciously directed toward lexical collocations because the majority of students relied on Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary and such dictionary is full of natural co-occurring of words (respondents confessed their ownership of this dictionary through verbal contact) .In other words, students' check of English dictionaries enlarge their lexicon and raise their awareness towards the occurring of two words together, i.e. lexical collocations .This unconscious awareness -raising has positive effect on students' oral proficiency because they think and perform in English .It is beneficial for students to check English dictionaries to get

more information about the meanings and the collocates of a word rather than to get a clear understanding of it through Arabic translation .

Then, low percentages represent that 14,28% and 11,43% of the students checked the three different types of dictionaries; they use a mixture of the three languages depending on the checked words .They did not care about English ,but they placed great emphasis on using any language to understand. These students, maybe, checked English - English dictionary as a first check but they did not understand anything. Then, they checked English -French dictionary as a second check because they have acceptable French vocabulary reservoir and understand French better than English. Finally, they checked English -Arabic dictionary to get a clear understanding of the word's meaning because they did not understand its meaning through English explanations or French equivalent, or they get closer to its meaning and wanted to confirm this meaning through their mother tongue.

Students' check of English -French dictionary takes the lowest percentage in both groups (10, 71%and 5, 71%respectively). This means that only few students preferred to check English -French dictionary because they were accustomed to use French outside the classroom due to the fact that the Algerian society is largely influenced by French, the language of a previous colonizer .Those students also were good in French and understand English through translating it into French.

Q7- How often do you use it?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| a- Always | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d- Never | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Always	07	28%	04	16%
Sometimes	14	56%	16	64%
Rarely	00	00%	02	08%
Never	04	16%	03	12%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 13: Students' Self-Evaluation of Dictionaries Frequency

More than half of the respondents in both groups stated that they sometimes use a dictionary. Some students, in both groups, always use it, but there is a difference between the two groups. Accordingly ,28% of the students in the experimental group and 16% of the students in the control group confirmed their frequent use of a dictionary .No student in the experimental group rarely use the dictionary , while 8% of the students in the control group rarely use it .Surprisingly , some students in both groups(16% and 12%) never check a dictionary . This indicates that those students were not directed toward the dictionary use and its effect on the learning process .They only depended on what was given to them by their teachers, and they did no effort to perform English in general, and to improve their oral proficiency in particular. As discussed, the majority of the students either sometimes or always use a dictionary. This means that they frequently checked a dictionary. Thus, students depended on themselves to comprehend and produce English appropriately.

Section three: Students' Oral Proficiency

Q8- How is your level in speaking?

a-Good

b- Medium

c- Bad

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Good	03	12%	04	16%
Medium	20	80%	19	76%
Bad	02	08%	02	08%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 14: Students' Self -Evaluation of Their Speaking Level

As illustrated in table (14), the overwhelming majority of the students in both groups (80% ,76%) evaluated their level of speaking English as being medium . 12% and 16% of the students in both groups declared to be good speakers of English , and only 8% in both groups thought that they are really bad and probably need some help .This self -evaluation shows to what extent students were confident in their speaking abilities. Students' level in speaking may reflect their level of English oral proficiency .Since the majority of the students declared that they were medium , they needed to be boosted by their teachers to improve their speaking skills to reach a native-likeness and naturalness .Consequently , in order to improve their students' adequate acquisition of English proficiency , teachers have to develop a learning strategy aiming at adopting lexical collocation in classrooms , our desirable goal , or any other .

Q9 – In which case, you cannot express yourself freely?

a- When you cannot get the correct words.

b- When you know the words, but you combine them wrongly.

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Lack of correct words	07	28%	08	32%
Miscombination of words	16	64%	15	60%
No answer	02	08%	02	08%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 15: Students' Difficulties in Expressing Their Ideas

Students declared to have difficulties in expressing their ideas. The majority of the respondents (64% and 60% in the experimental group and control one respectively) had a serious difficulty with vocabulary in terms of how words normally go together. So students had enough vocabulary, but they did not know how to use this reservoir because they were not taught how to learn and to use the lexical items they once met.

28% and 32% of the students, in the experimental group and control one respectively, affirmed that they had difficulties to express themselves because they could not get the correct words to convey their messages. Those students, also, were not trained how to use and to retrieve the words they once learned. Generally speaking, students who either lacked the words or miscombined them, they were unable to speak English appropriately. 8% in both groups represents those who did not answer. Those students, may be, thought that they were good in vocabulary and they could not express their ideas due to grammatical faults; or they did not know the reasons behind their inability to speak adequately. They

were possibly shy to speak in class or were unable to do their best to speak as fluently and proficiently as possible.

Q10- Do you think that miscollocation affects your oral proficiency?

a-Yes

b-No

c-Don't know

Total	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	15	60%	16	64%
No	05	20%	05	20%
Don't know	05	20%	04	16%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 16: Collocations Impact on Students' Oral Proficiency

More than half of the population in both groups (60% and 64% respectively) declared that the occurring of two words together (or collocations) had impact upon their oral proficiency. This means that those students, through their answers, were made aware of the importance of lexical collocation instruction. They understood that if they knew how words normally combined together in English, they would speak it proficiently. 20% in both groups confessed that collocations did not have impact on oral proficiency. Those students were never directed towards the existing relationship between vocabulary and oral proficiency in general and collocations and oral proficiency in particular. They could not understand collocation effects on language proficiency, and more interestingly on oral proficiency because they traditionally learned and still learning the importance and necessity of grammar instruction. 20% in the experimental group and 16% in the control group of the respondents

did not know whether lexical collocations affect oral proficiency or no .Those students, may be, were unfamiliar with such concept and even through answering this questionnaire remained unaware of the necessity of the normal co-occurring of words. This is why they did not decide and chose option ‘c’: Don’t know. Although low percentage represents those who did not affirm the effect of collocations on oral proficiency, it seems important to look at other effects in the results of the next two questions.

Q11- Does Arabic affect your oral proficiency?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	20	80%	18	72%
No	05	20%	07	28%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 17: Arabic Impact on Students’ Oral Proficiency

An overwhelming majority in both groups, 80% and 72% in the experimental group and control one respectively, confirmed that their mother tongue had great influence upon their oral proficiency levels .Students, in a case of inability to express their ideas through English opted to use Arabic or they use some Arabic expressions or some Arabic words. That is because code switching or mixing is a common phenomenon in the Algerian society. Even if they used only English, maybe, they speak on the basis of word-for-word translation. In this case students were interested in meaning and neglected the form. They did not care if words were miscombined or wrongly combined because of interference of their mother tongue, Arabic.

Q12- Does French affect your oral proficiency?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	15	60%	15	60%
No	10	40%	10	40%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 18: French Impact on Students' Oral Proficiency

More than half of the population in both groups 60% declared that French as a second language had impact on the way they speak English .In an Algerian context, most students suffered from French interference because this language is deeply integrated in their societal dialect. 40% of the students in both groups stated that French had no effect on their oral proficiency. Those students, may be , used both French and English perfectly and no language intervenes in the learning process of the other language .Maybe , those students were good in English and did not have sufficient knowledge in French ; this is why simply they affirmed that French did not intervene in the adequate oral production of English language .

Consequently, French interference in the oral production of English could not simply be avoided especially that the two languages are both Indo-European languages. Teachers have to pay attention to negative transfer and help their students speak English proficiently as far as possible.

Q13- Do you think the use of lexical collocations or the occurring of two words together is more difficult in speaking than in writing? Explain

Besides two students in the experimental group and three in the control one who did not write any explanation, all the students agreed that the use of lexical collocations is more difficult in speaking than in writing because they thought in writing they could jot down what they wanted and corrected their mistakes. Whereas, in speaking they had the words but they could not match them appropriately because what is necessary to them is how to express their ideas and thoughts without paying attention to the correct combination of words (due to the limit of time). We chose the following four explanations provided by the respondents :

The Experimental Group

- In speaking the task of matching words together is so difficult, if I want to speak I give just isolated words which are intended, without answering in complete sentences.
- I haven't time to think if words are correctly combined.

The Control Group

- I think they are more difficult in speaking because we cannot speak if we do not know which words will be combined together, and I will be asked to repeat what I say. So, I prefer to be silent.
- I am free when I write. By contrast, when I speak I can't think if words go together or no.

To sum up all the results evoked in this section, we can say that the majority of the students frequently checked dictionaries to learn new words, and to understand well their meanings to later use them in the production of English sentences. Also, most students

affirmed having an acceptable level of English in oral production (speaking). However, more than 60% in both groups of the respondents confessed having difficulty in expressing their ideas due to the fact that they wrongly combined words, and consequently the occurring of two words together or lexical collocations greatly influence their oral proficiency. In addition, their mother tongue (Arabic) and the second language (French) have effect on their oral proficiency. Besides these two factors, the correct combination of words greatly affected their way of speaking as it is assured by the respondents. Thus, students need to be made aware of the natural co-occurring of words and its impact on oral proficiency. This is what we look at in the analysis of next section.

Section four: The Role of Lexical Collocations

Q14- In your opinion, which of the following is the most difficult?

- a- Grammar ☐
- b- Vocabulary ☐
- c- Both ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Grammar	04	16%	03	12%
Vocabulary	11	44%	16	64%
Both	10	40%	06	24%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 19: Students' Difficulties in Learning English

Concerning the control group, the majority of the respondents 64% confirmed that vocabulary is considered the most difficult component of English language. Then, 24% of the students declared that both grammar and vocabulary are considered difficult. Only 12%

represents those students who had a difficulty in learning English because of grammar. Whereas, through the answers of the experimental group students, that are identical to the ones given by the respondents of the control group, the high percentage concerns the option of vocabulary (44%). Approximately, a similar percentage to the one of the second option: vocabulary, with a slight difference, concerns the third option: both grammar and vocabulary. Thus, 40% of the students confirmed having a difficulty in grammar as well as in vocabulary. The lowest percentage 16% concerns the first option: grammar.

The majority of the students declared to have difficulty in vocabulary. Those students seemed aware of the importance of vocabulary because the meaning of messages conveyed is understood through lexis not through grammar. May be, those students did not have sufficient vocabulary reservoir because of lack of reading /or listening to the target language. Grammar and vocabulary as a source of difficulty represents those students who cannot master the grammatical rules they learned and simultaneously they have not enough lexis to express their ideas. The low percentages represent, may be, those students who thought that they could get the expressive words, but they were only unable to apply the grammatical rules. In order to deepen our understanding of students' difficulties in learning English, we need to look at the explanations provided by the respondents' answers.

Q15 - Whatever your answer, please explain.

All the students in both groups provided different justifications. We presented the following answers that are randomly selected:

The Experimental Group

Grammar

- Grammar is a bit complex. Comprehension of rules is easy but the practice is not easy such as in exams .So, I haven't enough knowledge of grammar to write or speak correctly.
- It is so hard to link all the elements of the sentence and check their order and meanings.

Vocabulary

- According to me, vocabulary is the most difficult because grammar is based only on grammatical rules, but concerning vocabulary we should have a rich vocabulary and rely on English-English dictionary .But I don't use dictionaries.
- I have the ideas but I am not self-confident to say them .I am usually afraid to make mistakes because I don't know if I can use my vocabulary correctly .I can't make a good sentence with my own vocabulary. Also I can't speak very good.

Both

- Both grammar and vocabulary are difficult. It is dependable, sometimes I haven't the words, and in other cases I don't know the rules.

The Control Group

Grammar

- I always ignore the rules.

- Grammar is so difficult because there are a lot of rules and the application of a group of rules is easy at classrooms, but after a long time with the addition of other rules, it is a mixture of all ideas.

Vocabulary

- Grammar is just rules and they are easy, but without vocabulary we cannot apply them.
- I am not proficient. I don't know how to form sentences, although I know the rules. I must know more words because my biggest problem is the use of words to make sentences.

Both

- I haven't enough previous knowledge. The new words are difficult, I can't remember them and I do not know how to combine them. Also, I am weak in applying the rules of grammar.

Q16- Do you think new words can be better learned through

a- Lists of isolated words? ☐

b- Combination of words? ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Lists of isolated words	04	16%	07	28%
Combination of words	18	72%	17	68%
No answer	03	12%	01	04%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 20: Students' Manners of Learning the Newly-Introduced Vocabulary

The majority of the respondents in both groups (72% and 68%) declared that they can better learn the newly-introduced vocabulary through combination of words than exhaustive list of isolated words. Whereas, 16% in the experimental group and 28% in the control group represent those who had a reverse view. Those students thought that the effective way to learn new vocabulary is through remembering isolated words , may be, once memorized them in lists .Most students can remember and retrieve the newly- introduced vocabulary through combination of words. Those students , may be, remarked that they better learn vocabulary through reading or listening because through such strategy they know how the English words used in the context, and they can remember the way English words co-occur. Only, 12% (three students) in the experimental group and 4% (one student) in the control group remained undecided . Those few students, maybe, were bad in vocabulary, this is why they could not decide which strategy is the best to learn newly-introduced vocabulary.

Q17- Concerning word combinations, do you know what collocations are?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	03	12%	02	08%
No	22	88%	23	92%
Total	25	100%	25	100

Table 21: Students' Knowledge of Collocations

An overwhelming majority of the respondents did not know collocations, 88% in the experimental group and 92% in the control group. Only three students (12%) in the experimental group and two students (08%) in the control group who did.

Q18- If yes, from where you know?

a-Classroom ☐

b-Outside ☐

-For b, please specify the source

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Classroom	01	33,33%	00	00%
Outside	02	66,66%	02	100%
Total	03	100%	02	100%

Table 22: Students' Source of Collocation Knowledge

Those students who indicated option 'a' were asked to specify the source they checked to know collocations. One student in the experimental group confessed that his/her source of knowledge is school. The two remaining students in each group know collocations outside the school. The student of the experimental group stated that they had an excellent teacher in the secondary school because the best teacher teaches them everything in a good way. S/he also added , last year, our teacher of oral expression spoke about collocation. Concerning the other four students, two of the experimental group and two of the control group, whose knowledge of collocations was other source rather than classroom , all of them mentioned books , internet .

Q19 -Do you think that you have problems in combining words that normally go together because:

a-You miscombine them and you do not know.

b-You know, but you cannot correct the miscombination(miscollocation).

c-You do not bother if words are miscombined.

d-Others, please specify

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
A	05	20%	09	36%
B	15	60%	14	58
C	05	20%	02	08%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 23: Students' Problems in Combining Words

The majority of the respondents in the experimental group (60%) wrongly combined words and they did not know how to correct the miscollocations . 20% they did not know if they miscollocated words. A similar percentage of the previous one represents option 'c', this means that those respondents they did not care if they miscollocated words. What is necessary for them is to express their ideas without paying attention to the way words combined together. Whereas, in the control group 56% reveals those students who miscollocated words and could not get the correct collocations. 36% of the students miscollocated words and did not know that they faced such problem. Only 8% of the students did not bother whether or not words are miscombined. Through these results, students should understand that it is important to know how words are normally combined in English. In addition, their teachers have to direct their attention towards the miscollocations and train them how to correct such miscombinations to speak English adequately. It is not only necessary to master the

grammatical rules, but also to know how words co-occur together in order to help students gain a native-like proficiency.

Q20 – Do you put English words together the way you do in Arabic?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	48%	11	44%
No	13	52%	14	56%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 24: Students' Transfer of Arabic Collocations

This question aims to measure Arabic interference and its impact on English collocations use. More than half of the population in both groups (52% and 56%) declared that they did not combine English words together as they did in Arabic combinations . This means they did not simply replace English collocations with Arabic equivalents. Nevertheless, we cannot underestimate the other percentages: 48% and 44% which reveal respondents' answers in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. Those students confessed to rely on their mother tongue in order to combine English words together. Arabic interference in those students' oral production can be either a negative factor which leads to miscollocations or a positive factor which leads to acceptable collocations in the case of positive interference. Teachers have to know in advance whether or not their students wrongly combined English words because of Arabic interference. Teachers also have to provide their students with English collocations and their Arabic equivalents or vice versa.

Q21- Do you put English words together using false friends?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	14	56%	15	64%
No	11	44%	09	36%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 25: Students' Appreciation of Their Use of False Friends

This question aims to measure a second factor behind students' miscollocations , that of French interference and more precisely the case of false friends . Concerning the experimental group, 56% reveals those students who miscollocated English words because of wrong use of false friends; and 44% reveals those who did not face such problem.

Whereas, in the control group, most students (64%) miscollocated English words because they did not know how to adequately discriminate and use false friends. 36% indicates those students who had no difficulty with false friends. Most students in both groups could not understand how they could get rid of such problem because they were not directed towards English- French false friends and their effect on the way they speak English. Simply, students never learned any strategy that will help them learn English vocabulary effectively. In addition, their teachers did not provide them with the meanings and the uses of false friends to be able to distinguish between positive and negative transfer from French into English. Most interestingly, although false friends are approximately spelt similarly in English as well as in French, they do not mean the same thing in both languages. Additionally, Students have to know that each language has its own collocations. Once they were made aware of such fact, their speeches would sound natural.

Q22 -When two words are synonymous, do you combine them with the same set of words?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	01	04%	02	08%
No	24	96%	23	92%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 26: Students' Appreciation of Their Use of Near-Synonyms in Relation to Collocations

Most students in both groups claimed that they did not miscollocate English words because of near synonyms. Only a student (4%) in the experimental group and only two students (8%) in the control group declared that they miscollocated English words because of near –synonyms. Unlike Arabic and French, near -synonyms did not affect students' use of lexical collocations in particular, and the way they speak English in general. May be, students consciously knew that they negatively translated either Arabic or French collocations into English ones. Yet, they subconsciously collocated synonyms with the same set of collocates and they did not know that their language would be full of miscollocations and sound unnatural. Later on ,through in-depth analysis of the respondents' collocational test and oral test, we prove whether they face the difficulty of miscollocation in relation to near - synonyms or not .

Q23- -Do you agree that teachers should make students aware of lexical collocations to help them speak English proficiently?

a-Strongly disagree

b-Somewhat disagree

c-Strongly agree

d- Somewhat agree

e-Neither disagree nor agree(neutral)

f-Don't know

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	64%	18	72%
Somewhat agree	05	20%	03	12%
Strongly disagree	00	00%	00	00%
Somewhat disagree	01	04%	01	04%
Neither agree nor disagree	01	04%	01	04%
Don't know	02	08%	02	08%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 27: Students' Attitudes towards Consciousness -Raising of Lexical Collocation to Develop Students' Oral Proficiency

The majority of students in both groups (64% and 72%) strongly agree with the above mentioned proposition ; and 20% ,12%in the experimental group and the control one

respectively somehow agree with it . This result implies that the respondents display a self-awareness to improve their oral proficiency level and to sound natural as native speakers as far as possible. However, none in the two groups strongly disagree. Only a students in every group (4%) somehow disagree and 4% (only one student) in every group remains neutral . two students (8%) in both groups chose the option ' don't know ' .

Q24- Is it necessary to teach collocations as a separate module?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

c- Don't know ☐

Options	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	13	52%	15	60%
No	03	12%	05	20%
Don't know	09	36%	05	20%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

Table 28: Students' Attitudes towards Teaching Collocations as a Separate Module

More than half of the population in both groups agree with the claim that it is necessary to teach collocations as a separate module (52% and 60% respectively) . Whereas, 12% in the experimental group and 20% in the control group denote those students who disagree with that claim. In addition , 36% in the experimental group and 20% in the control group did not know which decision to make . Those students who chose option “a” were made aware of the necessity of lexical collocations to be taught as a separate module. They wanted to be more exposed to such lexical combinations to improve their oral proficiency level in particular and their English language proficiency in general. Simply put, they wanted

to realize their ultimate objective as foreign language learners that of mastering an acceptable level of English and sounding natural. Then, those students who chose option “b”, although they were few, were not made aware of lexical collocation importance. Or they were directed towards the importance of lexical collocation teaching and thought that there is no need to create a new module. Finally, those students who chose option “c” had no idea whether or not it is necessary to teach lexical collocations separately from other modules.

Q25-If you want to make suggestions or comments, please write in the space below.

All the students asserted that they need a help to improve their oral proficiency, making valuable suggestions. We choose five from each group.

The Experimental Group

- It is very difficult to combine words together appropriately
- English is international language, we need to learn it. So we should learn collocations which are important in speaking and writing.
- I want to do more hours for vocabulary.
- I want to be better in English. I will accept anything to help me.
- I don't mind if we will have another module. We have 13 but no one learn as how to speak correctly and how to gain more vocabulary.

The Control Group

- I want more activities that let me speak freely and correctly.
- We know no gain without pain. So, to speak English proficiently, we have to make extra efforts. We need to know more words and how they are used together to enrich our vocabulary.

- I think that all the teachers of all the modules should teach students lexical collocations to improve their language and help them to talk and use English correctly and fluently.
- We must be taught the correct way of combining words to speak English using correct and simple sentences.
- I emphasize on teaching collocations as a separate module to help us and other students speak proficiently and therefore write correctly.

To conclude this section, we reported that the majority of the respondents assured that they found vocabulary difficult to be learned and used easily. Thus, students believed that an effective strategy to learn vocabulary is using words in combinations. Yet, most students were not familiar with the concept of collocation (88% and 92% in both groups respectively), only few students knew it outside their classes .However, they tended to express their ideas without paying attention to the way words naturally combined because the majority of the students declared that they are unable to correct their miscollocations or they do not know at all that they miscollocate words. Besides students' ignorance of the natural co-occurring of words and its impact on their oral proficiency, there are other factors affecting students' use of collocations. These factors are caused by students' interference of Arabic , their mother tongue , or French as a second language .Whereas , results disproved the third factor that of near -synonyms .Nevertheless , the majority of students in both groups were made aware of the necessity of actively raising collocation awareness and its impact on oral proficiency . They agreed that lexical collocations have to be taught as a separate module.

3.4.3.General Summary and Synthesis

From the analysis and different interpretations of the students' answers to the questionnaire, we can say that the group under investigation is composed of 50 EFL first year

students at the university of Guelma for the academic year 2010- 2011 , in which 08% and 20% are males and 92% and 80% are females in the experimental group and the control one respectively . The majority of students in both groups showed homogeneity among them. Thus , it may be claimed that the two groups were equivalent and that age , motivation , language previous knowledge, and speaking level existed with equal quantities in both the experimental and the control groups .Therefore, the sample under scrutiny could be said to be representative of the population .

Also, the reported results show that students relied heavily on bilingual dictionaries as a learning strategy to foster their mastering of English language. Most students relied on the three dominant languages which are used with different frequencies. Thus, the majority of the students were frequently used to rely on Arabic as a mother tongue, French as a second language, and English as a foreign language. The use of these three languages in the Algerian society affects students' foreign language proficiency in general, and oral proficiency in particular. Interestingly , students tended to think and mentally constructed sentences in their mother tongue or French and translated the sentences word -for-word into English , sometimes , rendering the sentences meaningless because every language has it specific collocational range . It is important that teachers guide their students in choosing the right dictionary and teach them the effective way of using it.

Less than half of the respondents in both groups confessed their inability to find the words needed to express themselves. This means that they faced the most frustrating experience in speaking. Whereas, 60% and 64% in the experimental group and the control group respectively represent those students who were unable to express their ideas and opinions because they wrongly combined the English words. Such miscombination or not using the right collocates results in communication breakdown .Teachers, therefore, need to develop students' proficiency with word combinations in order to enhance their oral

proficiency. Significantly, students' oral proficiency is affected by miscombination of words or miscollocation, mother tongue interference as well as French interference .

In addition, a high number of students pointed out that vocabulary caused a great difficulty to speak proficiently. Of course, the lack of needed vocabulary is the most common cause of students' inability to say what they want. This showed that students realized that they need to acquire good vocabulary knowledge to express their opinions and ideas effectively. It is futile for students to rely on a long list of words and be unable to combine them correctly. Good vocabulary knowledge ensures students' effective use of collocations and therefore helps them speak proficiently, based on the knowledge and ideas they have gained through target language exposure. However, most students in both groups assured their unfamiliarity with collocation. Through verbal contact, they said that they never heard such concept, except five students who did know it as revealed in the results (Q17).

Among the factors that students identified as sources of their miscollocations, insufficient knowledge of lexical collocations, ignorance of the fact that miscollocation is a mistake that should be corrected, and low self-awareness towards such lexical combinations. This shows that a negative relationship exists between factors affecting collocation use and students' oral proficiency. This, in turn, means that miscollocation is a cause of proficiency lack and unnatural speaking. An overwhelming majority of the students declared that Arabic as well as French lead to miscollocation . It is difficult for most students to find the right collocates of a word because of the differences between Arabic and English. Moreover, French is deeply integrated in the Algerian dialect. It is taught as a second language in Algerian primary schools right up to universities, but most EFL students were not directed toward false friends and their uses within each language. Surprisingly, few students declared that they miscollocated words in the case of near -synonyms.

Students, through their answers, showed a sort of awareness towards their willingness to improve their oral proficiency levels. Consequently, they were ready to enhance their speaking levels and eager to be trained on collocation awareness-raising to correctly govern their language use in general and to develop oral proficiency in particular. Simply put, students were made aware of their need to actively learn collocations to improve their oral proficiency. They particularly wanted to study lexical collocations as a separate module in order to develop the collocational competence needed to improve their way of speaking. As a result, students need to be structured and trained in producing acceptable lexical collocations in the proper context. Consequently, the more the student is capable of orally producing the correct collocations, the fewer hesitations or pauses and the fewer miscollocations he makes in long chunks and therefore the more proficient and competent in the foreign language he becomes.

3.5. Teachers' Questionnaire

3.5.1. Description

The teachers' questionnaire was handed to twenty-one (21) first year teachers of English in the department of English at the University of Guelma, for the academic year 1010-2011. It is headed by a small introduction explaining to the teachers that it is a part of a research work that investigates the significance of lexical collocation awareness-raising to help students develop oral proficiency (see appendix II). It includes 25 questions that are organized into 3 sections as follows:

Section one: Teachers' Background Information

This opening section seeks information about the teachers' qualifications (Q1), their situation (Q2), and years of teaching experience at the university (Q3).

Section two: Teachers' Attitudes towards Students' Oral Proficiency

This section aims at investigating teachers' attitudes towards the students' oral proficiency. Thus, according to them, the proficient student is the one who answers directly using well-pronounced words in isolation or combination of words (Q4). Accordingly, we shed light on the two skills consisting oral proficiency by questioning teachers about the best way to make students listen interestingly (Q5); and about their students' difficulties to orally express their ideas (Q6). This question represents the reasons behind students' inability to express themselves in terms of word combinations. This section also aims at determining factors teachers think are responsible for miscombination of English words in order to draw students' attention to miscollocation (Q7). Then, (Q8) assesses teacher's role as a controller of errors to help students speak proficiently. Concerning this question, we investigated teachers' feedback of grammatical versus collocational errors. Furthermore, to assess teachers' views about collocations as a part of vocabulary, we questioned them about the best teaching instruction to be followed, either it is grammar instruction or vocabulary instruction, in order to help students improve their oral proficiency (Q9). Hence, an endeavour intended to lead to a shift of interest in teachers' minds towards vocabulary teaching in general and collocations teaching in particular is looked at in next section.

Section three: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Role of Lexical Collocations

This section is designed to deal with teachers views about teaching vocabulary separately (Q10), about the best way to teach newly-introduced vocabulary (Q11), and about the teachers' reasons associated with these teaching procedures (Q12). Then, proceeding to teaching collocations, we indirectly asked teachers which language feature they draw students' attention to, suggesting options (Q13), and directly questioning them if they encourage their students combine words correctly (Q14). Additionally, to investigate their

familiarity with factors leading to miscollocation, teachers were asked to tick the appropriate answers (Q15). To avoid such problem, teachers were asked whether they thought that lexical collocations are helpful or not (Q16), providing us with their own justifications (Q17). Concerning the significance of teaching lexical collocations, (Q18) aims at gathering information about teachers' views about consciousness-raising through noticing. In a case of making students notice lexical collocations, teachers had to mention sources they relied on to make students notice these combinations (Q19). Whereas, teachers who did not use such strategy in their lectures stated their reasons for not doing so (Q20). Moreover, provided with list, teachers were asked about the best way to retrieve lexical collocations (Q21). We investigated whether or not teachers were aware of the necessity of lexical collocation awareness -raising to help students improve their oral proficiency (Q22), and of the necessity to teach collocations as a separate module (Q23). Teachers then explained their willingness or unwillingness to separately teach lexical collocations (Q24). In the last question (Q25), teachers were asked to give their suggestions on the effect of collocation consciousness-raising on students' oral proficiency.

3.5.2. Presentation and Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: Teachers' Background

Q1- specify your qualification, please?

a-Licence / B.A ☐

b-Magister / M.A ☐

c-Doctorat / Ph.D ☐

Qualifications	Number of teachers	Percentage
a -license (BA)	07	33,33%
b- Magistere (MA)	12	57,14%
c- Doctorat(Ph .D)	02	09,53%
Total	21	100%

Table 29 : Teachers' Qualifications

More than half of the respondents (57, 14%) had a magister degree in English language studies. 33,33% represents those who had licence degree (bachelor of arts) . Only two teachers (09, 53%) had doctorat degree. We notice that most teachers have finished their further studies .This means that they tended to be qualified teachers who could deal with students' achievements and particularly students' oral proficiency. However, we cannot neglect those teachers (33,33%) who had only accomplished their licence degree . Maybe, those teachers were unable to introduce new techniques in the learning / teaching process to improve their students' language proficiency.

Q2-You work at the Department of English as:

a- Part-time teacher ☐

b-permanent teacher ☐

Situation	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	11	52,38%
B	10	47,62%
Total	21	100%

Table30: Teachers' Teaching Situation at the University

Results show that approximately half of the respondents (52,38%) worked as part – time teachers .Those teachers did not devote their time only to the university .Slightly lower than the previous percentage , 47,62% of the respondents replied that they worked as full-time teachers . They devoted all their time to teaching at the university and devoted their efforts to improve their student’s proficiency.

Q3- How long have you been teaching English at the university? (please specify the number of years)

Years of teaching experience	Number of teachers	Percentage
3 Years	04	19,04%
4 Years	02	09,52%
6 Years	05	23,81%
7 Years	01	4,76%
10 Years	02	09,52%
11 Years	02	09,52%
15 Years	02	09,52%
26 Years	03	14,29%
Total	21	100%

Table31: Teachers’ years of Teaching Experience

As it is shown in table (31), all the teachers proved to be experienced in teaching English at the university level. Their teaching experience varies between 3 years to 26 years. 19,04% and 09,52% represent those teachers who had a teaching experience of 3 years and 4 years respectively. This means that they are still novice in teaching English at the university. The highest percentage (23,81%) represents those teachers who had 6 years teaching

experience . Only one teacher (04,76%) had 7 years teaching experience . Both percentages represent that the respondents had a considerable experience in teaching English. 09,52% represents those teachers who had 10 years experience and similarly 11 years experience . An identical percentage that of 09, 52% represents those teachers who had 15 years experience . Finally, 14, 25 % represents those teachers who had 26 years teaching experience . In general, we can say that 15 respondents were experienced and efficient teachers in the field; and 6 teachers whose experience between 3 and 4 years were novice teachers.

To sum up this section, we can say that most teachers had magister degree and were experienced in teaching English at the university level. More than half of the population worked as part –time teachers.

Section two: Teachers’ Attitudes towards students’ Oral Proficiency

Q4- As a teacher, the student who speaks English proficiently is:

- a-the one who uses well-pronounced words in isolation
- b- the one who uses words together
- c-both
- d-Others, please specify
- e- Don’t know

Choices	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	10	47,62%
B	05	23,81 %
C	02	09,52%
D	04	19,05 %
Total	21	100%

Table32: Teachers’ Evaluation of the Proficient Student

The results revealed by this table demonstrate that most teachers (47,62 %) confirmed that the student who speaks English proficiently is the one who uses well -pronounced words in isolation. This means that those teachers did not know what proficiency really means.

According to them, proficiency is equivalent to good pronunciation even if the students were unable to express their ideas in meaningful sentences. Of the total respondents, 23,81% reported that the student who uses words together is considered as proficient speaker . The interpretation we can make from this result is that proficiency means knowledge of how words naturally combined together. Therefore, in order to provide the students with the opportunity of being proficient F L speakers, they should acquire collocational knowledge.

Of the total respondents, 19,05 % preferred to suggest the following meanings of a proficient student:

- The one who speaks correct English in a fluent way.
- The one who uses the right grammatical structures and uses words together. In other words, the one who can convey messages without making mistakes.
- The one who can express his ideas easily and clearly.
- The one who expresses his ideas even with mistake.

The teachers, through these answers, hold divergent views and did not know that language proficiency is a multifaceted concept. Language proficiency in general and oral proficiency in particular is composed of all the above mentioned definitions, plus the definitions mentioned in the first two options (a , b) .Furthermore, only two teachers (09,52%) reported that the proficient student is the one who uses well -pronounced words and knows how to use words together . This indicates that these two teachers knew that proficiency does not mean only good pronunciation but also correct word combinations.

Unlike the majority of the teachers, these two teachers assured that proficiency is far from good pronunciation alone because without expressing their opinions and ideas, the students were not proficient even though they pronounced English words well. To further deepen our understanding of teachers' attitudes towards the issue of oral proficiency, we look at the results of next question.

Q5- Students listen interestingly when:

a-the speech is correctly chunked

b- the speech is natural and fast, without paying attention to chunking

c- Others, please specify

Choices	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	07	33,33%
B	14	66,67%
C	00	00%
Total	21	100%

Table33: Teachers' Views of the Best Speech to be Chosen for Listening

The majority of the respondents (66, 67%) preferred their students to be exposed to natural and fast speech rather than correctly chunked speech. Those teachers, maybe, were accustomed to pay attention only to the topic presented in the tape. Additionally, they thought that students should listen to natural language, neglecting the way this language is presented and its effect on students' perception and production. As it is shown, most teachers ignored that when the speech is correctly chunked, the students can listen intentionally to what they heard. Also, these teachers should be aware that through listening to fast speech, students may lose concentration, and may become uninterested by listening to unclear speech. Without knowledge of chunking, students are unable to grasp the language as it is used by its native

speakers. Therefore, they are unable to link combination of words correctly, making sentences sound unnatural.

Q6- Do you think your students cannot express their ideas because:

a-they cannot get the correct words?

☐

b-they have the words, but they combine them wrongly?

☐

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	13	61,91%
B	08	38,09
Total	21	100%

Table34: Teachers' Views of Students' Difficulty in Expressing their Ideas

The results clearly show teachers' attitudes towards students' failure to express themselves. 61, 91% of the teachers affirmed that students could not express their ideas because they were unable to combine words together; while 38,09% of the teachers reported that students lacked vocabulary knowledge to express their ideas . These results are in accordance with the students' results of Q9. Hence, students faced great difficulty that of inability to express their thoughts and opinions because they did not know how words naturally occurred together. This means that teachers have to place great emphasis on vocabulary teaching and not only on grammar teaching. Interestingly, they have to direct their students' attention towards the natural co-occurring of words in order to give their students an opportunity to clearly express themselves. Lexical collocations can be used not only to help students manage lexis but also to communicate ideas more effectively. This, in turn, improves

students' oral achievements. To better understand teachers' intervention, we need to look at the results of next question.

Q7--How do you deal with students who miscombine words when they speak?

a-You supply them with the correct collocates

b-Ask them to pay attention

c-Do not bother

d- Others,please specify

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	05	23,81%
B	06	28,57%
C	00	00%
D	02	09,52%
a + b	08	38,10 %
Total	21	100%

Table35: Teachers' Attitudes towards Students' Miscollocations

The majority of the teachers (33, 10%) replied that when students miscombined words , they supplied them with the correct collocates and asked them to pay attention. 28,57% asked their students to pay attention to the way words are used together in order to get rid of these miscobinations; while23, 81% of the respondents directly supplied their students with the correct collocates, without making them aware of the miscollocations they had . Only two teachers (09, 52%) provided us with other options to avoid miscollocations . The first teacher said that it depends on the seriousness of this miscombination .The second suggested that teachers should let their students free to paraphrase what they want to say until they are satisfied. Fortunately, no one did not bother (00%).This means that all the teachers were

aware of the necessity to make their students aware of miscollocations and help them get rid of these collocational errors. But, the way of making students aware of miscollocations and attracting their attention towards these miscollocations vary from one teacher to another.

Q8- Which of the students' errors must be corrected to help them speak proficiently?

a-grammatical errors ☐

b-collocational errors (miscombination of English words) ☐

c-both ☐

Options	Numbers of teachers	Percentage
A	16	76,20 %
B	01	04,76%
C	04	19,04%
Total	21	100%

Table36: Teachers' Feedback of Students' Grammatical versus Collocational Errors

When asked about students' errors that had to be corrected to help them speak adequately, 76,20% of the respondents chose the grammatical errors , 19,04% of the teachers chose both grammatical and collocational errors , and only one teacher (04,76%) opted for collocational errors to be given emphasis and be corrected . Hence, the majority of the teachers gave great importance to grammatical errors and neglected collocational ones. Those teachers followed the traditional way of teaching that of grammar instruction in order to help students avoid errors in their speeches and therefore help them be proficient users of the language. Additionally, those teachers neglected that adequate stock of vocabulary, even with a minimum number of grammatical structures, often helps the students more .Therefore , teachers had to adopt in their classes not only grammar instruction but also vocabulary

instruction in general and collocation instruction in particular .Significantly, collocations are considered as an integral part of learning a foreign language and they must be corrected if wrongly combined because they pave the way to communication .

However, the results of this question disconfirm the results of (Q7). This paradox can be explained by teachers' ignorance of how to deal with vocabulary instruction in general and collocation instruction in particular. In addition, the teachers, maybe, asked their students to pay attention to collocational errors, but they never corrected such errors because they were accustomed to correct grammatical errors. Since the teachers knew that they had to supply their students with the correct collocates, through their answers to Q7, they chose option "a". This can be explained by the divergence between teachers' beliefs and their practices. If they did not do so, this indicates that they let their students grasp the language wrongly without any monitoring. We better deepen our understanding through the analysis of next question.

Q9- Do you think that students 'oral proficiency can be developed through:

- a-teaching Grammar ☐
- b- teaching Vocabulary ☐
- c- both ☐
- d-others, please specify ☐

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
a	00	00%
b	02	09,52%
c	16	76,20 %
d	03	14,28%
Total	21	100%

Table37: Teachers' Views of Improving Students' Oral Proficiency

This question seeks to indicate whether teachers were aware or not of the importance of shifting teaching instruction from grammar instruction to vocabulary instruction in order to help students develop oral proficiency. Most teachers (76, 20%) preferred teaching grammar combined with teaching vocabulary to help students develop oral proficiency. This means that those teachers knew that grammar and vocabulary are extremely important for language acquisition. Thus, teaching grammar is not memorizing a set of rules but a skill to be mastered. This skill combined with the skill of having sufficient vocabulary help the learners acquire the target language as far as possible. Teachers should not rely on a distinction between grammar and vocabulary, but provide connections between the two. 09, 52% of the respondents stated that students' oral proficiency can be developed through teaching vocabulary. These two teachers believed that vocabulary is vital for better oral achievements because meaning is conveyed through lexis not through grammar. So, building a vocabulary that is adequate to the needs of students' self-expression has to be a personal goal for every teacher seeking to improve students' oral proficiency. No one chose option "a": teaching grammar because most Algerian teachers theoretically were provided by new approaches and removed from the traditional way of teaching that of grammar-oriented teaching. The remaining three teachers (14, 28%) suggested other ways to help students develop oral proficiency. The first teacher reported that not pure grammar, not pure lexis, but teaching correctly the relevant strategies and raise students awareness about how they should be practised and chosen. Then, another teacher said that not just by teaching grammar and vocabulary but also listening to native language. The third teacher spoke about more practice of oral activities, without mentioning the core of these practices.

To summarize the results discussed in this section, we can say that most teachers (52, 38%) considered the development of students' oral proficiency as a matter of mastering good pronunciation of English words even if these words were used in isolation. Slightly lower

than a quarter of the respondents reported that a proficient student is the one who uses words together as they occurred naturally. When questioned about the listening skill as a component of oral proficiency, the majority of teachers affirmed that students had to listen to natural and fast speech, neglecting chunking. Concerning speaking, the majority of the respondents confirmed that their students could not express their ideas because they wrongly combined words. The teachers added that in order to help students avoid miscombinations or miscollocations of English words, they supplied the students with the correct collocates and asked them to pay attention to this kind of errors. However, most teachers did not correct collocational errors but rather they provided their students with explicit feedback of grammatical errors to increase their consciousness of certain grammatical rules, surely correcting only when needed. Moreover, it is common to see grammar and vocabulary as separate areas of language teaching and learning. Students were traditionally described as being good at grammar but having a limited vocabulary, or vice versa. Surprisingly, the results indicate that most teachers chose teaching both grammar and vocabulary to help students develop oral proficiency.

Section three: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Role of Lexical Collocations

Q10 -- Do you think that Vocabulary has to be taught?

a-through other modules ☐

b-as a separate module ☐

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
a	16	76,20 %
b	05	23,80%
Total	21	100%

Table38: Teachers' Attitudes towards Vocabulary Teaching

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (76,20%) thought that vocabulary has to be taught through other modules ; while 23,80% of the respondents stated that it is better to teach vocabulary as a separate module . This means that most teachers believed that vocabulary is an integral part of the language and there is no need to separate it as grammar and other components of the language. Therefore, vocabulary is mainly taught by means of the resources provided in the listening or reading. Whereas, few teachers saw the need to place emphasis on vocabulary and teach it separately from other modules in order to help students gain more vocabulary needed to convey their messages and gain control of the target language use. But, how to teach vocabulary? and which words have to be selected and how do we present them ? Such questions will be answered through the analysis of next question results.

Q11--Do you teach new words

a-alone?

b-in collocation(or words that go together)?

c-in complete contexts?

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
a	07	33,33%
b	00	00%
c	11	52,38%
b + c	03	14,29%
Total	21	100%

Table39: Teachers' Manners of Teaching Newly-Introduced Vocabulary

The highest percentage (52, 38%) represents those teachers who preferred to teach newly -introduced vocabulary in complete contexts. Those teachers knew that the meaning of a word depends on the other words occurring with it. This helps the students keep the words in memory and easily infer the meaning from context. Lower than this percentage, 33, 33% of the respondents reported that new words can be taught in isolation. Teachers still followed the traditional way of presenting new words through exhaustive lists. Maybe those teachers put emphasis on the key words of each lecture .The lowest percentage (14, 29%) represents those teachers who said that new words were taught in collocation, and these collocations had to be presented in complete contexts. Those teachers understood the necessity of collocations to teach newly - introduced vocabulary in condition that these collocations can be better learned in context. Thus, the overwhelming majority of teachers (66, 67%: ‘c’+ ‘b+c’) placed great importance on teaching vocabulary through context.

Q12- Why do you follow the procedure you do?

Justification	Number of teachers	Percentage
Justified	18	85,71%
Not justified	03	14,29%
Total	21	100%

Table40: Percentage of Teachers’ Justifications

The reasons cited by the teachers to justify their preference, for the teaching of newly-introduced vocabulary, dealt for most with the fact that the best strategy to teach vocabulary is teaching it through context. Teachers provided the following reasons that are ordered in relation to Q11:

a1: It depends on the words themselves to be represented.

a2: Students have to concentrate on the meaning and pronunciation of the new words that they don't know.

Concerning option "c", most teachers provided approximately the same justification that of understanding the meaning of the words through context. Here are some teachers' reasons:

c1: I think students should learn the words in context, so they would be able to better understand and use them. Learning words in isolation would not be remembered as when learning them in context.

c2: The module I teach is not based on dealing with words in isolation . So, I am restricted to the material I have in hand.

c3: It is better to infer the meaning of words from context because new words are easily understood in context

c4: Teachers' aim is to make students able to be self-confident and to produce sentences while they speak. In context, they can recognize their mistakes and correct them .

c5: For the first time, students need the context to exactly understand the meaning of the words, especially the new words. Later on, other procedures can be used as the students acquired a basic understanding of the word or the expression.

c6: Words are better understood within their context. They will be easier to grasp / memorise/ use.

b + c1: The most effective way to teach new words is in context and make students notice collocations because when students learn new words or expressions in context they will remember the words and note how the words are used together as well.

b + c2: I think lexical collocations will be better grasped by the learners in context to simplify students' use of ready-made sentences, so that whenever they see the collocation they remember it.

b + c3: Teaching new words in a context helps the students to really grasp the meaning and be able to use them adequately in their turn because through context students will remember how words are combined.

Q13- Which of the following do you regularly draw to learner's attention?

a- new words

b- traditional idioms

c- fixed expression

d- collocations

e- grammar structures

f- Others, please specify

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
a	05	23,81%
b	02	09,52%
c	00	00%
d	00	00%
e	01	04,76%
f	00	00%
a + b	01	04,76%

a + d	01	04,76%
a + e	11	52,39%
Total	21	100%

Table41: Teachers Awareness-Raising of Certain Language Features

Of the total respondents , 52,38% directed students' attention towards new words and grammar structures , 23,81% attracted students' attention towards new words only , while 09,52% attracted students' attention towards traditional idioms . A teacher (04, 76%) drew students' attention to grammar structures. Another teacher (04, 76%) directed students' attention to both new words and traditional idioms. The same percentage represents a third teacher who chose "a + b": new words and collocations. Therefore, the majority of the teachers raised students' awareness towards grammar structures and explained new words. Maybe, they thought that students had to master grammar knowledge and knew a large amount of new words to be proficient users of the language. Few teachers only preferred to draw students' attention to idioms. This indicates that those teachers believed that since idioms are largely used by native speakers, it is better to draw students' attention to them in order to help students achieve native - likeness and proficiency. Drawing students' attention to new words, grammar structures, and idioms was assured by other teachers who chose "e" and "a + b" . Only one teacher who mentioned drawing students' attention towards collocations in relation to new words. This teacher knew the necessity to raise students' awareness towards collocations but s/he still stick to the traditional way of attracting students' attention to new words. So, this teacher ignored that it is better to deal with words in combinations rather than in isolation.

Q14- -Do you encourage students combine lexical items appropriately?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Option	Number of the teachers	Percentage
Yes	01	04,76%
No	20	95,24%
Total	21	100%

Table42: Teachers' Views of the Necessity to urge Students Use Lexical Collocations

Since all the teachers, except one teacher, did not draw students' attention to lexical collocations; this question aims to investigate whether or not teachers urge students to combine words appropriately (, i.e. to use lexical collocations adequately) . 95, 24 % of the respondents did not encourage their students to use lexical collocations; only one teacher (04, 76%) did so. This means that teachers were not aware of the importance of lexical collocations. We notice that most EFL students constantly focused on creating correct structures and therefore were less proficient when speaking. This makes sense for teachers to focus on vocabulary teaching in general and on collocations teaching in particular. Of course, an increase in students' collocational knowledge will result in a development of their communicative competence and an improvement of their oral proficiency. However, teachers' ignorance of the necessity to develop students' collocational competence leads to miscollocations. Thus, through the analysis of next question we look at factors behind students' miscollocations .

Q15- Do you think that the reason behind the students' errors in keeping words together is because of

a-inability to stop using Arabic?

b- inability to stop using French?

c- lack of language knowledge?

d-lack of collocational knowledge?

e-inappropriate use of grammatical rules?

f- Others, please specify

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
a	02	09,52%
b	00	00%
c	03	14,29%
d	00	00%
e	00	00%
f	00	00%
a + b	03	14,29%
a + e	02	09,52%
c + e	02	09,52%
a + b + c	01	04,76%
a + c + d	03	14,29%
a + c + d + e	05	23,81%
Total	21	100%

Table43: Teachers' Views of Factors behind Students' Miscollations

This question aims to measure the reasons teachers stated to explain students' miscollations . Through our analysis of teachers' views, we mention that teachers confirmed that students' errors in keeping words together are due to different factors.

23,81% of the respondents considered the lack of both English knowledge and collocational

knowledge , the inappropriate use of grammatical rules , and the inability to stop using Arabic as major causes of students' miscollocations . 14, 29% of the respondents declared that the lack of both English and collocational knowledge and the inability to stop using Arabic caused students' collocational errors . The same percentage represents those teachers who reported that Arabic interference and French interference caused students' miscollocations . Another similar percentage represents those teachers who considered the lack of English knowledge as the main factor behind students' miscollocations . 09,52% represents those teachers who said that inability to stop using Arabic led to students' miscollocations . A similar percentage represents those teachers who stated that inability to stop using Arabic and the inappropriate use of grammatical rules caused students' miscollocations . The same percentage represents those teachers who chose other two factors which are the lack of English language knowledge and the inappropriate use of grammatical rules. A teacher (04, 76%) declared that the inability to stop using both Arabic and French and the lack of English knowledge caused students' miscollocations . Although the teachers had divergent views, most of them chose option " a" 6 times, chose option " c" 5 times, chose option " e " 3 times, chose "b" twice, and chose "d" twice . This means that teachers regarded Arabic interference and the lack of English knowledge as the major causes of students' miscollocations . This, in turn, means that students lacked vocabulary and thus they relied largely on their mother tongue and slightly relied on French to express themselves. Unfortunately, only few teachers realized that the reason behind students' miscollocation was the lack of collocational knowledge rather than general English knowledge. Surprisingly, some teachers thought that inappropriate use of grammatical rules caused students' miscollocations . We cannot understand how these teachers related grammatical errors to collocational errors. Maybe, these teachers ignored that collocational errors are due to lack of English knowledge and particularly due to lack of collocational knowledge or knowledge

about how words are naturally combined. Arabic and French affect the way students combine English words. Whereas, inappropriate use of grammatical rules causes grammatical errors only.

Q16 – Do you think lexical collocations are helpful to your students?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
Yes	21	100%
No	00	00%
Total	21	100%

Table44: Teachers' Views of the Importance of Lexical Collocations

All the teachers (100%) agreed that lexical collocations are helpful to their students . This means that teachers were made aware of the importance of lexical collocations and understood that lexical collocations are essential to help students gain control over language use.

Q17- If yes, say why please.

Only four teachers (19, 05%) did not explain the role lexical collocations play to help their students. Whereas, the overwhelming majority of teachers (80, 95%) provided us with different justifications.

- It's easier for our brain to remember and use language in chunks or blocks rather than as single words.
- The language will be more natural and more easily understood.
- It makes it easier for them to be understood by their listeners.

- To give the students the opportunity to speak good English at ease and enrich their vocabulary (to enrich their linguistic repertoire).
- A word out of combination is a fish out of water.
- The use of collocations helps students speak native-like English because they need native -like performance.
- If students know how to use lexical collocations, they speak proficiently.
- Since collocations are mostly related to how language is used by its native speakers, it will be easier for students to grasp, maintain, and recall the combinations when needed.
- Lexical collocations are ready -made expressions in students' minds to be recalled when needed in speech or writing.
- They will systemize students' thinking.

These are ten justifications among seventeen, we do not purposely mention the others (7) because they turn around the same point that of speaking good English and enriching students' lexicons.

Q18- Do you make the students notice lexical collocations during your lectures?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Choices	Number of the teachers	Percentage
Yes	05	23,81%
No	16	76,19%
Total	21	100%

Table45: Teachers' Views of Making Students Notice Lexical Collocations

The majority of the teachers (76,19%) did not make their students notice lexical collocations when presenting lectures ; while only 23,81% did so . This indicates that the majority of the teachers did not have a clear idea about collocation teaching. These teachers ignored the importance of making students noticing lexical collocations.

Q19- If yes, from what sources do you search your collocations?

a-Dictionaries ☐

b-On-line concordance ☐

c-Texts and passages with relevant themes ☐

d- Others,please specify

Choices	Number of the teachers	Percentage
a	00	00%
b	00	00%
c	00	00%
d	00	00%
a + c	04	80%
a + b + c	01	20%
Total	05	100%

Table46: Teachers' Sources to Search for Lexical Collocations

This question provides those teachers who chose option “Yes” with a list of sources from which they chose the one/s they relied on in their lectures to be presented with a focus on lexical collocations. 04 teachers (80%) reported that they relied on dictionaries plus texts and passages with relevant themes. These teachers used the texts and passages of their lectures and relied on another tool largely used by both teachers and students to teach or learn vocabulary (i.e. dictionaries). Also, we notice that most teachers who opted for option “Yes”

added not all the time (either sometimes or rarely). Only one teacher stressed that s/he regularly did so whenever these combinations occurred and s/he relied on the three mentioned sources.

Q20--If your response is no, what is the main reason for you not to do so?

- a- I have no time
- b- I do not know how to
- c- I do not think it is useful
- d- Others, please specify

Choices	Number of the teachers	Percentage
-a	12	75%
-b	02	12,50%
-c	00	00%
-d	02	12,50%
Total	16	100%

Table47: Teachers' Reasons for Not Making Students Notice Lexical Collocations

Those respondents who indicated option “No” were asked to specify the reasons behind their not making students notice lexical collocations. The majority of the teachers (75%) reported that they had not enough time. Maybe, most teachers took time constraints as pretext, but they did not know how to draw students' attention to lexical collocations and make them notice these lexical combinations. 12, 50% of the respondents declared that they did not know how to do .The same percentage represents those who suggested other reasons. The first teacher mentioned that “It is the task of the teacher of grammar or written expression to do so”. The second teacher confirmed his total ignorance of lexical collocation, as s/he said “It is the first time to hear this concept”.

Q21-In your opinion, what is the best way to make students easily retrieve lexical collocations?

a-Extensive listening or reading

b-Context

c-Examples

d-Translation

e-Noticing them

f-Consciousness-raising activities

g- Others, please specify

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
a	07	33,34%
b	00	00%
c	04	19,05%
d	00	00%
e	00	00%
f	00	00%
a +b	05	23.81%
b + c	02	09,52%
a + b + c	01	04,76%
c + d + e + f	02	09.52%
Total	21	100%

Table48: Teachers' Strategies of Making Students Retrieve Lexical Collocations

This question aims to investigate teachers' opinions about the best way to make students easily retrieve lexical collocations. Of the total respondents, 33,34% thought that extensive listening or reading helped students retrieve lexical collocations . 23,81% of the respondents said that both extensive listening or reading and context led to better retrieval of lexical collocations . 19,05% of the teachers stated that the use of examples helped students easily retrieve lexical collocations. 9,52% of the respondents (2 teachers) declared that the best way to help students easily retrieve lexical collocations is the use of lexical collocations in context and examples . The same percentage represents those two teachers who chose options : a + b + e . Those teachers opted for extensive listening or reading, context, and noticing lexical collocations to easily retrieve them . Other two teachers (09,52%) chose c + d + e + f , i.e. they chose examples, translation , noticing lexical collocations, and consciousness - raising activities . One teacher (04,76%) chose a + b + c . That teacher thought that extensive listening or reading, context, and examples helped students easily retrieve lexical collocations. Through our analysis, we notice that most teachers opted for extensive listening or reading, context, and examples; while few teachers once chose translation, noticing them, and consciousness -raising activities. Thus, most teachers did not know how to teach lexical collocations and how to make students easily retrieve them. They ignored that noticing lexical collocations, consciousness raising activities, and translation between L1 and L2 collocations are effective ways for better retrieval of lexical collocations.

Q22- Are you interested in using collocations to help your students speak English proficiently?(a brief explanation is appreciated)

- a-Yes ☐
- b-No ☐
- c- Don't know ☐

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
Yes	18	85,71%
No	03	14,29%
Don't know	00	00%
Total	21	100%

Table 49: Raising Teachers' Awareness towards Lexical Collocations

This question aims to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the use of lexical collocations in language instruction, their views about lexical collocation awareness -raising which aims to help students speak proficiently, and to discover the reasons teachers reported for making or not making students aware of lexical collocations. An overwhelming majority of teachers (85,71%) interested in raising students awareness of lexical collocations. Whereas, only three teachers (14,29%) did not agree to use lexical collocations and direct students' attention towards them. This means that most teachers were made aware of the importance of lexical collocation awareness - raising and its positive effect on students' oral proficiency.

The respondents who chose option "No" provided us with the following explanations:

- They are not uninterested, but since I haven't enough time to do so, I am interested only in completing the syllabus.
- Not really, it is interesting to know lexical collocations, but they are not vital to speak English proficiently.
- Since the modules I teach don't highly depend on oral skills. I concentrate only on making them speak but proficiency is not important.

Whereas, of the total number of the respondents who chose option “Yes”, 27,78% did not give their own explanations and 72,22% explained their willingness to raise their students’ awareness towards lexical collocations as follows :

- Using words together can make students’ speeches native-like and more natural.
- It is very essential to know how English is used by its native speakers.
- Of course, our learners today suffer from unconscious use of language and random choice of its vocabulary; this is why to raise students’ awareness, not only about lexical collocations, is very important to develop a conscious learning.
- Learning collocations would give the students a better understanding of practical English proficiency.
- Since the students generally have the habit of imitating the teacher, collocations are essential to the acquisition of English language especially for oral proficiency.
- The English language ability helps students speak the target language proficiently.
- Collocation use will enhance the student’s abilities to use the language in an appropriate context and will develop students’ language proficiency.
- Collocations help students to learn and speak English correctly.
- It will become a habit for students to use these collocations and over time they will gain oral proficiency.

Q23-- In your opinion, is it necessary to teach collocations separately from the other modules?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

Options	Number of the teachers	Percentage
Yes	03	14,29%
No	17	80,95%
Don't know	01	4,76%
Total	21	100%

Table 50: Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching Lexical Collocations as a Separate Module

An overwhelming majority of the teachers (80,95%) did not agree that lexical collocations have to be taught as a separate module . Those teachers, maybe, thought that lexical collocations are vital part of the language and exist in daily use of the language. Therefore, there is no need to teach them separately, but only we need to make the students aware of them whatever the module and whatever the lecture. Whereas, 14,29% of the teachers agreed with the proposed issue. This means that these teachers understood the necessity and importance of lexical collocations in L2 acquisition for better language achievements. They realized that it is beneficial to devote sufficient time to lexical collocation instruction. Thus, teachers will be able to implement lessons and use appropriate activities, addressing the specific needs of their students. Teaching collocations separately, also, helps teachers to teach students effective learning strategies that will enable them to independently develop their collocational competence inside and outside the classroom. Hence, students will be able to develop language proficiency and gain native-likeness and naturalness. Only one teacher (04,76%) remained undecided .

Q24- Please justify your answer.

Teachers who agreed with the proposition provided the following comments:

- Basically, collocations should be linked to reading strategies and techniques in order to enrich learner's vocabulary reservoir.
- Teaching collocations separately to devote sufficient time , students thus will be provided with different collocations .
- Teaching them as a separate module helps the learners to learn and notice them as deeply as possible.

Among teachers who disagreed with the proposition, 52,94% (9 teachers out of 17) declared that, using a teacher comment, "It is not necessary to teach it separately, I think it is sufficient to attract students' attention towards these combinations in other modules". Others confirmed that they are part of the language, "We use them in all modules". A teacher preferred to teach them through oral expression and written expression. Another teacher thought that the appropriate module to teach them is Grammar. Their comments mentioned respectively as follows:

- Learning them through different modules is the right thing to do. I think they may be taught in oral or written expression.
- They can be included in other modules, specifically Grammar.

Among the teachers who disagreed, 11, 76% (2) said that "compartmentalizing is robotizing the student's mind". A similar percentage represents those teachers who preferred to teach them within context: "The language is better acquired unconsciously in context".

Other two teachers (11, 76%) said that it is impossible and difficult to create a module known as collocations.

Q25 – Could you please add your comments about lexical collocations and its impact on English oral proficiency?

Concerning giving their comments, 33,33% of the respondents did not suggest anything . Maybe, those teachers thought that they expressed their ideas before, or they were not familiar with lexical collocations and they were unable to write down anything .However, the majority of the respondents (66,67%) stressed the point that lexical collocations are very important to help students achieve better levels of oral proficiency .So, most teachers had positive attitudes towards lexical collocation awareness-raising and its effect on students' oral proficiency. Some teachers addressed an interesting question about the best strategy to teach lexical collocations. Others said that lexical collocations are part of English language, teachers only need to direct students' attention towards them. Thus, the last proposed comments strengthened our hypothesis .This means that teachers as well as students have to be aware of the necessity to integrate collocation consciousness-raising in the learning/teaching process. We respectively provide the following teachers' views that confirm what is mentioned above. A teacher confirmed that "Lexical collocations are so important in English proficiency .They will help Algerian students to get rid of the negative influence of Arabic on their thinking and on their way of speaking. They also improve their oral proficiency levels because Algerian students really suffer a lack of such knowledge and of English knowledge in general". Another teacher stressed that "Teachers must become aware of the importance of lexical collocations for vocabulary learning. Students' brains become systemized whenever they see a word automatically without thinking relate it to an appropriate verb or adjective; they know in advance shopping cannot exist away from make" .Another teacher said that "collocations are necessary in the understanding and production of oral/ written messages .

Students suffer to answer a question, especially in speaking they give word-by-word answers. Simply, lexical collocations are an important part to acquire the language and gain proficiency”.

Yet, other teachers agreed with the importance of lexical collocations but they wondered how to apply them in EFL classes .A teacher declared that “lexical collocations act as a kind of training for students because they become like ready-made meal, what is important in this meal is just to add small spices. But how and how many spices should we add? Therefore, as far as oral proficiency is concerned, students will not make many efforts in producing sentences since part of it is already-made, I mean lexical collocations”. Another teacher, stressing the same point, said “Algerian students of English are very poor learners. Consequently, their lack of knowledge, their lack of involvement and their lack of curiosity in learning English will always hinder their adequate acquisition of proficiency through collocations or any other channel. The best way is to seek strategies which attract students’ attention. Of course, the impact of lexical collocations is significant, now how to adopt it depends on the teacher himself and his techniques. Yet, the concerned teacher doesn’t even know what collocation is! ” .

Other insights deduced from teachers’ answers reveal their desire to make students aware of lexical collocations to improve students’ English proficiency. Among these teachers, one teacher declared that “lexical collocations are necessary to speak proficient English. They can be learned through the natural process of language acquisition. We need to draw students’ attention to them, but we should not give them primary importance in our lectures”. Moreover, another respondent provided some required steps to integrate lexical collocations in EFL course for the improvement of language proficiency. S/he said “as teachers, we need to pay attention to collocations. We have to select our list of lexical collocations that appear in

each lesson. Then, we give it to the students at the end of every lesson. Of course, lexical collocations have great impact on oral as well as on written proficiency”.

To conclude this section, we report that 76, 20% of the respondents showed no interest in teaching vocabulary separately but rather through other modules. Also, more than half of the population (52, 38%) preferred to teach newly-introduced vocabulary in complete context, arguing that students can easily infer meaning of words from context. However, we cannot neglect 33, 33% of the teachers who preferred to teach new words in isolation. Unfortunately, half of the population interested in drawing students’ attention to new words and grammar structures, neglecting the need to raise students’ awareness towards lexical collocations. 95, 24% of the teachers did not encourage students to combine words correctly. Stating divergent views, teachers tried to explain factors behind students’ miscombinations or miscollocations. Moreover, the importance of collocational knowledge to language learning is well-established in teachers’ minds ; thus, 80,95% of them explained the central role lexical collocations play . Nevertheless, only 23, 81% of the teachers made students notice lexical collocations; while 76,19% did not do so . Additionally, teachers who made students notice lexical collocations reported that they relied on dictionaries and texts relevant to specific themes. Whereas, those teachers who did not make students notice lexical collocations gave their own justifications. The most reported factor was time constraint. For better retrieval of lexical collocations, most teachers thought that listening or reading, examples, and context can be considered as the best learning strategies. Interestingly, 85, 71% of the teachers recommended consciousness -raising of lexical collocations in EFL classes to gain proficient oral language production. A low percentage (14,29%) represents those teachers who agreed to teach lexical collocations as a separate module ; whereas the majority of the teachers (80, 95%) declared that lexical collocations may be taught through other modules , suggesting oral expression , written expression, and grammar . The majority of the respondents

positively agreed to raise students' awareness towards lexical collocations because they play vital role to improve students' oral proficiency.

3.5.3. General Summary of the Results and Synthesis

We can conclude from the results reported by teachers' questionnaire that the respondents were 21 teachers of English at the university of Guelma, for the academic year 2010-2011. Their teaching experience varies from 3 to 26 years. Most of them had a magister degree and worked as part -time teachers.

The majority of the teachers considered students' oral proficiency as a matter of mastering pronunciation of isolated words, neglecting that proficiency means the ability to communicate in a skilled way. Additionally, most teachers stated that listening to English can be better achieved through natural and fast speech. These teachers did not know that natural language, regardless to its speech rate, can be better listened and later better used if it is correctly chunked because chunking is a strategy that helps students' breakdown difficult text into more manageable pieces. Dividing content into smaller parts helps students identify key words and ideas, and makes it easier for students to organize and synthesize information. Additionally, teachers thought that the students could not express themselves because they wrongly combined words. Although teachers claimed that they supplied their students with the correct collocates, they placed great emphasis on grammatical rules. Therefore, what teachers really need is a shift of interest towards vocabulary learning, and most significantly towards collocations teaching. The results reveal that most teachers opted for grammar teaching combined with vocabulary teaching.

Concerning vocabulary teaching, most teachers confessed that vocabulary has to be taught through other modules, and most importantly in context. As far as teachers' views about vocabulary instruction is concerned, approximately all of them hold negative attitudes

towards directing students' attention to lexical collocations which they perceived as a neglected secondary task teachers have to go through to meet students' needs . Only one teacher encouraged his/ her students to use lexical collocations. Most students wrongly combined words and their teachers ignored their role to overcome these difficulties in speaking. These teachers thought that the students' main difficulties sources are lack of language knowledge and poor training on its grammar rules. Mother tongue and French are considered by only few teachers as being the major sources of students' miscollocations. However, all the teachers assured the usefulness of lexical collocations to help students improve their oral proficiency. An overwhelming majority of the teachers did not understand the importance of noticing lexical collocations, maybe, due to the fact that most teachers had no idea how to implement lexical collocations in their lectures. Teachers provided reasons for not including these techniques in teaching practices. The most mentioned factor was time constraints. Other teachers briefly outlined the reason as not knowing how to .Furthermore, teachers ignored the effective ways to easily retrieve lexical collocations. Yet, an overwhelming majority of the teachers' intention (85, 71%) was directed towards awareness - raising of lexical collocations for better oral achievements. Contrary to students' results, teachers did not understand the need to separately teach lexical collocations. They affirmed that the best way to teach lexical collocations is to include lexical collocation awareness-raising in all lectures and to train students independently use such techniques to improve their oral proficiency levels.

Conclusion

Considering attentively consciousness -raising of lexical collocations to be implemented in EFL classes for a better development of students' oral proficiency, we devised and administered our questionnaires to both students and teachers. Through the analysis of questionnaires data, we made some following interpretations.

First years EFL students prove to hold positive attitudes towards English language which they have deliberately chosen to study . Most importantly, they had a desire to proficiently communicate via this language. This means a desire to develop their oral proficiency despite the fact that they wrongly combined English words. They positively agreed that consciousness -raising of lexical collocations significantly affects oral proficiency.

The teachers understood their students' needs. They also showed a deep awareness towards their students' problems in relation to orally express their ideas and thoughts. Teachers were made aware of the necessity of directing students' attention to lexical collocations to be adopted in classes in order to improve students' oral proficiency. We have tried to analyse each question in relation to such issue. For deeper understanding of the dramatic changes at the level of students' oral proficiency in relation to lexical collocation awareness-raising, we analyse and interpret data driven from the experimental study in next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Experimental Work:

Lexical Collocation

Awareness-Raising

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Introduction

This study describes the implementation of lexical collocation consciousness-raising to enhance the development of oral proficiency. The aim of this study is to find out whether training students in using this strategy improves their oral proficiency or not. The procedure of this experimental work goes through four main phases: the lexical collocation test, the pre-test phase where the participants were tested through an oral test to investigate their current level in oral performance and to measure their collocational knowledge; the treatment phase, which is devoted to the drawing of subjects' attention to lexical collocations, was supplied with a series of lessons; finally, the post-test phase where the subjects were evaluated by the same oral test in order to investigate to what extent our strategy would or would not yield to positive results in developing oral proficiency of English language.

This chapter is devoted to the description and analysis of the lexical collocation test, the oral tests, and the experiment, representing a study of the effect of lexical collocation awareness-raising on first year LMD students' oral proficiency. The results of this innovative treatment are compared to each other, investigating differences between the experimental and the control groups.

4.1. Research Design

The study was quasi-experimental in nature and it involved an experimental group and a control group. The experiment is concerned with trying to bring evidence that making students aware of lexical collocations improves their oral proficiency.

Firstly, the researcher designed a lexical collocation test, investigating the subjects' collocational knowledge. At the beginning of the study, the subjects sat for a pre-oral test. Then, the two groups went through a series of lessons and used the same listening texts. The focus of the lessons was on vocabulary acquisition. However, the researcher's approach to the teaching of vocabulary differed in the two groups. The control group was exposed to learning

new vocabulary by conventional methods (definitions, examples...of isolated words), while the experimental group was attracted towards lexical collocations. At the end of the study, the subjects of both groups sat for a post-oral test to evaluate the difference between the experimental group and the control group after the implementation of the treatment.

4.2. Subjects' Population and Sampling

The sample that was randomly chosen from the target population was first year LMD students of English at the University of Guelma, for the academic year 2010-2011. Choosing to work with a sample of fifty (50) students, these students were to a great extent homogenous as the analysis of students' questionnaire showed (chapter 3). Their ages varied between 19 to 25 years old. The number of girls outnumbered the number of boys. In addition, most of them have been studying English as a foreign language for, at least, eight years. We chose two groups of 25 students, one for the experimental group and the other for the control group.

The researcher tried to avoid participants' attitudes and feelings that can be developed during the study and may influence the generalizability of the findings. Donald Ary et al (2010) called this threat the "reactive threat" because the subjects are reacting to the experience of participating in an experiment such as Hawthorne effect. This threat may affect what we measure as independent variable (293-295). Also, when subjects may understand what the study is about, they try to help the researcher towards achieving his aim, i.e. Halo effect (215). To get rid of such threats, the experiment was done as a normal series of lessons in the Oral Expression class.

4.3. Research Variables

Lexical collocation awareness-raising was taken as an independent variable and we analysed its effect on students' oral proficiency or dependent variable. In other words, the independent variable was lexical collocation awareness-raising, and the dependent variable was the scores obtained from the oral test of the subjects after the treatment. Accordingly,

Donald Ary et al (2010:26) state that independent variable is a variable that is suspected of causing change in another variable, whereas dependent variable is being influenced by the independent variable.

4.4. Materials and Scoring

For the collocational test, data were measured on the basis of percentages of responses to every exercise of the test repeated across both groups under study. To calculate the percentage of every exercise answers, we apply the following formula:

$$\% = \frac{S \times 100}{N}$$

S = Score of the correct/ incorrect answers

N = Total number of the exercise answers

The data obtained from the oral tests (pre and post-testing) were treated as evidence of both language proficiency and collocational use. Therefore, the subjects' performance on the oral tests served not only as a measurement of the subjects' oral proficiency in English, but also as a measurement of their free production of lexical collocations. As language proficiency data, the speeches were analyzed with respect to five main elements: pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary usage, and accuracy (structure). In scoring the pre and post-test oral proficiency, the researcher divided the marks on the five main areas of the study; overall accuracy (structure), lexical accuracy, comprehension, pronunciation and fluency. In interpreting these results, it is important to know that a given level on the oral proficiency scale does not represent a single point on the scale, but rather covers a set of points. For scoring the participants' oral proficiency, three teachers assessed the students' speeches: the researcher, a teacher of Phonetics, another teacher of Oral Expression. Therefore, the recordings were transcribed and analysed with regard to the collocations they contained to determine whether changes in the outcome are presumed to be the result. The quantity of collocations is manually calculated in terms of percentage. Pearson

correlation coefficient was calculated on the scores of oral proficiency obtained after the intervention.

Collocations found in the transcriptions were checked against the collocations measures included in Oxford Collocations Dictionary and The BBI Combinatory Dictionary, i.e. the data were examined against a reference. These collocations were also checked by a native speaker.

For the present experiment, the choice of the topics was made to avoid students' unwillingness to speak as well as to give the students the same opportunity of using the same lexical collocations theme. Our choice for such topics was consolidated by the fact that these topics were the preferred and most liked ones. While we administered the experiment tests, we made sure that students did not speak to each other or draft something on papers to guarantee collecting personal and individual answers.

The details of collocational test, pre-oral test, treatment, and post-oral test are presented in the following sections.

4.5. The Lexical Collocation Test

4.5.1. Aim of the Test

The aim of Lexical Collocation Test is to determine to what extent students mastered lexical collocations. Also, it aims at checking students' familiarity or unfamiliarity with English collocations in order to prove or disprove the results obtained from students' questionnaire (Q17, Q18). Students may subconsciously know how English words are combined together, but they never heard that these combinations are known as lexical collocations.

4.5.2. Description of Lexical Collocation Test

The test is composed of five different exercises where students may adopt different strategies namely matching (exercise N° 1), sentence completion (exercise N° 2), correcting

sentences with wrong V+N collocations (exercise N° 3), multiple-choice (exercise N° 4), and finally near-synonyms multiple-choice (exercise N°5). The collocation test, except the last exercise, was taken from English Collocation in Use, Advanced.(2008). It includes five major types of lexical collocations as categorized by Benson, Benson, and Ilson (1997).The test was selected and adapted carefully to suit the proper level of the students. It is neither difficult nor simple (see Appendix III).

4.5.3. Administration of the Test

The researcher herself administered the test a week after the administration of students' questionnaire. The test-takers of the experimental group took the test in a 90-minute session, and the other test-takers of the control group took the same test the following 90-minute session. Being told that they should not leave any of the test items unanswered, the students were not allowed to look to each other's answers to guarantee that the test would be considered valid. Because of lack of available classrooms and constraints on time, we did not pilot the test.

4.5.4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the subjects' answers to the collocational test. The analysis was basically based on judging whether the subjects provided an acceptable collocation or not. Their answers were counted as correct or incorrect and were transformed into percentage.

Exercise N° 1

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	78	39%	58	29%
Incorrect	122	61%	142	71%
Total	200	100%	200	100%

Table 51: Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers in Matching Lexical Collocations

The subjects were intended to match two parts of a collocation. Matching words from column 'A' with their collocates from column 'B', students would form eight (8) collocations. Any words unknown to the students were explained by the researcher, with care taken that the particular words were not giving away the answers to any of the test items, to not allow misunderstanding led to wrong answers.

The results show that the number of incorrect answers exceeds that of correct ones in both groups with a percentage of 61% in the experimental group and 71% in the control group. This means that the subjects did not succeed in correct matching of lexical collocations. Thus, the results reveal that students' knowledge of lexical collocations is very limited.

Exercise N° 2

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	51	25,5%	41	20,5%
Incorrect	149	74,5%	159	79,5%
Total	200	100%	200	100%

Table 52: Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers in Using Proper Lexical

Collocations

In this exercise, students were asked to complete eight (8) sentences with a suitable collocation from the previous exercise. Concerning grammatical errors, we did not count them as incorrect when students gave a wrong tense because we only did interest in collocational errors. The analysis of the data for both groups again reveals that most answers were wrong. Around 74,5 % and 79,5% of the participants' responses were incorrect, in the experimental group and in the control one respectively. This means that students were unable to guess the meaning of lexical collocations through context. Although the collocations of the exercise are common and frequently used, students had great problems in choosing proper lexical

collocations to complete the sentences. Therefore, the students were unable to appropriately use lexical collocations. This, in turn, reflects their limited knowledge of lexical collocations. We can say that students will not use a word in a proper context unless they know which words co-occur with it. As a result, knowing a word cannot be limited to merely knowing its meaning; what is crucial is to know its collocational range as well.

Exercise N° 3

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	40	20%	61	30,5%
Incorrect	160	80%	139	69,5%
Total	200	100%	200	100%

Table 53: Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers in Correcting Collocational Errors

This exercise consists of eight (8) sentences with inappropriate verbs. Students were asked to correct the underlined verbs to form acceptable collocations. Table (53) reveals that wrong answers were numerous in both groups with a percentage of 80% and 69,5% in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. Students, therefore, had a significant problem in producing acceptable V+N collocations in English. The obtained results show that the participants essentially lacked collocational knowledge.

Exercise N° 4

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	64	42,67%	66	44%
Incorrect	86	57,33%	84	56%
Total	150	100%	150	100%

Table 54: Students' correct and incorrect answers in choosing appropriate lexical collocations

This exercise contains six (6) sentences in which students were expected to choose an appropriate word out of three choices to form a correct lexical collocation. Slightly more than half of the answers were wrong in both groups (57,33% and 56%). While, 42,67% and 44% represent participants' correct answers counted in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. Data from this exercise show low results in the participants' ability to produce acceptable Adj+N collocations. However, the result of wrong answers is lower than the percentages revealed in the aforementioned exercises. This could be due to the fact that these collocations are more frequent in everyday speech.

Exercise N° 5

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	28	22,40%	30	24%
Incorrect	97	77,60%	95	76%
Total	125	100%	125	100%

Table 55: Students' Correct and Incorrect Collocations in Relation to Near-Synonyms

Similarly to exercise (4), this exercise consists of five (5) sentences in which students were intended to choose an appropriate word out of three choices to form a correct lexical collocation. The exercise focused on the appropriate and inappropriate collocational use of the near-synonymous words.

Only 28 and 30 correct answers out of 125 were counted in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. While incorrect answers were 97 with a percentage of 77,60% and 95 with a percentage of 76% ,in the experimental group and in the control group respectively. Concerning sentence '3', most students negatively translated from Arabic into English, using **say* instead of *tell* respectively (We say in Arabic yaqolu elhaqiqa). Answering to sentence 2, the students wrongly used the French equivalent chance (chaque etudiant a une seule chance). Through their answers to '4' and '5', the majority of students wrongly combined the two parts of the collocation. These results disconfirmed students'

answers when responding to the questionnaire (Q22). This means that students were unaware that there is no absolute synonymy because every word has a specific meaning that slightly differs from its synonym. Significantly, they were unaware that synonyms do not always combine in the same way. i. e. synonyms do not share the same set of collocates. Students were not aware of the collocational meaning, but rather their attention was directed to the core meaning of isolated words. Simply put, students of both groups lacked collocational knowledge.

Overall, results of correct versus incorrect answers drawn from the collocational test are represented in table (56) :

Answers	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Correct	261	29,83%	274	31,31%
Incorrect	614	70,17%	601	68,69%
Total	875	100%	875	100%

Table 56 : Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers of the Collocational Test

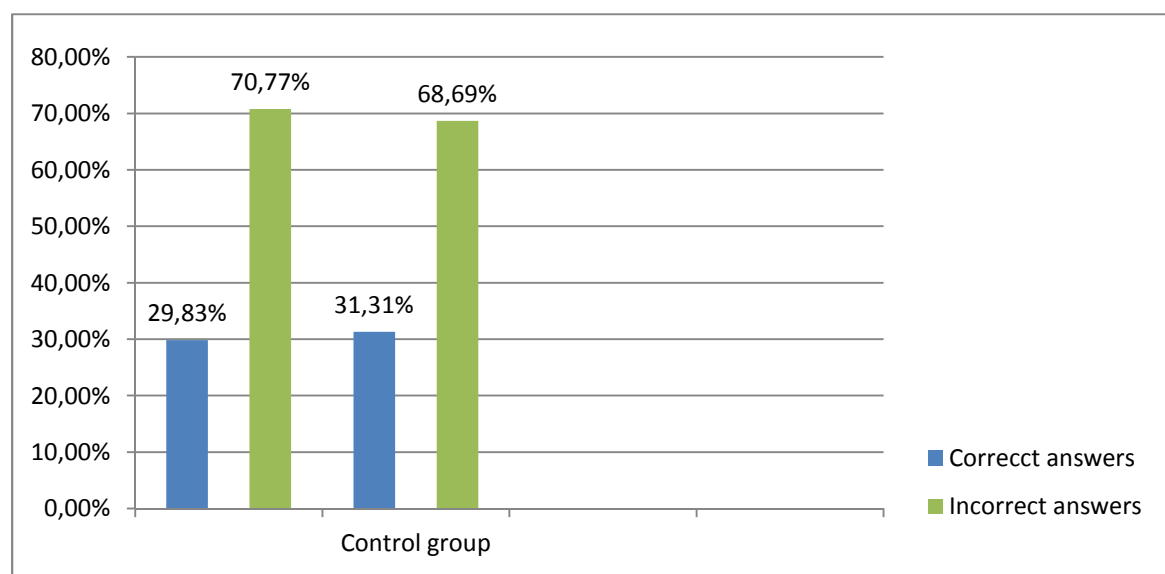


Figure 4: Students' Correct and Incorrect Answers of the Collocational Test

From students' answers of the whole collocational test, table (56) reveals that the number of incorrect answers exceeds that of correct answers in both groups. This indicates that all students of the experimental group and the control group faced the same problem that of inappropriately combining English words because they lacked collocational knowledge.

4.5.5. Summary of the Results

Results show that students of both groups tested were very poor in answering the abovementioned exercises. Results obtained from exercises 3, 4 and 5 show that the control group participants slightly did better than the experimental group participants contrary to data obtained from exercises 1 and 2, in which we notice the reverse. The exercise the students found the easiest than the others, scoring low percentage of incorrect answers was exercise 4 which aimed at choosing the right collocate. The most difficult one turned out to be exercise 5 in which the students were asked to choose a word among 3 synonymous words which collocate with the central word included in the sentence. Most students hardly ever provided the appropriate choice of synonymous words. This means that they found it easier to match two words in a collocation if they were confronted with a group of words to choose from (exercise 4) than to choose from synonymous collocates, even as small as a 3-elements choice. Additionally, even if a student knew the Arabic equivalent of the central word, s/he frequently failed to know its collocates such as *the wind howls*, concerning this collocation all the participants ignored that wind collocates with howls. Maybe, these students were only familiar with its collocate blows.

Concerning exercises 1, 2, and 3, the number of wrong answers exceeds that of correct answers. Although familiarity with the way words combine is a basic and a native-like aspect of learning and using vocabulary, students' attention was not fully directed to it. Counting the number of all the correct and wrong answers, we deduce table (56) which clearly indicates

high percentages of unacceptable collocations in terms of wrong answers provided by all the participants of both groups.

Taken together, the data reveal that indeed EFL students faced difficulties in combining English words together, resulting in a language that did not sound native-like or 'natural'. This phenomenon is mainly due in part to a lack of knowledge of native-like English collocations and also to differences between the collocational patterns of Arabic as a native language and English as a foreign language. Furthermore, L1 influence is one of the reasons for the unacceptable production of English collocations, i.e. miscollocations. In some cases, the students resorted to their native Arabic language, which resulted in producing incorrect collocations. To illustrate, in sentence 1(exercise 3), most students answered with the incorrect collocation **to give some suggestions*, probably because of Arabic expression *kaddama ba?d eliqtirahat* . **To give a formal apology* instead of *to make a formal apology* is another example of Arabic negative interference, maybe because students translated it from its Arabic equivalent *kaddama i?tidar* and never thought that its collocate is *to make* which means in Arabic *to fabricate(sana?a)*. L1 influence was evident in some other instances such as ** to do all the improvements* (in Arabic, we say *qama bitahsinet*) instead of *to make all the improvements*. In addition, exercise 4 answers were full of students tendency to guess the collocates from Arabic equivalents, for instance, **life-term relationships* (?alaqat mada alomr) instead of *long-term relationships* , and **will pass the test of time* (tanjah fi ikhtibar azaman)instead of *will stand the test of time* .Students tend to guess word partners by directly translating from Arabic collocates because their attention was not drawn towards English collocations and their Arabic equivalents. Also, they did not know that lexical collocations are different from language to language. This is indicative of EFL students' general weakness in producing acceptable collocations and of the need to provide students with a help for the improvement of their collocational knowledge and consequently their oral proficiency. It can

be concluded that most participants did not store enough lexical collocations in their minds because they were never made aware of these lexical combinations. We need, thus, to look at the effect of collocational knowledge on students' oral proficiency in the next sections.

4.6. Experimental Study

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study is to investigate the effect of collocation awareness-raising on first year EFL students' oral proficiency. The researcher designed a quasi-experimental study with two groups: an experimental group and a control group. In this study, experimental group used consciousness-raising of lexical collocations as treatment in teaching vocabulary while control group did not. Therefore, in the pre-experimental phase, pre-oral test was administered to measure students' ability to use lexical collocations in oral achievements. In the experimental phase, all experimental group participants received awareness-raising of lexical collocations (see appendix IV). The subjects, then, took a post-oral test immediately after the treatment to measure the outcome effects, i.e. the relationship between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency.

4.6.1. Pre-Experimental Phase

4.6.1.1. Aim of the Pre-Oral Test

The pre-oral test was given to both groups to measure both the subjects' use of lexical collocations in their speeches and their oral proficiency. It aimed at defining the difficulties that students encountered in expressing their ideas in terms of collocational errors.

4.6.1.2. Description of the Pre-Oral Test

To collect data about the participants' oral proficiency and their use of lexical collocations in oral achievements, a pre-oral test was organized. In the pre-oral test, students chose a topic out of three: friendship, family, or likes and dislikes, asserting that they were highly motivated to speak about a topic of their choice. Such topics that were purely descriptive may have prompted the use of more adjective+noun and verb+ noun collocations.

Asked to speak around five minutes about one of the three proposed topics, they all agreed to choose talking about likes and dislikes. Such choice seemed to be reasonable because it was the beginning of the academic year, students were not familiar with the university context. Hence, they wanted to express their feelings and emotions. Importantly, participants were not aware of being under study to avoid bias. During pre-testing, participants' speeches were audio-recorded, using XtremeMac Micromemo. To provide a satisfactory atmosphere for both groups, recordings were sometimes taken as a part of normal class procedure. Thus, participants did not feel they were in risk because this strategy gave the students a feeling of security as they worked in an atmosphere which they knew well. The length of these recordings ranged from 66 seconds to 2 minutes.

4.6.1.3. Administration of the Pre-Oral Test

When attending the pre-oral test, the subjects were invited to talk about likes and dislikes. The subjects were encouraged to speak as much as possible as there was no time limit. The test was taken before the treatment and was done in a quiet classroom. Later, the subjects' speeches were transcribed and the number of lexical collocations was manually counted.

4.6.1.4. Results and Discussion

Students' speeches were analysed and measured for oral proficiency by the researcher and other two teachers, and collocation use was analysed in transcriptions of the recordings. In this respect, the goal intended was to explore the extent of students' ability to orally use English. Also, we purposely measured both collocational and grammatical errors, attempting to prove that students had difficulty of orally expressing themselves due to collocational errors rather than grammatical ones which most teachers, through their answers to the questionnaire, interested in. Collocational errors and grammatical ones were counted and compared to each other.

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Collocational errors	122	61,93%	117	61,26%
Grammatical errors	75	38,07%	74	38,74%
Total	197	100%	191	100%

Table 57: Students' Collocational versus Grammatical Errors Obtained from the Pre-Oral Test

Through the analysis of teachers' questionnaire (chapter three), we point out that most teachers opted for teaching isolated words and grammar structures. Later on, their attention was directed towards lexical collocations. Thus, we purposely measured collocational versus grammatical errors in order to reinforce raising teachers' and students' awareness towards the importance of lexical collocations. Results from table (57) show that the number of collocational errors exceeds that of grammatical errors in both groups with a percentage of 61,93% in the experimental group and 61,26% in the control group. These two close percentages confirm the homogeneity of both groups under study. Also, the high percentage of collocational errors represents students' lack of collocational knowledge and therefore students' lack of natural sounding and native-like pronunciation. Simply put, collocational errors negatively affect students' oral proficiency. Since the message was orally communicated through lexis not through grammar, students were unable to communicate adequately because they had limited knowledge of collocations, the core of vocabulary.

Nevertheless, we cannot neglect percentages representing grammatical errors. Students in both groups did not know how to use tenses appropriately such as : I hate to *left my friends (instead of: to leave) and I dislike *to study in the university (instead of: studying). They used incorrect inflectional verb forms: I hate someone *lie (instead of lies).This *make me angry (instead of makes). I hate girls who *is impolite (instead of are).There *is many

things I hate * it in my life. One of them is war. (instead of there are many things I hate them in my life). Through the analysis of students' speeches, we notice that the verb to be is omitted such as: *This ... me (instead of This is me). * I hate homes work but sometimes I... obliged to do (instead of I hate home works but sometimes I am obliged to do). Additionally, they produced sentences without subject : * I know is not good (instead of I know it is not good).They used sentences full of grammatical errors such as: -

There...some bad *behaviour that I dislike *it (instead of There are some bad behaviours that I dislike them). The following two examples show the misuse of prepositions and relative pronouns respectively:

*I hate all things influence on stability in Algeria (instead of: I hate all things influence the stability of Algeria).

*I hate dealing with people that I know (instead of: I hate dealing with people whom I know).

Yet, the high number of errors is due to lack of collocational knowledge. Interestingly, to further assess participants' use of lexical collocations, we assess the number and percentage of acceptable English collocations produced by the students as follows:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Acceptable lexical collocations	22	15,28%	19	13,97%
Unacceptable lexical collocations	122	84,72%	117	86,03%
Total	144	100%	136	100%

Table 58: Students' Acceptable versus Unacceptable Lexical Collocations Obtained from the Pre-Oral Test

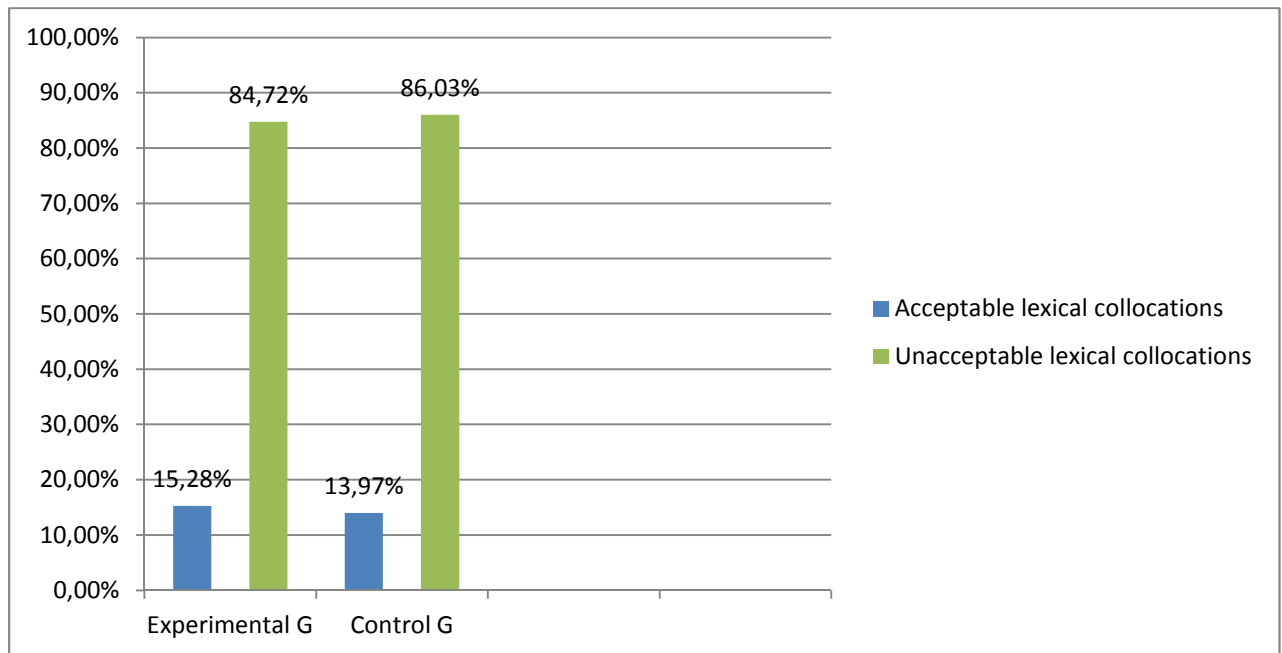


Figure 5: Students' Acceptable versus Unacceptable Lexical Collocations Obtained from the Pre-Oral Test

From Table (58) , we can say that the percentage representing students' use of lexical collocations is very low in both groups. The average number of lexical collocations used in the students' speeches was less than one in both groups. Students' mean of collocational use is calculated, using the following equation:

$$mean = \frac{\sum X}{\sum N}$$

$\sum X$: Score of the acceptable lexical collocations

$\sum N$: Total number of the respondents of each group

Therefore, mean of the experimental group = $\frac{22}{25} = 0,88$

and mean of the control group = $\frac{18}{25} = 0,72$

This further demonstrates that participants did not store adequate lexical collocations in their minds because of insufficient collocational knowledge. Therefore, participants in both groups did not master lexical collocations. Comparing the means of the use of lexical collocations

and students' oral proficiency, as shown in table (59), there is no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-oral test neither in use of collocations (0,88 -0,72 a difference of 0,16) nor in oral proficiency (2,24 and 2,32). One may conclude that the participants in the experimental and the control groups showed equivalent levels in use of collocations and oral proficiency before starting the treatment. Therefore, any change occurs following the treatment would be attributed to the intervention or the independent variable (lexical collocation awareness-raising).

	The experimental group	The control group
The mean of lexical collocations use	0,88	0,72
The mean of oral proficiency	2,24	2,32

Table 59: Pretest Use of Collocations and Oral Proficiency Means of the Experimental and Control Groups

Moreover, acceptable and unacceptable lexical collocations used by students are illustrated in table (60) and table (61) respectively as follows:

The experimental group	The control group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lose contact -climbing mountain -solve the problem -she didn't treat me good -bad marks make me sad -to wash the dirty dishes -They widely spread in our society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I hurt someone -Disobey their parents -This make me angry -I hate doing home works -I made mistake -Tell them the truth -That's actually bad in my personality

Table 60 : Examples of Some Acceptable Lexical Collocations Used by Participants in Pre- Oral Test

Table (60) indicates that participants of both groups correctly produced certain common lexical collocations, despite their small quantity, that are frequently used. Students, maybe, subconsciously restore these lexical chunks in their minds through their exposure to English language. In some instances, they positively transferred from Arabic into English such as *to wash the dirty dishes*. However, a lot of collocations which are easy to grasp were also not used in students' speeches. Therefore, students relied heavily on joining single words together, orally producing speeches that were full of miscollocations because their attention was never directed towards lexical collocations. Then, we proceed to present in more detail the unacceptable collocations students made use of them.

The experimental group	The control group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -War makes a lot of loss. -Teacher attention me. -To do war and violence against people. -My appetite blocked. -I cannot find my comfortable. -Makes great stress in my life. -Try to do problems for the others. -Send my ideas or answers. -I will search the solution. -I hate the person who doesn't speak the truth. -I dislikes having undesirable job with inactive team. -I am not the reason for its damage. - I dislike having courses at morning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I'll never pass my limits. -I had take my baccalaureate. -I made the same routine. -I am facing a big pressure and stress. -I hate coming back from my decision. -I dislike put blame on others. -I want to finish my diplome early. -To make peace. -It causes a lot of problems. -I dislike the system of studying in this university.

Table 61: Examples of Some Unacceptable Lexical Collocations used by Participants in

Pre- Oral Test

Table (61) illustrates some instances of incorrect lexical collocations used by the students of both groups to express their ideas about likes and dislikes. Although the topic was frequently encountered by the students, they did not have sufficient lexical collocations related to such topic. Most students produced unacceptable collocations because they translated these collocations word-for-word either from NSA such as **I had take my baccalaureate* (Dit Al bac) or from MSA as in **It causes a lot of problems* (Tussabibu Mashakilan Kathira) and **I cannot find my comfortable* (Lam ?ajid Rahati). Negatively transferring from French is another instance of miscollocations such as: **The teacher attention me* (l'enseignant fait attention à moi). In **I dislike having courses at morning*, for instance, the students used courses as an equivalent to lessons through rendering the French noun 'des cours'. These students neglected that false friends seem to be similar but they do not share the same meaning. When the students failed to say what they wanted in English, they borrowed French words as in *'I want to finish my diplome early'*.

In addition, depending on their misconceptions about synonyms, students produced unacceptable collocations because they combined synonymous words with the same collocates such as: *I hate the person who doesn't *speak the truth* (instead of tell) and *I dislike having undesirable *job with inactive team* (instead of task). Nevertheless, most of students' collocational errors were due to students' inability to correctly combine English words. To illustrate, the majority of students collocated do with problems and violence, and collocated make with stress.

Thus, we can draw the conclusion that data obtained from pre-oral test are in accordance with the collocational test results since most students negatively transferred from Arabic or French and were not aware that the meaning of a collocation was different from the meaning of its core word .i.e. there is no absolute synonymy. These miscollocations confirm that students were unfamiliar with lexical collocations and did not know how to get rid of the

factors operating to hinder producing acceptable collocations. All these explain the high percentage of unacceptable collocations in both groups. This, in turn, indicates that lack of collocational knowledge is a major source of students' collocational errors.

4.6.1.5. Summary of the Results

Vocabulary and grammar are two basic elements of a language, but traditionally most EFL teachers often emphasize learning grammar more than vocabulary in their teaching. In order to teach collocations along with grammar through an integrated approach, teachers need to know that grammatical rules may be useless if students do not possess patterns of lexical co-occurrence for the rules to operate on effectively. Therefore, in order to improve their oral proficiency, students need to be trained to gain both grammatical accuracy and lexical accuracy.

The results revealed by our analysis of students' speeches confirm that misuse of grammatical rules was one of error sources but not the major one. Students' lack of collocational knowledge was the major setback that hindered students from orally expressing their ideas in an appropriate way. Furthermore, most of the lexical combinations produced by the students were considered unacceptable collocations. Making false generalizations about equivalence between Arabic and English, French and English, students negatively transferred from both Arabic and French. Additionally, students were unaware that each synonymous word has its specific set of collocates. Hence, they thought that tell, speak, and say could be used interchangeably without paying attention to the words with which they collocate. This represents only an instance among many other instances of miscollocations. Students wrongly combined words because they were unaware of how words naturally co-occurred. This, in turn, explains the students' failure to produce acceptable collocations because they were unfamiliar with this concept. Despite the importance of lexical collocations, students were not directed towards such unacceptable collocations to avoid them in future performances. More

interestingly, their attention was not drawn towards lexical collocations encountered in the texts they listened to or read.

To confirm the need for awareness-raising of lexical collocations, we proceed to next phase.

4.6.2. In-Experimental Phase

4.6.2.1. Procedure and Design of the Experiment

For our experiment, we took a period of time of about seven months(7) to include in the subjects of the experimental group the idea that they should know how words are naturally combined to know how they could express their ideas proficiently. We taught fifty students in two groups, the experimental group (receiving collocation instruction) and the control group (not receiving collocation instruction). In a three-hour weekly class, we gave experimental group students a series of lessons on collocations. During treatment, lessons and activities elaborated to raise students' awareness of lexical collocations. The treatment sessions were divided into two: class work sessions and lab work sessions. Treatment lessons were selected from four main sources: English Collocations in Use (2005), English Collocations in Use: advanced (2008), Cambridge Complete CAE Students' book, and web resources. The former two sources provide whole sections with different exercises intended to improve collocational knowledge as a means of better communication. Correspondingly, both books entitled English Collocations in Use (Intermediate and Advanced) present and practise collocations in typical contexts. Each unit focuses on a topic. The third source presents collocations through listening to natural speech and practises them in several exercises. The fourth source provides several and varied collocation exercises.

4.6.2.2. Treatment

The instruction was two sessions per week. Each week focused on a different set of collocations. These collocates were about topics that students might encounter outside the

classroom or during the class. Apart from the main materials, the control group and experimental group each received different supplementary materials. The control group received additional examples of grammar and vocabulary usage, while the experimental group received additional examples of lexical collocations. The differences between the control and experimental group will be explained next.

A. The Control Group

For the control group, the students received instruction based on the traditional vocabulary / grammar split focusing on the isolated vocabulary and grammar found in the materials rather than on the lexical collocations. New words were explained whenever deemed necessary, or whenever the students asked. Grammatical points also were explained and practised. In this traditional method, the researcher neglected to direct students' attention towards vocabulary in general and lexical collocations in particular.

The same texts and listening tapes were used for this group as for the experimental group, except that there was no collocation awareness-raising. Moreover, while listening to the tape the students would be given an activity focusing on isolated vocabulary. Researcher's feedback would be on grammar points, vocabulary items, and mistakes made by the students.

Overall, the control group received the same amount of listening and speaking practice as the experimental group, but instruction was focused on isolated vocabulary.

B. The Experimental Group

From the beginning of the study, the researcher established a classroom environment in which the experimental group students engaged actively in collocation consciousness-raising activities. We strongly invited the students to take risks, encouraged them to explore different collocational ranges, providing them with topic-related or word-related collocations. Therefore, the students would have much more control over the ideas with which they were working. A primary goal had been to make students as autonomous as possible. Such lessons

included introducing major lexical collocation patterns, and familiarizing students with the process of awareness-raising. The description of the process put emphasis on the fact that these activities were intended to prepare them to become proficient speakers. Specifically, the researcher explained that noticing collocations is a learning strategy that focuses mostly on quality of ideas, and she discussed the significance and importance of lexical collocations.

1) Class Work

The class sessions were devoted to doing activities and presenting lessons to enhance collocation awareness-raising. Lessons covered dictionary use discussion, noticing and highlighting techniques, and recycling through communication skills. Other lessons focused on underlining verb-noun collocations, matching games, and identifying collocations in a given text.

During the first sessions, the researcher utilized most common collocations that students could easily retrieve. We designed activities to help participants distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable collocations. Accordingly, the researcher showed a variety of authentic materials for the students to notice and record in their notebooks numerous and varied types of lexical collocations. Then the students used them in context. This was followed in another session by exercises in which teachers recycled the previously-learned collocations to foster students' understanding, for instance, establishing mother tongue and target language equivalence (i.e. collocations with direct L1 equivalents).

2) Lab Work

The first session each week focused on listening to the audio text and was essentially the same for both control and experimental groups. The groups differed in how these listening sessions were examined and expanded upon in the other class session each week. Students of the control group would hear the text two or three times and answer some listening comprehension questions. While the experimental group students, after listening, were asked

to spot out theme-related collocations and look for other collocates in a collocation dictionary. This would be followed by a speaking task on the same topic to allow students use the learned collocations in meaningful contexts. The students would often read through the transcription with the researcher and review collocations and then listen to the text two more times while looking at the transcript. Interestingly, students showed interest in the consciousness-raising activities which led to progress in communication skills. They talked more and had more chances to speak English particularly during competitive activities and collocation games.

3) Aims of the Lessons

This series of lessons aims, first of all, to help the students understand what a collocation is and to be able to identify collocations and distinguish them from other kinds of lexical combinations such as "idioms". Secondly, the lessons were intended to teach experimental group students a number of lexical collocations consisting of the most frequent English nouns and the adjectives and/or verbs which usually accompany them. We trained students on how to record collocation in organized notebooks. Finally, we offer a number of tools and Internet resources based on Corpus Linguistics. So that learners acquire the necessary skills to search for collocations autonomously.

4) Selection of collocations

Teachers should be selective about what collocations to teach since a great number of collocations generally appear in every lesson.

With collocations organised by topic, students can conduct a survey among their classmates and follow it up with an oral report. In the topic of household chores, for examples, students survey the following:

In your house, who:
does the dishes?

makes the beds?

takes the rubbish out? (etc)

With collocations organised by key-word, the students can be given a set of cards with the collocations written on them which they have to put into some kind of chronological order. They can then use the cards to verbally use the collocations themselves.

make the bed	make the cake	make dinner	make soup	make dessert	make an attempt
take chance	take a nap(after lunch)	take a bite	take the rubbish out	take bath	take break

Table 62 : Collocations with the Common Verbs Make and Take

The following are examples of such lessons administered as both class work and lab work:

Example 1: First week

Session 1

I. Warm-up

Students were given a list of very common collocations and were expected to substitute the parts of the collocations by their synonyms, discussing the reasons for not doing so.

Discussion

We usually say strong tea but not powerful tea. In another familiar example of collocation, we talk of high mountains and tall trees, but not usually of tall mountains and high trees. We get sick but we fall ill.

II. Introducing Lexical Collocations

The researcher explained and exemplified differences between free combinations, collocations, and idioms.

Free Combinations

Free lexical combinations are those in which the two elements do not repeatedly co-occur; the elements are not bound specifically to each other: they occur with other items freely such as **buy the house, take the bus**

Collocations

Collocation means a natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are frequently used with each other. For example, **heavy rain, commit suicide, pay attention, and blond hair.**

Idioms

An idiom is an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words. For example, **to have your feet on the ground** is an idiom meaning to be sensible.

Then, students were asked to give examples of certain common collocations to see if they understood the concept and were able to exemplify it.

Students' answers: need a help, take a break, take a wrong turn, have a sit, dense forest, etc.

III. Practice

We thought that the effective way to better raise students' awareness of collocations is through context because any English text, spoken or written, will contain many examples of lexical collocations. We underlined collocations and those written in bold (to feel the need and to improve the quality) were given more importance. Students were intended to find what

collocates with them in the text. The researcher went further than the text and asked them to find further possible collocations with certain items in the text using a collocation dictionary.

Text

It was the entry of McDonald's into Rome in 1986 that sparked off the "slow food movement" – a tongue-in-cheek reaction against fast food by a journalist who **felt the need** to celebrate meals prepared with love and consumed at leisure. Fifteen years on, the organisation spans 50 countries and has more than 70,000 members.

Now the idea is moving on to what is being called the "slow cities" movement, and towns in many countries are being invited to join more than 30 Italian communities who have taken up the challenge of resisting the frenetic, ever-quicken pace of living and trying to **improve the quality** of life.

Extracted from: The Guardian Weekly

Collocations

1. feel the need to (do something)

- feel like: When I came back to England, I felt like a stranger.
- feel as if/as though: I felt as though someone had just punched me in the stomach.
- feel sadness/happiness/anger/relief etc: She felt some sadness when the time came to leave.
- feel guilty: Richard felt no guilty at all for what he had done.
- feel the need to do something: Cara felt the need to talk to someone.
- feel (a) pain: He felt a sudden pain in his chest.
- feel the cold/heat: Children don't seem to feel the cold as much as adults do.

2. to improve the quality

- His work is improving over time.

- He did a lot to improve conditions for factory workers.
- *He took vitamins to improve his health.*
- I thought the best way to improve my French was to live in France.

IV. Speaking practice:

The students were going to speak about their feelings describing an event happened to them before. Students would prepare some notes, so that they were ready to finish the sentences and gave reasons.

I feel sad when

I feel guilty when

. . . . makes me feel angry.

. . . . was when I felt the happiest.

After work / school I feel like

Session 2

I. Warm-up

The students were expected to brainstorm nouns that can be collocated with feel and improve.

Students' answers: The examples were written on the blackboard. The researcher and the students discussed the examples given and eliminated the incorrect ones.

- She finally felt the joy of being mom.
- When I walked out I felt cold
- Reading books improves my English
- After the earthquake, they lived in bad conditions and they needed help to improve their way of living

II. Introducing the Different Types of Lexical Collocations

In this session, great emphasis is placed on making students familiar with collocation types. Here are some examples:

1. noun + noun

- The **ceasefire agreement** came into effect on 5th July 1962.
- I would like to buy two **bars of soap** please.

2. adjective + noun

- The doctor ordered him to take **regular exercise**.
- The Titanic sank on its **maiden voyage**.

3. noun + verb

- The **lion** started **to roar** when it heard the **dog barking**.
- **Snow was falling** as our **plane took off**.

4. verb + noun

- I always try to **do my homework** in the morning, after **making my bed**.
- He has been asked to **give a presentation** about his work.

5. adverb + adjective

- We entered a **richly decorated** room.
- Are you **fully aware** of the implications of your action?

6. verb + adverb

- She **placed** her keys **gently** on the table and sat down.

- Mary **whispered softly** in John's ear.

III.Practice

1-Which word from the box collocates with all the words given?

doubtful- idea- opinion- story- belief- criminal

1. strong, profound, popular, unshakable, share, respect, lose _____

2. conflicting, personal, second, express , give, ask _____

3. dangerous, desperate, common, born, hardened, catch _____

4. extremely, very, slightly, look, become, remain _____

Answers: 1 = belief, 2 = opinion, 3 = criminal, 4 = doubtful

2-Students were asked to highlight and then notice collocations discussing beliefs in this text.

The writer seems to **make assumptions** based on an **unshakeable belief** in the superiority of his own value system. He seems to be unaware of the extent to which his own **set of beliefs** has **coloured his judgement**. His research **leads him to conclude** that military action was justified. However, his **evidence is based on** one single document and **attaches** too much **importance** to this. I do not **trust his judgement**. Moreover, other documents **cast doubt on** his conclusions. **Opinions** on the issue **are divided** and my own **considered opinion** is that the writer is not to be trusted. I **have serious misgivings about** his research and I **have doubts** about the accuracy of some of his facts.

IV.Speaking Practice

The researcher collaborated with the students to mention collocations referring to beliefs and opinions such as firmly believe, hold the view, etc. Students then were intended to talk about their beliefs and opinions.

Example 2: Second week

Session 1

Aim - To practise adjective-noun and verb-noun collocations

Lesson plan

1.Warm-up activity(10 min)

2.Main Activities

- Matching words(10min)
- Listening for collocations(15 min)
- activity (15 min)
- Listening comprehension (for the control group only)
- Play a collocation game on verbs and nouns(20min)
- Role play (15 min)
- Audio-recording students (15min)

I.Warm-up Activity

We explained to students that they were going to listen to opinions about languages (CD 1 Track 5 from Complete CAE, 2010:17).

We put students into pairs or small groups and asked them to recall the nouns and verbs that collocate with language.

II.Pre-listening – vocabulary

Dictating two lists of words, Students worked in pairs matching words to make common collocation.

fashionable	highly articulate
achieve	command
Mother	accuracy
an excellent	loanwords
a bit	your aims
consider	tongue
becoming	rusty

Students were going to listen to opinions about languages. They were informed that they would listen and match any of the collocations that they heard. Then, we played the recording and checked students' answers.

(Answers: an excellent command, fashionable loanwords, a bit rusty, mother tongue, becoming highly articulate, consider accuracy, achieve your aims).

III.Listening

Students were going to do some collocation activities while listening. Contrary to the experimental group, students of the control group listened and answered some comprehension questions. The meaning of any unknown words or phrases was explained to the control group.

Activity

Students were asked to choose the correct collocations and use them in meaningful sentences. For example, I **took** my final exam last week but I **failed**. Hopefully, I will **pass** next week.

Pass	
Lose	(an) exam
Fail	
Take	

Save	
Spend	Money
Waste	

Cause	
deal with	(a) problem
Solve	

ask for	
Give	Advice
Follow	

Make	
Keep	(a) promise
Break	

go on	
-------	--

set up	
Run	(a) business
take over	

Make	
learn from	(a) mistake
Avoid	

give	
do	Homework
hand in	

go to	
escape from	Jail
get out of	

get	
-----	--

Arrange	(a) trip	lose	(a) job
Cancel		apply for	
return from		find	

Figure 6: Collocation Forks of Common Verbs

IV. Post-listening

1-Collocation Game

The researcher put students into teams. Each team needed a piece of paper and a pen. Then, he dictated the following verbs: take, play, make, find, pay, and tell. He elicited one example of a noun that collocates with each verb (from the previous exercise). Students had a limited time (e.g. 5 minutes) to write as many more nouns as possible for all of the verbs. When the time was up, both teams counted how many verb + noun collocations they had got. Finally, the researcher checked their answers and awarded points for each correct collocation. The team who got high points was the winner.

2- Speaking Practice

Students were divided into groups of 6 or fewer. Give each student a job card. Students had to justify which job they preferred to get when they graduated. Each student should speak for a couple of minutes. When everyone finished, the class voted for the most convincing worker.

Session 2

Aim: recycling and noticing lexical collocations previously-learned

Students could learn them by **topic** (time, number, weather, money, family) or by a particular **word** (*take action, take a chance, take an exam*).

Activity 1

Students were given the tape script with some key collocations blanked out. They listened again and completed the spaces.

Example 3 : the fifth week

Session one

Aim: to present and practise verb + noun collocations (make, do, get, take)

Lesson Plan

1. warm-up (15 min)
2. Presentation (20min)
3. Multiple choice activity (20 min)
4. Dictionary activity (30 min)
5. Communicative drill (30 min)
6. Speaking practice (15 min)
7. Revision (15 min)

1.Warm up

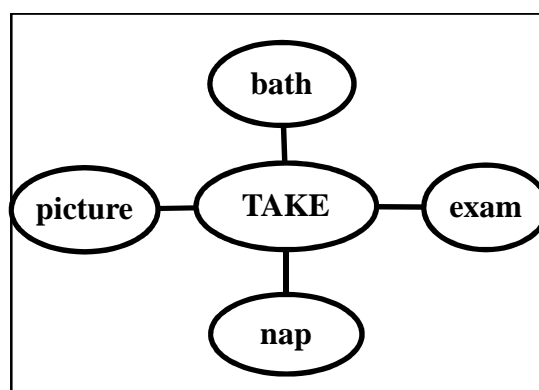
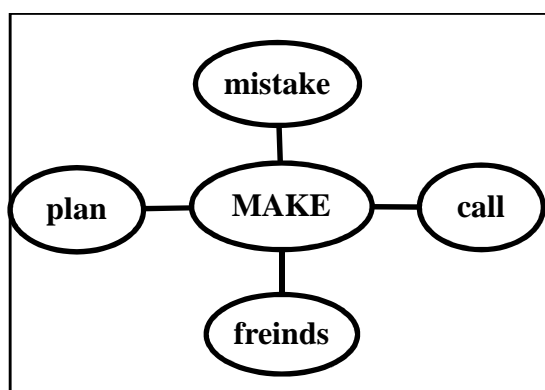


Figure 7: Collocation bubbles

The researcher drew bubbles on the board and asked students to do the same in their notebooks. Then, he read sentences aloud twice. They should listen and write each collocate in the appropriate bubble. After checking that all the students wrote the collocations of the given sentences, students checked their classmates' sentences and correct any mistakes.

2. Presentation

Students were asked whether they can use other words such as **make a job*, **take a job*; **make business*, **take business*. Some students said that we cannot. We asked them why they could not use any other words here (to find out whether or not students were aware of the concept of collocation – words that often go together).

We explained that in English there are many words which often go together in this way. We elicit some basic verb + noun collocations that students may already know (for example: *do homework*, *make a mistake*); and some 'collocations' in Arabic (students' mother tongue). Furthermore, we tried to translate them literally into English, for instance,

1./ḍaraba zaydun ʿumarān/

'Zayd hit Umar'

2./ḍaraba l-mudiiru biyadin min ḥadiid/

'The headmaster ran the school firmly'

3. Multiple Choice Activity

Choose the appropriate verb to form a correct collocation

- 1- If you can't speak English, you can't **get a** good **job**.
- 2 -You should never **do business** with your friends or family.
- 3 -If you want to become rich, you have to **take risks**.
- 4 -Successful business people **do** a lot of **overtime**.
- 5 -Your work should always **take priority** over your family.
- 6 -Big companies don't care about their employees. They only care about **making a profit**.

4. Dictionary Activity

Students were intended to put each noun into the correct column in the table, being informed to work together and/or use their dictionaries (Oxford Advanced Learners of English Dictionary). We asked them to think of some more words that could go in each column or to find some in their dictionaries. When the students finished filling in the table, we checked the correct answers for each column.

Do	Make	Get	Take
Business	a complaint	a bonus	a break
overtime	a fortune	a job	classes
training	a profit	an email	priority
work	an appointment	qualifications	risks

Table 63: Collocations with Common Verbs : Do, Make, Get, and Take

This activity shows students how a good dictionary can help them to learn collocations. Students found all the answers to this activity by looking up entries in the Oxford Collocations Dictionary.

Session 2

Warm-up

Students were intended to use make, do, get, take in acceptable sentences. They were not allowed to have look on their notebooks or on their copybooks. But, they could discuss their answers with their classmates.

5. Communicative Drill

Preparation

Make one copy of the table for every 4 students in the class. Cut up the cards and put them into piles. Put students into groups of four. Choose one student in each group to be a referee. Give each referee one set of cards and tell him/her not to show them to the other

students in his/her group. The referee should take a card and say the noun written on it (e.g. 'A job') The other students in the group should shout out the verb which the noun collocates with it (e.g. 'Get a job!'). The player who says the verb first wins and gets to keep the card. If both players shout out the verb at the same time, neither gets the card. When the referee used all the cards in the pile, the group with the most cards won. It is a good idea to set a time limit for this activity, or ask the students to time themselves.

Such activity was done as a class race: the group which finished the pile of cards first (with correct answers) was the winner.

6. Speaking Practice

Ask one student from each group to come to the front of the room and choose a card at random. The student should take the card back to his/her group and asked his/her team-mates the question, inserting the correct collocation. The students should discuss the question for a short time and tried to practise the collocation in their answers. For example:

Question: what do you do when you get up early?

Answer : I make my bed and take my breakfast

When the group finished discussing the question, a student from another group should return the card to the table at the front of the classroom and took a different card. He/she should then discuss the question with his/her team-mates in the same way. The students should continue in this way, discussing different questions and trying to practise the collocations. The researcher set a time limit for the activity, the students thus did not have to discuss every question.

7. Revision

At the end of the activity, the researcher elicited some answers and corrected any mistakes that students made. Also, students were asked to brainstorm what they had gained from the session. Even the tongue-tied students were boosted to speak.

TO sum up, this section described in detail the steps undertaken to carry out the experiment lessons and specific instructions in implementing collocation awareness-raising. To illustrate this, we describe lessons presented in three weeks out of twenty-two weeks (22). In the next section, data analyses and results of the post-oral test will be reported.

4.6.3. Post-Experimental Phase

4.6.3.1. Aim of the Post-Oral Test

Post-oral test was expected to collect data about the subjects' use of lexical collocations and measure their oral proficiency. In this respect, the goal intended is to measure the degree of influence of making students aware of lexical collocations on their oral proficiency. Thus, test results were examined for correlations between the subjects' use of collocational knowledge and their oral proficiency.

4.6.3.2. Description of the Post-Oral Test

The post-oral test was identical to the pre-oral test in terms of choice of a topic out of three. It was administered in the same way, under the same conditions. Similarly to pre-testing, during post-testing, students were instructed to make a five-minute presentation on a topic of their choices among three proposed topics. They agreed to talk about friendship.

4.6.3.3. Administration of Post-Oral Test

A post- oral test was administered after the treatment to measure the oral performance of students in both groups. It was taken immediately after the last week of the intervention, at the end of the second semester. It was administered in the same way, under the same conditions.

4.6.3.4. Results and Discussion

The number of lexical collocations used in students' speeches was calculated. it was helpful to investigate participants' awareness-raising of using lexical collocations in their speeches. Similarly to pre-oral test, to measure participants' use of lexical collocations, we

assessed the number and percentage of acceptable English collocations produced by the students as follows:

	The experimental group		The control group	
	Number (N°)	Percentage (%)	Number (N°)	Percentage (%)
Acceptable lexical collocations	154	88%	17	20,73%
Unacceptable lexical collocations	21	12%	65	79,27%
Total	175	100%	82	100%

Table 64: Students' Acceptable versus Unacceptable Lexical Collocations Obtained from the Post-Oral Test

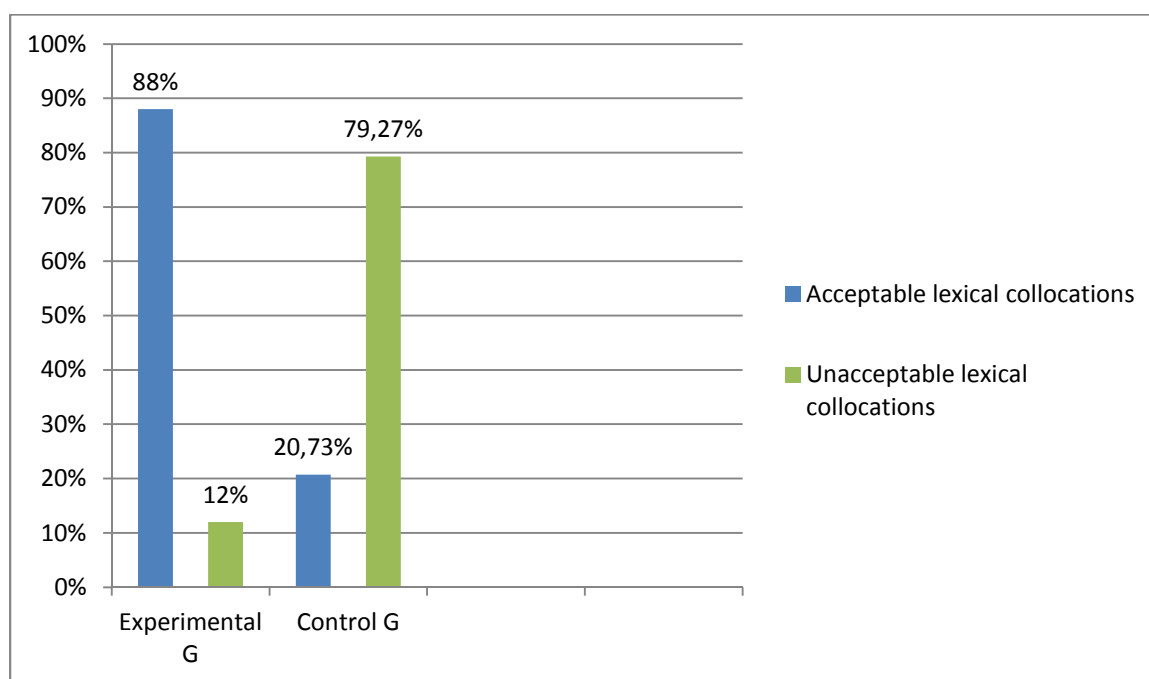


Figure 8: Students' Acceptable versus Unacceptable Lexical Collocations Obtained from the Post-Oral Test

The students' speeches of the two groups were analyzed and compared for the percentages representing acceptable and unacceptable lexical collocations. We can say that the percentage representing students' use of lexical collocations is very low in the control group. But, the percentage representing students' use of lexical collocations is high in the experimental group. This indicates that the control group students had insufficient collocational knowledge. They still lacked collocational knowledge. Therefore, they did not master lexical collocations even the ones about a daily encountered topic such as friendship the topic they chose for post-oral test. While the experimental group participants retained and used the collocations they learned before. Thus, in the post-oral test, those students produced a great number and variety of acceptable lexical collocations. Contrary to the experimental group students, the control group students used miscollocations in their speeches more frequently. To illustrate, instances of acceptable and unacceptable collocations are presented in table (66) and table (67) respectively.

The experimental group	The control group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The real friend is... -Making friends is very important -She loses her temper quickly -I take the jokes she plays -To make sacrifice -To form a lasting friendship -Moufida and Imene consider me a mutual friend -They dream together how to cement this relation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The real friend is... -Everyone can make friends -Keep silent -There is no real friendship

Table 65: Examples of Some Acceptable Lexical Collocations Used by Participants in Post-Oral Test

The experimental group	The control group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Innocent relationship comes at a young age. -Humans are social creatures. -They need to create new relationship. -Friendship must be filled with love. -They gave their teachers hard time. -Her smile can hit her great sadness. -I immediately offer to them my friendship. -People have changed. -It must be built on some rules. -A person won't give a huge importance to his pride. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Friendship required the helpful and faithful. -Friendship is comfortable and relaxed. -Friendship requires meeting the needs of both friends. -there are isolated people. -Friendship must be build. -Work for the continue of this good relationship. -Don't wait the back. -Anyone has a friendship. -He should be your second half. -You share the same character. -No one can create problems between friends. -Without speaking any word.

Table 66: Examples of Some Unacceptable Lexical Collocations Used by Participants in Post- Oral Test

We notice that the speeches produced by experimental group students are longer than the ones produced by control group students (see appendix V and VI). This indicates that the experimental group students were capable to freely express their ideas. Also, the experimental group participants used large amounts of acceptable lexical collocations as shown in table (65); while control group participants used very few lexical collocations which are frequently used and daily encountered such as *keep silent* and *real friend*. In addition to that, the students who did not receive the treatment still faced the same problem that of miscollocations . The collocations verb+ noun seemed to be more likely to cause L1 interference for the subjects in this study. They were heavily influenced by their mother tongue. Wait and back (ينتظر المقابل) their combinations produced relatively miscollocations. They were also influenced to a lesser extent by French. Another difficulty facing students was the fact that they wrongly combined

English words. To illustrate, a student said: * *No one can create problems between friends* (instead of cause problems) because in Arabic one can say *yakhliq elmashakil*. Another one used the French verb continuer to express the idea of cement a lasting friendship **work for the continue of this relationship*. The majority of control group students wrongly collocated *friendship* with *requires*. By comparison, all the students who received the treatment avoided making collocational errors because of French transfer or near-synonyms. Accordingly, they still faced the obstacle of paraphrasing from Arabic. This indicates that the intervention made students aware of how words are naturally combined. Thus, their way of thinking was affected by consciousness-raising of lexical collocations; They did not combine single words in relation to only grammatical rules but also they paid attention to the way these words are habitually used together. However, the students could not avoid mother tongue interference in short period of time. They needed more practice and time. The fact that the subjects' mother tongue language is Arabic might explain this result because it is easy for the subjects to render Arabic words into English. It is their native language which is widely used among them outside the classroom.

In addition, in the posttest, we calculated the means of collocations use and oral proficiency of the control and experimental groups after the treatment period. We then divided the sum of the scores obtained from students' use of collocations and the scores gained in oral proficiency by the number of the participants in each group. The results are as follows:

	The experimental group	The control group
The mean of lexical collocation use	6,16	0,68
The mean of oral proficiency	3,12	2,36

Table 67: Post-Test Use of Collocations and Oral Proficiency Means of the Experimental and Control Groups

The numbers of lexical collocations used by the two groups are strikingly different. Through comparison, we can see that subjects in the experimental group used much more lexical collocations in speaking than subjects in the control group. The average number of lexical collocations used by experimental group is 6,16 while the average number of lexical collocations used by control group is only 0,68 . In other words, the average number of lexical collocations used in the students' speeches was less than one in the control group and less than seven in the experimental group. This further indicates that there is an increase in collocational use among the experimental group students. The total score of the experimental group participants for the acceptable collocations use was 6 lexical collocations out of 154. Unlike the experimental group, the control group participants' use of lexical collocations was less than 1 out of 17. This reflects a wide gap between the two groups in the oral production of lexical collocations.

Furthermore, the mean of students' oral proficiency is 3, 12 in the experimental group and 2, 36 in the control group.

Concerning oral proficiency, familiarity with the way words naturally combined is a basic native-like aspect of learning and using target language vocabulary. This knowledge helps students express their ideas. A language that is collocationally rich is also more precise because the meaning of a word is always determined by the context and it is collocation that provides this context. As a result, students can express more clearly and, at the same time, more precisely the message they want to convey. For example, the experimental group participants precisely used the expression *everlasting friendship*, while the control group participants said* *we should work for the continue of this good relationship* or * *build friendship and want to be for a long period/ to death*. Also, *she is a mutual friend* is another example to illustrate how the participants who received the treatment could precisely express their ideas, whereas those who did not receive the treatment used longer wordier expression

to express the same idea, producing the awkward sentence* *Friendship requires meeting the needs of both friends*. Furthermore, experimental group students were able to master sufficient lexical collocations and used them appropriately; therefore, they achieved a considerable degree of language fluency (only slight hesitations and pauses in their speeches), thus performing well in foreign language oral production. By contrast, the control group students hesitated and made frequent pauses to express their ideas. Those students who did not store adequate lexical collocations in their minds, connected phrases and sentences piece by piece according to grammatical rules. This means that they had to spend much more time in selecting appropriate words. Therefore, the processing speed must be slowed down, and much less time left to consider the content of the language. All these aspects affected the fluency and therefore students' levels of oral proficiency.

4.6.3.5. Comparison of Results and Means

After collecting the data of the pre and post test, the scores help us to provide a statistical analysis. First, the comparison of the pre and post test means of collocational use and oral proficiency of the control and experimental groups are presented in terms of figures.

Figures (9) and (10) show the pretest performance of the control and experimental groups in collocational use and oral proficiency. By observing these graphs, one can notice that the achievement of both groups in the pretest is approximately the same. When we look at the two groups' means in the pre-test (table 59), we notice that there was no significant difference between the two groups in use of lexical collocations or in oral proficiency. This means that the participants started the experiment with equal levels in use of collocations and oral proficiency.

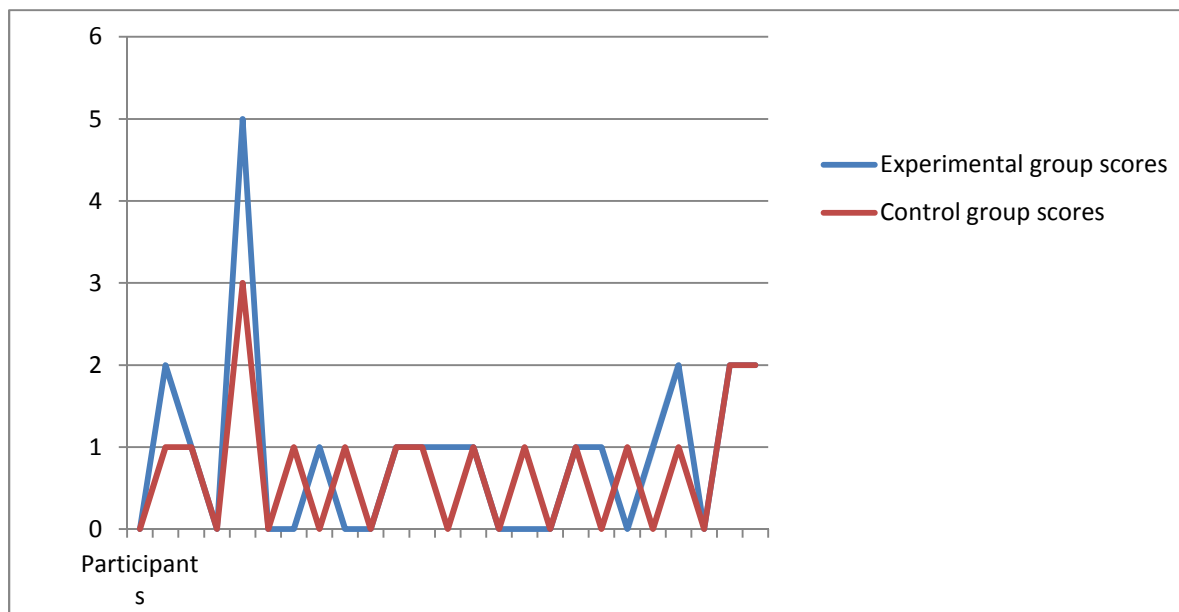


Figure 9 : Pretest Lexical Collocation Use Scores

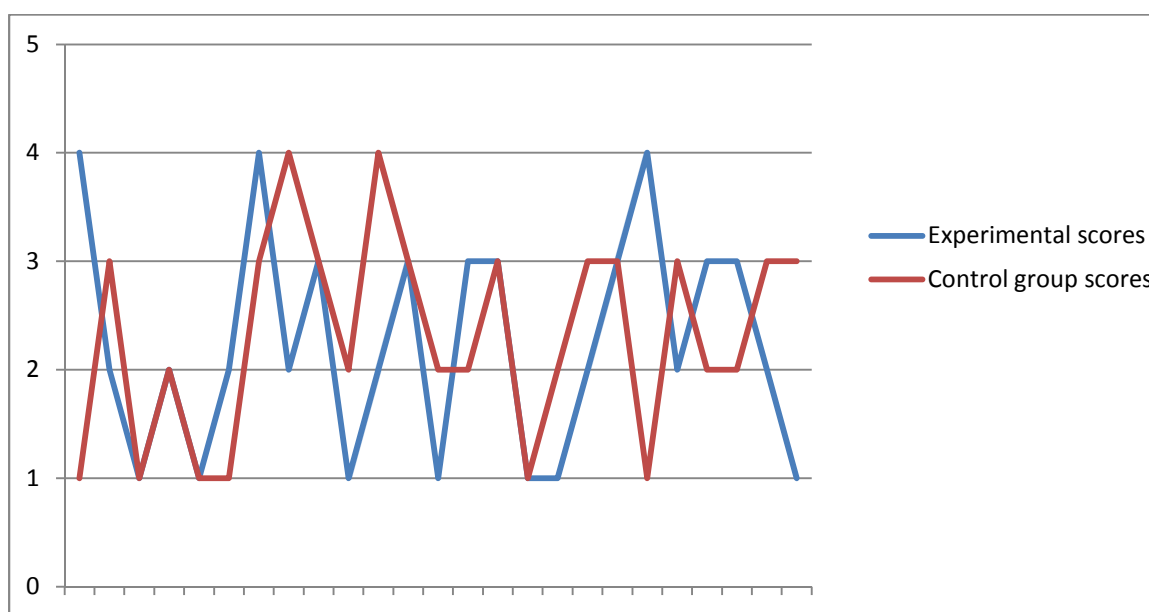


Figure10 : Pre-Test Oral Proficiency Scores

At the end of the experiment, both control and experimental groups were tested again. After the analysis of the posttest results, we notice a significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of their lexical collocational use and oral proficiency results. The experimental group participants performed better than the control group

participants. Such difference between the two groups is clearly shown in figure (11) and figure (12).

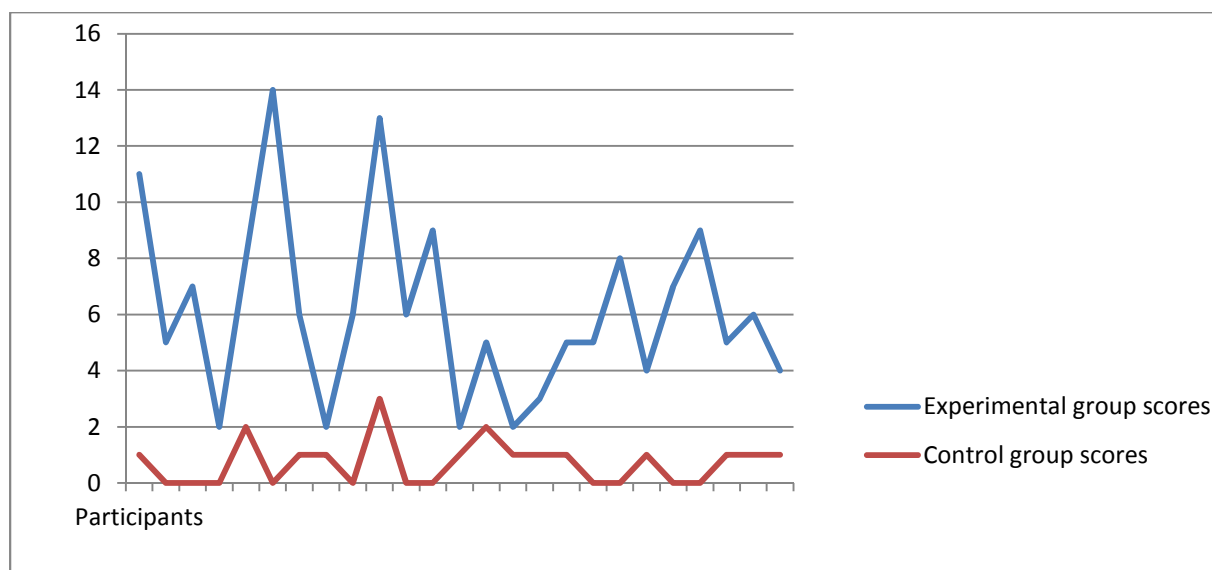


Figure 11: Post-Test Lexical Collocation Use Scores

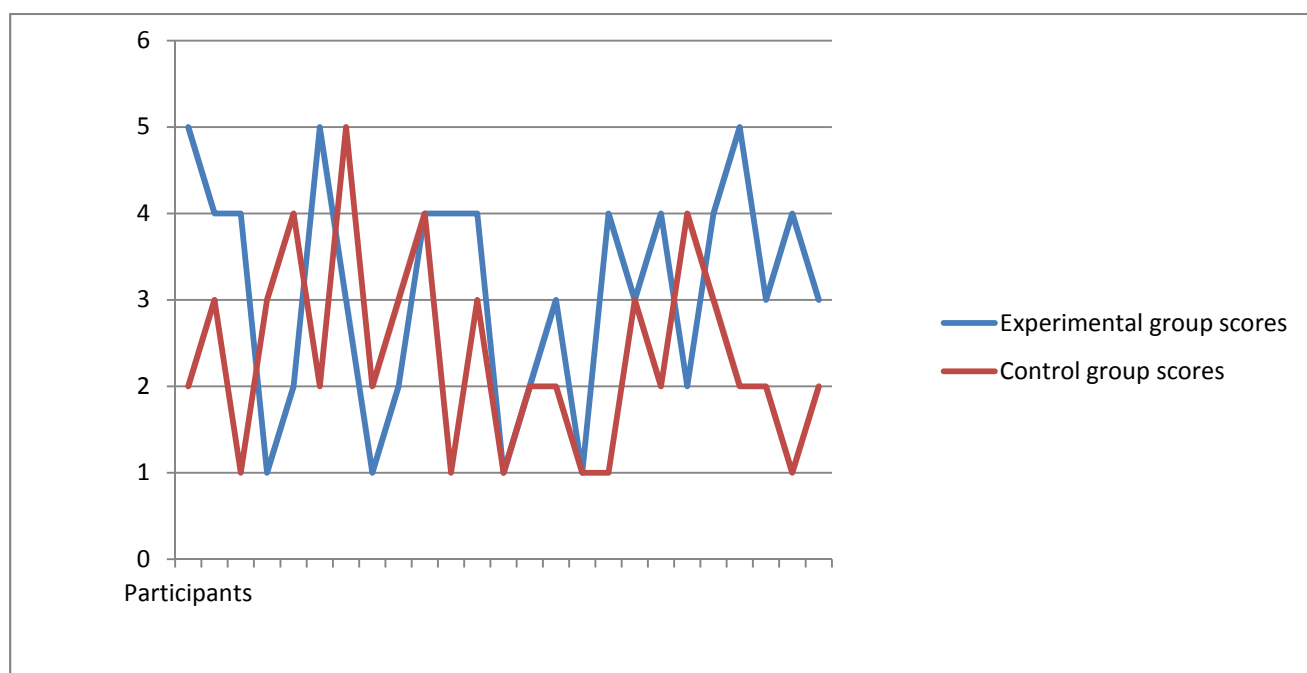


Figure12 : Post-Test Oral Proficiency Scores

Figure (12) shows that experimental group students' level of proficiency increased. This means that the subjects' exposure to larger amounts of collocations influenced the

production of these collocations in their speeches and therefore affected their oral proficiency. That is, the more the subjects were exposed to a particular collocation type, the more they used it. Consequently, a wide range of meaningful collocations in the experimental group students' mental lexicon made it possible to quickly find the right word. It also facilitated and accelerated the communication process. Furthermore, if students were able to use lexical collocations appropriately, their communicative abilities would be increased, which is considered helpful to enhance their oral language proficiency. As a result, students need to be trained to record and retrieve collocations rather than just individual words to enhance their proficiency and produce more natural-sounding language. This improvement is a result of training students to appropriately combine English words.

In contrast, since in control group students' lexical reservoir, there were no ready-made chunks (i.e. collocations) at their disposal, they had to generate them from scratch on the basis of grammar rules. This led to numerous collocational errors. This, in turn, led to inadequate oral use of English

Table (68) sums up the means of students' use of collocations and their oral proficiency of the control and experimental groups obtained in the pretest and posttest.

	Pre-test Means		Post-test Means	
	The experimental group	The control group	The experimental group	The control group
The mean of collocations use	0,88	0,72	6,16	0,68
The mean of oral proficiency	2,24	2,32	3,12	2,36

Table 68 : Pre and Post Tests Means of Collocations Use and Oral Proficiency

By comparing the means of both groups in collocation use and oral proficiency in the posttest, we notice the following:

In terms of collocation use, we may easily deduce that the experimental group outperformed the control group. From table (69), we notice a slight difference between the means of the control and the experimental groups in the pretest. They had nearly the same collocational knowledge, only 0,16 difference between the two groups. However, a difference of 5,48 was reached in the posttest. The difference between the pre-oral test and post-oral test in terms of collocation means is +5,28 and -0,04 of the experimental and of the control group respectively. This explains that the experimental group had shown a progress in collocational use which was not the case of the control group.

Concerning oral proficiency, we notice that the control and experimental groups had shown a similar performance in pretest. From table (69), we may remark a negligible difference between the two groups in the pretest (0,08). A remarkable difference 0,76 is noticed between the two means of oral proficiency posttest for the control and experimental groups. Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed by the statistical results obtained from this experimental study in which we notice an improvement of oral proficiency among the experimental group students. This means that a positive relationship exists between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency.

To reinforce the conclusion drawn from this comparison and to give it more validity, we proceed to the computation of correlation coefficient.

4.6.3.6. Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the Experimental Group

To verify whether the relationship between students' use of collocations and their oral proficiency has been affected by the treatment, a posttest correlation coefficient "r" is calculated. The degree to which two sets of scores covary or vary together is estimated by calculating a correlation coefficient (r). It can range from a perfect positive relationship of +1.0 to no systematic relationship at 0.0 to a perfect negative relationship of -1.0. If "r" is approximate to "+1" or "-1" the correlation is high. If it is "+1" or "-1" the correlation is

strong/perfect. But, if “r” is near 0 the correlation is weak and if “r” is 0 there is no correlation. If “r” is positive (marked by +) this means that if the values for “x” increase the values for “y” also increase. But if “r” is negative this indicates that if the values for “x” increase the values for “y” decrease.

However, there is always the possibility that the results might show no relationship between them. This leads to the need for a special type of hypothesis called the null hypothesis. It is a hypothesis of no association in a correlational study (Brown,1988:110) . It is either confirmed or disconfirmed.

On this basis, the null hypothesis in the current study is:

H0: There is no systematic relationship between the use of collocations of first-year LMD students and their oral proficiency. That is to say, H0: $r = 0$.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the use of collocations of first-year LMD students and their oral proficiency. In other words, H0: $r > 0$.

In order to calculate the correlation coefficient (r), we apply the following formula:

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

$\Sigma \rightarrow$ the sum

$(X - \bar{x}) \rightarrow$ the deviation of x scores from the mean (\bar{x} is the mean of X scores: the sum of X scores divided by the number of cases N).

$(Y - \bar{y}) \rightarrow$ the deviation of y scores from the mean (\bar{y} is the mean of Y scores: the Sum of Y scores divided by the number of cases N).

X \rightarrow scores of independent variable

Y → scores of dependent variable

Table (69) presents the scores of the experimental group students of lexical collocations use and oral proficiency as follows:

The experimental group students	X :Scores concerning the use of lexical collocations	y: Oral proficiency scores
1	11	5
2	5	4
3	7	4
4	2	1
5	8	2
6	14	5
7	6	3
8	2	1
9	6	2
10	13	4
11	6	4
12	9	4
13	2	1
14	5	2
15	2	3
16	3	1
17	5	4
18	5	3
19	8	4
20	4	2
21	7	4
22	9	5
23	5	3
24	6	4
25	4	3
Total	154	78

Table 69: the Experimental Group Scores of the Post-test

The calculation of 'r' is scientifically related to the means of both variables, i.e. dependant and independent.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n} = \frac{154}{25} = 6,16$$

$$\bar{y} = \frac{\sum y}{n} = \frac{78}{25} = 3,12$$

Students	X	Y	x- \bar{x}	y- \bar{y}	(x- \bar{x})(y- \bar{y})	(x- \bar{x}) ²	(y- \bar{y}) ²
1	11	5	5	2	10	25	4
2	5	4	-1	1	-1	1	1
3	7	4	1	1	1	1	1
4	2	1	-4	-2	8	16	4
5	8	2	2	-1	-2	4	1
6	14	5	8	2	16	64	4
7	6	3	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	1	-4	-2	8	16	4
9	6	2	0	-1	0	0	1
10	13	4	7	1	7	49	1
11	6	4	0	1	0	0	1
12	9	4	3	1	3	9	1
13	2	1	-4	-2	8	16	4
14	5	2	-1	-1	1	1	1
15	2	3	-4	0	0	16	0
16	3	1	-3	-2	6	9	4
17	5	4	-1	1	1	1	1
18	5	3	-1	0	0	1	0
19	8	4	2	1	2	4	1
20	4	2	-2	-1	2	4	1
21	7	4	1	1	1	1	1
22	9	5	3	2	6	9	4
23	5	3	-1	0	0	1	0
24	6	4	0	1	0	0	1
25	4	3	-2	0	0	4	0
Total	154	78	4	3	76	252	41

Table 70: Correlation between Collocations Use and Oral proficiency

$$r = \frac{76}{\sqrt{252 \times 41}} = 0,747$$

Since the value of the r obtained is 0.74 is well above zero (as shown in table).

0.74 > 0, so the null hypothesis that assumes no relationship between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency (H0: r=0) is rejected.

Moreover, the coefficient correlation r is higher than 0,5. This means that there is a strong correlation between the two variables: students' use of lexical collocations and their oral proficiency.

4.6.3.7. General Discussion

To determine the effect of awareness-raising of collocations on improving EFL student' oral proficiency, this study used a quasi-experimental design. By setting up a control and an experimental group, thus, a treatment was administered to one group, and its performance was compared with another equivalent group, similar in abilities and attitudes, which had received a different treatment type. Data for this study consisted of pre- oral test, performed before the experiment phase, and post- oral test, composed at the end of the implementation phase. Two separate analyses were conducted on these data :(1) a collocation use analysis, and (2) an oral proficiency analysis.

The findings of the study, based on the results of the tests, show that awareness-raising of lexical collocations had a positive effect on the oral proficiency of the subjects in that it improved their collocational knowledge, and enhanced their oral proficiency.

Firstly, experimental group students scored better than control group students in terms of acceptable lexical collocations use. As a result, the mean of collocations use of experimental group students increases considerably. Also, the mean of oral proficiency of experimental group students increases. To determine improvement in students' oral proficiency from pretest to post-test, we compared the experimental and control groups for the overall quality of the students' oral proficiency and for the use of lexical collocations. The experimental group outperformed by far the control group in both collocational knowledge and oral proficiency. However, the difference between the two groups on the basis of oral proficiency scores is not highly significant as it is in terms of lexical collocations use (figure 11 and figure12). This confirms that students of the experimental group were made aware of the

necessity to retrieve and use lexical collocations in their speeches. The statistical differences are a clear indicator of the changes that occur within the oral performances of the experimental group participants. This finally allows us to reject in this experiment the null hypothesis (H0) which states that the difference is due to chance, and to accept the alternate hypothesis (H1) that the difference between the two groups is caused by the independent variable, i.e. awareness-raising of lexical collocations.

From the results discussion, we conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between students' use of lexical collocations and their oral language proficiency. Thus, first year LMD students' use of lexical collocations patterns had a positive relationship with their oral proficiency. The aforementioned analysis of this empirical research results confirmed our hypothesis revealing that awareness-raising of lexical collocations improves students' oral proficiency. Therefore, more attention should be given to lexical collocations in EFL classes.

To sum up, the major findings of the study include: i) collocational knowledge was associated with awareness-raising, and ii) the subjects of the experimental group performed better after receiving collocation instruction compared with the control group that did not receive the treatment.

Conclusion

The current study seeks to improve first year LMD students' oral proficiency. In this empirical study, the implementation of collocation awareness-raising activities provides good results in improving students' oral proficiency. Consequently, our hypothesis which speculates that collocation awareness-raising is effective for improving oral proficiency of first year LMD students at Guelma University is significantly corroborated. Hence, the study hypothesis is confirmed.

Since the students' exposure to collocations and relatively their production of these collocations may mirror their oral proficiency levels, an interest towards awareness-raising of

lexical collocations is recommended in next chapter in which some pedagogical implications of the results of the present study are given. It is hoped that the data can also provide FL teachers with an anchor point in the teaching of English collocations.

Chapter Five

Improving L2 Oral Proficiency

and Lexical Collocation

Awareness-Raising: Some

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Introduction

In this study of lexical collocation consciousness-raising and its impact on EFL students' oral proficiency, we have shown in research literature that lexical collocations are very important to help students improve their oral proficiency level. Then, depending on the results discussed in the two previous chapters, we provide implications for EFL classrooms. We also make conclusions for the use of lexical collocation awareness-raising to foster the development of oral proficiency. Accordingly, through the analysis of the experiment which we carried out, we find it useful to propose a set of recommendations that will help in the improvement of oral proficiency through the use of lexical collocations. The first recommendation is related to the importance of lexical collocations which should be focused on in order to help EFL students orally use English in an accurate, fluent and effective way. The second recommendation concerns the teacher's role in making students aware of lexical collocations and in helping them retrieve and use such lexical combinations. Finally, valuable suggestions for future research studies are provided.

5.1. Teaching Lexis Along With Grammar

Grammar has been the focus of language teaching for centuries, yet it is vocabulary, or more specifically, lexis, which learners need to negotiate meaning because meaning is carried not by grammar but by lexis. Since EFL students cannot orally use structures correctly if they do not have enough vocabulary knowledge, many studies stress that the lexical component of language is as important as the grammatical aspect.

A listener would be able to understand what the speaker meant because of words. Speakers should not be grammatically correct to communicate effectively, but they need to be correct with their use of lexis. Therefore, a lexical approach to teaching, which means the primary focus is on helping students acquire vocabulary, is needed. This movement away

from a grammar-based syllabus largely began in 1993 with the publication of “The Lexical Approach” by Michael Lewis. In reality, teachers can use any methodology with a lexical approach from grammar translation to task-based learning. What changes is just the linguistic focus of the lesson. It focuses on structures made up of lexical combinations. The actual paradigm shift was away from individual words to clusters of words, or lexical chunks as they are commonly referred to.

Depending on his approach, Michael Lewis suggests that teachers need to help students become aware of the lexical chunks, specifically collocations, which commonly occur in the language. The idea is that if students become aware of some of the many lexical structures, they will have more information about how to combine individual words to build coherent structures like phrases, expressions and whole sentences, which should ultimately emulate those used by native speakers. Many researchers (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Bahns, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003) have noticed that it is not the use of grammar which separates higher level students from native speakers, but the way words are combined into lexical chunks. Therefore, teachers have to avoid focusing on teaching either grammar or lists of vocabulary; rather they should emphasize teaching both grammar and lexical collocations as Lewis (2000:45) points out: “Practice should be directed towards helping students collocate words and grammaticalize from words to sentences”. A primary aim of teaching must be to raise students’ awareness of collocations because the fewer collocations students are able to use, the more they have to use longer expressions with much more grammaticalisation “to communicate something which a native speaker would express with a precise lexical phrase and correspondingly little grammar” (16). Consequently, a greater focus needs to be placed on developing student’s collocational competence.

5.2. Vocabulary Teaching and Lexical Collocations

Vocabulary is an essential component for successful communication in EFL classroom. While grammar is important, a lack of vocabulary may result in complete failure to convey a message. Foreign Language teachers often claim that their primary role is to teach grammar, and that vocabulary will somehow be learned subconsciously. If students have to learn and recycle the vocabulary through simple exposure, it is better to be structured rather than indirectly learned. Vocabulary learning strategies are not taught as part of most curricula, but certainly they should be.

Teachers have to convince their students that vocabulary constitute the core of any lecture. In fact, vocabulary teaching should be provided and included in EFL classrooms. Therefore, students have to check and use their acquired English lexicon with the help of awareness-raising and dictionary use strategies. Importantly, teachers should check students' progress in vocabulary use. Furthermore, native speakers have a large inventory of lexical collocations, which are vital for proficient production and natural sounding. EFL students, thus, should not depend on a set of grammar rules and a separate store of isolated words, but on the ability to rapidly access to this inventory of lexical chunks. However, teachers have not paid much attention to how to build vocabulary and have not taught the notion of collocation. The language strategies consistent with the lexical approach must be directed towards naturally occurring language and towards raising learners' awareness of the lexical nature of language.

While students attempt to produce the target language orally, they may notice that they do not know how to say precisely the meaning they wish to convey because they do not know how words are normally combined by native speakers. Interestingly, learners have to notice and subsequently learn certain lexical collocations to enhance the development of their oral proficiency. Simply put, an increasing mastery of the most

basic lexical collocations, which becomes possible through strengthening the students' collocational power, results in a higher level of proficiency. In an effort to help students overcome vocabulary difficulties, lexical collocations should be presented in meaningful contexts to be easily retained. Vocabulary, as revealed by research findings, is a major problem encountering learners when they speak in terms of miscollocations. Students cannot express their ideas and thoughts as clearly as they want because they heavily rely on bilingual dictionaries when they encounter unfamiliar words. Another strategy used by students is that they rendered Arabic words into English, ignoring that they have to translate whole chunks as single units to get the same meaning and to sound natural. Nevertheless, teachers should not correct every error a student makes, but they have to set priorities according to their lesson objectives. Teachers have to design their courses in relation to collocational knowledge.

5.3. The Role of Lexical Collocations in EFL Classes

The mental lexicon does not consist solely of single words, but also includes larger chunks of language. Yet word-based lists begin to look inadequate as a guide to vocabulary learning. In order to achieve native-like competence and proficiency, EFL students need to be aware that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce collocations. Collocations will help EFL students speak and write the target language in a more natural and accurate way. They are fundamental to fluent language production, as they allow language production to occur while bypassing controlled processing and the constraints of short-term memory capacity. Studies of speech fluency (Pawley and Syder, 1983; Boers et al, 2006) show that lexical collocations are essential to maintain smoothness and speed of real-time speech, and they play an important role in developing students' language proficiency. Directing student's attention towards lexical collocations could open the door to

improvements in how learners acquire second language. Teachers have to train their students how to be autonomous learners to build collocational competence by themselves.

5.4. Building Collocational Competence

Collocations are fundamental components in vocabulary learning; and are a matter of convention as Lyons (1977:265), and most researchers, stresses that it is “the native speakers’ ability to produce acceptable and novel collocations”. Therefore, students who lack collocational knowledge miscombine words because they do not know the appropriate collocations which precisely express their thoughts. Correspondingly, analysis of pre-oral test showed that students of both groups (experimental and control) lacked collocational competence. Teachers, thus, should encourage students pay attention to the way words are normally combined as mentioned by John Firth (1957 :11) “you know a word by the company it keeps”.

In addition, teachers should urge students to be involved in extensive listening. This will not only expose them to a massive amount of vocabulary, but will also help them discover and acquire new collocations. Students, also, have to read because reading includes collocational patterns and their appropriate use. It is, therefore, through listening and reading that students will develop their collocational competence which is acquired subconsciously. Nevertheless, in order to consciously acquire collocational knowledge and to foster the mastery of this knowledge, teachers have to make their students aware of lexical collocations as Lewis (1997:207) says:

The Lexical Approach therefore implies greatly increased emphasis on listening and spoken examples for learners at all levels, and for literate learners, increased emphasis on extensive reading. They should listen and read extensively, consuming much larger quantities of material, but in less depth, than has been the norm.

EFL teachers, thus, should help their students develop not only communicative competence, a desired teaching goal, but also collocational competence. In other words, EFL teachers should help students to use English adequately, aiming at communicating effectively by using collocations. It is lexis in general, and collocational competence in particular, which allows students to read more widely, understand more quickly, and speak more proficiently. Therefore, lexical collocations are important, from a pedagogical point of view, for many reasons.

5.5. The collocational Proficiency in the target language

The emphasis is put on foreign language proficiency in general and on oral proficiency in particular, considering the learning/teaching of English as a foreign language. Most EFL graduates from Algerian universities will probably be recruited as EFL teachers at a variety of levels. It is, therefore, necessary to keep EFL students update with interesting ways to develop an acceptable level of oral proficiency. To achieve this goal, teachers need to introduce lexical collocations to their students; and adopt adequate EFL classroom strategies which constantly remind learners of the importance of these multi-word items.

Since collocational knowledge is part of native speakers' proficiency, effective performance of EFL students depends on their stock of lexical collocations. Furthermore, several researchers (Conzett, 2000; Lewis, 1997, 2000; Hsu, 2005) have argued that collocational competence can serve as a major criterion to distinguish students' levels of English proficiency. It can be concluded that collocational competence is of great significance to EFL learners' language proficiency.

5.5.1. Lexical Collocations Promote Fluency

Pawley and Syder (1983:191) refer to "native-like fluency" as the ability to link units of language with facility. Lewis (1997:15) also points out that "fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed and semi-fixed prefabricated items". It implies that lexical

collocations provide an easily retrievable frame for language production, and thus enhance the fluency of the language production. As a result, lexical collocations can be easily called up and used without the need to compose them through word selection and grammatical rules, that is to say, using such lexical chunks may simplify the learners' language processing significantly. Along the same lines, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992: 32) explain that:

It is our ability to use lexical phrases, in other words, that helps us speak with fluency. This prefabricated speech has both the advantage of more efficient retrieval and of permitting speakers (and hearers) to direct their attention to the larger structure of the discourse, rather than keeping it focused narrowly on individual words as they are produced.

Through stringing lexical chunks together, speakers are able to produce stretches of fluent language. Because the use of lexical collocations lessens the load of language processing, it enables speakers to employ regular patterns of discourse without undue hesitation and disfluency. At the same time, it enables learners to concentrate more on the content of the language. In other words, lexical collocations enable EFL students to process and produce language at a faster rate because they have a vast repertoire of ready-made language, immediately available from their mental lexicons (Lewis, 2000: 54-55). If a speaker can pull these readily from memory as wholes, fluency is enhanced. This reduces the amount of planning, processing, and encoding needed, and gives the speaker time to pay attention to the multitude of other tasks necessary while speaking. So, it can be concluded that lexical collocations can promote language fluency to a large extent.

5.5.2. Lexical Collocations Enhance Language Accuracy

To master a foreign language, students must know not only its individual words, but also the ways to piece them together. Pawley and Syder (1983:193) argue that one of the most difficult tasks for even the most proficient non-native speaker is to select that subset of utterances that are customarily used by native speakers. And they define the term “native-like

selection” as “the ability of the native speaker to convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also native-like” (Pawley & Syder 1983:193). Thus, to acquire the ability of native-like selection, students should know how to select accurate and collocational patterns in order to convey their ideas as native speakers.

5.6. Foreign Language Teaching and Lexical Collocations

Traditionally, most EFL teachers often emphasize learning grammar more than vocabulary in their teaching. Concerning vocabulary teaching, teachers put great emphasis on identifying single words rather than collocations. However, teaching/learning lexical collocations should be given the same status as other aspects of foreign language. Lewis (1993:95) stresses that lexical collocations play a central role in language learning/ teaching, and he regards lexis as the basis of language rather than grammar or vocabulary. As a novel theory to language teaching, the lexical approach has received increasing attention in recent years because of its potential contribution to language pedagogy. Contrary to vocabulary which is understood as a stock of single words; lexis includes both single words and frequently used lexical combinations that we store in our mental lexicon. The lexical approach concentrates on developing language proficiency through lexical chunks. Lewis points out the pedagogic necessity of deliberately selecting, incorporating, and recycling lexical collocations into classroom materials and activities; he clearly mentions “this point applies just as much to collocations which students are less likely to notice unless guided towards the importance of collocation by their teachers” (Lewis, 2000:75). Similarly, Nesselhauf(2003:240) asserts that “an L1-based approach to the teaching of collocations seems highly desirable”.

5.6.1. Chunking

The concept of how students process knowledge of foreign language for retention and retrieval in their brains as meaningful groups is usually referred to as chunking.

According to Lewis, pedagogical chunking should be a frequent classroom activity, as students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed and gradually develop ways, “not of assembling parts into wholes, but of identifying constituent bits within the whole” (Lewis 1993:195). It means that the primary purpose of the teaching activities is to raise students’ awareness of lexical chunks, rather than teaching different ways of constructing sentences.

In EFL classroom, focusing on chunking is a useful way to look at language and to extend students’ control of it. For instance, students can spend a little time at the end of a reading comprehension exercise identifying lexical collocations in the text and analyzing them. EFL teachers should read texts aloud in class so that students hear the text correctly chunked. Students cannot store language features correctly in their mental lexicons if they have not identified them correctly. Incorrectly chunked, the input will either not be stored at all or will be wrongly stored. So, it cannot be available for retrieval and use. Teachers have to encourage their students:

- read different materials about the same subject matter to discover lexical collocations used to discuss that topic. Teachers have to train them read for lexical patterns, not simply for subject-verb agreement or other grammar rules.
- read newspapers or magazines to see everyday English collocations
- practise speaking/writing new sentences using these collocations in different contexts.
- Pay attention to how words are used together when listening to or practising speaking sentences in English; rather than emphasize only building vocabulary and learn grammatical rules.

Chunking is the key to understand how the English language operates. Concerning spoken language, EFL students have to be in close imitation of how a native speaker performs.

Students are required to read aloud along with a transcript while listening to speech on a tape

or a disk. They are encouraged to perform the process repeatedly until they are certain that they have mastered the phrases and how they are spoken with particular attention to lexical collocations. Students even can repeat saying sentences they listened to. Teachers wishing to foster their students' collocation learning may, therefore, wish to give special emphasis to activities in which students have the opportunity to encounter the same language several times, enabling them to focus on building up fluency with particular strings of language without the 'distractions' of dealing with new contexts and meanings. Following Lewis language model: Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment, and taking notes of the way words commonly appear together, will prevent EFL students from saying or writing sentences that may be grammatically correct but sound unnatural.

According to Lewis (1997) the central idea to effective communication and efficient acquisition is chunking. Lewis (1997:58) writes: "Unless you chunk a text correctly, is almost impossible to read with understanding, and unless you speak in appropriate chunks, you place a serious barrier to understanding between yourself and your listeners". Chunking, thus, is the key to comprehensibility, more interestingly, to making speakers understood in speech, and from a language teaching point of view, to successfully turning input into intake.

5.6.2. Converting Input into Intake

Because the lexicon is far too vast to "teach", the Lexical Approach puts the emphasis on getting students to notice lexical chunks during their exposure to English. This is called "noticing" or "consciousness raising" and is considered the key for language acquisition. It is necessary for students to be able to notice the linguistic wrapping in which the message is delivered. Accordingly, students are trained to turn the language they meet (input) into the language they acquire and have access to spontaneous use (intake). The teacher's role is to help students develop their "noticing" skill, or in other words, to turn **input** (language exposure) into **intake** (language acquisition). Hopefully, the development of the students

noticing ability will go beyond the classroom and occur whenever they encounter the language. Students do not automatically put their recognition vocabulary and newly learned vocabulary to productive use. Once students are explicitly taught about the possible words combinations, they should be given more opportunities to use them. Teachers should provide their students with the opportunity to utilize the lexical collocations in productive tasks, such as sentence-writing and essay writing (Woolard, 2000), or in oral activities (Frank Boers, 2006). First, ask your students to read or study the collocations and examples of the target words (READ); second, ask them to make one sentence with each word without looking at the examples (DON'T READ); and third, have students look at the book again carefully, and check each sentence against the collocations and examples to make necessary correction or revision (REREAD and REUSE). Other output activities can also be designed not only to raise students' awareness of collocations but also to consolidate their learning (recycling).

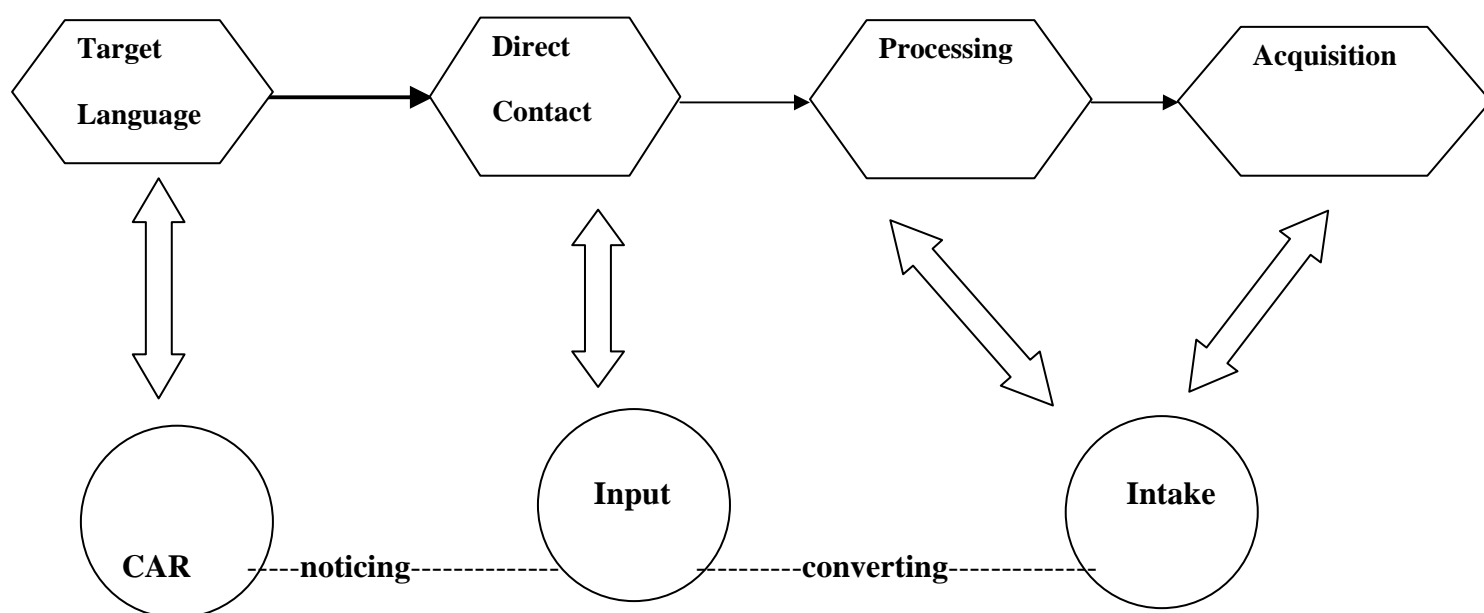


Figure 13: Converting Input into Intake

CAR: refers to lexical collocations awareness-raising

5.6.3. Working Memory

Most EFL teachers underestimate the role of working memory in language learning and do not know how memory can be influenced. There is increasing evidence that these multiword lexical units are integral to first- and second-language acquisition, as they are segmented from input and stored as wholes in long-term memory. Nevertheless, the most crucial element in a learner's acquisition of a lexical item and/or chunk is the number of times it is heard or read in a context. Researches show that the word has to be seen or heard between 5 and 16 times to be learned because new words that are not met soon are lost (Nation, 1990:14). It is essential that the newly learned collocations are repeated soon after the initial learning, and repeated many times and in many contexts. Teachers have to ensure that there are enough meetings with these lexical collocations in order to be reinforced in students' memory. To achieve this goal, teachers have to train their students to be exposed independently to the target language out of EFL class to discover lexical collocations. Since lexical collocations are retained in long-term memory as single units, they must be observed in use in real-time, spontaneous communication and practised extensively. Repeated exposure to such input over time would encourage learners to achieve a certain level of comfort with natural expression in English. Students automatically retain a memory of collocational chunks from the language to which they are exposed. This suggests that they will learn the collocations they repeatedly meet. Any deficit in learners' knowledge of collocation may therefore be the result of insufficient exposure to the language than of a fundamentally different approach to learning.

5.7. Teacher's Role

There are some pedagogical suggestions, based on Lewis (1993) work, that need to be taken into account when applying lexical collocation instruction:

1. A Shift in Language Acquisition Understanding

Teaching single words and grammatical rules are, traditionally, important to improve students' language proficiency. However, Lewis (1993:89) suggests that lexis is the core of language. He implies that lexical collocations should play a more important role in language proficiency than grammatical structure. Most of EFL Algerian students spend much time in learning grammatical structures and single words by rote. Therefore, the first step is to change their traditional concept of English learning thoroughly.

2. Developing Students' Awareness of Lexical Collocations

According to lexical approach, "students need to develop awareness of language to which they are exposed and gradually develop ways, not of assembling parts into wholes, but of identifying constituent bits within the whole" (Lewis 1993:195). Therefore, teachers should not only introduce the importance of lexical collocations to students, but also establish the concept of lexical collocations in students' minds. Thus, giving them opportunities to identify, organize and record lexical collocations. To illustrate, spotting all the lexical collocations in a given text, translating chunk-by-chunk, highlighting lexical collocations in doing exercises, reading and so on, may help students develop their awareness of lexical collocations.

3. Teaching Basic Lexical Collocations First

Basic lexical collocations should be taught first to facilitate the acquisition of native-like proficiency. Initial instruction should focus on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently, rather than originally created sentences. Teachers generally prefer teaching rare words over common ones, assuming that common words are already known. Based on the findings of collocation test, teachers should concentrate on the practice of different lexical collocation types. Teachers may begin by introducing a few basic lexical collocation patterns, and then teach increasingly variable collocation types.

4. Teaching Lexical Collocations within a Topic Framework

Lewis (1997:92) proposes that teachers must remain constantly aware of the different types of lexical collocations, which may be organized within a topic framework. It indicates that it is important to help learners to master lexical chunks which cover a particular topic or situation together. Words may be more effectively learnt if they are presented systematically in rich contexts rather than randomly. Since EFL students are sometimes unable to express themselves, they have to know how words are normally combined in order to enrich their linguistic reservoir. Yet, teachers should not impose topics on their students. Students will be unable to speak if they are unfamiliar with certain topics. Therefore, teachers have to be highly selective in choosing the list of collocations to be presented, depending on their students' interests and needs. This kind of strategy may help students memorize lexical collocations, and when they encounter similar topics again, it is much easier for them to recall many relevant lexical chunks quickly.

5. Doing Chunk-Related Exercises and Games

By doing exercises and games, students can get more information about lexical collocations in a relaxed atmosphere. Some frequently used lexical collocations should be repeated and revised in the exercises and games, which will help students to internalise them and use them skillfully. Relying on games in learning is so beneficial for students to feel satisfactory; this is reported by many researchers. Owen Boyle (2008: 127), accordingly, states: "Games create experiences with language and ideas, and experience is the glue that makes learning stick". When students are engaged in interesting and meaningful use of language, it is possible for them to master lexical collocations more quickly.

6. Providing Lexical Collocations Sources

Teachers can provide EFL students with sources of lexis in general and of lexical collocations in particular, such as collocations dictionaries and concordances, stressing that

these students should have direct exposure to lexical collocations of English language; and learn to extract and know how to use patterns of lexical collocations effortlessly. It is valuable to encourage students to use good dictionaries rich in collocational examples.

5.8. What EFL Teachers Need for Effective Developing of Collocational Competence

For the sake of better ongoing of consciousness-raising, as designed in the experiment lessons, certain basic steps should be respected:

- Make sure students understand what collocations are, exemplifying such concept in English as well as in Arabic.
- Introduce materials for teaching collocations: articles, collocations dictionaries, and online concordances, if available. Show students, on the one hand, how to find collocations in such materials; on the other hand, it may encourage students to discover the usage of lexical chunks by themselves.
- Train students to notice, retrieve, and recall lexical collocations.
- Urge students to list them in a notebook.
- Give feedback on students' oral work including both grammatical rules and collocational information.

It seems that these steps can be incorporated into many different EFL learning situations, whether the class is oral expression session or any content module session. Any teacher can take these steps into account to make students aware of lexical collocations and help them retrieve these lexical combinations for later output use (either spoken or written).

Once they become aware of lexical collocations and are equipped with basic resources to use them, the students gain the power to develop their collocational competence independently.

They can, therefore, go through any oral task: oral presentation, discussion, participation, answering teacher's questions... By teaching students how to learn lexical collocations effectively, and use their dictionaries, EFL teachers will make their students autonomous.

5.9. How EFL Teachers can Help Students Avoid Collocational Errors

Students always feel pressure to produce more than they can, and they may become depressed when they are not able to express what they want to say. Correspondingly, they produce longer wordier expressions full of collocational errors as McCarthy (1990:13) points out: “Even very advanced learners often make inappropriate or unacceptable collocation”. Collocations, the way words naturally combine in a language, are very important because these chunks can be retrieved as wholes when the situation calls for them. Therefore, attention should be drawn to common collocations which will help students express their ideas efficiently. EFL teachers should train their students to make effective use of English dictionaries which are based on naturally occurring data. Students, thus, have to be extensively exposed to the target language. Since most of collocational errors made by the participants reveal that Arabic collocations or French ones are often translated into English word-for-word, EFL teachers should make comparisons between English and Arabic collocations and English and French ones. Through such comparisons, EFL teachers can provide students with similarities and differences of the collocational patterns of English and the mother tongue and English and the second language (French) .

Lewis (1997:60-62) introduces some activities which are used to develop learners' knowledge and awareness of lexical collocations to minimize collocational errors:

1. Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
2. First and second language comparisons and translation, carried out chunk-for-chunk rather than word-for-word, aim at raising language awareness.
3. Repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarising a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active.
4. Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.

5. Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
6. Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.
7. Working with language corpuses created by the teacher for use in the classroom or accessible on the Internet.

Simply put, we notice that collocational errors were due to the neglect of awareness-raising of collocations in EFL classes. Most teachers put emphasis on grammatical errors, providing students with immediate feedback, and neglected collocational ones. However, the majority of students made more collocational errors than grammatical ones, as reported in our study. Therefore, more practice is needed to avoid miscollocations. We suggest some ways through which teachers can help their students minimize collocational errors.

5.10. A Need to Raise Students' Awareness

For the teaching of collocations to be successful, teachers have the responsibility to direct students' attention to the most useful collocations, those which hold high priority in the context of the curriculum. By helping students learn about putting words together, EFL teachers will save a lot of time. Yet, findings of teachers' questionnaire show that most teachers (76,19%) reported not making their students aware of how words are normally combined at all and how to notice them for teaching vocabulary. They largely relied on teaching single words and grammatical rules.

5.10.1. Consciousness-Raising

The results of the study mentioned that lexical collocation awareness-raising plays an essential role in English teaching/ learning process and improves EFL students' oral proficiency. Thus, from our research findings, we have come to the conclusion that the teacher has a crucial role to draw students' awareness towards lexical collocations. S/ he can effectively make them aware that this is simply the way we say things in English. Most lexical items may not be new, but the fact of occurring together is not observed. Therefore, teachers

have to bring students' attention towards the natural occurring of English lexical combinations.

Although this study was conducted on a small group of 50 EFL students at Guelma University, The results have implications for other EFL learning situations. Since most of EFL students faced the greatest problem that of wrongly combined expressions to convey their ideas. Generally speaking, implementing the lexical approach in EFL classroom does not lead to radical methodological changes. Rather, it involves a change in the teacher's mindset and brings some useful suggestions on English teaching. The most important point is that the language activities should raise students' awareness of the lexical nature of the language.

5.10.2. Noticing

Students need to notice the lexical collocations and be aware of them. They may notice these lexical chunks when they check a dictionary, or may guess them from a context. Lexical collocations may explicitly be explained to them and highlighted. A major factor to strengthen their learning is the choice of lexical collocations. EFL teachers should take into consideration how to attract students' intention, interest, and needs towards what they teach.

The most important learning strategy we can give students is just to train them to **notice** lexical chunks during their exposure to language. First we have to raise their awareness of the fact that language consists of lexical combinations, then we need to define the main types of lexical collocations (verb-noun, noun-noun, noun-adjective...) and finally we need to develop some activities that help them notice the lexical chunks in spoken and written texts.

A good way to get students to notice lexical collocations in a text is to tell them that they will have to use those chunks later in a task. The task should relate to the original text. For example, if students were to read about someone's experience on a holiday, their task could be to describe a holiday that they had or would like to have and they would have to look for lexical chunks that they could use for that task. The source could also be a spoken text.

Keeping with the holiday idea, an easy way to do this in a class is to tell students about a holiday you had and ask them to write down any chunks (or simply expressions) that they think they could use when they describe their holiday. Not only this is an effective classroom activity but it teaches students a valuable strategy for language acquisition, that being listening or reading for useful language that you can use later.

Of course, once the students have extracted the language, you should get variable chunks up on the board and, where possible, elicit other slot-fillers that could be used. This is to give students some latitude with the chunks when they finally do their productive task. To sum up, we quote what Lewis (1997:85) claims:

Effective implementation of the Lexical Approach places great emphasis on noticing the basic multi-word chunks of language. Accurate noticing means teachers need a set of organizing principles so that they can encourage learners to record selected language in carefully designed notebooks after studying a text, or doing the exercises and activities.

5.10.3. Retrieval

If EFL students can retain more of what they have learnt, their learning burden would be reduced. Lexical collocations can be remembered through different processes. Retrieval, the process of remembering language features, involves three aspects. First, students must understand a collocation in the context in which it occurs, perhaps by guessing its meaning from the context, looking it up in dictionaries, or constructing their own interpretation through discussion with peers or teachers. Second, its meaning must be retrieved whenever it is met during reading or listening. Third, it must be used in circumstances that are appropriate.

There are two effective ways to help students remember a collocation: repetition and use. Repetition can be achieved by exercises that recycle collocations in different contexts. Readings and important collocations are presented side by side, and follow-up activities use the same material to gradually increase familiarity with its language features. Salient collocations can be recycled in different types of exercise to expose learners to them

repeatedly. For example, sentences containing collocations of the commonly confused words *injury* and *wound* can be used in a sentence completion exercise that asks students to fill in a blank to form a valid collocation (i.e. reconstructing the content), while the same data can be used in a correcting common mistakes exercise. Repetition also occurs when students are asked to record and organize collocations that they think are useful for an oral presentation or essay assignment. Recall of a collocation is strengthened when it is used. Activities that require students to use a particular collocation to construct sentences or conduct a conversation can be designed to consolidate and extend what has been learned.

To conclude, lexical collocation awareness-raising encourage students to look for useful expressions for the particular genre and theme at hand. Moreover, collocations which students noticed and recorded offer them more input to aid them express their ideas and thoughts. Thus, it is essential for both teachers and students to deal with collocations in a well-defined academic environment where topics are adequately chosen. In addition, the previously-learned collocations need to be encountered more to be retrieved easily.

5.10.4. Recycling Collocations

Students are unlikely to remember collocations after seeing them just once, so it will be necessary to recycle them in subsequent classes. Teachers can exploit reading and listening texts for collocations recycling activities. The following activities can be used after exploiting a text for meaning, for example, after students answer comprehension questions or do a matching exercise based on the text.

- After students have become familiar with the content of the text, ask them to silently underline, for instance, adjective + noun collocations.
- After answering an activity, teachers write the collocations learned on the board and be sure students copy them into their notebooks. They will slowly get used to this recording format.

- Give students the tape script with some key collocations blanked out. They listen again and fill in the blanks.
- Prepare a table which includes half or part of some of the multi-word items in a text. Students then scan the text to complete the table with the other half of the collocations.
- Teachers calls out one half of the collocation and the students work in teams to write the other half on the board. This activity can be extended by asking students to suggest other possible collocates.
- After answering comprehension questions, students are asked to orally repeat the text. Working in pairs, they have to reconstruct the collocations, before checking with the original.
- Prepare a list of collocations recently seen in class. Divide the class into teams of four (4) students, and give each team a piece of paper. Write a collocation from the list on the board. The first team to write a correct sentence including that collocation gets a point. Continue until you've exhausted the list, or until one team reaches a specified number of points.
- A few minutes before the end of a class, ask students working individually to write down all the new collocations they have seen in that class. This could also be done at the beginning of a class to recycle collocations from the previous class.
- False friends can cause difficulty for students learning a foreign language because students are likely to combine the words wrongly due to linguistic interference. For this reason, teachers sometimes compile lists of false friends as an aid for their students. Teachers should try to take account of previously-learned collocations to be included in this list rather than using exhaustive lists of words in isolation.
- An effective way to repeat and recycle previously-learned collocations is to translate them into Arabic (students' native language). However, teachers have to make sure that

students translate the whole collocation and not just the core word. This will make them aware that words do not correspond on word-for-word basis. As you can see below, 'right' could be rendered into Arabic in three different ways depending on its collocations.

to draw a right angle زاوية قائمة

to draw it right بشكل مضبوط

to treat him right يعامله بعدل

to right صحح

As you can see from the order of the activities above, they move from receptive where students merely guess or recognize lexical collocations (chunks of language), to more productive where they are encouraged to actually produce the language.

5.11. Consciousness-Raising Activity Model

Textual analysis, of value for either spoken or written language, is an important consciousness-raising activity in which students listen to a short text twice, read aloud by the teacher or played on a tape at normal speed with pauses of several seconds between sentences or phrases. Students are encouraged to jot down content words and whatever other parts of the text they can retain. They then work in teams to reconstruct the entire text by drawing on their grammatical and lexical knowledge as well as logic, with teacher assistance. Then, they are shown the entire original text and given a chance to compare where they were inaccurate in their reconstruction of it. This type of activity can provide a chance for students to be aware of lexical collocations in a text and to be aware of how speech is chunked around them. It can also help students retain the sequences by having a clear focus on the constituent parts of these sequences and see how these sequences fit into the flow of discourse.

5.12. Teaching Collocations Through Other Modules

5.12.1. A Proposed Consciousness-Raising Strategy

Based on the nature of the sample under study and its needs, a proposed teaching strategy is adopted to enhance developing collocational competence. This strategy would provide enough opportunities for EFL students to improve their language proficiency in general and oral proficiency in particular and let them become active participants. Thus, consciousness-raising helps students enrich their language vocabulary repertoire and strengthen their communicative abilities. More interestingly, it provides a various range of activities and tasks the students will perform by themselves, helping them feel self-confident and independent. Thus, students will be autonomous learners, seeking to acquire as much collocations as possible in order to be able to orally express their ideas in an accurate and fluent way. Simply speaking, the implementation of lexical collocation awareness-raising in EFL classes as an integrated module will make students aware of its importance and significance to use the previously-learned collocations when needed. Therefore, the retrieval of these lexical combinations help students sound natural and native-like in their future oral achievements. All the aforementioned techniques used to draw students' attention to collocations and how to retrieve them are easily applicable, and can be made a part of any lecture. We select some of them as examples to help teachers know how to apply them in their lecture context or classroom activities.

5.12.2. Lesson Models

When working with text, it takes very little time to point collocations out to students, or with classes experienced in noticing to ask them to find collocations for themselves. However, teachers should be careful to choose which collocations they focus on in terms of frequency, suitability, and level of their students.

5.12.2.1. Oral Expression

Songs are a useful lexical resource. Before listening, give students the words of a song with some collocations blanked out. Ask them to work in pairs to predict how many words have been blanked out from each space. They then listen for the exact words. If there are any patterns in the song (for example, a number of second conditional sentences), students can be asked to identify these sentences, and write more sentences using the same structure which fit the theme of the song.

Diamonds and Rust (Joan Baez, 1975)

I'll be damned

Here comes your ghost again

But that's not unusual

It's just that the moon is full

And you happened to call

And here I sit

Hand on the telephone

Hearing a voice I'd known

A couple of **light years** ago

Heading straight for a fall

As I remember your eyes

Were bluer than robin's eggs

My poetry was lousy you said

Where are you calling from?

A booth in the midwest

Ten years ago

I **bought** you some **cufflinks**

You brought me something

We both know what memories can bring

They bring diamonds and rust ...

Now I see you standing

With brown **leaves falling** around

And snow in your hair

Now you're **smiling out the window**

Of that crummy hotel

Over Washington Square

Our breath comes out white clouds

Mingles and hangs in the air

Speaking strictly for me

We both could have died then and there

5.12.2.2. Written Expression

Teachers of written Expression were used to ask their students to summarize a long story or repeat a short story, using their own expressions. Concerning the former task, students were explicitly taught the techniques of how to summarize; while in the case of short stories they never learned how to do it. Hence, it is of great importance to orally retell a story or write it as a written assignment. A proposed procedure to do so is as follows:

1. Show the students, for instance, “*A nice story*” on the board. This can be done by using a projector or simply by writing the story on a whiteboard.
2. Read the story to the class and have the students discuss the strengths and limitations of the story.
3. As a whole-group activity, students should be encouraged to replace the word *nice* with other appropriate adjectives. As students suggest adjectives, introduce them to (or remind them of) the idea of collocation. For example, *a bright idea* is an acceptable collocation but not **a bright walk*, and we say *a strong coffee* not **a powerful coffee*.
4. Read the new and improved story aloud to the group and have the students compare and contrast it to the original. Hopefully students will be able to appreciate how easily a simple story can be transformed into something more sophisticated just by their using a range of vocabulary rather than relying on the words *nice* or *good*.
5. Following this activity, students should be issued with the “*A bad day*” worksheet.
6. In pairs or small groups, the students replace the word *bad* with other synonyms. Monitor to check they’re using suitable collocations.
7. Students read their stories aloud and compare their choice of adjectives.

Students could be encouraged to write their own ‘good’ or ‘bad’ story for homework or continue the story for homework. Interestingly, students may be trained to summarise a long story or repeat a short story by simply drawing their attention towards the common collocations that constitute such a story.

A nice story

It was a **nice** day so Mary decided to go for a **nice** walk in the nice park near her house. She thought it was a **nice** idea to phone her friend Jenny so that after their nice walk they could go for a nice coffee in one of the **nice** cafés which were near the edge of the town.

A bad day

John had a **bad** day at work. He had woken up with a **bad** headache and because he was in a **bad** mood he had a **bad** argument with his wife. The weather was so **bad** that he decided not to walk to work. He took his car but a **bad** accident made him late for work ...

Taken from the Lesson Share section in www.onestopenglish.com

5.12.2.3. Literary Texts

The teachers are accustomed to once read the text .Then, they ask some students to read it. They explain the difficult terms if there are any unfamiliar words. Teachers significantly discuss the plot: the main actions and events, analysing the characters of the passage. They discuss the different themes addressed in the text. The last point will be figures of speech such as symbolism, simile, and metaphors ...etc. So, it will be easier for them to make students notice some major lexical collocations because it is a difficult task, at the part of students, to mention all the collocations found in a text filled with these lexical collocations such as Old Man at the Bridge. Simply put, teachers first have to draw students' attention towards frequent and useful collocations.

Old Man At The Bridge By Ernest Hemingway

An old man with steel **rimmed spectacles** and very **dusty clothes** sat by the side of the road. There was a pontoon bridge across the river and carts, trucks, and men, women and children were crossing it. The mule-drawn carts **staggered up the steep** bank from the bridge with soldiers helping push against the spokes of the wheels. The **trucks ground up** and away heading out of it all and the **peasants plodded** along in the **ankle deep dust**. But the old man sat there without moving. He was too tired to go any farther. It was my business to **cross the bridge, explore the bridgehead** beyond and find out to what point the **enemy had advanced**. I did this and returned over the bridge. There were not so many carts now and very

few people on foot, but the old man was still there.

"Where do you come from?" I asked him.

"From San Carlos," he said, and smiled.

That was his native town and so it **gave** him **pleasure** to mention it and he smiled.

"I was taking care of animals," he explained. "Oh," I said, not quite understanding.

"Yes," he said, "I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos."

He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black **dusty clothes** and his grey **dusty face** and his steel **rimmed spectacles** and said, "What animals were they?"

"Various animals," he said, and **shook** his **head**. "I had to leave them."

I was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta and wondering how long now it would be before we would see the enemy, and listening all the while for the **first noises** that would **signal** that ever mysterious event called contact, and the old man still sat there. "What animals were they?" I asked.

"There were three animals altogether," he explained. "There were two goats and a cat and then there were four **pairs of pigeons**."

"And you had to leave them?" I asked.

5.12.2.4. American Civilization

Teachers have to draw students' attention to collocations by highlighting them, and underline the key words of the lecture. Students will be familiar with such technique and subconsciously grasp these lexical collocations.

The 13 American Colonies

The first permanent settlement in North America was the English colony at Jamestown, in 1607, in what is now Virginia. John Smith and company had come to stay. The Pilgrims followed, in 1620, and **set up a colony** at Plymouth, in what is now Massachusetts. Other English **colonies sprang up** all along the Atlantic coast, from Maine in the north to Georgia in the south. Swedish and Dutch colonies took shape in and around what is now New York. As more and more people arrived in the New World, more and more **disputes arose** over territory. Many **wars were fought** in the 1600s and 1700s. Soon, the two countries with the largest presence were England and France. The two **nations fought** for control of North America in what Americans call the French and Indian War (1754-1763). England **won the war** and **got control** of Canada, as well as **keeping control** of all the English colonies. The **people** who **settled** in the New England Colonies wanted to **keep their family unit** together and **practise their own religion**. They were used to doing many things themselves and not depending on other people for much. The people who **founded** the Middle **Colonies** were looking to **practise** their own **religion** (Pennsylvania mainly) or to make money. Many of these people didn't bring their families with them from England. The founders of the Southern Colonies were, for the most part, out to **make money**. They brought their families. The Pilgrims in Massachusetts and the Quakers in Pennsylvania were examples of people who had left England to **practise the religion** they chose. Maryland and Rhode Island **passed laws** of religious toleration (meaning that **people** could not **be harmed** just because their religion was different from other people's). These American colonists also believed that they had a right to govern themselves. More and more, they believed that they should not have **to pay** so much **taxes** to England, especially since they could not serve in the English government and **have a say** on how **high** or **low** those **taxes** were. As more and more Americans **voiced their concerns** over higher and higher taxes, a **bitter conflict** began **to arise**. The English response

was to isolate the colonies from each other, hoping that the American **people** would not **pull** together as a whole.

5.12.2.5. General Linguistics

Introduction to European Structuralism

Course in General Linguistics (Cours de linguistique générale) is an **influential book** **compiled** by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye that is based on notes taken from Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures at the University of Geneva between the years 1906 and 1911. It was **published posthumously** in 1916 and is generally regarded as the starting point of structural linguistics, an **approach** to linguistics that **flourished** in Europe and the United States in the first half of the 20th century. This typically twentieth-century view of language has **profoundly influenced** developments throughout the whole range of human sciences. It is **particularly marked** in linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology and anthropology. De Saussure focuses on what he calls *language*, that's "a system of signs that **express ideas**," and suggests that it may be divided into two components: *langue*, referring to the abstract system of language that is **internalized** by a given **speech community**, and *parole*, the individual acts of speech and the "**putting into practice** of language".

Language is necessarily **dynamic**. It changes over time to **accommodate the needs** of its users. Historical linguistics sought **to account for changes** in language overtime. This is the diachronic dimension. In opposition to this **totally historical view** of language, De Saussure **emphasized the importance** of investigating language from another point of view which is the synchronic dimension. So in his second dichotomy, De Saussure distinguished synchronic linguistics (studying a language system at a given moment or one particular point of time) from diachronic linguistics (studying how a language changes over a period of time).

5.12.2.6. Grammar

Teachers can introduce awareness-raising of collocations whatever the grammar exercise intended to be answered such as tense correction, sentence completion, passive form, reported speech, etc. Moreover, we notice that most grammar teachers provided a series of varied exercises, but they preferred to lastly ask students to write meaningful sentences making use of the learned grammar structures. Thus, we propose the following exercises to show to grammar teachers that it is an easy task to include lexical collocations in their exercises. Concerning the first exercise, the answers are given to highlight lexical collocations.

Exercise 1

Fill in the correct form of the present perfect simple as in the examples.

Example: The boys **have** never **eaten** sushi. (eat)

1. Daniel has seen that video clip at least twenty times. (see)
2. The workers **have not had a break** in 4 hours. (not have)
3. We have visited them regularly over the last few years. (visit)
4. **Has** Ella **passed** her **driving test** yet? (pass)
5. Roger has been to Mexico **several times** since 2002. (be)
6. They have not spoken to each other in ages, have they? (not speak)
7. Why **has** Mathew **quit his job**? (quit)
8. **Have** the nurses **gone on strike** again? (go)
9. **Have not** they **delivered** the **post** yet? (not deliver)
10. I **have** already **told** you the **answer**. (tell)
11. I **have** already **made** several **calls**.
12. Jim **has not worked** on Fridays since he **joined the company**.

Exercise 2

Write meaningful sentences using the present perfect and including the expressions (or collocations if students are familiar with this concept) :

find forgiveness, to be promoted to, completely forget, lifelong endeavor, take advice, repeatedly threaten

Suggested answers:

- Victims of violence have not **found forgiveness** in their hearts yet.
- By stroke of good fortune, Adam has **been promoted** to **assistant director** since 2007.
- I have **completely forgotten** you are coming today.
- Learning a foreign language well has been a **lifelong endeavor**.
- Since you have suffered for ten years, I think you need to **take legal advice**.
- She has **repeatedly threatened** to **commit suicide**.

5.12.3 Suggested Collocational Resources for EFL Classroom Use

There are i) excellent dictionaries which can develop students' collocational competence, ii) books that present and practise collocations in typical context, and iii) web sites that inform the students on the collocational behaviours and provide them with several exercises and activities. These resources help students master English collocations and therefore they speak and write natural-sounding English :

- 1.The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners
- 2.The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations
3. The Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English
4. The Longman Language Activator

5. Bilingual Dictionary such as Ghazala (2007) English Arabic Collocations Dictionary.

6. Two books entitled The Words You Need and More Words You Need which are full of semantic matrices of words, especially collocational grids

7. English Collocations in Use (Intermediate and Advanced)

8. Web Sites

- <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.greenstone.org>
- http://www.winfieldcollege.com/tesl_collocation1.html
- <http://www.fis.edu/eslweb/esl/patents/easy/colloc.htm>
- http://www.disal.com.br/nroutes/nr6/pgnr6_03.htm
- <http://www.eli.ubc.ca/teachers/resources/>
- <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/ITAPAWfluency4.html#collocation>
- www.answers.com/topic/collocation
- www.englishclub.com

5. 13. Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on students' lexical collocational competence, further studies may explore the students' ability with grammatical collocations. Thus, we can have a clearer and complete picture of EFL students' collocational knowledge. Future studies could also investigate the relationship between EFL students' collocational competence and their overall language proficiency. It would be of great value to understand whether or not collocational knowledge helps students to increase their language proficiency. It is also suggested to look into the relationship between collocational competence and students' autonomy.

Conclusion

Learning collocations is considered as an important part of acquiring English. However, teachers and students have not paid much attention to the notion of English collocations in Algerian classrooms. Thus, the findings of this study have implications for both teachers and students. EFL students frequently do not notice the precise way an idea is expressed by a collocation, unless their attention is explicitly drawn to it. Therefore, students' attention should be turned to the way words combine into collocations. It is not possible for teachers to present every example of collocations in English, but they can raise students' awareness of collocations. Teachers need to reconsider their language teaching practices, incorporating collocations into their EFL classes. From a pedagogical point of view, this study provides a plethora of how English collocational knowledge is developed in EFL students. In addition, for EFL students to achieve an acceptable level of oral language proficiency, the significance of lexical collocations should receive increased attention from EFL teachers who should in turn promote making students aware of target language collocations. Knowing how collocations are acquired is fundamental for devising ways of teaching them and strategies for learning them. A model for awareness-raising of lexical collocations has been suggested, and the possible factors affecting the development of collocational knowledge have been examined. Hopefully, the study of lexical collocations will continue in the future. Further studies should reveal a more detailed picture of the development of collocational knowledge in EFL learners, with important implications for L2 theory and instruction.

General Conclusion

This research investigates the impact of collocation awareness-raising on EFL first year students' oral proficiency. It was undertaken to answer the following problem: Does collocation awareness-raising aid first year students to improve their oral proficiency? Thus, the aim of this study is to see whether making students aware of lexical collocations improves their oral proficiency levels or not.

To reach this aim, we relied on a mixed method, randomly choosing a sample of 50 Algerian first year students of English. The sample consists of two groups: 25 students in the control group and 25 students in the experimental group. At the beginning of the experiment, two questionnaires were administered; one was addressed to the first year students of English in the department of English at the University of Guelma, the other was designed for their teachers, for the academic year 2010-2011. Then, a collocation test was used to explore students' collocational knowledge. The sample sat for a pre-oral test and a post-oral test. The former intended to determine students' use of lexical collocations, whereas the latter aimed at finding out whether the collocation awareness-raising implemented during treatment was effective in enhancing the subjects' ability to speak proficiently. The test was interposed by a series of consciousness-raising lessons.

The results obtained gave a clear view about the students' lack of collocational knowledge, and about the teacher's ignorance of lexical collocations importance. In addition to that, the results allowed us to check how students of English seemed to treat each word separately, and failed to identify its collocates. Translation, either from Arabic as a mother tongue or French as a second language, was confirmed by the results obtained from students' questionnaire, collocational test, and from the pre-oral test, because students had the tendency to think in Arabic or French. This will be a hindrance to foreign language learning because of the difference between Arabic and English lexical collocations, and between French and English ones.

The experiment showed the need of students for consciousness-raising of lexical collocations which can be useful to them. The implementation of lexical collocation awareness-raising in FL

learning/ teaching is a helpful tool, not only to develop the language proficiency, but also to boost the students' capacities to develop their collocational competence .Thus, lexical collocations should be taken into consideration and introduced in the syllabus. This will help EFL students overcome the different problems they encounter when combining words together in particular and using English proficiently in general. As previously stated the need for collocation awareness-raising is necessary to help students develop their oral proficiency. Teachers, therefore, have a crucial role to play in making their students aware of lexical collocations.

Simply put, changes in the outcome of the experimental group are presumed to be the result of the intervention (i, e. consciousness- raising). And also, they are in the direction of our research hypothesis which states that if students were trained to pay a careful attention on how words are normally combined, they would speak English proficiently. The ultimate purpose of this study is to improve the students' abilities to store input and to retrieve a correct output represented in the knowledge of lexical collocations, attempting to improve their oral proficiency. In addition to that, teachers themselves are more concerned than students with the consciousness- raising of collocations, and have to consider the significance and usefulness of lexical collocations which lead to autonomous users of language. Consequently, it would be advisable to encourage teachers to help their students develop a collocational competence which could be an important positive factor in the assessment of oral proficiency.

To sum up, consciousness- raising of lexical collocations is an aim that has a lot of benefits to get rid of routine teaching classrooms and traditional ways of dealing with vocabulary. Therefore, focusing on the importance of lexical collocations among EFL students, all the members of teaching setting have to collaborate in order to design a more appropriate syllabus of lexical collocation course, or at least to integrate it into other syllabi through highlighting and noticing the basic lexical collocations.

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Sitography

<http://nltk.googlecode.com/svn/trunk/doc/howto/collocations.html>– NLTK collation
tutorial

<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

<http://www.greenstone.org>

[www.answers. com/topic/collocation](http://www.answers.com/topic/collocation)

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student ,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out in the department of English at the university of Guelma. This research is intended to shed light on the role of lexical collocations in developing English oral proficiency. Your answers will only provide information for the fulfillment of the researcher's Magister dissertation.

Please answer the following questions as honestly and frankly as possible.
Will you please tick the corresponding answer or fill in with information where necessary.

Section one: The Students' Profile

1-Age: years old

2-Sex :

a-Male ☐

b-Female ☐

Section two: Background knowledge

3- How long have you been studying English?

.....

4- Is it your choice to study English?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

5- Do you use a Dictionary?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

6-If yes, which dictionary do you use?

- a-English-English dictionary ☐
- b- English-Arabic dictionary ☐
- c-English-French dictionary ☐
- d-All ☐

7-How often do you use it?

- e- Always ☐
- f- Sometimes ☐
- g- Rarely ☐
- h- Never ☐

Section three: Students' Oral Proficiency

8-How is your level in speaking?

- a-Good ☐
- b- Medium ☐
- c- Bad ☐

9-In which case,you cannot express yourself freely?

- a-When you cannot get the correct words. ☐
- b-When you know the words, but you combine them wrongly. ☐

10-Do you think that miscollocation affects your oral proficiency?

- a-Yes ☐
- b-No ☐
- c-Don't know ☐

11-Does Arabic affect your oral proficiency?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

12- Does French affect your oral skills?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

13-Do you think the use of lexical collocations or the occurring of two words together is more difficult in speaking than in writing? Explain

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Section four: The Role of Lexical Collocations

14-In your opinion, which of the following is the most difficult?

a-Grammar ☐

b- Vocabulary ☐

c- Both ☐

15-Whatever your answer, please explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....

16-Do you think new words can be better learned through

b- Lists of isolated words? ☐

b- combination of words? ☐

17-Concerning word combinations, do you know what collocations are?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

18-If yes, from where you know?

a-Classroom ☐

b-Outside ☐

-For b,please specify the source

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

19-Do you think that you have problems in combining words that normally go together
because:

☐

a-You miscombine them and you do not know?

b-You know,but you cannot correct the miscombination(miscollocation)?

☐

c-You do not bother if words are miscombined?

☐

d-Others,please specify

.....

20-Do you put English words together the way you do in Arabic?

a-Yes ☐

☐

b-No

21-Do you put English words together using false friends?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

22-When two words are synonymous, do you combine them with the same set of words?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

23-Do you agree that teachers should make students aware of lexical collocations to help them speak English proficiently?

a-Strongly disagree ☐

b-Somewhat disagree ☐

c-Strongly agree ☐

d- Somewhat agree ☐

e-Neither disagree nor agree(neutral) ☐

f- Don't know ☐

24-Is it necessary to teach collocations as a separate module?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

c- Don't know ☐

25-If you want to make suggestions or comments, please write in the space below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... **Thank you a lot for your cooperation and help**

Appendix II

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out in the department of English at the university of Guelma. Your answers will be used to explore the role of lexical collocations in developing students ' English oral proficiency, and will be treated anonymously.

Please put a tick in front of the option of your choice and write down your comments when required. You can choose more than one option when necessary.

Miss Biskri Yamina

Magister student

Doctoral School

Department of English

University of Badji Mokhtar, Annaba

Section one: Teachers' Background

1-Specify your qualification, please?

a-Licence / B.A ☐

b-Magister / M.A ☐

c-Doctorat / Ph.D ☐

2-You work at the English Department as:

a-Part-time teacher ☐

b-permanent teacher ☐

3-How long have you been teaching English at the university? (Please specify the number of years)

.....

Section Two: Teachers' Attitudes towards Students' Oral Proficiency

4-As a teacher, the student who speaks English proficiently is:

a-the one who uses well-pronounced words isolately ☐

b- the one who uses words together ☐

c-both ☐

d- Don't know ☐

e-Others,please specify

.....

5-Students listen interestingly when:

a-the speech is correctly chunked ☐

b- the speech is natural and fast,without paying attention to chunking ☐

c- Others,please specify

.....

6-Do you think your students cannot express their ideas because :

a-they cannot get the correct words ☐

b-they have the words, but they combine them wrongly ☐

7-How do you deal with students who miscombine words when they speak?

a-You supply them with the correct collocates ☐

b-Ask them to pay attention ☐

c-Do not bother ☐

d- Others,please specify

.....

.....

8-Which of the students' errors must be corrected to help them speak proficiently?

a-Grammatical errors ☐

b-collocational errors (miscombination
of English words) ☐

c-both ☐

9-Do you think that students 'oral proficiency' can be developed through:

a-Teaching Grammar ? ☐

b- Teaching Vocabulary? ☐

c- both ? ☐

d- Others,please specify

.....

Section Three: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Role of Lexical Collocations

10- Do you think that Vocabulary has to be taught

a-through other modules ? ☐

b-as a separate module ? ☐

11-Do you teach new words

a-alone ? ☐

b-in collocation(or words that go together) ? ☐

c-in complete contexts ? ☐

12-Why do you follow the procedure you do?

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

13-Which of the following do you regularly draw to learner's attention:

a-new words ☐

☐

b-traditional idoms

c-fixed expression

☐

d-collocations

☐

e-grammar structures

☐

f- Others,please specify

.....

14-Do you encourage students combine lexical items appropriately?

a-Yes

☐

b-No

☐

15-Do you think that the reason behind the students' errors in keeping words together is because of:

a-inability to stop using Arabic

☐

b- inability to stop using French

☐

c- lack of language knowledge

☐

d-lack of collocational knowledge

☐

e-inappropriate use of grammaticall rules

☐

f- Others,please specify

.....

16-Do you think lexical collocations are helpful to your students?

a-Yes

☐

b-No

☐

17-If yes,say why please.

.....

18-Do you make the students notice lexical collocations during your lectures.

a-Yes

☐

b-No

☐

19-If yes, from what sources do you search your collocations?

a-Dictionaries

☐☐

b-On-line concordance

c-Texts and passages with relevant themes ☐

d- Others,please specify

.....

20-If your response is no,what is the main reason for you not to do so?

a- I have no time ☐

b- I do not know how to ☐

c- I do not think it is useful ☐

d- Others,please specify

.....

21-In your opinion, what is the best way to make students easily retrieve lexical collocations?

a-Extensive listening or reading ☐

b-Context ☐

c-Examples ☐

d-Translation ☐

e-Noticing them ☐

f-Consciousness-raising activities ☐

g- Others,please specify

.....

22-Are you interested in using collocations to help your students speak English proficiently?(a brief explanation is appreciated)

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

c- Don't know ☐

.....

23- In your opinion,is it necessary to teach collocations separately from the other modules?

a-Yes ☐

b-No ☐

24-Please justify your answer

.....

25-Could you please add your comments about lexical collocations and its impact on English oral proficiency.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time and collaboration.

Appendix III

Collocational Test

1-Match a word from each box to form collocations.

A/ 1- disease

2- evidence

3- opportunity

4- smoke

5- standards

6- teeth

7- wind

8- withstand

B/1- arises

2- chatter

3- howls

4- pressure

5- rises

6- slip

7- spreads

8- suggests

(3.1 p : 11)

2- Complete each sentence using a collocation from 3.1 in the appropriate form.

1- The scientific.....human beings first emerged in africa .

2- Thewas.....all night and it was raining, so I
couldn't sleep.

3- The machine has to be made of materials that cana lot of
.....

4- Oh, no! There's a fire .Look at thefrom those
buildings.

5- It was so cold I couldn't stop myfrom

6- Our survey shows that parents believe.....have.....at the
school.

7- You must accompany Bob on one of his business trips to Asia, if the

.....ever

8- An alarming newisamong cattle in the
south of the country.

(3.2 p :11)

3- Correct the underlined verbs to form correct collocations in these sentences.

1- I would like to do some suggestions.

2- I think that I could give a contribution to the project .

3- I expect you to give a formal apology .

4- There is still some way to go and lots of improvements to do.

5-Thank you very much for doing these arrangements.

6-We're going to make a party on Saturday.

7-Lana made some interesting research into her family roots.

8-The manager had to give a number of changes to office procedures in order to do all
the improvements he had planned for the company.

(9.A,9.1 p :22-23)

4- choose the correct collocation.

1- I was contacted by a childish / childhood/childlike friend I hadn't seen for years.

2- I am sure that my friendship with Louisa will pass / sit / stand the test of time.

3- Foraging / Forcing / Forging good relationships helps us live longer .

4- Mason was a long -life / lifelong / lifelike friend of my father's.

5- She has quite a wide circle / circulation / cycle of friends.

- 6- It's hard to form life-term / long-time / long-term relationships when you're in a job that involves a lot of travelling. (40-1 p :85)

O'Dell and McCarthy, English Collocations in Use(Advanced), 2008.

5-Choose the correct answer (mine)

1-when I feel tired I always take deep/thick/heavy breath to relax.

2-Schools try to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity/possibility/chance to succeed .

3-Many people believe that mass media do not always say/ speak/ tell the truth.

4-When asked about the latest rumours, the minister refused/rejected/denied to comment.

5-The news of her failure was not completely/thoroughly/entirely unexpected considering how ill she had been.

Appendix IV : ABC

Appendix -A-

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Using this book	4

Learning about collocations

- 1 Introducing collocations
- 2 Strong, fixed and weak collocations
- 3 Grammatical categories of collocation
- 4 Using your dictionary and other resources
- 5 Finding and working on collocations in texts
- 6 Register

Varieties of collocations

- 7 Metaphor *foot the bill, heavy burden, run into trouble*
- 8 Intensifying and softening adverbs *deeply offensive, spotlessly clean, wildly inaccurate*
- 9 Make and verbs that mean make *make a contribution, make a habit of, turn in a profit*
- 10 Communicating *generally speaking, talk business, get a message across*
- 11 Collocations with phrasal verbs *take up office, work up an appetite, see off an intruder*

Topics: work and study

- 12 Working life *make a living, take up a post, move up the ladder*
- 13 New employment *fit the job description, land a new job, menial tasks*
- 14 Thoughts and ideas *bear in mind, widespread belief, jump to conclusions*
- 15 Business reports *fierce competition, stimulate growth, hike in prices*
- 16 Customer services *fit for purpose, kick up a fuss, grounds for complaint*
- 17 Student life *gifted child, mature student, thirst for knowledge*
- 18 Writing essays, assignments and reports *working hypothesis, confront issues, critical analysis*

Topics: leisure and lifestyle

- 19 Social life *call for a celebration, social whirl, play host to*
- 20 Talking *juicy gossip, broach the subject, opening gambit*
- 21 News *declare independence, reach agreement, bow to pressure*
- 22 Current affairs *refuse point-blank, decline to comment, gauge reaction*
- 23 Festivals and celebrations *date back to, movable feast, propose a toast*
- 24 Advertisements and fashion *set the trend, fashion victim, flawless complexion*
- 25 Traffic and driving *lengthy delays, grind the gears, bear left*
- 26 Travel and adventure *get itchy feet, off the beaten track, leg of the journey*
- 27 Sport *keep in shape, reach fever pitch, score an own goal*
- 28 Plans and decisions *toy with an idea, tentative suggestion, deciding factor*
- 29 Film and book reviews *star-studded cast, glowing reviews, hold one's attention*

Appendix - B-

Feelings and emotions

Feeling happy

Look at these messages in cards sent to Brian and Helen on their wedding day. Note the collocations in bold.

Brian and Helen,
have a great day, I know you'll
be **blissfully** happy together.
Simon

To Brian and Helen -
Best wishes to the happy couple!
Jack

Dear Helen and Brian,
We hope marriage brings you
lasting happiness.
Jake and Maria

Brian and Helen,
with love and best wishes on this
happy occasion,
Yvonne Eric

2 a standard way of referring to a newly married couple

Feeling sad and upset

In these letters to the problem page of Good Life magazine, useful collocations are in bold.

Dear Good Life,
My grandmother died six months ago and I've
been **desperately** sad and **deeply** depressed
ever since. Is this normal for a 26-year-old?
Karen Young

Dear Good Life,
I felt a great sadness when I had to say goodbye
to my friends at the end of our three years at
university. The farewell party was such a sad
occasion. What can I do? My life feels empty
without them.
Jo Hart

Dear Good Life,
I was **bitterly** disappointed recently when a friend
let me down badly. How can I express my
disappointment to her without appearing silly or
childish? I'm not very good at showing my feelings.
Yolanda Reed

Dear Good Life,
I failed an exam recently and it was a huge
disappointment to me. Now I'm feeling increasingly
anxious that I'll fail the next one. In fact I'm
worried sick. What should I do?
David Wright

deeply disappointed is also common

Anger and emotion

There is mounting [growing] anger over the new tax, along with widespread condemnation
of it in a lot of people in many different places have condemned it. It has especially aroused
feelings of resentment among professional people.

I lost my temper and was seething with anger when she called me an idiot. It suddenly
became very angry!

Divorce is a highly emotional experience for all those involved. It's hard not to give a pure
emotional response. The emotional involvement of both parties is intense, and the
emotional impact on children is huge. [these are rather formal collocations]

Jack was an emotional wreck [informal: in a bad emotional state] after his girlfriend
finished with him.

This page gives a number of synonyms for *very/emotionally* and for *big* words which learners
sometimes use too much. Make a special note of them.

word in Use

Exercises

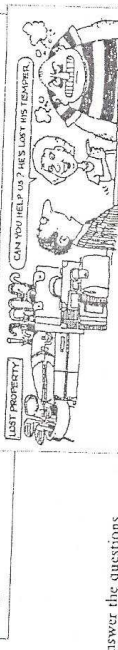
21.1

How many words meaning *very* or *extremely* can you remember from the opposite page?
Use them instead of *very* or *extremely* in these sentences.

- I was **very** disappointed. (give two answers)
- Less is a **very** emotional individual.
- She felt **extremely** sad.
- Her childhood was **extremely** happy.
- I was **extremely** worried.
- She felt **very** depressed.

21.2 Improve the style of these e-mails by replacing the underlined words with collocations from the opposite page.

	Delete	Reply	Reply All	Forward	Print	
1	<p>Dear James</p> <p>I have to tell you that there is general condemnation and growing anger over the news that the company pension scheme is to be closed down. The issue has brought out strong feelings among the staff. I am personally becoming more and more angry that the situation might get out of control, and ask you to act immediately.</p> <p>With best wishes,</p> <p>Joanne Wilson</p> <p>Staff representative</p>					
2	<p>Dear Joanne,</p> <p>I too am full of anger over the pension question. I tried to show my disappointment over it to the Board, but they simply dismissed the issue and that just made me extremely angry. I feel very let down. I shall continue to do what I can.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>James Morgan (Resource Manager)</p>					
3	<p>Garath,</p> <p>You probably know I didn't get the job I applied for. It's a very big disappointment.</p> <p>Christina</p>					
4	<p>Dear Winston,</p> <p>I felt a big sadness when I heard of Patrick's death.</p> <p>Will you be going to the funeral?</p> <p>It will be such a sad thing, won't it?</p> <p>Patricia</p>					



21.3

Answer the questions.

- Give two examples of a happy occasion.
- What phrase can refer to two people who have just got married?
- What adjective collocates with *happiness* to mean 'which continues for many years'?
- What other noun meaning 'effect' can collocate with *emotional*?
- What is an informal way of saying *I was extremely worried*?



Go to the Cambridge University Press website at www.cambridge.org and enter the word *temper* in the Search Cambridge Dictionary box. Then click on *Look it up*. If you cannot use the web, look up *temper* in a good dictionary. What collocations can you find in addition to *lose your temper*?

Appendix - C-

Vocabulary

Chance, occasion, opportunity and possibility

① Read these definitions and circle the correct alternative in *italics* in the sentences below.

Occasion – a particular time when something happened or happens
My sister's wedding was a very special *occasion*.

Collocations

Adjectives: formal, historic, memorable, rare, solemn, special, unique

Verbs: to mark an occasion, to rise to the occasion

Use: on one occasion, the occasion when

Opportunity – a situation in which it is possible to do something you want to do. I'm going to work in South America for a year. It's a great *opportunity*.

Collocations

Adjectives: equal, excellent, golden, perfect, tremendous, welcome

Verbs: have, lose, miss, seize, take + the opportunity, opportunity + arise/occur

Use: the opportunity to do something, the opportunity for + noun

Possibility – a situation where something may or may not happen.
There's a definite *possibility* of a strike by refuse collectors next week.

Collocations

Adjectives: definite, distinct, real, remote, serious, slight, strong

Verbs: face, accept, rule out, recognise, ignore + the possibility

Use: the possibility of doing something (not possibility to do), the possibility that + clause

- Schools try to ensure that every student has an equal *opportunity* / *possibility* to succeed.
- On several *occasions* / *opportunities* recently the university has made changes to the syllabus without consulting students.
- If you study abroad, you should take every *occasion* / *opportunity* to learn the language.
- There's a strong *opportunity* / *possibility* that you will win one of the three available scholarships.
- Our graduation ceremony next week will be a very special *opportunity* / *occasion*.
- According to the weather forecast, there's a distinct *possibility* / *occasion* of rain tomorrow.

② Now read the extract on the right and complete the sentences below it with *chance, occasion, opportunity or possibility*. Sometimes two answers are possible.

Chance can mean *possibility* or *opportunity*, but is generally used less formally than these words.

Chance

1. an occasion which allows something to be done / an opportunity
I'm afraid I didn't get the *chance* to tell him the good news.

Collocations

Adjectives: good, ideal, last, second, unexpected

Verbs: get, have, deserve, welcome, give someone, take, turn down + the chance

Use: the *chance* to do something

2. likelihood / the level of possibility that something will happen
There's an outside *chance* that I'll have to go to Japan next week.

Collocations

Adjectives: fair, outside, realistic, reasonable, slim

Verbs: be in with a chance / stand a chance of + -ing

Use: the *chance* of doing something, there's a *chance* that + clause, by any *chance*, on the *off* *chance*, No *chance*!

- If you don't do well in your exams, you'll have the *chance* to retake them again next summer.
- Our education system is based on the principle of equal
- Have you ever considered the of training to be a teacher?
- If you go on working hard, you stand a good of getting to Harvard.
- Your exams start on Monday, so this weekend is the last you'll have to revise.
- I think there's a real that I'll get the grades I need.
- We're having a party to celebrate the end of our exams – it'll be a great
- Is there any that you could help me with my homework?

③ Complete these sentences with your own words, then compare ideas with a partner.

- I hope one day I'll have the opportunity of ...
- Next year there's a possibility that I'll ...
- Unfortunately, I have very little chance of ever ...
- I hope the occasion never arises, when I ...

Listening Part 2

① Work in pairs to discuss these questions.

- Would you like to study abroad? Why (not)?
- Which country/countries would you choose? Why?
- What difficulties might you experience?
- What difficulties might a foreign student experience in your country?
- How do you think a period of study abroad would change you?

Appendix V

Pre-oral Test Students' Speeches

Experimental Group

Student 1

In my life, I hate many things. I dislike suffering in my study. I dislike impolite students and coming to the university by bus, besides the road as climbing mountain. I dislike doing homework, especially quizzes and French courses. Also, I hate living in poor family and reading books at free time.

Student 2

There are many things in my life I hate doing. One of them is waiting the bus of university when it comes late. I dislike going to the classroom and my teacher attention me or blame me .Any way because I doesn't live in Guelma exactly, but I try always to comes early as much as in my education. I hate waiting the bus more than 30 minutes and of course I have not enough time.

Student 3

Everyone dislikes things in his life and it is sure that they are the most things that disturb him. According to me I am positive girl and I don't have a lot things to hate except of the inhuman behaviour like the lie, unloyalty , violence, disrespect, injustice and the war. But I can see that they widely spread in our society and in our age in general.

Control Group

Student 1

There are many things I dislike doing, first I hate get up early especially at seven o'clock in the morning and I don't like having a bad marks in the exams because I want to finish my diploma rapidly. I dislike doing the difficult things at home such as preparing foods and at the end I hate the person who lies.

Student 2

I hate many things in my life and especially as a student for example I dislike to have a bad marks even if I don't revise I like always to have a good marks, this is the human being nature, also, I hate people who talk too much, I hate difficult challenges, I hate any program that ties me, in general, I hate a large number of people who haven't the same thinking of me, and I can't stop if I want to talk about my hate.

Student 3

In my life I hate a lot of things to do like laying because it causes a lot of problems I like to make my decisions and I hate someone to do something to change my decision, and I hate to left my friends, family and I hate when my little cat feels sick, I hate the war in the world especially in the Arabic world and I dislike poverty because it is the main cause of death and I hate all things influence on stability in Algeria.

Appendix VI

Post-oral Test Students' Speeches

Experimental Group

Student 1

I have many friends who are by nature, very nature, compassionate and open minded. They 'r also very fun, loving, and humorous. Both the guys and the girls pay no attention to school what so ever , but they are kind-hearted and respectable. Unlike my high school friends who used to be very mean-spirited and gave their teachers a hard time just for kiks. Three of them I call best friends, two girls and a boy, strangely enough, they all look like siblings. All dark-haired, tall and black eyed, they 're really smart and serious when it comes to work, also very fashionable. They all are well-dressed and very polished, not to mention the fact that they're all very graceful and articulate in a way that puts me to shame. Their friendship is the best thing that has ever happened to me , and I'm surely grateful fur them.

Student 2

The friendship between me and my friend Mounira is a good company. I consider my friend as a sister . We strick up uor relationship from four years ago. We study together in the same university, in the same class. We help each other in everything. My friend has a sense of humour, but sometimes she loses her temper quickly. She always play jokes on me I take the jokes. She has a vast experience of using computer and she spends a large amount of time studying. She found it easy to study because of the terrible noise coming from her television.

She was friendly loyal to me and her friends. But, all what I can say is my friend has ongoing personality and I love her so much.

Student 3

The feeling of there's one really loves you and always asking about you, when you are happy he is happy too and when you are sad he is always in front of you is so amazing. That is because I had been always dreaming to make a very close friendship with some body really cares of me. And that what happened to me this year when I met a person I had been always dreaming to meet very loyal, very honest and loves me from all his heart, so we developed a lasting friendship and we decided that our relation will be always growing and no one will spoil this special friendship. The only problem between us is that he is away from me and we are in different countries, but we don't believe in the saying of "Away from eye is away from heart". Although there is a distance and spaces between us we'll be always real friends having very close relationship.

Control Group

Student 1

A friend is one who I supported and I like and our proverb said "Friend in need is friend indeed. This is the real friend

Student 2

Our society is build of many relations between the people and this relation are different from one to each other ,for example, when we say this two girls are friends we means that there are many things which shares between them and this friendship looks like a

brother and more than it because they characterized by the elements of friendship like the helpful with them.

Student 3

For me, friendship is considered as our relations with the others and to make friends can be in everywhere and with everyone. However we need friends more than any time because to stay alone is very difficult. For example, at university in which mixed of students come from everywhere and from different towns, and they have different traditions and behaviours. Therefore, you must deal with good friends and who can help you for study and for anything. Finally, the true friend is the one who knows that friends indeed is friends in need.

Résumé

La présente recherche vise à étudier la relation qui existe entre l'utilisation des collocations lexicales Anglaises et la compétence orale des étudiants de première année. Puisque la compétence collocational est une exigence essentielle pour la maîtrise totale d'anglais, les étudiants doivent être entraînés à remarquer quels mots coexistent ensemble pour parler une langue étrangère la façon dont ses locuteurs natifs. Ainsi, nous émettons l'hypothèse que la sensibilisation de collocation lexicale permet aux étudiants d'améliorer leur compétence orale. Les données pour l'étude ont été collectées à partir de 50 étudiants de première année de département d'Anglais, l'université de Guelma. Cette étude empirique était réalisée pendant l'année universitaire 2010-2011.

L'échantillon d'étude a été composé de deux groupes : un groupe expérimental qui a été mis conscient de collocations lexicales et un groupe témoin qui n'a pas été formé du tout. Premièrement, deux questionnaires ont été administrés à la fois aux étudiants et aux professeurs. Les résultats obtenus révèlent que la plupart des étudiants aussi bien que la plupart des professeurs ne connaissaient pas le concept de collocations.

De plus, les étudiants sont allés mal ensemble avec des mots anglais et leur miscollocations a été causé par des facteurs différents, principalement le manque de connaissance collocational et l'interférence de langue maternelle. Pour confirmer que les étudiants avaient une connaissance de collocations lexicales très limitée, nous avons compté sur un test de collocation. Alors, nous avons administré un test pré-oral et un test post-oral. Le premier a prévu à déterminer l'utilisation des collocations lexicales par les étudiants, tandis que le dernier a visé à découvrir l'impact de sensibilisation des collocations implémentaient pendant le traitement sur la capacité des sujets de parler sagement.

Pour déterminer la nature de la relation existante entre les deux variables de l'étude – l'utilisation des collocations lexicales et la compétence orale, le coefficient de corrélation (r) a été calculé. Ce dernier a révélé une corrélation positive significative entre ces deux variables. De plus, les résultats obtenus dans les deux tests (pré test et post test) ont été analysés et comparés. Le test indique donc une amélioration dans la compétence orale et la connaissance des collocations lexicales en faveur du groupe expérimental. Les conclusions tirées de ce travail ont mené à émettre des propositions pour aider les enseignants d'Anglais langue étrangère à renforcer la connaissance des collocations à leurs étudiants, notamment diverses activités et stratégies de sensibilisation des collocations lexicales pour améliorer la compétence orale.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في العلاقة القائمة بين مستعملي المتلازمات اللفظية الإنجليزية و الكفاءة الشفوية عند طلبة السنة الأولى. لكون الكفاءة الشفوية لكونها ضرورية في التملك الكلي للإنجليزية؛ فيجب أن يتدرب الطلبة على ملاحظة الألفاظ المترافقة معا في لغة أجنبية وفق ما تستعمل في بيئتها. وهكذا فقد افترضنا أن رفع وعي الطلبة بالمتلازمات اللفظية سيسمح لهم بتحسين كفاءتهم الشفوية. جمعنا معطيات الدراسة من بين 50 طالبا من السنة الأولى قسم اللغة إنجليزية، جامعة قالمة. وقد أنجزت هذه الدراسة التطبيقية خلال السنة الجامعية 2010-2011.

وقد تم تقسيم العينة إلى فوجين : فوج تجريبي عملنا على رفع الوعي لديه بالمتلازمات اللفظية، وفوج شاهد لم يحس. في البدء قدمنا استبياناً لكل من الأساتذة والطلبة، حيث بينت نتائج هذا الاستبيان أن معظمهم يجهل مفهوم المتلازمات. بالإضافة إلى أن الطلبة وجدوا صعوبة في استعمال كلمات إنجليزية وتوافقاتها نتيجة جهلهم بها، وتداخلات اللغة الأم. ومن أجل البرهنة على أن الطلبة لا يمتلكون معرفة جيدة بالمتلازمات اللفظية، قمنا بتقديم اختبار المتلازمات. بعد ذلك قمنا بتقديم اختبار ما قبل التجربة شفوي و شفوي آخر ما بعدها. يبين الأول استعمال الطلبة للمتلازمات اللفظية، بينما يبين الثاني أثر رفع وعي الطلبة بالمتلازمات واستعمالها أثناء معالجة قدرات المتحدث الجيد. ومن أجل تحديد طبيعة العلاقة بين المتغيرين؛ أي بين استعمال المتلازمات اللفظية و الكفاءة الشفوية، فقد قمنا بحساب معامل الارتباط (ع). وقد بين هذا الأخير وجود ارتباط إيجابي دال بين هذين المتغيرين. بالإضافة إلى تحليل ومقارنة النتائج المتحصل عليها في الاختبارين. وهكذا فقد بين الاختبار البعدي تحسناً في الكفاءة الشفوية وفي معرفة المتلازمات اللفظية عند الفوج التجريبي. النتائج المتحصل عليها خلال هذا العمل مكنتنا من تقديم اقتراحات من أجل مساعدة أساتذة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في رفع وعي الطلبة و تعميق معرفتهم بالمتلازمات، وبالأخص تزويدهم بمختلف النشاطات الاستراتيجية المتعلقة برفع وعي الطلبة بالمتلازمات اللفظية لتحسين كفاءتهم الشفوية.