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**A Corpus-based Study of Lexical Collocations:  
The Case of Second Year Students of English at  
Université des Frères Mentouri – Constantine 1**

*Thesis Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Fulfilment  
for the Requirements of an LMD Doctorate Degree in Linguistics and Applied  
Languages*

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## **Dedication**

*To myself, I dedicate this work.*

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

The practical contribution of this research work is an investigation of the collocational competence of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine). The study focuses on lexical collocations, namely, VERB+NOUN. It aims at measuring the collocational competence of learners of English as a Foreign Language, pinning down the underlying causes of errors, and making some recommendations to remedy the situation by identifying the main areas of difficulty. It is hypothesised that Second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) would have a low level of mastery in respect to the usage and comprehension of V+N collocations. It is also hypothesised that the aforementioned learners would not be adequately aware of the importance of using collocations. In addition, the study hypothesises that the essays of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) would fail to use Verb + Noun collocations appropriately. The sample is sixty six EFL students. The teachers will be able to design appropriate material to raise their learners' awareness of the concept of collocation, and, therefore, improve their level. The British National Corpus, collocation checker, and Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary are the tools chosen to measure Algerian learners' collocational competence. The findings confirm the hypotheses emphasising Algerian EFL learners' unawareness of the importance of collocations. In addition, the findings show that the influence of the mother tongue, along with some other factors (approximation and synonymy), are the primary causes of errors.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**BNC:** British National Corpus

**CA:** Contrastive Analysis

**EA:** Error Analysis

**FL:** Foreign Language

**FSs:** Formulaic Sequences

**IL:** Interlanguage

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**LA:** Language Awareness

**MTT:** Meaning-Text Theory

**LFs:** Lexical Functions

**NL:** Native Language

**NNS:** Non-Native Speaker

**OALD:** Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

**OCD:** Oxford Collocation Dictionary

**OOCD:** Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary

**SL:** Source Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**TL:** Target Language

**V+N:** Verb+Noun

## **Phonetic Symbols Used**

### **1. Dialectal and Standard Arabic**

#### **I. Simple Vowels**

##### **Description**

i	close, front, unrounded, short
i:	close, front, unrounded, long
a	central, front, unrounded, short
a:	central, front, unrounded, long
u	close, back, rounded, short
u:	close, back, rounded, long
@	mid, Central, unrounded
Q	mid, back, rounded

#### **2. Diphthongs**

##### **vowel**

ei

ai

aU

@U

## Consonants

### Description

b	voiced, bilabial, stop	ب
t	voiceless, alveolar, stop	ت
tʃ	voiceless, palato-alveolar, Affricate	تش
tˤ	voiceless, dental, emphatic, stop	ط
d	voiced, dental, stop	د
dˤ	voiced, dental, emphatic, stop	ض
k	voiceless, velar, stop	ك
g	voiced, velar, stop	ق
m	voiced, bilabial, nasal, stop	م
n	voiced, alveolar, nasal, stop	ن
f	voiceless, labiodental, fricative	ف
s	voiceless, alveolar, fricative	س
sˤ	voiceless, alveolar, emphatic, fricative	ص
θ	voiceless, interdental, fricative	ث
ð	voiced, interdental, fricative	ذ
ðˤ	voiced, interdental, emphatic, fricative	ض
z	voiced, alveolar, fricative	ز

S	voiceless, palato-alveolar, fricative	ش
Z	voiced, palato-alveolar, fricative	ج
r	voiced post alveolar fricative	ر
l	voiced, alveolar, lateral	ل
j	voiced, palatal, glide	ي
w	voiced, bilabial, velar, glide	و
h	voiced, glottal, fricative	هـ
ʔ	voiceless, glottal, stop	أ
ħ	voiced, pharyngeal, fricative	ع
X	voiceless, velar, fricative	خ
q	voiceless uvular plosive	ق
G	voiced, uvular, fricative	غ
h0	voiceless, pharyngeal, fricative	ح

## 2. Standard Arabic

### II. . Simple Vowels

#### Description

I	close, front, unrounded, short
i:	close, front, unrounded, long
A	Central, front, unrounded, short



a: Central, front, unrounded, long

U close, back, rounded, short

u: close, back, rounded, long

### **3. Diphthongs**

#### **Examples**

ai

aU

eI

### **III Consonants**

#### **Description**

B voiced, bilabial, stop

T voiceless, alveolar, stop

tS voiceless, palato-alveolar, Affricate

t0 voiceless, dental, emphatic, stop

D voiced, dental, stop

d0 voiced, dental, emphatic, stop

K voiceless, velar, stop

G voiced, velar, stop

M voiced, bilabial, nasal, stop

N	voiced, alveolar, nasal, stop
F	voiceless, labiodental, fricative
S	voiceless, alveolar, fricative
s0	voiceless, alveolar, emphatic, fricative
T	voiceless, interdental, fricative
D	voiced, interdental, fricative
D0	voiced interdental, emphatic, fricative
d0	voiced, interdental, emphatic, fricative
Z	voiced, alveolar, fricative
S	voiceless, palato-alveolar, fricative
Z	voiced, palato-alveolar, fricative
R	voiced post alveolar fricative
L	voiced, alveolar, lateral
J	voiced, palatal, glide
W	voiced, bilabial, velar, glide
H	voiced, glottal, fricative
ʔ	voiceless, glottal, stop
ħ	voiced, pharyngeal, fricative
X	voiceless, velar, fricative

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Achieving a high level of proficiency in a foreign language requires the mastery of its components at different levels of language (phonology, grammar, and lexis, semantics and pragmatics). Language knowledge is a wide scope that covers all the facets of language. It includes the four basic skills required in the process of learning a foreign language: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Word knowledge is a part of general language knowledge; it is the main concern of this research work. The concept of word knowledge is often misconceived, and thus inadequately defined. It is usually interpreted as the task of learning and memorising new vocabulary words for the sake of enriching the lexical repertoire (diction) of the learner.

Emphasis has always been on the fact that EFL learners should memorise words in isolation. Such description is markedly limited for it ignores the internal structural mechanism of language. Single words have specific functions within language and are determined by their positions and their relations to other elements –quite similar to a game of chess where each position is occupied with the appropriate element. The common description of word knowledge excludes both the structuralist and communicative features within language.

Since Language is an orderly (arrangement) system of signs, each sign can function effectively only when properly placed in the correct combination with other elements: this is the essence of the syntagmatic study of language at the lexical level. However, one must note that there is a correlation –in this study– between the structuralist syntagmatic aspect and the cultural and pragmatic aspects of language.

A comprehensive concept of word knowledge includes the knowledge of the associations between words. These associations are arbitrary, highly recurrent, and culture-specific. The general term for these associations is 'formulaic language' which includes idioms and collocations. If a learner discredits (invalidates) the relation between words during the learning process, he/she shall face difficulty in both production and comprehension. He/she must bear in mind that, for example, some words tend to occur specifically and recurrently with other words following the so-called idiom principle.

It is safe to say that making errors when learning a foreign language is inevitable. These errors may occur at different levels, and are corrected and avoided as the learner's competence improves. However—and conversely—based on observations of supposedly advanced foreign language learners, the findings show the learners' apparent inability to express themselves –either through speaking or writing– in a native-like language; and that what they have acquired during all the previous years has not been adequate nor enough to enable them to use idiomatic language, given the fact that learning a language does not confine one to learning its usage (grammar) only, but its use, too (pragmatics).

The concern of the present study is collocations, specifically, lexical collocations. Collocations differ in their structure and types. They can be Noun + Verb, Adjective + Noun, or Verb + Noun collocations. The last type, i.e. Verb+Noun is the central point of investigation in this study.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

The present research work attempts to discuss the concept of collocation, and debunk some of the non-scientific beliefs about word knowledge. It examines the collocational competence of second year EFL undergraduate students' at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1). It also seeks to investigate the collocational competence of these students by

examining their written essays, and retrieving the miscollocations used through an error analysis. And lastly but not least, the research tries to raise awareness amongst EFL teachers and students of the importance of learning and using collocations, while suggesting at the same time teaching and learning approaches and techniques that are based on the findings of empirical research.

### **3. Research Questions**

There are three questions which this research work attempts to answer; they are:

1. Are second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) aware of the importance of the concept of collocation?
2. Are second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) able to produce V+N Collocations?
3. To what extent do second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) master V+N collocational language in essay writing?

### **4. Hypotheses**

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) would have a low level of mastery in respect to the usage and comprehension of V+N collocations.
2. Second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) would not be adequately aware of the importance of using collocations.
3. The essays of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) would fail to use Verb + Noun collocations appropriately.

## **5. Research Methodology**

This research will examine sixty-six (out of three hundred thirty) randomly chosen essays of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1).

The practical side of this study is to probe into the collocational competence of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri. There will be focus on the learners' production and knowledge of lexical collocations. In order to examine the learners' language production, an analysis of the essays they have written will be conducted, focusing on retrieving the collocations. The type of lexical collocations that this study will inspect is the Verb + Noun. This type of collocations is common and is used at a high frequency.

The study will use three research tools: Collocation Checker, Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary (O.O.C.D), and the British National Corpus (BNC). Collocation Checker is an online software which permits to identify correct and erroneous collocations. It shares the same database as BNC. All word combinations retrieved from the students' essays are analysed via this software. The second tool is the O.O.C.D which is an online software as well. It provides all the possible collocational hits for the searched word, in addition to examples retrieved from the BNC. Its main function -in this study- is to distinguish collocations from free combinations. The British National Corpus is the third tool. It is an online corpus that comprises 100 million words. BNC contains authentic data, and is considered as one of the most reliable sources for examining collocations. A high-frequency hit in BNC is proof of a well-combined word combination. The basic threshold in this study is 40 hits per word combination. All collocations which do not score 40 hits will be considered as free combinations, instead.

## **6. Structure of the Thesis**

The present research work is divided into seven chapters:

The first chapter deals with the phenomenon of formulaicity as an inherent part of language. It is a general overview of the concept of idiomaticity in native speaker and learner language. Several notions will be discussed in this chapter notably the definition of formulaic sequences, the reason it is difficult to define them, and the theoretical framework within which they are investigated. A scrutiny of such notion is usually done in a corpus –the same procedure is followed during this research. The chapter will also look at formulaic sequences as whole fixed phrases (the whole) and the relations between the constituent parts that qualify them to make potential combinations (the parts). For any foreign language learner, the process of grasping any new concept starts with detecting it first. Other segments in the first chapter will include the functions of formulaic sequences, their categorisation and the difference between formulaic and creative language.

The second chapter revolves around the concept of collocation—the foremost point of investigation in the present study. The misconception about the idea of word knowledge and its acquisition is laid down and debunked. In addition, collocations as parts of formulaic sequences will be defined.. The chapter will also tackle previous studies on collocations, the main findings, the collocational errors and their causes, and the mechanism of language production.

Chapter three will tackle the notion of error analysis as a research tool to identify foreign language learners' errors. Some views on this tool will be discussed, such as Corder's view. Error analysis and contrastive analysis will be juxtaposed in this chapter to determine the merits of each research tool in identifying learners' errors and their causes.

The experimental side of this study is undertaken in chapters four, five, and six where an error analysis approach is adopted. The main concerns are hence the identification of learners' errors and their causes, and, also, the measurement of the frequency of free combinations and correct collocations. All the Verb+Noun word combinations in the learner's essays are manually extracted. Then, those word combinations are examined in Collocation Checker to identify miscollocations. The procedure is, then, to be continued through the Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary (O.O.C.D) which serves to distinguish acceptable collocations from free combinations via native speaker metrics. After that, the British National Corpus (B.N.C) takes on the final distinction between free combinations and acceptable collocations from a frequency standpoint. The findings are analysed and interpreted so as to identify the most problematic areas, the causes of learners' errors, and the prevalence of free combinations or acceptable collocations.

The seventh chapter suggests pedagogical solutions to the difficulties EFL learners face when using Verb+Noun lexical collocations. The suggested solutions (remedies) will be a projection of the identified difficulties and errors empirically validated in the present study.



## **Chapter One: Formulaic Language**

### **Introduction**

Formulaicity is the state of the art that underlies the different levels of word combinations including collocations and idioms. The present chapter explicates the notion of formulaicity. It goes through the various linguistic views about it. The chapter also discusses formulaicity as a whole concept, and looks at it from the inside in order to thoroughly comprehend it. Formulaic language is usually studied within a corpus. Nonetheless, detecting it causes difficulty. In the literature to come, this difficulty is to be discussed to formulate mental and linguistic frameworks. This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the functions of formulaic sequences and their importance in language. Chomsky's opposing view to that of a corpus study is introduced, ending the chapter with a reconciliation between creative language and formulaic one.

#### **1.1. Definition of Formulaic Language**

Opting for a definition of formulaic sequences is no easy task, for they intersect with the many disciplines of language study (grammar, semantics, and pragmatics). According to Wray (2000, p. 464), many attempts were made to categorise formulaic language (e.g., Becker 1975, Bolinger 1976, Hatch *et al.* 1979, Coulmas 1979, 1994, Aijmer 1996, Howarth 1998a and b, Hudson 1998). Since formulaic language is a learning target for EFL learners, a prior point needs to be clarified; it is of how EFL learners should view it. In this respect, Wood (2009, p. 41) states that:

As long ago as 1983, Pawley and Syder pointed out a link between formulaic language and fluent language use, and that speakers tend to ignore the potentially infinite lexical and grammatical options available. Instead, the norm is to use standard predictable phrases such as *How are you?* or *Will you marry me?* rather than grammatical but communicatively unlikely

ways of expressing the same meaning or function such as What is your current state of well-being? Or Are you inclined to become my spouse?

Wood (as cited in Kaneyasu, 2012, p. 5) hints at the idea that focusing solely on grammatically constructed sentences will neither result in appropriate usage of that language nor the mastery of it. If a native speaker is exposed to the examples in the quotation, he/she will argue that the expression “will you marry me?” is used in day-to-day conversations instead of “are you inclined to be my spouse?” Thus, the first thing to be noted about formulaic language is that it is mostly composed of ready-made phrases that are culturally loaded and are arbitrary, by definition. Dixon and Aikhenvald point out that the idea of ‘word’ as a basic unit of language was developed for the familiar languages of Europe (Kaneyasu, 2012, p. 5).

Warren (2005, p. 36) says that, according to Mel’cuk, there are more memorised expressions in language than single ones. On the same note, Jackendoff points out to a significant number of phrases that are memorised by speakers of the language. Schmitt and Carter suggest, in agreement, that formulaic sequences take up a hefty portion of spoken language (as cited in Wood, 2009, p. 42).

The prevalence of formulaic language in spoken and written language was measured in order to have a concrete idea on its wide range of existence, hence, its importance. Altenberg (1998, p. 102) recorded a frequency of 80 % of the words in the London-Lund corpus of spoken English which are a part of formulaic sequences. Those words vary from single words to phrases. In a later study, Erman and Warren (as cited in Wood, 2009, p. 42) state that 58.6 % of the corpus investigated in their study was made up of the various types of formulaic sequences. These numbers are considered as a strong evidence of the dominance of formulaic language in language usage. They also prove that they are the most important part of it,

because, were they not that paramount, no idioms or collocations would exist in language. Thus, one would not expect to hear ‘good morning’, ‘good evening’, and similar expressions on a daily basis; one would expect novel expressions every day, and society would never be able to agree on communicative patterns that govern their use of language. All this would certainly result in no ‘langue’. Similarly, Altenberg claims that up to 80 % of adult native speaker language may be formulaic (as cited in Wray 1999, p. 214).

There is an agreement between linguists that the foremost trait to focus on in formulaic sequences is the strong bond between the words making up the expression. Wray (2008) seconds this idea by saying:

While most linguists accept that there is such a thing as formulaic language, consensus about what it is exactly is severely limited. Underpinning the notion of formulaicity is the sense that certain words have an especially strong relationship with each other in creating their meaning—usually because only that particular combination, and not synonyms, can be used (Wray, 2008, p. 9).

The variable Wray (2008) adds to the identity of formulaic language is that of collocability. In other words, the relationship between the elements of the formulaic expression cannot be said to be strong if the component elements are not arbitrarily and recurrently tied together. Hence, components of a formulaic sequence cannot be replaced by potential synonyms since the phrase is arbitrarily designed to be fixed in nature and usage. In the same vein, Ellis (2012) supports Wray’s idea. He says:

Formulaicity is a dimension to be defined in terms of strength of serial dependencies occurring at all levels of granularity and at each transition in a string of forms. At one extreme are formulaic units that are heavily entrenched (unique patterns of high token frequency), and

at the other are creative constructions consisting of strings of slots each potentially filled by many types (Ellis, 2012, p. 26).

Wray, states that each speech community has its preferred ways of saying things and organising thoughts. The preferred ways of saying things are reflected in the employment of formulaic language and figurative one. The preferred ways of organising thoughts can be seen via the use of subordinate conjunctions, clauses, and discourse markers (Kecskes, 2007, pp. 2-3).

There are different points of view regarding the concept of combination. Wray (2002) succinctly discusses each of the theories, after she puts out the following:

Theories differ considerably regarding what it means that some words have a particular bond with others. Some accounts, including the one in this book, envision the strings of words to have its own separate identity as an entry in the mental lexicon. Others focus on how we might create 'rat runs' in our processing, so that certain formulations are quicker and easier to produce than others with same meaning. Others still are interested in identifying rules and constraints on them that will generate the formulaic expression (Wray, 2002, p.10).

To summarise Wray's point, it can be said that the diversity in defining formulaic language should not be viewed as a form of disagreement on a particular point. Instead, linguists looked at the notion from different angles which led to different understandings of the notion of formulaicity. Wray backs up her words by arguing that, in corpus-driven studies, it is necessary to vouch that formulaic language is an inherent part of language. Considerable quantities of text are analysed, looking for recurrences and co-occurrences of words. Those established combinations are called 'formulaic sequences', regardless of who the producer was. Often, the researcher finds various established patterns of word combinations that he/she ascribes to the language (Wray, 2002, p.10).

If the several definitions of formulaic language are to be regarded, the one provided by Wray would stand out due to its ubiquity and preciseness. Wray (2000) defines the formulaic sequence as:

A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray, 2000, p. 465).

Bannard and Lieven (pp. 299-300) suggest that a statistical definition of formulaic language is more valid. Thus, formulaic language is a piece of language that re-occurs in high frequency in comparison to its component parts.

## **1.2. The Whole and the Parts**

One of the faculties of human cognition is that it tends to store information units that are frequently processed in a specific order for the sake of having faster access to them (Hawkins, as cited in Alhama, 2012, p. 03).

She would go and smile and be nice and say ‘So kind of you. I’m so pleased. One is so glad to know people like one’s books’. All the stale old things. Rather as you put a hand into a box and took out some useful words already strung together like a necklace of beads (Agatha Christie, as cited in Wray 2002, p. 03).

Breaking a phrase down to single words yields a different meaning from treating it as a whole (Wray, 2002, p. 04). This is the premise behind looking at both, the whole and the parts. Since it is now understood that a formulaic sequence is a fixed phrase that holds its meaning in the associations of words, it is useful to look at it from the inside. One would have a firmer grasp on the concept when he/she looks at the parts in isolation and in combination.

It is Wray's extensive research on formulaic language from psycholinguistic, syntactic, and pragmatic points of view that led to this discussion. Hence, the majority of the discussed ideas in this segment are Wray's, unless otherwise cited.

It is worth noting that understanding the processing procedure of retrieving formulaic language is essential to understanding how the speaker/writer uses it in daily life. What is meant by retrieving is the mental procedure of storing the formulaic sequences within the brain, and, then, retrieving them as ready-made chunks for instant use. According to Wray (2002, p. 05), "words and word strings which appear to be processed without recourse to their lowest level of composition are termed formulaic." This means that, when dealing with formulaic sequences, the brain does not analyse them to their core components –as individual words; they are perceived as holistic expressions. The brain does not seem to have difficulty with formulaic sequences; Ellis reports that "whether these preferred strings are actually stored and retrieved as a unit or simply constructed preferentially, it has been widely proposed that they are handled effectively like single 'big words' " (Wray 2002, p. 05). Sinclair regards them as single choices despite the fact that they seem like segments that can be analysed, they are, in actual fact, single choices (as cited in Wray 2002, p. 07). Research in psycholinguistics reports that language users are sensitive to the frequencies of co-occurrence of numerous word combinations. Hence, the learner's cognitive system is influenced by recurrent usage events and the processing of the component constructions (Ellis, Simpson-Vlach, Maynard, 2008, p. 376).

Looking at formulaic language from a sociolinguistic standpoint yields an insight on the existence and importance of formulaic language in everyday speech. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992, p, 01) provide this analogy: we, humans, are creatures of habit, not only in our behaviour, but, also, in the language we use. Human behaviour can be categorised in specific patterns of thinking and behaving; these behavioural patterns tend to be shaped by the

surrounding environment. Conventions are, then, formed to affirm certain behaviours and reject others. The same thing happens with language: it is a matter of arbitrary convention. Are these phrases fixed? They certainly are. They also hold either positive or negative connotations that are culturally loaded. “There are words and phrases that we are likely to say when we see a particular friend, or find ourselves in a certain situation” (Coulmas, as cited in Wray, 2002, p. 5). This is also apparent in the context of collocation; some words tend to combine well with each other in an expression. Other words, can be formed in a seemingly equally good manner, but, still, sound non-felicitous. This is one side of the coin; there exists another one. One of the main characteristics of language is that it is compositional, i.e. a limited number of sounds can be arranged in arbitrary combinations to, later, make meaningful combinations (Bannard & Matthews, 2008, p. 241).

Fixedness extends that “the patterning of words and phrases . . . manifests far less variability than could be predicted on the basis of grammar and lexicon alone” (Perkins, 1999, pp. 55-56). Compositionality is a core component in understanding formulaicity. It is the degree to which a certain formulaic phrase can be broken down into its components as a method to figure out figurative meaning. Compositionality can be divided into degrees; the less fixed a formulaic expression is, the less compositional it is. In other words, the more likely the expression is to be understood through each core component, the less fixed and compositional it is. Idioms received a considerable amount of attention, because they allow for two interpretations: literal and figurative (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012, p. 47).

Jespersen’s (1924/1976, p. 85) (characterisation of *formula* was the following:

[it] may be a whole sentence or a group of words, or it may be one word, or it may be only part of a word, – that is not important, but it must always be something which to the actual speech instinct is a unit

which cannot be further analyzed or decomposed in the way a free combination can.

The phenomenon of formulaicity was long recognised by linguists; the following are some views shared by some of them. It is in the mid-nineteenth-century with Jackson, who, in his writings, discussed the ability of aphasics to utter rhymes and conventional greetings, despite their inability to produce utterances on their own (Wray, 2000, p. 07). De Saussure talked about synthesising the elements of:

[a]syntagm into a new unit . . . [such that] when a compound concept is expressed by a succession of very common significant units, the mind gives up analysis – it takes a short cut – and applies the concept to the whole cluster of signs, which then becomes a simple unit (Wray, 2000, p. 07).

On the other end of the spectrum, there is an opposing linguistic view to that of formulaicity; the movement is led by Noam Chomsky who believes that humans have an abstract syntactic knowledge that is innate, and its basis is in the human genes. In this respect, Wray says that it is the theoretical views that promote grammar as a basic processing system of language structure which sympathise the least with formulaicity. Among those is Chomsky's (1965) claim that humans' understanding of language structure is greater than their understanding of observed input.

This view of Chomsky was opposed by many linguists (Chafe; Lyons; Weinreich; Jackendoff, as cited in Wray, 2002, pp.12-13). Two challenging arguments surfaced to oppose the Chomskian claim: the first one revolves around the fact that it is impossible –for the brain– to process idioms. Otherwise, they will lose their intended meaning. “The only way to decode and encode an expression like *pig in a poke* is to have a direct link from its phonological or graphemic form to its meaning” (Wray, 2002, pp.12-13). The second point of view argues that



not all the grammatical sentences are considered idiomatic by native speakers (Wray, 2002, p. 13). In other words, the speaker can produce a significant number of sentences, which are *odd* and unacceptable. Hence, not all the –seemingly- permissible combinations in a language are really permissible.

The theoretical significance of formulaic language was also proved via corpus linguistics. The latter states that, in a wider sense, the pervasiveness of formulaicity in language data is apparent and unquestionable. This pervasiveness can be felt by revealing the patterns that govern the distribution of words. Sinclair (as cited in Wray, 2002, pp. 13-14) describes it as “unrandomness” in distributing words.

Widdowson (1989, p. 185) adds further by stating:

communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as and when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual demands.

### **1.3. Detecting Formulaic Language**

A part of understanding formulaicity can be done through its identification in speech and/or writing. There are many ways to identify formulaic sequences and collect them. The premise of the formulaic study of language is that some linguistic expressions can be analysed into smaller units; however, it is preferable if they are treated as wholes (Durrant & Mathews-Aydinli, as cited in Durrant, 2013, p. 01). Two basic ways of collection stand out:

One is to use an experiment, questionnaire or other empirical method to target the production of formulaic sequences (as defined by the study in question) as data. The other is to collect general or particular linguistic material and then hunt through it in some more or less principled way, pulling out strings which, according to some criterion or group of criteria, can justifiably be held up as formulaic (Wray, 2002, pp. 19-20).

The study in hand adopts the second method where material was collected and examined based on criteria of formulaic language, specifically in this case, collocations. Coulmas points out that the method to identify formulaic language is the following: the sequence has to be made up of at least two morphemes which cohere phonologically, and are identified as a formula (as cited in Wood, 2002, p. 3).

At this point, it is important to bring the concept of ‘idiomaticity’ into the equation. According to Moon (1997, p. 44), idiomaticity is the intuitive judgment of a speech community to consider an expression as a unit, and, also, if that unit sounds right. Such verdict is made by linguists who are native speakers of the language in study. The definition of idiomaticity comes in opposition to what Chomsky has suggested. In defence of the role of idiomaticity and formulaicity, “Hopper (1998, p. 166), like Bolinger, objects to the generative approach that stresses the uniqueness of each utterance treating it as if it were completely novel, and suggests that everyday language to a very large extent is built up of combinations of prefabricated parts” (Warren 2005, p. 37).

The reason idiomaticity was brought up is that it has a relation to formulaicity. Therefore, it can be used as a tool to detect formulaic sequences within a corpus. However, this method raises suspicion in scientific research, since intuition, as Sinclair (1991, p. 04) describes, is not a reliable guide to detect formulaic sequences. Francis, on the other hand, believes that the

corpus is “the only reliable authority” that presents a challenge “to abandon our theories at any moment and posit something new on the basis of the evidence” (Wray, 2000, p. 21).

In order to make intuition scientific, Willis proposed a panel of independent judges. Foster (2001, p. 83) opted for an attempt to make the procedures formal and reliable. She suggested that seven judges be used; they are university teachers specialised in Applied Linguistics, and who have experience in teaching/researching English as a foreign language. The instructions had suggested that each judge worked individually, and a basic exclusion threshold was set, that is the consensus of at least five judges. Foster’s (2001, p. 84) report emphasised the slippery nature of intuition as a scientific tool. In this context, she affirms:

According to the written comments of all seven informants, theirs was not an easy task. Lapses of concentration with reading meant missing even obvious examples of prefabricated language, so progress was slow and exhausting. All seven reported difficulty in knowing where exactly to mark boundaries of some lexical chunks and stems as one could overlap or even envelop another. Nevertheless, after a certain amount of self-imposed revision, each reported feeling reasonably confident with their coding (Wray, 2000, p.22)

Frequency is an important factor in distinguishing formulaic sequences from non-formulaic ones. It is usually measured via a computer. The analysis is done on a corpus (in this study, it was the online corpus BNC). Wray (2000), in this respect, states that:

In corpus linguistics, computer searches are conducted to establish the patterns of distribution of words within text. This is done on the basis of frequency counts, which reveal which other words a given target word most often occurs with. These patterns of collocation turn out to be far from random (Wray, 2000, p. 25).

This study used frequency as an inherent characteristic for identifying acceptable collocations. Corpora can be considered as the right place to investigate formulaic language, for they contain authentic data that allows for an objective and thorough analysis. Besides, they contain millions of words, thousands of spoken data, and a hefty amount of written material of all genres. It has also been confirmed –by this study- that arbitrary associations between words of a language, be it collocations or idioms, do exist and can be identified via corpus. In this respect, Wray states that “both these associations invite us to see frequency as a salient, perhaps even a determining, factor in the identification of formulaic sequences” (Wray, 2002, p. 25).

Thus far, the superiority of corpus research over the native speaker’s intuition has been proved. In a similar vein, Sinclair and Renouf (1988, p. 151) second this superiority by stating that:

The retrieval systems, unlike human beings, miss nothing if properly instructed – no usage can be overlooked because it is too ordinary or too familiar. The statistical evidence is helpful, too, because it distinguishes the commoner patterns of usage, which occur very frequently indeed, from the less common usage, which occurs very infrequently.

Compositionality and fixedness are inherent characteristics of formulaicity as well. A formulaic sequence does abide by all the grammatical and lexical rules that accompany the open choice expressions/free combinations, i.e. the phrase should not fall into grammatical regularity or semantic logic (Wray, 2000, p. 33). Fixedness shows in the inability to insert elements within some phrases; these phrases can be either fully-fixed or semi-fixed. This means that fully-fixed phrases do not support insertion or modification in voice; semi-fixed phrases support insertion that is only arbitrarily permissible.

#### **1.4. The Functions of Formulaic Sequences**

The functions of formulaic sequences can be put into two major categories: brain processing and socio-interactional mechanisms. Wray and Perkins (2000, p. 17) state that “two apparently unrelated purposes for formulaic language. On the one hand it is a means of ensuring the physical and social survival of the individual through communication, and on the other it is a way of avoiding processing overload.”

Bannard and Matthews (as cited in Arnon & Snider, 2009, p.69) attempted to show that children store formulaic sequences in; an assumption that was crucial, especially with the prevalence of grammatical models of knowledge. Formulaic sequences allow the brain to save efforts while processing information. As a consequence, it would be easier for the speaker to retrieve such expressions and use them. Becker emphasises that:

[they] give us ready-made frameworks on which to hang the expression of our ideas, so that we do not have to go through the labor of generating an utterance all the way out from S every time we want to say anything. (Wray, 2000, p. 473).

According to Pawley and Syder (as cited in Guz, 2014, p. 113), automatised repertoires of prefabricated chunks determine, to a large extent, the foreign learner's ability to achieve native-like oral fluency, thus, reducing the amount of processing and encoding of his/her message. What the brain actually does in such situations is take shortcuts while generating ideas and understanding them. Similar savings in effort are particularly paramount at times of immediate needed effort (Wray, 2000, p. 473). Learners do not decode the linguistic information contained in formula, instead, they internalise the L2 rules (Liu, 2014, p.4).

There is usually a benefit of reliance on formulaic language, and that is ensuring fluency in production and availability of information when required. Formulaic language bypasses the generative system, either partially or in its entirety. Formulaic sequences are more suitable than novel expressions, since they facilitate understanding for the hearer, because the form of the message is familiar (Wray & Perkins, 2000, pp. 17-18).

The other major function of formulaic language is to ensure proper communication between interlocutors. Formulaic sequences can demonstrate the speaker's individual identity and among the group. They allow the speaker to express belonging and difference; they also allow him/her to carve a place out in society (Wray, 2000, pp. 474-477). Schmitt (2013, p. 2) asserts that it is in language use that formulaic sequences become particularly important, i.e. in consideration to their pragmatic significance. They are used to fulfil recurrent communication needs. This is why:

a number of taxonomies of formulaic sequences (or subsets of them), most notably those of Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) and Aijmer (1996), are based on the socio-interactional function that some of them have, for greeting, thanking, apologizing, and so on. Many such functions seem to rely on the use of agreed forms to a greater or lesser extent (Wray, 2000, p. 477).

It is important, at this point, to make the connection between the two functions and how they relate. According to Wray (2000, p. 477), when an individual chooses a prefabricated stretch of language in order to reduce the pressure on processing, the aim is to be fluent and to succeed in producing the entire message without interruption, or to ensure that information is reliably to hand when needed. In other words, the speaker selects a formulaic sequence in the interests of efficient *production*. In contrast, when the speaker selects a formulaic sequence for socio-interactional purposes, what is paramount is the effect of the words on the hearer. The success of the utterance is not measured by whether it is delivered clearly and fluently, nor even whether its internal composition is extricated and fully appreciated, but rather by whether the hearer reacts appropriately, be that in providing a requested item, backing down in the face of a threat, or registering the speaker as an in- (or out-) group member.

### **1.5. The Categorisation of Formulaic Sequences**

It has been stated previously that several criteria enter the framework when it comes to the identification of formulaic sequences; frequency alone is not sufficient, since many open choice combinations might receive high frequency hits. Compositionality and fixedness are key factors, too. Wray (1999, p. 214) points out that “although automated frequency counts are a great boon, formulaic sequences cannot be defined in terms of frequency alone, for many strings which we would want to identify as formulaic for other reasons are not at all frequent in general usage.” Formulaic sequences can be categorised by form and function.

Many linguists have their say about the categorisation of formulaic sequences by form. This includes the fact that “formal descriptions and/or categorisations of formulaic sequences have been offered by Altenberg (1998), Becker (1975), Bolinger (1976), Bybee (*forthcoming*), Coulmas (1979), Glaser (1998), Hatch *et al.*, (1979), Howarth (1998a) Hudson (1998), Lattey (1986), Moon (1992, 1998a,b), Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992) and many others” (Wray,1999, p. 214).

A categorisation of formulaic sequences based on form underlies the sequence adhering to compositionality and flexibility maxims. A sequence is said to be non-compositional when its meaning cannot be deduced from its constituent parts, or, at least, without soliciting to the context (pragmatics). On a different note, a sequence can be considered to have a non-literal meaning when there is no need to decompose it in order to understand it. Thus, it is treated as a whole. “The effect of bypassing the internal composition can be to promote a metaphorical meaning relative to its literal one (e.g. *pull someone's leg*), or even entirely replace it (e.g. *go the whole hog*)” (Wray, 1999, p. 215). The more immutable a sequence is, the less flexibility it shows. Examples include proverbs, idioms, and quotations. Some sequences, however, are less fixed and can allow for some morphological and grammatical changes (Wray, 1999, p. 215).

The categorisation of formulaic sequences at the level of function is characterised by the processing effort and interaction. When it comes to effort, research shows that the brain takes a shortcut in processing when it becomes familiar with a given sequence (Raichle, as cited in Wray, 1999, p. 215). This supports the idea that the foremost benefit of using common ready-made chunks spares the congested effort of on-line analysis (Wray, 1999, p. 215). The benefit extends to the hearer, too. He/she finds formulaic language easier to process, a point that can be used by the speaker to manipulate the hearer through his utterances. The latter point is socio-interactional. Manipulation is performed through “commands, requests, bargains, and so



on, and perceptions by means of recognised verbal ‘badges’ which portray the relative place in the hierarchy of the speaker and hearer or mark the speaker as a group member or an individual” (Wray,1999, p. 216).

### **1.6. The Relationship between Formulaic and Creative Language**

Arguing for the importance and for the prevalent and inherent existence of formulaic language does not entail that creative language is totally discredited. What needs to be done is not to establish balance, since the scientific study of language is no more prescriptive. Rather, a line needs to be drawn between compositional and non-compositional principles. It can be said that:

early criticism of generative syntactic theory for failing satisfactorily to accommodate idioms (e.g. Chafe, 1968; Weinreich, 1969; Fraser, 1970; Makkai, 1972; Bolinger, 1976; Coulmas, 1979; Gazdar et al., 1985) has led to the admission of irreducible formulas to the lexicon. Thus, the formulaic sequences which are syntactically irregular or semantically opaque achieve the status of ‘big words’ (Ellis, 1996, p. 111).

This is where Chomsky’s theory fell short, by marginalising the role of formulaic language and promoting basic grammatical construction as the sole mechanism to language study. The aim here is to establish a balance between the two forms.

Formulaic sequences which are of a regular construction are excluded, for the lexicon cannot contain any items with a regular internal structure. Rather, all sequences of words, and indeed of morphemes, which can be assembled by rule, must be assembled by rule (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 10).

What ensues out of such view is problematic. Consider these examples: *I am really glad to see you/ I am in a very glad state after seeing you/Seeing you has brought me real gladness*. According to native speakers, the last two forms would be considered odd despite their grammaticality.

The solution lies:

In recognising a central role for formulaic sequences, and allowing for their presence in the lexicon, it is not necessary to deny our capability for creativity, only to relegate it from the position of sole strategy (Wray, 1992, pp. 17f). Such a model of dual processing is one way of accommodating the holistic and analytic features of language (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 11).

Wray goes on to state that establishing a balance between novel and ready-made phrases is useful for communicative language. The creative process allows for freedom in encoding and decoding. On the other hand, the holistic system guarantees economy of effort when dealing with familiar expressions (Wray, as cited in Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 11). The view of language differs between linguists and language learners, in this respect. The former see it as an analytical system that is based on rules; the latter see it as a memory system that is based on prefabricated chunks (Skehan, as cited in Okuwaki, 2012, p. 5). Wray and Perkins (2000) conclude by stating:

Without the rule-based system, language would be limited in repertoire, clichéd, and, whilst suitable for certain types of interaction, lacking imagination and novelty. In contrast, with only a rule-based system, language would sound pedantic, unidiomatic and pedestrian. It would require full access to all of the language faculties at all times and there would be no 'shortcuts'. It would be a much more accurate

reflection of what Chomsky terms competence, but not a reflection of communicative competence (Wray & Perkins, 2000, p. 10).

## **Conclusion**

The main focus of this chapter was to clearly highlight the importance and prevalence of formulaic language. However, prior to stressing its importance, the initial task was to provide a clear-cut definition of formulaicity. As discussed previously, there is no consensus on one definition of formulaicity. Wray's efforts to define it were the most prominent. For this reason, its definition was the one adopted in the present study. One of the findings of this chapter was that it is not an easy task to detect formulaic language, since there are many conditions that need to be met to be able to do so. Frequency, compositionality, and fixedness were the prominent characteristics of formulaic sequences. They were also adopted in determining collocations during the practical work of the present study. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the opinion of Chomsky that diminishes the theoretical significance of formulaic language. Not only did Chomsky marginalise formulaic language, he also emphasised the role of grammar as the only tool in language study. Formulaic sequences were categorised based on their cognitive processing potential and socio-interactional significance. At the very end of the chapter, there is an attempt to establish a common ground between formulaic language and creative one; it is firmly stated that a balance between the two forms of language has existed, and thus, it is necessary to be admitted.

## **Chapter Two: Collocation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses important literature that concerns the notion of collocation. It is considered as the hub of this research work as it directly discusses collocations. An essential introduction to the study of language is made by tackling the topic of word knowledge. A distinction is drawn between the three types of word knowledge. These three types make up for the whole study of language. Then, the concept of collocation is defined taking into consideration the different points of view concerning the matter. The role of collocations within language is explicated by reviewing their importance in language. The different types of collocations and their many categorisations are pointed at during the discussion. The theoretical perspectives and the approaches to the study of collocations since the coinage of the term by Firth are mentioned with emphasis on the important views that were adopted for this study. Collocations have always posed some degree of difficulty to EFL learners with their idiosyncratic mechanism of production. The chapter ends by dissecting the causes behind the learners' errors and an attempt to bring the various views on collocations to partial agreement.

### **2.1. Knowing a Word**

Human language is made up of words. Words are used for communication. Communication is a human survival mechanism. The only way for a human being to understand language is through the understanding of words. Such an activity can be called 'word knowledge. However, the difficulty lies in the fact that words cannot be understood on their own as they do not operate in isolation, but, in sequences. In this respect, Nation stated that:

[w]ords are not isolated components of any given language, but are parts of many joint systems and levels. Consequently, there are many aspects and degrees of word knowledge required for learners to be able to use words properly and effectively (as cited in Alsakran, 2011, p. 11).

The levels he talks about are phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic. Each system builds up for the previous one, and is indispensable for its existence.

With regard to the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), word knowledge can be divided into two spheres: receptive (passive) and productive (active). What is meant by receptive word knowledge is that the learner engages in an input process where he/she simply receives information. Productive word knowledge is the reverse mechanism where the learner reciprocates the knowledge he/she received through an active output embodied in speech and/or writing.

As the term ‘word knowledge’ can be problematic to the reader, another alternative would be ‘vocabulary learning’. Another convention that comes into play is the differentiation between ‘breadth’ of knowledge and ‘depth’ of knowledge. The number of words a learner memorises represents the breadth of their knowledge; however, if a learner knows the various aspects of the words he/she memorises, he/she is said to have depth in their word knowledge. The idea of the depth of word knowledge includes the relationships between words, in addition to word associations, collocation, and colligation (as cited in Alsakran, 2011, p. 12).

Word knowledge can be classified into three categories: knowledge of form, knowledge of meaning, and knowledge of use. Each of these categories includes both the receptive and productive aspects. In ‘knowledge of form’, spoken forms, written forms, and word parts are

treated. Form and meaning, concepts and referents, and associations constitute ‘knowledge of meaning.’ Finally, in ‘knowledge of use’, grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints are taken into consideration (as cited in Alsakran, 2011, pp.12-13). As can be viewed, the categories of word knowledge are interrelated, similar to the common levels of language study (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics). Despite the close-identicalness of the two notions (the categories of word knowledge and the levels of language study), the former holds the advantage of investigating word associations –which is pragmatic- since word associations are arbitrary and culturally loaded.

## **2.2. Definition of Collocations**

There exists levels of word combinations, and the way they are studied is in a linear form. This latter is represented in a continuum where free combinations and idioms lie on the extremes of it. Collocations are found in the middle of the continuum. At first thought, it might be understood that collocations lie in the middle because they share some properties of both free combinations and idioms. Though this is true, another fact needs to be mentioned: the central position of collocations makes it laborious for the researcher to have a firm grasp on their identity. In other words, they are slippery and difficult to define.

With regard to collocations, there is a survey of definitions. Though these definitions vary, they also agree on one premise: it is difficult to define collocations. Before stating any of the definitions, it is worth noting that collocations were investigated in a multi-faceted fashion: partnership, co-occurrence, discourse, context, and meaning. According to Darvishi, two broad categories comprise the study of collocations: partnership or word co-occurrence. The term collocation emerged from lexicon studies with two opposing views on the matter. The first one argued that the notion of collocation relates to meaning; the other suggested that there exists no semantic connection between words (Farrokh, 2012, p. 56).

Collocations, similar to idioms, are a defining factor of language proficiency. They also differentiate native speakers from non-native speakers. When a native speaker asks for help, he/she usually will say “Would you please give me a hand?” whereas a non-native speaker will say “Would you please help me?” If the second example is to be shown to a non-native speaker, he/she would argue that there is no problem with it, i.e. it is correct. Yet, if the same example is to be shown to a native speaker, it would sound odd. The reason it is odd is because that is not the way native speakers of English –in this case- express themselves. When dealing with formulaic language, the difference between native and non-native speakers is that the latter focus solely on the syntactic aspect of language, treating it in the form of free combinations. They ignore –or are unaware of- the fact that not all language forms abide solely by the grammatical rules of that language.

The following are two definitions of collocations compiled by Farrokh (2012):

(Benson et al.): “collocations are loosely fixed, arbitrary recurrent word combinations and the meaning of the whole do reflect the meaning of the parts. *Pure chance, to commit murder, close attention, and keen competition* share the features of this category” (pp. 57-58).

Lewis “collocations are those combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency. Collocations co-occur, but not all words which co-occur, are collocations” (p. 57).

Firth coined the term ‘collocation’ when he suggested that words should be understood by the other words accompanying them. Thus, collocation was studied at the level of meaning and partnership (Farrokh, 2012, p. 56). In a further discussion of Firth’s view, McIntosh stated that words have a limited range of collocability (compatibility), which distinguish collocations from miscollocations. Since the collocational range and variety can be wide, collocation can be seen as “a kind of habitual association of words” (McIntosh;



Palmer; Bolinger & Sears , as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 57), resulting from reiterated usage by native speakers in given settings.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) tackled collocations from the aspect of discourse, defining collocation as a “cohesive effect of pair words” (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 57). Examples of pair words include steering wheel/car; missile/war; disease/medicine.

To summarise, collocations are arbitrary word combinations that are developed by native speakers in given social settings. The relations between the words hold a specific meaning. This meaning cannot be generated via free combinations since the collocational range exists beyond the grammatical one.

### **2.3. Importance of Collocations**

In the formulaicity chapter, the advantage of using formulaic language was discussed. Since collocations fall within the continuum of formulaic language, they share some characteristics of formulaic sequences. They are loosely fixed expressions. Therefore, they are easy to process. There is usually a benefit from reliance on formulaic language, and that is ensuring fluency in production and availability of information when required. Formulaic language bypasses the generative system, either partially or in its entirety. Formulaic sequences are more suitable than novel expressions, since they facilitate understanding for the hearer, because the form of the message is familiar (Wray & Perkins, 2000, pp. 17-18). The same applies for collocations.

This is one of the reasons it is difficult to separate collocations from idioms and free combinations: they intersect in their characteristics. This is another reason the term ‘continuum’ was used instead of ‘scale’: the continuum represents a syntagmatic study, i.e. linear (since the study deals with word combinations). In addition, a continuum is a separated sequence where the difference between the components is clear. According to the Merriam-

Webster online dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuum>), the word ‘continuum’ means “a range or series of things that are slightly different from each other and that exist between two different possibilities.” Since the difference is slight, it is difficult to differentiate between the components.

It has been aforementioned that word knowledge includes collocational knowledge. On that note, Ellis (2001) hints at some commonality between the two concepts. He suggests that both have the faculty of being stored in the long-term memory and being retrieved from it without going through the entire sentence generating process again. In other words, when whole expressions instead of single words are stored in the brain, production and understanding of language would be easier. The same view is shared by Nattinger and DeCarrico and Korosadowicz-Struzynska who believe that ready-made utterances are crucial for the development of learners’ communicative competence (Honbun, 2005, p. 86).

All fluent and appropriate language use requires collocational knowledge. If one examines native speaker speech or writing, he/she will notice a prevalence of idioms and collocations. This does not mean that free combinations are less used or less important, it only shows how important prefabricated chunks are in language. On a different note, if learner language is analysed, one will notice the overuse of free combinations or the misuse of collocations in their language production (see discussion in chapter 04 for more details). This is evidence that EFL learners are not aware of the importance of formulaic sequences in language production and comprehension (speech and writing).

If non-native speakers of a given language are said to be fluent, it entails that they produce sentences in a native-like manner. Hence, according to Pawley and Syder, Hill, Nation, they internalise a number of lexicalised and institutionalised formulaic expressions. These expressions vary in their range of fixedness (idioms) to less fixedness (collocations).

This collocational knowledge is governed by appropriate grammatical rules. How do they do that? EFL learners repeatedly use and encounter a large range of conventionalised expressions out of which they choose appropriate ones (like native speakers) (as cited in Honbun, 2005, pp.86-87).

#### **2.4. Types of Collocations**

Collocations are defined from different perspectives. They are divided into several types based on various tendencies. There are criteria which determine each categorisation.

The term idiomaticity is often linked to fixedness of expression and compositionality. An equivalent term is formulaicity. Cowie and Mackin categorise both collocations and idioms based on idiomaticity. The categorisation resulted in four categories: pure idioms, figurative idioms, restricted collocations, and open collocations. Pure idioms represent the most fixed expressions, while open collocations represent the least fixed ones (Darvishi, 2011, p. 53). Pure idioms usually do not allow for significant grammatical changes. For example, '*to kick the bucket*' means to die. Although it is possible to say that someone kicked the bucket, one cannot say the bucket was kicked due to the fixed nature of the idiom. On the other end of the spectrum, the term 'open collocations' in this division refers to free combinations. Restricted collocations, however, allow for more manoeuvrability. For example, the collocation '*heavy rain*' can be used as *it is raining heavily, it rained heavily, it rains heavily during the winter in the north.*

For Howarth (as cited in Li, 2005, p. 13), the criteria to categorising collocations and idioms are idiomaticity, semantic specialisation, and restricted collocability. As a result, there are four groups: free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative idioms, and pure idioms. Howarth's classification of formulaic sequences is almost identical to Cowie and Mackin's. One difference is that he calls open collocations free combinations. This latter is more

pertinent among researchers. According to him, the essence of formulaic sequences lies in “their degree of restrictedness related to mental storage and processing.”

Another classification of collocations is done by Wood who categorised collocations on the basis of semantic and syntactic criteria in a continuum. This resulted in idioms, colligations, and free combinations (Darvishi, 2011, p. 53). Mckeown and Radev (2000, p. 6) distinguish between compounds and flexible word pairs. The former occur repeatedly, and are immutable. A good example is noun+noun pairs. The latter include combinations, such as subject+verb or verb+object. What makes them flexible is that they allow any number of words to be added between them.

Rigid noun phrases, predicative relations, and phrasal templates are the three types of collocations suggested by Smadja (1993, p. 148). A predicative relation comes in the form of two words repeatedly co-occurring in the same syntactic relation. They are considered the most flexible type of collocations, and are hard to spot because of their belonging to interrupted sequences of words in a corpus. Rigid noun phrases are uninterrupted sequences of words. They may include adjectives and nouns; they are the most rigid. Some examples include ‘*hedge fund*’, ‘*fortune 500 companies*’, ‘*stock exchange*’. An attempt to break rigid noun phrases down makes them lose their meaning. The last type is the phrasal templates. They are made up of idiomatic phrases with one, various, or no empty slots for intervening words. Famous examples of phrasal templates can be found in the stock market domain (Smadja, 1993, p. 149). An example such as “*The closely watched index had been down about 14 points in the first hour of trading*” is a phrasal template.

Lewis adopted the fixedness and restriction criteria to distinguish between strong and weak collocations. On a different note, he differentiated between frequent and infrequent

collocations on the basis of frequency of co-occurrence in a corpus (Darvishi, 2011, pp. 53-54).

Sinclair introduced ‘downward’ and ‘upward’ collocations. He also introduced the terms ‘node’ and ‘collocate.’ The former stands for the word under investigation; the latter is used for the word that is used within the range of the node. According to Sinclair, if A is a node, and B is a collocate, the combination of A with a less frequent B results in a downward collocation. For example, the words ‘*tired of*’, ‘*attitude towards*’, etc. On the other hand, if B is a node, and A is a collocate; the combination is an upward collocation. A good example is ‘*in consideration*’ (Farrokh, 2012, p. 61).

The last type of collocations and the one adopted in this study is the most basic of all. It is also famous among researchers such as Benson and Benson and Bahns. This distinction is between lexical and grammatical collocations. A definition of both types is quoted. First, according to Bahns (1993, p. 57), grammatical collocations “(usually) consist of a noun, an adjective or a verb, plus a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause.” Second, according to Benson (1985, p. 62), “lexical collocations contain no subordinate element; they consist of two lexical components.” On one hand, a grammatical collocation is composed of a word functioning as the node (noun, adjective, or verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause. On the other hand, a lexical collocation is made up of lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs) (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, pp. 59-60).

There are eight types of grammatical collocations from Benson et al. (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 60):

1. G1: noun + preposition; pity towards
2. G2: noun + to inf. She was brave to quit smoking.

3. G3: noun + that clause; He took an oath that he would keep his word.
4. G4: preposition + noun; in danger.
5. G5: adjective + preposition; he is addicted to videogames.
6. G6: predicate adjective + to inf. It was wise to buy the flat.
7. G7: adjective + that clause; She was excited that her request was accepted.
8. G8: svo to o (or) svoo (there are other 18 patterns).

There are seven types of lexical collocations also adapted from Benson et al. (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, pp. 59-60):

1. Verb (donating creation or activation)+ noun (pronoun or prep. phrase): make an impact.
2. verb (meaning eradication or nullification)+ noun: annul a marriage.
3. adjective + noun: strong coffee.
4. noun + verb: baby cries.
5. noun1 of noun2: a pack of wolves.
6. adjective + adverb/ adverb + adjective: sound asleep; hopelessly addicted.
7. verb + adverb: anchor firmly; argue heatedly.

The present study focuses on lexical collocations, specifically verb + noun collocations.

## **2.5. Theoretical Perspectives on Collocations**

The phenomenon of collocation was addressed within some theoretical frameworks. These considerations are phraseological, semantic, and grammatical. This resulted in the introduction of Meaning-Text-Theory (MTT).

### **2.5.1. Contextualism**

It is common to hear teachers and learners talk about context when it comes to language learning and understanding. If a learner wants to memorise new vocabulary, he/she has to

understand it in its original context, i.e. within the sentence it occurred in. The same thing goes for understanding a word. It is necessary to get the meaning of a word from its context. In this case, using the dictionary without referring to the contextual meaning of a word might result in misunderstanding and misuse, since many words are polysemous, i.e. have more than two meanings.

Contextualists project the need to consider context in the light of collocations. Their argument stems from the belief that collocations are an inseparable part of language. In other words, any attempt to speak or write that goes through a basic sentence-generation process will not prove useful due to some fixed parts in the language. Contextualists emphasise the idea that the meaning of words is determined by their co-occurrence (Seretan, 2011, p. 17).

There were several stages of the contextual description of collocations. First, the idea revolved around a repeated co-occurrence of words within a limited space in approximation to each other in a text. Sinclair, then, undertook the development of the idea. He gave less importance to the distance separating the items, namely, the node and collocate. Thus, the study talked about allowing intervening words between the node and collocate. Sinclair (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 17) states that “[o]n some occasions, words appear to be chosen in pairs or groups and these are not necessarily adjacent.”

### **2.5.2. Text Cohesion**

Cohesion is an essential characteristic in writing. It allows for a logical building of ideas. It is a part of the semantic unity of a text or passage within which an interlocutor “can normally decide without difficulty whether it forms a unified whole or is just a collection of unrelated sentences” (Halliday & Hasan, as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 17). Cohesiveness is crucial to the point where it can determine good writing from sloppy one.

It is not familiar amongst some teachers that the concept of cohesion extends to include word combinations, namely collocations. In this respect, Halliday and Hasan make a distinction between two types of text cohesion: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. According to them, collocation is essential to achieve lexical cohesion. Collocations produce a cohesive effect from the words' "tendency to share the same lexical environment" (as cited in Seretan, 2011, pp. 17-18). The following examples serve as clarification: *matches/fire/warmth/to light; water/plants/growth/to water.*

### **2.5.3. Meaning-Text Theory**

MTT is "a language modelling tool that aims to associate a given meaning with the language utterances expressing that meaning" (Seretan, 2011, p. 19). In order to achieve cohesive unity, one has to ensure that the words used in a given text do serve the general idea of the topic. If one is discussing climate change, one cannot use words that carry connotations about weight loss. Thus, the writer emphasises appropriate meaning delivery through appropriate vocabulary –collocations in this case.

An important concept attached to MTT is lexical functions (LFs). There are two types of LFs: paradigmatic LFs and syntagmatic LFs. the former focus on the lexical relations between words that are morphologically-derived, e.g. *intimidate/intimidating*, in addition to synonymy and antonymy relations, e.g. *happy/content*. Syntagmatic LFs describe lexical combinations semantically. The functions in this category can surpass 60 (Seretan, 2011, p. 17).

In MTT, the meaning of any collocation is determined by its main constituent (A) or the node. The node is chosen by the speaker in an unrestricted way. However, the choice of the other element (B) or the collocates is limited by the identity of A (Seretan, 2011, p. 20).



#### **2.5.4. Lexis-Grammar Interface**

Although collocations display a degree of grammatical independence, that does not mean they do not adhere to grammatical rules. According to Hargreaves (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 21), “knowledge of a collocation, if it is to be used appropriately, necessarily involves knowledge of the patterns or colligations in which that collocation can occur acceptably.” Colligation is a synonym of the term grammatical collocation.

Many scholars (Sinclair, 1991; Hunston et al., 1997; Hoey, 2000) consider collocation as a typical trend in linguistics that exists at an intersecting point between grammar and lexicon. Francis (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 21) emphasizes that there is no way to look at collocation in separation from grammar, or at lexicon independently of syntax, because they are “ultimately inseparable.”

### **2.6. Approaches to the Study of Collocations**

The phenomenon of collocation was approached from several angles. Each approach tried to get a firm grasp on this notion. This led to three basic approaches to the study of collocations: the lexical approach, the semantic approach, and the structural approach.

#### **2.6.1. The Lexical Composition Approach**

It is assumed that, in the lexical approach, words that constitute a collocation receive their meaning from the other words they occur with. According to Firth (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 136), collocation is a “mode of meaning”, and “the lexical meaning of any given word is achieved by multiple statements of meaning at different levels.” That is a reason to understand a word by the company it keeps. The reason collocations have a degree of fixedness is that their meaning can only be understood from the whole composition. If one

attempts to decompose the combination, and understand words individually, meaning will change, or there will be no meaning.

Firth's suggestions led to the discussion about lexical collocations. This was done by Halliday (1966) and Sinclair (1966), who were called 'Neo-Firthians'. These latter tried to argue a point. They wanted to study lexis as an independent linguistic level. The former stated that the lexical theory tends to complement the grammatical theory; the latter argued grammar and lexis do intersect when looking at language form (Gitsaki, 1996, p. 137). Therefore, lexis and grammar cannot be separated from each other, because both serve as building blocks in the structure of language that is a system. A new set of terms was introduced by the Neo-Firthians: the node, the span, and the collocates. The node refers to the lexical item whose potential collocations are investigated. The span refers to the potential number of words on both sides (left or right) of the node that might collocate with it. The collocates refer to the words in the environment of the node; they are, according to Sinclair (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 138), defined by the span.

The collocational environment enables the linguist to categorise lexical items into lexical sets. According to Halliday (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 138), a lexical set is a collection of words that share the same collocational restrictions, e.g. *warm*, *shine*, *light* are members of the same lexical set, for they collocate with the word *moon*. What makes a lexical item eligible to belong to a given lexical set is its syntagmatic relation with another specific lexical item, rather than its paradigmatic one. For example, *strong* and *powerful* belong to the same lexical set, because they collocate with the term *argument*.

It is important to bring the collocational pattern when discussing the lexical set. It has been aforementioned that collocations are loosely fixed. It means they allow for some grammatical changes regarding the original structure. For example, the following collocations

share the same collocational pattern: *strong argument, the strength of his argument, he argued strongly*. In this case, Halliday (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 139) stated that the words *strong*, *strength*, and *strongly* share the same collocational pattern, since they are word-forms belonging to the same lexical item.

An added benefit to the lexical composition approach is that it proved the insufficiency of grammar in studying lexical items. Hence, according to Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens, the lexical item “must be identified within Lexis, on the basis of collocation” (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 141).

### **2.6.2. The Semantic Approach**

Chomsky (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 143) suggested that collocations should be treated semantically. Although he did not contribute directly to the study of collocations, he differentiated between ‘strict subcategorisation rules’ and ‘selectional rules’. According to him, strict subcategorisation rules “analyze a symbol in terms of its categorical context” while selectional rules “analyze a symbol in terms of syntactic features of the frames in which it appears.” Semantics is the study of the meaning of words/sentences. If lexical items forming collocations are only studied in terms of their relations to other lexical items, do they make acceptable collocates with all of them?

The area of investigation where the lexical approach fell short is ignoring the fact that lexical items within collocations collocate with only a limited number of lexical items. The question is why? According to Lyons, Firth’s theory was proven insufficient for the study of collocations. He adds that Firth’s definition of meaning as a “complex of contextual relations” carries ambiguity. His criticism goes to the obvious lack of principles that establish “lexical groups by association”, and define lexical sets (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 143).

Semanticists modelled the Neo-Firthians in their attempt a semantic theory that complements grammar, but is different from it. Katz and Fodor (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 145) point out that a semantic theory would “take over the explanation of the speaker's ability to produce and understand new sentences at the point where grammar leaves off.” In other words, a semantic theory would autonomously take over the investigation of the speaker’s production and understanding of language without interference of grammar. In his attempt to examine syntagmatic relations between lexical units, Cruse (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 146) states that collocational restrictions are similar to co-occurrence restrictions that are established arbitrarily. Nevertheless, the semantic approach shows its weakness in viewing the co-occurrence of lexical items as merely a result their semantic properties.

### **2.6.3. The Structural Approach**

“The structural approach consists of those linguists and researchers who suggest that collocation is influenced by structure, and collocations occur in patterns” (Gitsaki, 1996, p. 150). As it is obvious from Gitsaki’s words, the structural approach calls for a grammatical study of collocations. The premise is simple: since collocations occur in grammatical patterns, they should be discussed grammatically. Although the Neo-Firthians did not ask for a total separation between grammar and lexis, they were criticised by Mitchell (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 150) who believes in the “one-ness of grammar, lexis and meaning”. He argues that there is an apparent interdependence between grammar and lexicon. This interdependence shows in the way ‘lexical peculiarities’ obtain their meaning. Not only do they obtain their meaning from the lexical context, but, also, from the generalised grammatical patterns they appear in.

Another method to incorporate grammar in the study of collocations is suggested by Matthews (1965). He makes a suggestion to expand Chomsky’s syntax with additional rules

that include the selectional rules of lexical items. The approach relies mainly on the syntagmatic study of collocations in the light of transformational grammar. The suggestion was left as it is, and was not developed any further (Gitsaki, 1996, p. 151).

Pawley and Syder introduced a notion called ‘language blocks and lexicalised sentence stems’. The notion suggests that the only way for an EFL learner to achieve native-like competence, he/she needs to master the rules of generative grammar, i.e. the grammatical rules, alongside the ability to distinguish well-formed sentences from ill-formed ones based on native-speaker characteristics (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 194). Hence, the learner has to memorise language in blocks, since a significant portion of native speaker lexicon occurs in “lexicalised sentence stems” (Gitsaki 1996, pp. 152-153).

## **2.7. Main Findings from the Previous L2 Studies**

In the preceding sections, the main approaches to the study of collocations were discussed. Those approaches aim to benefit from the research about collocations. Consequently, they reached some conclusions about this phenomenon. The present segment discusses the main findings from the research on collocations.

### **2.7.1. Native Speaker and Non-Native Speaker’s Use of Collocations**

Non-native speakers (NNSs) use fewer collocations than native speakers do. They also use a more restricted range of collocates, in addition to the underuse of some types in comparison to native speakers and the overuse of other ones. The studies (Laufer & Waldman 2011; Granger 1998; Lorenz, 1999) that were conducted took advanced learners as samples. The aim was to measure EFL learners’ mastery of frequent and strongly associated collocations. The obtained results showed that native speakers outperform advanced EFL learners both quantitatively and qualitatively. Native speakers employ more collocations in

their productions. They also vary the types of collocations they use (quantity) (Henriksen, 1985, p. 35).

These studies reported an apparent negative transfer from learners' NL to TL. Although advanced EFL learners usually show their ability to use L2 independently of L1, the case with collocations seems to be different. This difficulty can be reported to learners' unawareness of collocations, their existence, and their importance, a trend that has become, therefore, one of the factual causes of collocational usage and abusage. EFL learners either underuse some collocations, or overuse others. They also disregard various collocational options, while repeatedly referring back to the same collocations. Hasselgren (1994) calls them "collocational teddy bears" (Henriksen, 1985, p. 36).

### **2.7.2. The Difference of L2 Learners' Knowledge and Use of Collocations from L1**

The question to be asked: is it problematic if L2 learners' knowledge and use of collocations differ from those of L1 users? The answer is it is indeed problematic. According to Wray (2002, p. 74), L2 learners have to become highly knowledgeable in FSs in order to be understood by native speakers. Nevertheless, if L2 use is viewed as a lingua franca, attempting to attain native-like formulaic –collocational in this case- proficiency may not be paramount.

On a different note, Howarth (1998) encourages linguists to look differently at unsuccessful collocational choices. If errors are viewed as risks being taken by EFL learners in order to cope communicatively with native speakers, then, this is a positive sign of efforts being made by learners; they are communicative strategies in use. The necessity to master FSs, including collocations, is that they determine the quality of learners' success in transmitting ideas in important contexts, such as academic writing. Lack of formulaic

competence also poses a burden on the native speakers in terms of misunderstanding (Millar 2011) and slowness in reading speed (Henriksen, 1985, p. 37).

### **2.7.3. Collocational Development in L2**

Collocational knowledge normally develops in the same manner lexical knowledge does. However, the point of concern is the speed of development. In other words, does it develop as quickly as lexical knowledge? “Many of the studies document that collocational competence develops very slowly and unevenly (e.g. Groom, 2009; Laufer & Waldman, 2011)” (as cited in Henriksen, 1985, p. 38). This is even the case for advanced learners. According to Henriksen (1985), there needs to be a second thought about what makes someone an advanced learner if he/she fails to master such a crucial point in language.

Gyllstad says that a 4-6 months period did not yield his university students sufficient TL exposure that led to any significant improvement in their collocational competence. Nesselhauf (as cited in Henriksen, 1985, p. 38) seconds that by stating that only a slight improvement was recorded despite increased exposure to collocational knowledge.

### **2.8. Collocations as a Source of Difficulty for Advanced Learners**

Appropriate usage and understanding of collocations is a difficult task, because of their ambiguity and fixedness. Howarth (as cited in Leśniewska, 2006) investigated the errors made by advanced learners in writing. One particular type of errors stood out: collocational errors. According to him, collocational errors “can lead to a lack of precision and obscure the clarity required in academic communication” (p. 96). An experiment was carried out where two groups were asked to do a writing assignment. One group was made up of native speakers; the other one was composed of advanced EFL learners. The analysis of the writings was statistical in order to measure lexical sophistication, variation, and density. The raters could not distinguish between the native and non-native paragraphs. What distinguished the native

and non-native writing was collocational errors. This shows that collocations represent a difficult aspect of language to advanced EFL learners, let alone intermediate and beginners. According to Waller (as cited in Leśniewska, 2006, p. 97), advanced EFL learners have “a foreign accent in writing.”

Källkvist analysed the collocational errors of Swedish advanced learners of English. The results indicated an overuse of general verbs (*make, get, have*), which resulted in awkward collocations. This points out to the learners’ unawareness of the usage restrictions. Another interpretation is that general verbs are polysemous. The study conducted by Bahns and Eldaw, stated that collocational knowledge lags behind the knowledge of general vocabulary. In other words, it does not expand at the same rate as that of general vocabulary (Leśniewska, 2006, pp. 97-98).

## **2.9. Collocational Errors and their Causes**

In order to solve the problem of collocational errors, it is paramount to figure out what causes them. L1 interference is the main cause of EFL learners’ errors, especially for intermediate and/or beginner learners. Liu (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 63) conducted a study on Chinese EFL learners’ use of collocations. He summarised the causes of errors in the following pointers:

### **2.9.1. Error Causes**

The following is a discussion of the several error causes that play an instrumental role in making errors.

#### **2.9.1.1. Lack of Collocational Concept**

Some learners could only understand the meaning of words in isolation; they did not know which words to combine them with. Thus, they produced erroneous collocations.



### **2.9.1.2. Direct Translation**

Some learners relied on the Chinese translation of a word, thus, translated it directly, e.g. *learn knowledge* instead of *gain knowledge*.

### **2.9.1.3. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions**

Some restrictions were based solely on the meaning of the word and its range. Grammar should be taken into consideration, too. This resulted in erroneous collocations, such as *few knowledge* instead of *little knowledge*.

### **2.9.1.4. Lack of Knowledge of Collocational Properties**

Learners showed unawareness of collocational properties of some words they already knew. Hence, they could not assume that potential collocations could be formed using them. For example, the word *good* could be used in *good knowledge*.

## **2.9.2. Strategies Used by EFL Learners**

The unveiling of the aforementioned error causes led linguists to interpret those errors into strategies used by EFL learners. The following are the six strategies that had been employed, adapted from Liu's study (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, pp. 63-64):

### **2.9.2.1. Negative Interlingual Transfer**

Some phrases like *listen his advice*, *wait your phone call* were translated directly from Chinese. In English, they were not acceptable.

### **2.9.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions**

The learners sometimes used analogy while writing in English. Other times, they failed in observing the structural restrictions of English, which led to the production of erroneous

collocations. For example, the writing of *make Joyce surprise* instead of *make Joyce surprised*.

### **2.9.2.3. False Concept Hypothesised**

Learners' misconceptions about some delexical verbs such as, *make*, *do*, and *take* made them think that they could be substitute each other freely. For example, the use of *do plans* instead of *make plans*.

### **2.9.2.4. Overgeneralisation**

When learners did not find any contrast to a specific collocation, they overgeneralised the rule. This ended in breaching two rules, and creating a false one. For example, they deviated *am used to taking* to *am used to take*. The problem with this latter is that it is a combination of *am used to something* and *used to take*.

### **2.9.2.5. Use of Synonyms**

Learners applied the open choice principle without consideration to the selectional restrictions of some words. For example, they mistakenly used *receive other people's opinion* to say *accept other people's opinion*. Consequently, the intended meaning was deviated.

### **2.9.2.6. Word Coinage and Approximation**

Learners used word coinage as a paraphrase to express some intended meaning, according to them. For example, they used *to see sun-up* instead of *to see sunrise*. Another form of paraphrase was approximation. It is the misuse of a vocabulary item or structure that shares some commonalities with the intended word or structure, according to them. For example, they used *middle exam* to say *mid-term exam*.

In Kuo (2009, p. 149), the causes of collocational errors were summarised to three major categories: negative transfer, Synonymy, and approximation. These errors were also adopted from Liu's work, and they are adopted for the categorisation of collocational errors in this study.

### **2.10. The Underlying Mechanism of Language Production**

Understanding the dynamic of language production is an important step to understanding the difference between collocations and free combinations. Sinclair (1991) divided language production into two principles: the open choice principle and the idiom principle. The former operates via the creation of sentences/utterances while maintaining syntactic and semantic rules. The latter is simply the retrieval of memorised prefabricated chunks. The idea that language production adheres to the open choice principle more than the idiom principle was rejected by empirical studies (Leśniewska, 2006, p. 101).

Although it was claimed that advanced EFL learners use the idiom principle similar to native speakers (Weinert, 1995; DeCock et al., 1998), there is a difference between them. Advanced EFL learners do not employ the same chunks as the native speakers; the frequency of employment is distinct; they use different syntactic structures; they convey different pragmatic functions (Leśniewska, 2006, p. 101).

### **2.11. Properties of Collocations for a Unified Concept**

In the previous sections, it has been stated that there is no unified definition of collocations. In actual fact, each study looks at collocations from a different perspective, hence, defines them accordingly. The present section does not intend to reach an ultimate definition of collocations. It attempts, though, to potently study this phenomenon by collecting the main concepts from various studies, and, then, putting the pieces together to achieve a solid understanding of the whole concept. There are some properties of collocations

that were agreed upon by the several studies conducted in this crucial aspect of language. In this section, the main properties are put together; they are six.

### **2.11.1. Collocations Are Arbitrary**

What is meant by arbitrariness is that collocations are peculiar and idiosyncratic, not regular (Seretan, 2011, p. 15). In other words, the choice of words does not abide by the semantic or syntactic rules. A demonstration of this feature can be seen in translation. The latter requires more than knowledge of the syntax and semantics of SL and TL, but also of the collocations and their equivalents in both languages (Smadja, 1993, p. 146). Due to arbitrariness, the morph-syntactic properties of collocations are unpredictable. It means that the grammatical properties of a language cannot solely explain the meaning of a collocation (Seretan, 2011, p. 16).

Another way to describe arbitrariness is by understanding that a word in a word combination by its synonym might cause infelicity within the combination (McKeown & Radev, pp. 3-4). Arbitrariness extends beyond languages to dialects of the same language. For example, American and British English display arbitrary differences in similar phrases such as, *set the table (American)*, *lay the table (British)*; *make a decision (American)*, *take a decision (British)* (McKeown & Radev, p. 4).

### **2.11.2. Collocations Are Domain-Dependent**

Collocations can be technical and non-technical. Jargon is known as a highly specialised code. It is difficult for the layman to understand it. A way to explain the idiosyncrasy of jargon is by viewing the same words being used out of the context of jargon; they take on a whole different meaning. Although native speakers are unaware of the arbitrariness of collocations in non-technical contexts, it becomes obvious in specialised sublanguages (Smadja, 1993, p. 146).

### **2.11.3. Collocations Are Recurrent**

What is meant by the recurrent nature of collocations is that these combinations do not make exceptions. Rather, they repeatedly appear in the same context. For example, *to ease the jib*, *to buy short* appear only in specific domains (Smadja, 1993, p. 147). The frequent usage of collocations makes them institutionalised. Firth refers to them as “actual words in habitual company”, “habitual and customary” (Seretan, 2011, p. 16).

### **2.11.4. Collocations Are Cohesive Lexical Clusters**

It means that the presence of a word suggests the completion of the rest of the collocation. Lexicographers often rely on this property when compiling collocations (Cowie; Benson, as cited in Smadja, 1993, p. 147). Cruse (as cited in Seretan, 2011) talks about the affinity of a word for a given collocate. This affinity makes a specific word more suitable for the combination than its synonym. According to him (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 16), “these affinities cannot be predicted on the basis of semantic or syntactic rules, but can be observed with some regularity in text.”

### **2.11.5. Collocations are Prefabricated Phrases**

Studies on language acquisition proved that children memorise single words as well as chunks. These latter are seen as the building blocks of language. What characterises them is that they are ready-made/prefabricated, playing a role in language naturalness and fluency. Hoey states that “[w]e acquire collocations, as we acquire other aspects of language, through encountering texts in the course of our lives” (Seretan, 2011, p. 15). Hausmann (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 15) calls collocations “semi-finished products” with a “déjà-vu” effect in language.

### **2.11.6. Collocations Are Semantically Compositional**

Semantic compositionality refers to the understanding of the meaning of a collocation through the constituting words. Choueka (as cited in Seretan, 2011, p. 23) points out that the meaning of a collocation cannot be understood directly from its constituent parts. He says the meaning “cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its components”.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to shed light on the notion of collocation from lexical, a semantic, and a syntactic point of view. Although there is no clear-cut definition of collocations, the chapter attempted to cover all the important literature on the matter. After introducing the various points of view of linguists on collocations, it became obvious how important they are for the building of the language. They are of no lesser value than free word combinations. The chapter reached an important point in the discussion by unveiling the need to re-consider the definition of who an advanced learner of language is. The approaches that undertook the study of collocations were influenced by different backgrounds, and the ultimate verdict is to state that they only partially cover the study of collocations by being combined, an aim the present study attempted to achieve in its practical side. As a final word, it is difficult to learn collocations. Nevertheless, they are necessary whether for speech or writing in order to achieve native-like proficiency.

## **Chapter Three: The Projection of Error Analysis on the Study of Collocations**

### **Introduction**

A useful way to identify learners' proficiency is to measure both their success and failure in doing some language tasks. However, focusing on errors seems to be more important. The current chapter tries to investigate the notion of error analysis as an established discipline in the foreign language learner's production. Moreover, it attempts to discuss the usefulness of error analysis in learner corpus. The usefulness of error analysis to this facet of language study is discussed as well as the limitations that might face the researcher while analysing learners' errors. The errors made by EFL learners are not usually prompted without some contributing factors. Therefore, in the pages to come, these factors are explained, and an attempt to shed light on the prominent one(s) shall be made. Furthermore, the chapter tackles the role learners' errors play in predicting improvement. Error analysis is not a one-stage procedure; it contains three stages each of which is to be discussed thoroughly. When discussing error analysis, it is imperative to bring up to light contrastive analysis. The chapter will be concluded with the problems researchers in this area are likely to face while undertaking error analysis.

### **3.1. Error Analysis: Concept, Utility, and Limitations**

Learning a new language has always been a very important topic for researchers, and specialists in L2 and FL acquisition have been working on designing corpora and textbooks for helping non-native speakers use language the same way native speakers do. Nonetheless, these latter have their pros and cons. 'Learner language' (James, 1990), a term denoting studies of the speech and writing of learners, showed that while acquiring a language, second language learners establish a system that is separate and of structurally intermediate status between their mother tongue and target language. 'Interlanguage' is the term Selinker gave as



a description of the system second language learners adopt during the process of language learning (Siddique, 2007, p. 20). Learners obviously make numerous mistakes when learning language and practising what they have learnt. The discipline that is interested in investigating these errors, their reasons, and sources has come to be called 'Error Analysis'. According to Tizazu (2014, p. 70), "when people learn a second language, they cannot instantly develop a native-like control over the target language."

As Ellis points out:

Errors are an important source of information about second language learning, because they demonstrate conclusively that learners do not simply memorise and reproduce target language rules in their own utterances. Errors also indicate that learners construct their own rules on the basis of input data and that is in some instances, at least. These rules differ from those of the target language (as cited in Siddique, 2007, pp. 20-21).

In other words, Ellis states that learners do not simply rely on the 'copy-paste' mode when it comes to their language production, but, there are other factors that contribute to their production of language, and that the errors identified in their speech and writing patterns reveal that they make up their own rules based on the input they receive; they do not limit themselves to what they acquire. Corder is considered the pioneer and most influential scholar in EA for his works in the late sixties. He considered errors as mainly systematic. Besides, they are signs that show the progress the learner makes while learning a second language (Siddique, 2007, pp. 20-21). In other words, learners give evidence of the signs of the application of the data they are acquiring and implementing in utterances and sentences (speech and writing). The impact of error analysis is obvious in the points it uncovered and

highlighted within the process of second language acquisition. Error analysis's emphasis on investigating errors may be used for pedagogic purposes (Wang, 2008, p. 185). As an example of EA contributions, the fact that most of the grammar errors second language learners make are more likely to be the same for children acquiring their mother tongue is a point in case.

Corder's perspective (1967), for the first time, highlighted the creative aspects of errors. The subsequent interest and research in the field of EA resulted in a change of perspective and elevated the status of errors from 'unwanted forms' (George 1972) produced by lazy and unmotivated language learners to valuable indicators of learning and teaching guides (Siddique, 2007, p. 22).

Thus, errors were not viewed negatively as indicators of low level and lack of competence. After the work of Corder, such errors became more of signs of improvement and highlighters of points for further research and corpus design. From a teaching-learning approach, teachers also benefited from EA in that they could estimate the level of improvement of the learner and the areas within which he/she still requires practice (Corder, 1981, p. 11). Dulay, Burt, and Krashen reiterate that, similar to teachers, curriculum developers consider errors as signs indicating the areas of second language where learners face greater difficulty dealing with, hence, leading to the factors hindering them from fluently producing chunks of language (Siddique, 2007, p. 21). Presada and Badea (2014, p. 49) argue that error analysis showed its efficiency in improving learners' language acquisition and skills. In language acquisition, namely during the trial-and-error process, if the learner's production is correct, the rules he used ought not be reviewed; however, if his/her production is incorrect, the followed rules are to be revised (Huang, 2002, p. 21).

A question that poses itself here is "what exactly, then, does error analysis entail? Corder suggests the following steps after collection of a corpus of a learner language:

“Identifying errors, describing them, explaining the errors and, evaluating them” (Huang, 2002, p. 21).

All these steps represent the process through which learners’ errors go before becoming useful data that will help L2 learners work on their weak points instead of being seen as negative deductions from incompetent learners.

Considering EA research as a tool for describing the complexity of the learning behaviour did not prevent it from having its own limitations and complexities. Thus, EA was criticised at the level of its scope and methodology. On that note, Ellis confirms that error analysis is not that developed of a discipline to thoroughly investigate L2 acquisition (Huang, 2002, p. 21). In other words, the major concern of a theoretical analysis of errors is the process and strategies of language learning in addition to its similarities with first language acquisition (Erdoğan, 2005, p. 263). Siddique (2007, p. 23) sees that “the scope of EA itself is limited, because it provides only a partial picture from the parts of the language that the L2 learner produces.” She confirms what Ellis says about EA being a limited discipline for the study of second language acquisition. Supporting this view, “Hammarberg (1974) contends that error analysis can, at the very least, be considered to have a place, ‘as a partial and preliminary source of information at an initial stage of investigation’ ” (Siddique, 2007, p. 23). In other words, error analysis cannot be fully relied on to study second language acquisition with all the aforementioned steps being properly executed. Nonetheless, it can only be seen as taking part in the initiation of the investigation, due to its limited scope and various disadvantages.

Another difficulty EA faces is the mono-sectional study of learner language at one time, which is the opposite of the other studies which are cross-sectional in their nature. In addition to the previous points, error analysis failed to give enough attention to the distinction of the

errors learners made at different learning stages, hence, an unclear description of the process learners go through which provides a view of language that is distorted and not updated.

The reference to the strategy of avoidance should not be overlooked when it comes to the difficulties error analysis fails to study.

[It is] revealed from research that error analysis fails to account for the strategy of avoidance. A learner who for one reason or another avoids a particular sound, word, structure, or discourse category may be assumed incorrectly to have no difficulties therewith (Schachter, 1974).

Various studies have revealed that avoidance is a frequently occurring problem in SLA. This shows the inability of error analysis as an investigation tool to determine areas and instances where L2 learners avoid producing a certain sound, writing a certain word, or following a given structure just because they find it difficult to be dealt with. Yet, error analysis does not identify such problems, but rather considers it as an already mastered skill – language production- due to its ‘superficiality’ in error identification.

‘Error’ and ‘mistake’ are two distinct concepts when it comes to the process of error identification. Error is considered as a transitional deviation from the native language norms; it is also a systematic deviation (Ellis, 1994). Furthermore, the difference between errors and mistakes lies in the fact that these latter occur due to poor performance, whereas, errors result from lack of competence (Siddique 2007, p. 24). What is meant by poor performance is that the learner knows the rule, but only makes an involuntary mistake. While, an error means that the learner does not know the rule, so, he/she has a problem with the theory in the first place. The error identification process is hindered by another difficulty, namely, the so-called ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ errors.

Corder states that “purely superficial formal correctness is no guarantee of absence of error” (Siddique 2007, p. 24). It means that the method followed by error analysis researchers

is limited to the surface and is unable to investigate the deeper production of L2 learners. This amounts to saying that one does not need to analyse superficially appearing errors only, but also to prudently infer the learner's intention behind saying/writing something, because it is this intention which clearly enables one to identify an error, or not. It is this process which makes it difficult for error analysis investigators to thoroughly identify errors (Siddique 2007, p. 24).

Given the reasons for the occurrence of these errors is the most important step in error analysis in second/foreign language acquisition, for it is at this stage that investigators seek to find a procedure for SLA (Ellis 1985), since the source of error may be spotted because of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, epistemology, or even in the structure of discourse (Taylor, as cited in Siddique, 2007, p. 24).

Richards (1971) identified three sources of competence errors: interference, and intralingual, and developmental. Lott (1983) further subdivided transfer errors into: overextension of analogy, transfer of structure, interlingual/intralingual errors. Intralingual errors, on the other hand, have been subdivided into: overgeneralization errors, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized (Siddique, 2007, p. 24).

Similar to all previous stages of error analysis, error evaluation also poses a problem. No clear criteria for evaluating errors are established, and responses are not objective as they are influenced by the context in which they occur.

As a concluding word, what is to be remembered is that to have a totally accurate identification method is far to reach due to all the previous difficulties EA faces and the process complexities raised (Siddique, 2007, p. 24).

### **3.1.1. A Concept Orientation in Later Stages**

“The conception of error as inevitable and as a fundamental part of the learning process made many researchers take a different orientation” (Beghoul, 2007, p. 22). The focus of researchers shifted from searching for causes of error and the antidote into the fundamentals of second language learning (Beghoul, 2007, p. 22), because the attempt to only correct the problem is temporary and is unlikely to yield a final solution to the problem. On the contrary, forming a new method or theory will help appropriately tackle the issue of errors via the focus on teaching the correct form, instead of correcting it. In other words, the interest will be shifted to avoiding the problem in the first place by addressing it correctly and directly instead of waiting for it to occur, and, then, correcting it.

Comparative studies between L1 and L2 acquisition were significantly interested in error analysis, so as to profoundly understand the process of error-making by looking at the factors which influence the acquisition of language. Hence, EA became more of an ‘interlanguage’ study, rather than a superficial analysis of learners’ errors. In a brief overview of the term ‘interlanguage’, Beghoul (2007, pp. 22-23) wrote that, previously, it had been seen as a discipline standing on its own, but, later, the notion of ‘interlanguage’ was divided into different approaches, like interlanguage phonology, interlanguage lexis, interlanguage pragmatics, etc. This division made it a more effective and useful discipline. In addition, error analysis evolved to include a notion which was neglected before, that is of ‘error’ and ‘mistake’. This latter is referred to as a ‘division’ of interlanguage studies, and Beghoul calls it the “separation of the knowledge and the output dimensions” (Beghoul, 2007, pp. 22-23). He further adds that this division is similar to the one provided by Chomsky, i.e., ‘competence and performance’ (Beghoul, 2007, pp. 22-23). According to Chomsky, competence is the cognitive knowledge of language rules that exists perfectly within the mind of each

individual, whereas, performance is the real act performed by an individual. Beghoul (2007) adds another major variable to the study of interlanguage where:

[a]nother trend in the study of interlanguage is a sociolinguistic one which is the assumption that interlanguage is subject, like any other linguistic system, to sociolinguistic variation. This means that the interlanguage of the learner changes according to some social variables such as the formality of the learning situation (p. 23).

Similarly, this is a point EA used to ignore which posed a difficulty and made the analysis of errors appear 'superficial'.

### **3.2. The Significance of Learners' Errors**

Learning a second or foreign language is a task that cannot be accomplished without either living in a native country for an adequate period of time, allowing the learner to immerse in the process of language learning through daily use, or following a set of given lectures including rules of grammar, vocabulary, etc. that are designed in a form of corpus. Corder affirms that studying the standard works on modern language teaching leaves one surprised after figuring out the negligence for the errors learners make and, subsequently, their correction, too. These errors were discredited and considered of no importance, irritating, distracting and a must-occur results of language learning with which the instructor should not be concerned. Errors were seen as indicators of low competence on the part of the learners. Researchers and teachers could not see any value or usefulness in dealing with them in a positive and useful way.

It is only after the inclusion of psychological and linguistic theories in learner language studies that error discussion experienced a new wave, making people believe that errors were the result of mother tongue interference on L2 production. Hence, errors were viewed differently and given appropriate interpretations to their occurrence based on a critical

view. For López (as cited in Amara, 2015, p. 59), one can obtain data about the proper way of learning a given language by analysing learners' errors. Errors are part of the process of learning; they reveal new ways to language acquisition since they are made by the EFL learner himself.

The contribution of linguists to the investigation of learner errors was believed to be a contrastive view of two systems: the source and target languages. This contrastive orientation means the identification of the difficulties learners face, and, thus, guiding the teachers in order to give them more attention. This contribution was not welcomed by these latter, who, after years of experience, could spot such difficulties and deal with them. Therefore, from their standpoint, the contribution of linguists was not really helpful (Beghoul, 2007, p. 23). In a similar vein, the presence of teachers with their students made them recognise the real needs of learners and identify the areas where they fall short.

It can be said that:

... in the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought, in respect of learners' errors. Firstly, the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred (Corder 1981, pp. 5-6).

The two opposing views merely represent the old and new beliefs concerning errors.



Corder (1981) comments that ‘flux and agitation’ are the terms Chomsky gave to the state both linguistics and psychology experienced at the time. The theory became debatable after it had been believed to be solid. This left its apparent consequences on language teaching. One effect was the changing focus from the ‘teaching’ concept to the ‘learning’ one. In other words, a differentiation was made between the idea of acquiring which was linked to the mother tongue, and learning which is related to the second language. In a similar vein, Lambert asserted the difference between the two. Carroll suggested that learning L2 can benefit from the acquisition of L1 (p.6). What follows is an extended explanation of the idea.

A clear distinction between the concept of ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’ can be easily made, yet, it is difficult to explain. It goes without saying that L1 acquisition is unquestionable. However, it is not the case for L2. L1 acquisition is an essential part of the growth process of an infant, whereas, it is only after the almost-complete-acquisition of the mother tongue that second language acquisition starts. For the L1, no explicit intention is needed as the process is – if it may be called- automatic or natural. While, for the L2, what is required is an ‘explicit language behaviour’, namely, motivation (Corder 1981, p. 6). To summarise, the acquisition (L1 learning) requires no intention on behalf of the infant, besides, it is primary and maturational. On the other hand, learning (L2 learning) requires motivation from the learner, and is secondary (largely after L1 is acquired).

For the sake of meeting learners’ needs, researchers tend to form hypotheses and test them to assess their credibility. On the same note, since learners’ errors became important to investigators, a new hypothesis was suggested (Corder 1981, p.6). He (1981) argues that:

...this hypothesis states that a human infant is born with an innate predisposition to acquire language; that he must be exposed to language for the acquisition process to start; that he possesses an internal mechanism of unknown nature which enables him from the limited data available to him to construct a grammar of a particular language (p. 07).

The point here is to make an L2 learner follow almost the same process of the child, since he/she (L2 learner) is considered to be like a baby when it comes to his/her second language competence. In other words, predisposing him to language and immersing him in the process, until it becomes second nature to him/her. Within the same context, Corder (1981) paraphrases Miller's words:

Miller (1964) has pointed out that if we wished to create an automaton to replicate a child's performance, the order in which it tested various aspects of the grammar could only be decided after careful analysis of the successive states of language acquisition by human children (Corder 1981, p.7).

It is said success leaves clues, and this is the idea Miller wants to defend.

Corder (1981) proposed a hypothesis claiming that some strategies followed by an infant acquiring his first language should be assigned for the second language learner; however, he did not covertly mean that it ought to be the exact same learning sequence. He believed that if a two-year-old baby produces an incorrect utterance, it will not be seen as wrong, ill-constructed, or mistaken. It is not regarded as an error, but a form of communication indicating his current linguistic improvement (p. 7). Therefore, why should one be subjective with the second language learner? Not taking his errors as a signal of development. Instead, he/she is criticised for being incompetent. Corder asserts that "no one expects a child learning his mother tongue to produce from the earliest stages only forms which in adult terms are correct or non-deviant" (Corder 1981, p. 7). Language mastery is a long process which is achieved through a sequence of stages. This process is complex due to the different skills the learner needs to acquire, and it is impossible to find a learner who does not make errors while using language, since even advanced learners fall short in some

situations and find great difficulty in expressing themselves in native speaker's terms. Brown and Frazer (as cited in Richards, 1971, p. 23) point out:

The best evidence that a child possesses construction rules is the occurrence of systematic errors, since, when the child speaks correctly, it is quite possible that he is only repeating something that he heard. Since we do not know what the total input has been, we cannot rule out this possibility.

The next point to be expected is a discussion of learners' errors and their appropriate interpretation in order to correct them. This will prove beneficial when designing a course of lectures. This course will determine the input for learners, and it is named as 'the syllabus'. Corder (1981) believes that it is the child or the learner who determines language input based on his/her learning mechanisms (p. 8). One cannot design a syllabus based on his/her impressions of the learner requirements, since learners differ in the acquisition method, speed, and quantity. In addition to that, it is not appropriate to perceive that the correct utterances a child or an L2 learner produces to be a sign of language mastery. A reason is that they might be merely repeating utterances they heard before and not making up their own (Corder, 1981, p. 8). This misconception might lead to significant failure in syllabus design, thus, another failure to meet learners' needs. Ferguson supports this idea as he suggests that "syllabuses have been based at best upon impressionistic judgements and vaguely conceived theoretical principles where they have had any considered foundations at all" (Corder, 1981, p. 8).

"The learner's errors are evidence of this system and are themselves systematic" (Corder, 1981, p. 8). This statement by Corder (1981) implies that there are errors which are called 'systematic' and others which are 'unsystematic', i.e. 'errors and mistakes.' Subsequently, based on what has been said before, the talk is about about Chomsky's dichotomy of 'competence versus performance.' 'Competence' stands for the abstract intellect a person

possesses perfectly in his/her mind, while, 'performance' is the real use of language. In a similar vein, when a native speaker makes an error, it is said to be a mistake, because the problem is just in his/her performance. On the other hand, some errors non-native speakers make are due to their imperfect competence. Thus, they are called 'errors.' To support this view, Corder (1981) emphasises that different errors occur in the language of adult native speakers. These errors are recurrent and are caused by memory lapses, physical states, and even psychological ones. These errors are haphazard and linked to performance, not competence, and they are easily noticeable. On the same note, even the second language learner is exposed to such situations. As a result, a distinction has to be made between errors of competence and those of performance. In this respect, Corder says "the errors of performance will characteristically be unsystematic and the errors of competence, systematic" (Corder, 1981, p. 8).

Learners' errors provide evidence of their advancement and the structures they are using -though they might not be correct:

They are significant in three different ways. First, to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly (and in a sense this is their most important aspect), they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn (Corder, 1981, p. 8).

Making more mistakes and using more rules enable the observer to grasp that the mistakenly used rules are a sign of knowledge and implementation of these rules. The act of uttering something correctly does not automatically entail mastery of a certain rule or concept, since the learner might be just repeating a previous statement, not constructing the utterance by himself. Spolsky calls this a 'language-like behaviour' (Corder, 1981, p. 8). One important point to highlight is that, despite the consideration of the first and second language learning strategies as identical, still, a distinction has to be made. The first language learner has an infinite number of hypotheses to test about the nature of his mother tongue (although this hypothesis is doubted) while it is easier for the second language learner. The hypotheses to be tested fall into the scope of the difference between the systems of his mother tongue and the target language and their nature, if being different. What is to be deduced is that it is the interference of habits he/she formed in his/her mother tongue that prompt mistakes. Said differently, it is the experimentation of the systems of the new language rather than the recurrence of the old habits (Corder, 1981, p. 8).

Humboldt stated that one cannot really teach language. What can be done is creating conditions within the mind in which it will develop. However, such conditions cannot be created without more knowledge about the learning method and the nature of the built-in syllabus. When fulfilled, investigators will have more insights. Learners' internal strategies will tell how to carry practice and determine the syllabus; input will be adapted to their needs rather than false misconceptions about how, what, and when he ought to learn (Corder, 1981, p. 8).

### **3.3. Corder's Assumptions about Errors**

Since Corder (1981) is considered to be the pioneer in error analysis and as far as his point of view on errors is concerned, he contributes in making a shift in the consideration and weighing of errors. The view about learner errors shifted from a subjective one, i.e. regarding

errors as signs of lack of competence, portraying learners' insufficient ability to use the target language correctly and appropriately to guidelines indicating several positive attitudes that can be summarised as follows:

1. Errors are signs of hypothesis testing, not just mere imitation of already-made sentences.
2. Errors are indicators of the areas where the learner requires more practice to improve.
3. Teachers and instructors can use those errors to check the learner's improvement, and evaluate his advancement in language proficiency.

In this respect, Beghoul paraphrases Corder's six assumptions behind this procedure (2007, pp. 15-16):

- a. Interlanguage utterances have a communicative purpose and are systematic. This implies that deviant utterances are part of the overall system, and, thus, ought to be of equal importance to the investigator.
- b. Interlanguage is a code, which is neither the first language nor the full second language but includes features of both and even some features which belong to neither system.
- c. The learner possesses a degree of competence in the second language, Corder called 'transitional competence', which can be described in more or less the same way as his competence in the first language.
- d. Not all utterances produced by the second language learner are indicators of an underlying system or, as Corder called it, a built-in system. Some utterances in interlanguage might be isomorphic with those of the second language, i.e., correct by the second language norms, but occur only by chance. In order to be part of the built-in

system both the deviant and the non-deviant forms have to occur with a minimum of regularity.

e. Interlanguage is described as an autonomous system just like any other linguistic system.

f. The errors are not to be considered harmful for the learner but ought to be viewed as indicators that the learner is in the process of making hypotheses and testing them to find out the nature of the second language rules.

### **3.3. The Interlanguage Hypothesis**

“It has been argued that correct performance can be just as revealing as incorrect performance and that the linguistic competence of L2 learners can and should be described [...]. The name given to this competence by Selinker [...] is Interlanguage (IL)” (Henderson, 1985, pp. 23-24). The point Henderson discusses is a definition of interlanguage. The idea is that even correct performance and use of language by L2 learners can benefit investigators and corpus designers the same way errors do. Moreover, producing syntactically and semantically correct sentences does not necessarily entail language proficiency on behalf of the learner, since this latter might be just repeating a prefabricated statement he heard from someone else. On a similar note, making errors does not automatically mean that the learner lacks competence as there are extralinguistic and pedagogical factors influencing his/her production, for example, psychological states (anger and tiredness). In other words, understanding the reasons behind learners’ errors requires more conspicuous and detailed research rather than directly jumping into conclusions. As a brief historical overview, for Lennon, “the term ‘interlanguage’ thus refers to a language intermediate between the native and the target language. It was derived from Weinreich’s ‘interlingual identifications’” (Selinker, as cited in Lennon, 2008, p. 56). Lennon goes further and says that the major pillar

on which the interlanguage hypothesis is founded is the foreign learner language system which is distinct from both his L1 and L2, despite the fact that it is influenced by both (Lennon, 2008, p. 56). According to Fang and Xue-mei (2007, p. 11), interlanguage is “a term that Selinker (1972) adopted from “interlingual”. It refers to the separateness of a second language learners’ system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language learners.” The learner is somehow experiencing a linguistic system that is neither his native nor target one. In other words, the learner is dwelling on an isthmus while trying to reach a destination that is different from his original one. Lennon believes that interlanguage is a destination-based changing system aiming to reach a goal (target language acquisition) through the assumption that analysing learner production leads to the understanding of the mental processes leading to that aim. Eventually, this will hone foreign language acquisition methods (Fang & Xue-mei 2007, p. 11). Lennon’s words totally fall in line with the previously mentioned idea of learner production analysis. In this day and age, the naming of interlanguage changed to become ‘language learner language’ as it is preferred by researchers (Lennon, 2008, p. 56).

Selinker is considered the father of this notion. He “identified five central processes underlying ‘language learner language’ which distinguish it from the way in which first language acquisition proceeds:

- Language transfer
- Transfer of training
- Strategies of L2 learning
- Strategies of L2 communication
- Overgeneralisation of L2 rules” (as cited in Lennon, 2008, pp. 56-57).



The aim behind this distinction is to show that there is a difference between the two processes (NL versus TL). In an explication to these processes, Lennon starts by mentioning the first process, 'language transfer,' and emphasises on the accuracy of Selinker, who did not say 'interference' to highlight the role of the learner in production. In addition, Selinker hints to Weinreich's term 'internal identifications' and rather uses the term 'transfer of theory' so as to refer to the inappropriate methods followed by teachers, where there is no clear-cut method for providing information for the learner.

When describing 'strategies of second language learning', Selinker talks about the inclusion of several initiatives to make the system simple for the learner, as it is hard to fathom. The aim is to prevent cognitive overload that learners experience, and that is likely to hinder them from obtaining essential input. As such, they, hence, suffice with data they acquired and apply it to all instances of production. A good example is the use of the simple present instead of the past for narration. 'Strategies of L2 communication' are another story where Selinker admits the difficulty in distinguishing between this process and the precedent. The difficulty lies in that not only does the difference appear in the production of data, but there is also a psycholinguistic aspect. The focus of the speaker is to ensure the understanding of his message, despite all mishaps. Communication strategies showed to be the most cultivable domain of research. Selinker's idea simply meant that the learner may prioritise fluency over accuracy so that to maintain rapport. Word coinage, code switching, paraphrasing, avoidance, and other strategies are used to maintain fluency. The last process is better quoted in Lennon's words:

by ‘overgeneralisation of L2 rules’ Selinker was referring to processes such as extending the “-ed” morpheme for forming past tenses to verbs to which it does not apply (e.g. \*‘‘choosed’’) or extending the “s” morpheme for forming noun plurals to nouns where it does not apply (e.g. \*’sheeps’’) (Lennon, 2008, p. 57).

Although this latter was suggested to be included in ‘strategies of learning’ (Lennon, 2008, p. 57).

Having discussed the five fundamental processes distinguishing the L1 and L2 acquisition systems, it is important to shift to what Tarone et al. provide in detail. They state that there are four basic observable facts which underlie the interlanguage hypothesis, mainly aiming to evaluate the hypothesis. These facts are subject to study. First of all, ‘fossilisation’ which is the sustainability of occurrence of given errors and other surface forms in the systems of learner-language over a certain period of time. Second, ‘mutual intelligibility’ that exists amongst interlanguage speakers. Third, ‘backsliding’, or the constant appearance in speech errors that are bilingual and were thought to have been dropped. Fourth, the interlanguage ‘systematicity’ that is present at a given point in time (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 24). The aforementioned axes are aimed to experiment the strength and sustainability of the interlanguage hypothesis, because such factors must be taken into account to check the usefulness of the interlanguage hypothesis as a methodology that is able to solve language acquisition problems and identify points of focus in TL acquisition.

Nevertheless, Tarone et al. show reticence over the interlanguage hypothesis, and, namely, call it a ‘hypothesis.’ They do so in some sort of rebuttal, where they uncover the weaknesses of ‘language learner language’, through a discussion of the four fundamental axes stated prior. They start with ‘stability’ and distinguish two types of IL users. A first type is characterised by stability, in contrast to the second one that is unstable, i.e. still learning.

Thus, learners can be either type I or II. IL ignores such a crucial point. For systematicity, Tarone et al. (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25) call L2 speech systematic when it evidences an internal consistency in the use of forms at a single point in time. However, Tarone et al. argue that if interlanguages show minor stylistic variation, they are said to be more systematic. A non-native speaker uses a restricted scope of styles due to his/her limited reserve. Hence, one possesses more systematicity in his/her IL than NL. Types I and II are to be mentioned here, since language learner language does not clarify which speaker is more systematic, the stable one or the unstable, taking into account that type II has a less repertoire, but, does that mean he is more systematic? If yes, then IL is contradicting itself.

In mutual intelligibility, Henderson (1985) mentions that “language teachers are fond of recounting anecdotes about a Japanese speaker interpreting the English of an Arabic speaker for the teachers, or a group of students apparently conversing while native English speakers listen uncomprehendingly” (p. 25). This notion can be explained simply by saying that it is interlocutors’ use of language that is understandable to build and maintain rapport. However, if the addresser and addressee can understand each other, it means they share an interlanguage. Last but not least, backsliding, a common phenomenon among teachers, signifies, according to IL, the mastery of a linguistic form in the target language preceding a loss, misuse, or non-use of a form. But, apparently backsliding is not limited to L2 since it happens even in NL speech (Henderson, 1985, p. 25).

Henderson stresses the calling of IL a notion rather than a hypothesis since it is unable to answer all the questions raised about second language acquisition despite the fact that it is useful in urging investigators to look beyond the errors of L2 learners. He proclaims the preference of its calling ‘a form of communication in a foreign language’ (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25).

### **3.4. Error and Language Interference**

Language interference is one of the several common causes of difficulty language learners face during the learning process or the use of the second/foreign language. In this respect, Lennon (2008, p. 02) confirms that attention by traditional textbooks had been given to the most occurring errors. The aim was to prevent learners from falling into specific pitfalls at the level of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. According to Lennon (2008), there are intralingual and interlingual factors causing difficulty for learners (p. 02). These factors are found at the aforementioned levels of language, i.e. the lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic. For instance, at the level of lexis, difficulties were identified at the level of minimal formal differences existing in the foreign language including significant differences in semantics (for example 'ball' and 'bowl'). Thus, such intralingual monolingual tiny dissimilarities usually cause difficulty for learners and prompt errors in their language production. An example of interlingual lexical difficulties is apparent in the significantly similar forms between the learner's native language and the target one despite the difference in meaning (for example French 'phrase' and English 'phrase') (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25).

At the level of phonology, the difficulty lies in the fact that the language learner will pronounce the target language words in his native accent, since the mother tongue's phonetic and phonological systems, which are the prevalent ones, have an impact on the target one, i.e. TL. A good example is the influence of French on English when the learner finds a difficulty in words which start with 'in', such as 'instinct.' At the level of structures, grammatical structures, namely, the learner might confuse between the tenses in his native language and the target one. For instance, the German 'Perfekt' may be identified with the English present perfect tense, for example, and the learner may use the present perfect when he/she would use the Perfekt in German (Henderson, 1985, p. 25). At the lexical level, "English 'irritated' may

be used to mean the same as German *irritiert*, ‘book’ made to correspond semantically to *Buch*, ‘house’, identified with *Haus* and so on” (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25).

Before the late 1950’s and 1960’s, the dominant belief had been that intralingual factors had had the major impact on the errors learners make. However, with the arrival of Weinreich (1953), the old belief had started to change and focus shifted to the interlingual factors. Soon, a new label surfaced. “This is the phenomenon of language interference, with the influence usually being from the stronger language to the weaker one” (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25). Weinreich mooted that for any user of two languages, the identification of sounds, words, structures, and meanings in one language will tend to be based on the elements in the other language. In other words, users of two languages or even more are making ‘interlingual identifications’, as Weinreich calls the process (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25). Usually, the tendency is to identify the language elements based on the influence of the mother tongue, since it is the most prevalent in most cases.

Language interference is now doomed to be amongst the main contributing factors of learner error, since the identification is subconscious and requires conscious effort on behalf of the learner to properly distinguish and instill the differences between the native and target systems. In this respect, Lennon (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25) emphasises numerous bilingual users are engaged in a process of working with a more dominant repertoire over another. This is due to the process of interlingual identification, where two different forms (the native and target forms) are substituted with a third one which is of no use to both forms. According to Weinreich (as cited in Henderson, 1985, p. 25), language learners in such a status are called ‘compound bilinguals’. In contrast, ‘co-ordinate bilinguals’, theoretically, possess two totally separate languages stored in the brain with no cross-lingual influence on behalf of any.

### **3.5. Procedure of Error Analysis**

In Beghoul (2007, pp. 16-17), Corder stated three main stages in the procedure of error analysis. They are error recognition, error description, and error explanation as explained shortly.

#### **3.5.1. Stage One: Error Recognition**

As a first step in error treatment, learners' errors need to be identified and spotted either in speech or writing. In this respect, a line needs to be drawn between mistakes and errors. In other words, the analyst ought to categorise the erroneous instances as stemming from, either competence or performance. The analyst has to bear in mind that, even in native speaker's speech, slips of the tongue and lapses are likely to occur.

Before the advent of Corder, learner errors had been structurally categorised: phonologically, morphologically, lexically, and syntactically. The introduction of communicative competence by Hymes (1972) as a complementary component to Chomsky's linguistic competence prompted the addition of pragmatics in error classification. Consequently, other three judgmental criteria were added to the equation.

The criteria that were stated by Corder are as follows:

1. Grammaticality
2. Appropriateness
3. Feasibility
4. Probability

1. Grammaticality: Hymes (1972) refers to it as acceptability. A sentence/utterance is said to be grammatically correct when it adheres to the grammatical norms of the language. If a learner says 'the boy eated the apple', the sentence is grammatically unacceptable because of the violation of the past tense of the irregular verb 'to eat.'

2. Appropriateness: grammaticality is not solely relied upon to determine the acceptability of a given utterance/sentence. If the utterance/sentence does not conform to the sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms of society, it will be either misunderstood or not accepted by the native speakers. An example of that can be a teacher who is addressed by using the word 'buddy'.
3. Feasibility: Chomsky describes a non-feasible utterance/sentence as not "perfectly natural and immediately comprehensible without paper and pencil analysis, and in no way bizarre and or outlandish".
4. Probability: if an utterance/sentence fulfils all the aforementioned characteristics, but, is out of the scope of common usage, it is considered as erroneous. In other words, it is out of the ordinary in usage. Besides, such utterances/sentences are mainly used in word play, i.e. by poets and writers.

### **3.5.2. Stage Two: Error Description**

In the second step of error treatment, the error analyst has to deal with the process the learner had undergone, which, later, resulted in a deviation at the level of sentence/utterance. At first glance, the second stage seems easier than the first one. However, there are still some problems the analyst has to deal with. In order for the analyst to fully diagnose the problem, he/she has to understand what the learner intended to convey through his/her sentence/utterance. According to Corder, the L2 learner resorted to the dictionary when he could not express his thought through the words he already possessed. The problem is therefore lexical, as the learner could not choose the right words.

### **3.5.3. Stage Three: Error Explanation**

In the third and final stage, error investigation entertains the psycholinguistic factor as an essential process. The error analyst attempts to trace down the source of the error. He/she might conclude that it is the interference of the mother tongue or another language. The

analyst might try to compare the deviant forms in the target language to forms in the learner's mother tongue or second language.

The error analyst might end up with the verdict that overgeneralisation is the culprit. On a different note, some errors cannot be categorised under a specific type of error, and they are the most problematic of all due to the open range of possibilities of error.

In Siddique (2007), it is stated:

The explanation of errors to account for why they were made is the most important of EA for SLA research as it involves an attempt to establish the process responsible for L2 acquisition (Ellis 1985). The source of an error may be psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, epistemic, or may reside in the discourse structure (Taylor 1986,) (p. 25).

She adds (pp. 25-26) “based on the considerations discussed above, we can conclude that it is obvious from the complexities that are integral to the EA process that it is impossible to identify errors 100 % accurately.”

### **3.6. Contrastive Analysis as a Predictor of Error**

One cannot talk about error analysis without bringing up contrastive analysis to the forefront of the discussion. In this respect, one can say that contrastive analysis attempts to identify the similarities and differences between languages. It also attempts to describe the reason some structures in the target language represent more difficulty than other ones (Ciesielkiewicz & Márquez, 2015, p. 120). Catford argues that the pivotal role of CA is explanatory, not predictive (Filha, 1997, p. 10).

According to Lennon (2008):

The main idea of contrastive analysis, as propounded by Robert Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), was that it is possible to identify the areas of difficulty a particular foreign language will



present for native speakers of another language by systematically comparing the two languages and cultures. Where the two languages and cultures are similar, learning difficulties will not be expected, where they are different, then learning difficulties are to be expected, and the greater the difference, the greater the degree of expected difficulty (p. 1).

The premise of contrastive analysis is that in order for a researcher to identify errors in the target language, he has to look at the foreign learner's mother tongue, because errors stem basically from the interference of the mother tongue and L2. Not only does the researcher have to look at language, but, culture, too since they are inherently interrelated. Comparing the features of learner language to other samples of learner language and/or to a control corpus of expert production helps to discover some of its typical characteristics (Granger, as cited in Granger, 2012).

Here is another way to look at contrastive analysis: 'careless mistakes' is a term given to the obvious errors foreign learners make while trying to focus their attention on the difficult aspects of language that require more attention. This term is used in traditional language teaching. On a different note, there was criticism towards contrastive analysis by error analysis's advocates, who claimed that the focus of CA on the differences between L1 and L2 results in a negligence of the factors influencing L2 performance (Khansir, 2012, p. 1028).

Contrastive analysis regards the interference of the mother tongue as the sole source of errors in non-native learner language. From this standpoint, it views the foreign language learner as passive with regard to the interference of his/her mother tongue in the second or foreign language. Therefore, the learner is not actively engaged in the process of error-

making, and no other factors are taken into consideration when investigating errors (Lennon, 2008, p. 3).

If the previous idea is put into practice, it would show that it is minimalist. In other words, it does cover up all the angles of error-investigation. Lennon (2008, p. 3) stresses the fact that regardless of a learner's first language, whether that language contains prepositions or not, it will be significantly difficult not to make mistakes in the English prepositions. The same thing applies to the difficulty L2 and foreign learners of English face when choosing between the simple or progressive tenses. Such types of errors are called 'developmental errors'. They occur regardless of the learner's first language, i.e. whether the L1 shares some aspects of English or not. It is argued that contrastive analysis is unable to predict the developmental errors.

Imperfection in the principles of contrastive analysis extends to its predictive power. Since learners' errors tend to appear in given aspects, analysts can identify some recurrent patterns of error.

Contrastive analysis fails, not only in the prediction of some errors, but also in bringing to the surface some interlanguage errors which are not worthy to mention. Some errors tend to take a uni-directional side. Zobl (as cited in Lennon, 2008, p. 3) stated that it is not necessary to stress the difficulties English learners of French and French learners of English face in the light of the differences between English and French. An example is the position of the direct pronoun objects. In French, they are found before the verb as in '*le chien le mange*'; in English, they are found after the verb: '*the dog eats it.*' Lightbown and Spada argue that:

This is possibly because English learners of French hear lots of examples of SVO in French (where the object is not a preposition), whereas French learners of English never hear SOV order in English and so are less tempted to follow the word order of their native language (Lennon, 2008, p. 3).

### **3.7. Error Analysis versus Contrastive Analysis**

As regards the last proviso, Beghoul (2007) states that:

Although Error Analysis came as a sort of a 'substitute' to Contrastive Analysis it bore many of its features. The idea of comparing two linguistic systems has always been inherent in the procedure of Error Analysis at all its stages. While the predicting role of Error Analysis has never been explicitly stated, it has always been implicitly adopted (p. 21).

Corder argues that error analysis is valuable to the teacher, since it allots him/her with feedback on the learner's accomplishments and unmet needs. The psycholinguist can make use of it by understanding the mechanisms of language learning. The learner, too, benefits from EA since the teacher is compelled to adjust his teaching material to meet the suggestions of EA (Beghoul, 2007, p. 21). Besides, the concern of error analysis is similar to that of contrastive analysis; the view, however, is different (Maicusi T., Maicusi, P., López, 2000, p. 170).

Moreover, contrastive analysis performs well when the researcher wants to predict phonological errors. However, there is less efficacy in the prediction at the level of morphology, syntax, lexis, and discourse (Lennon 2008, p. 04). The exploration of the causes of L2 errors is crucial for the understanding of the nature of the target language; EA can investigate and analyse such errors (Al-Khresheh, 2016, p. 51). Beghoul (2007) states:

Error Analysis was not a remedy to the strong version of Contrastive Analysis because, in fact, it implicitly kept the predicting role of the latter. The only obvious difference between the two was that while the strong version of Contrastive Analysis took the mother tongue as the main source of errors, Error Analysis took it as only one source among others (p. 22).

In a similar vein, due to the influence of the strong version of CA, the only recognised source of learner error was the interference of the mother tongue. ‘Interlingual errors’ was the term used for the errors stemming from the interference of the mother tongue (Shekhzadeh & Gheichi, 2011, p. 160).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the utility of error analysis as a research tool for investigating learner errors. Often, researchers tend to regard correct language usage by foreign learners as an indicator of improvement. Making errors, nonetheless, ought to be viewed in the same way. When an EFL learner makes errors at any level (phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis, and/or semantics), that should be viewed as a positive sign. In other words, such errors entail that there is effort on the part of the learner, and that he/she is attempting to develop patterns on his/her own. The interference of the mother language is considered as the major factor for learner errors. EFL learners resort to structures from their mother tongue and transfer them to English. This, however, does not diminish the value of errors; they have become signs of creativity instead of unwanted forms. The three stages of error analysis proved to be interrelated which aim at providing a clear and thorough diagnosis of learners' errors. Finally, error analysis is proved to be more useful than contrastive analysis since the latter considers the interference of the mother tongue to be the sole cause of learner errors. Although there are some repercussions in the use of error analysis, it is still a reliable tool for the investigation of learners' errors.

## **Chapter Four: The Methodology Used in the Present Research**

### **Introduction**

This chapter elaborates on the methods to be used in order to investigate the use of Verb+Noun lexical collocations in the essays of the second year EFL undergraduate students at the department of English at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1). The discussion coming in the following pages will include a detailed description of the research aims. The research design in both its facets, qualitative and quantitative, will be explained in the sections to come. The introduction will also discuss the three research instruments used in the practical work. The discussion will tackle, in detail, the procedure of the analysis. In addition to the research population. The discussion will end with a conclusion that summarises the whole chapter.

#### **4.1. Statement of the Research Aims**

Since second year EFL undergraduate students of English at Université des Frères Mentouri will end aim to reach a native-like competence, comparing their produced V+N collocations to native speakers' in a corpus is important to measure their competence. The main aims of the present research work are interconnected in order to:

1. Identify the difficulties second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) face in the production of Verb+Noun collocations in their essay writings.
2. Identify the factors that contribute to the difficulty of producing acceptable Verb+Noun collocations in the essays of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1).

3. Find out what material and strategies second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) use to create Verb+Noun collocations in a foreign language.
4. Formulate suggestions for language teaching based on the obtained results.

## **4.2. Research Design**

The aim of a research design is to scientifically deal with data obtained from research. That data needs to be interpreted in order to reach meaningful conclusions based on the findings. Hence, a research work can be defined as:

The procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions data were obtained. Its purpose is to provide the most valid, accurate answers as possible to research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, as cited in Atamna 2008, p. 120)

The two famous approaches to scientific research are the quantitative and qualitative methods. They are distinct in terms of the way the practical side of the research is carried out. Nonetheless, it is sometimes inevitable for a researcher to be using the two methods in his/her research despite their differences.

### **4.2.1. Quantitative Research**

“According to Goodwin and Goodwin (1996), a quantitative approach uses statistical data in the description of observations” (Atamna, 2008, p. 121). In other words, quantitative research method relies on numbers and statistics as major representations to interpret obtained data.

According to Goodwin and Goodwin (as cited in Atamna 2008, pp. 121-122), these are the main steps involved in quantitative research:

- “Identify the target population.
- Select the type of instrumentation needed.
- Choose or construct the needed measures.
- Collect data.
- Analyse the data.
- Report the results.”

The present research focuses mainly on the quantitative approach to interpret the data obtained from learners’ written compositions. The designed tables and graphs throughout the coming pages contain numbers, percentages, and averages of research findings in appropriate correspondence with each aim.

#### **4.2.2. Qualitative Research**

The premise of qualitative research is the use of comments and non-statistical arguments to interpret data. According to McMillan & Schumacher (as cited in Atamna, 2008, p. 120), “it is a method which does not make use of statistical procedures in the examination and interpretation of observations; it makes use of words rather than numbers, i.e., it is narrative and non experimental in character”.

Although the research in hand focuses mainly on quantitative data, it also adopts a qualitative approach in an attempt to understand learners’ attitudes toward V+N collocations, delexical/non-delexical verbs, and teachers’ and learners’ awareness of the importance and existence of V+N collocations.

#### **4.3. The Informants**

The informants are Algerian second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1). These students have been studying English since their first year in middle school, and they were preparing for graduation for the year after.

The study dealt with the essays of 66 students who were required to write essays about one of the aforementioned topics.



#### **4.4. Research Instruments**

The usual methods of investigation in the field of collocation are cloze tests, elicitation tests, or production. This study belongs to the latter category. It is conceived to belong to the field of Applied Linguistics, and the analyses are carried out with a practical application in mind, i.e. language teaching. The research used three instruments in an attempt to measure learners' collocational competence:

1. Collocation Checker
2. Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary
3. British National Corpus

##### **4.4.1. Collocation Checker**

It is an online website that is designed to help learners identify incorrect V+N collocation usages. It provides valuable references on miscollocations and only investigates V+N collocations. The way it functions is by indicating whether the inputted V+N collocation is acceptable or not. Its database is derived from the British National Corpus. The main function of collocation checker is error-oriented. Hence, it is used, in the present study, to determine the acceptable/unacceptable V+N collocations that were retrieved from the learners' essay compositions.

##### **4.4.2. Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary (O.O.C.D)**

It is used to investigate the various combinations of the various lexical words. It provides all the possible collocational hits for the searched word, in addition to the examples retrieved from the BNC. Thus, the aim of this instrument is to obtain all the permissible

combinations of the investigated verb or noun. O.O.C.D derives its database from the BNC, too.

#### **4.4.3. British National Corpus**

This is the third and final research tool in this study.

The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English from the later part of the 20th century, both spoken and written (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>).

BNC has many collocational and non-collocational uses. From a collocational standpoint, it can be used to state the possible collocates of a given word. It also provides the frequency of co-occurrence of collocations, be they grammatical or lexical.

Although it contains both spoken and written data, the BNC can be considered as a rich resource for investigating collocations in writing. According to the BNC website:

The written part of the BNC (90%) includes, for example, extracts from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, school and university essays, among many other kinds of text. The spoken part (10%) consists of orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal conversations (recorded by volunteers selected from different age, region and social classes in a demographically balanced way) and spoken language collected in different contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins. (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>).

The point of advantage is that all the research tools share the same database which ensures identical results.

#### **4.5. Analysis Procedure**

Since the subject of analysis is learners' writing, the essays of second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) will be analysed. The collected essays were learners' examination essays that had been written in the second semester of the academic year 2014/2015. The reason for choosing examination essays is to ensure that the learners write seriously, as the essays would be corrected by their teachers, and they would be awarded grades.

Verb+Noun collocations were chosen, because they are not only frequent and among the most difficult for the learner, but also particularly important, since they tend to form the communicative core of utterances where the most important information is placed.

The proposed topics were of a social nature. Hence, the vocabulary is non-specialised, and there is a medium level of formality. The students had to choose one of the topics and write an essay about it. The following are the suggested topics:

1. The gifts that you wish to receive.
2. The effects of moving to a new town.
3. Describe your dream house.
4. Why are some parents strict?

The essays of the second year students were randomly chosen to carry out the analysis. There were 66 essays to be analysed.

It is worth mentioning that the extraction of Verb+Noun collocations from the learners' essays was manual. In other words, in each essay, all the V+N combinations were analysed. It has to be noted that the extraction did not include prepositional verbs, but, only,

simple and phrasal verbs. The included word combinations were highlighted so that, later, they would be copied on a word file.

The analysis procedure underwent three primary phases. In the beginning, all V+N word combinations were highlighted and copied. This resulted in 612 word combinations that were extracted manually, and, then, analysed without skipping a single one.

Collocation checker was used as a tool to distinguish acceptable word combinations from unacceptable ones. At this phase, the retrieved word combinations are only labelled as “correct” or “wrong.” After the 612 word combinations were separated into either correct or wrong word combinations, then came the second phase.

Before discussing the second phase, it is necessary to state the criteria for choosing collocations in this study:

1. The sense of the verb is so specific that it can only combine with a small set of nouns.
2. The verb in this sense cannot be replaced by its syntactically and semantically possible choices.
3. Word combinations which have high frequency hits in the British National Corpus are considered as well-formed collocations.

In the second phase, O.O.C.D was used to verify the correct word combinations from phase one. The aim was to check whether the permissible collocations of verbs/nouns provided by the latter were identical to the ones of collocation checker. Another aim is to provide example-suggestions for the erroneous collocations and word combinations. Oxford Collocation Dictionary (O.C.D) or Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (O.A.L.D) were used in case there had been any contradiction between the results of collocation checker and O.O.C.D.

The third and final phase is designed to distinguish free combinations from collocations. But, first of all, the distinctive characteristics between the two need to be outlined.

In free combinations, the syntactic and morphological variability of the elements is admissible, but determined by the grammar of the language, e.g. heavy bag/the heaviest bag. On the other hand, collocations are loosely fixed, i.e. there is a place for syntactic and morphological variability, e.g. heavy rain/rain heavily.

The substitutability restriction of free combinations is semantically motivated, while the substitutability restriction of collocations is arbitrary. With free combinations, the component elements are used in their literal sense. Whereas, with collocations, at least, one of the elements should be used in its literal sense and the other in a non-literal one.

In free combinations, the constituents do not have a restricted sense; in collocations, at least, one of the elements is used in a restricted sense and the other in a non-restricted sense. Finally, with free combinations, their meanings are compositional for both encoding and decoding. However, with collocations, their meanings are compositional for encoding and non-compositional for decoding.

In the third phase, the BNC is used to distinguish free combinations from collocations. The basic threshold is 40 hits per 100 million words. In other words, if an inputted word combination scores at least 40 hits of co-occurrence, it is considered a collocation. If a word combination scores 39 hits or less, it is a free combination. One last thing that needs to be mentioned is that the span of a V+N collocation is five words to the right side of the verb.

For the provided examples throughout the analysis, the sentences from the learners' essays were literally copied as they had been written originally, with all the spelling,

punctuation, and grammatical errors. This was done to ensure objectivity and authenticity of data in the analysis.

## **Conclusion**

The main focus of chapter four was to lay the research tools and orientation of the present study. This latter is basically of a quantitative nature. However, this does not exclude that there will be instances where qualitative research is more useful. The aforementioned pointers confirmed the idea that the foremost aim is to examine EFL undergraduate students' use of V+N lexical collocations. Collocation Checker, O.O.C.D, and BNC –the three research tools– share the same corpus database. Hence, the results from each of the steps in the analysis will be identical.

## **Chapter Five: The Use of Word Combinations in Learners' Essays: Frequency, Deviations, and Error Causes**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the results obtained from the extraction and treatment procedures. It will begin with a discussion of the overall findings of the extracted word combinations. These latter will be categorised into free combinations, collocations, and idioms. The analysis will delve deeper into the frequencies of most correctly and mistakenly used verbs, delexical and non-delexical. Then, it will move to the deviations at the level of the verb and noun, without ignoring their types. The underlying causes behind the making of errors will be pointed out at and exhaustively discussed.

### **5.1. Frequency of Used Word Combinations**

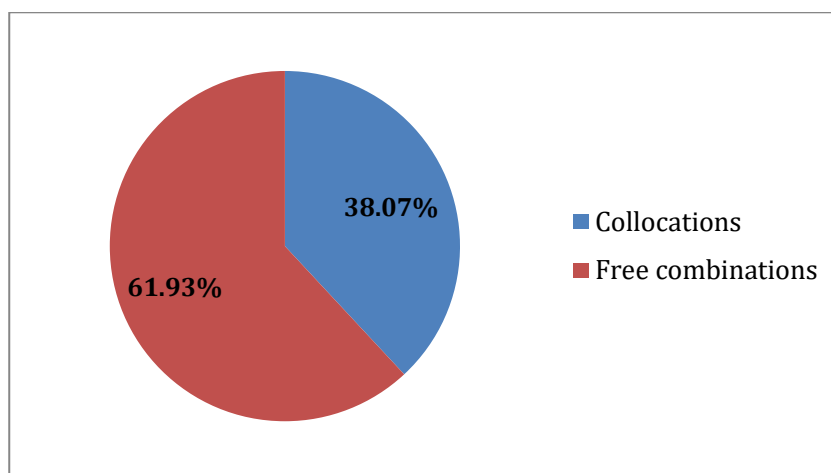
<b>Total</b>	<b>Free Combinations</b>	<b>Collocations</b>	<b>Idioms</b>
612 (100%)	379 (61.93%)	233 (38.07%)	0 (0%)

**Table 01: Number of Word Combinations in Students' Compositions**

The general results of the study indicate that students produced 612 word combinations. These combinations include free combinations, V+N collocations, and idioms. Learners used more free combinations than collocations and idioms. In other words, they focused on using general verbs and combining them with, seemingly, appropriate nouns. 'General verbs' (love, receive, know, meet, get) are the most common ones which possess a wide range of noun possibilities to combine with. They do not suffice on an arbitrarily limited number of nouns that they recurrently appear with at a minimum required frequency. This latter is a characteristic of collocations (V+N collocations in this case). The collocations' slot in Table 01 includes both acceptable and unacceptable collocations. Later, the criteria used to



distinguish between the correct and the erroneous collocations will be discussed. Looking at the frequency of the V+N collocations obtained in the present study, it is noticeable that there is a lack in their use. Consequently, the frequency of correct collocations decreases as compared to free combinations. These findings signify a lack of awareness of the importance of collocation –as a concept- in writing, as well as low mastery in their use. Contrary to expectation, in the 66 essays written by the students, no idiom was identified, although it is inevitable that learners use idioms in such essays which discuss topics of a social nature, not a scientific one. One main interpretation of the absence of idioms is that EFL learners do not memorise many, or, they are not aware of their role in writing.



**Graph 01: Frequency of Word Combinations in Student's Compositions**

The dominant use of free combinations was expected; the learners produced 379 of them, the equivalent of 61.93 % of the total word combinations. What distinguishes free combinations is the open range of compositionality from both ends, the verb and the noun. Verbs of a general nature such as the following ones illustrate more:

**To love:**

1. Also, gold ring is one of my special gifts that I want to receive because I *love gold* very much especially rings.
2. When *gives me flower* I feel very happy and comfortable because I *love nature* especially plants, and the best colours for me are red and white.
3. This is very important for us because it help us to be suitable and comfortable and *to love the new atmosphere* of the new town.
4. I personally *love gifts* because they make me feel happy and honest in the idea that there are people in the world who love me especially if they were my family.
5. This car that I would like to have, I prefer it some how large with six seats. and its colour for instance being red or brown because I *love so much these two colours*.
6. Although I am old now but I still *loving dolls*, because when I was young I used to have a big one.
7. No father hates his son, he behaves like that with him because he *loves him (the son)* and if he does not love him, why he cares about him and about his life.
8. Finally, as well as I *love cats*, I hope to have one on my birthday party.

**To know:**

1. Maybe sometimes our fathers punish us and do not talk to us when we *know a bad guy* or when we stay outside for a long time .
2. Communication with others in a new town is very difficult and it is a big problem we can face it, when we leave our place. Because we are new and we *do not know the habitants* of this new town.
3. 3. we need time to know them and *to know teachers* in order to be good and we can behave with them easaly.

4. The third example of gifts and the most important one is a trip to visit an other town. this was my childhood's dream, because I want *to know other mentalities* and to have new friends.
5. Parents are strict with their children because they *know our community* and our people.

**To make:**

1. To sum up, receiving gifts is something that *makes relations* be more strong. And no matter what the gifts are going to be.
2. So try to give gifts, just *to make your relatives* feel your care, and make them feel a part of happiness.
3. A second positive effect of moving to a new town is know about the other people and personalities and their traditions also, *make the new relationships*, it may be better than the ancient ones.

**To want:**

1. Also, I *want a phone* of the last generation that have many applications on it as the new applications.

when I told my family I want it they told me we have one, but me I *want a personal computer* just for me.

**To discover:**

1. Traveling to another country, it will be a great experience. you will *discover things*. Learning a lot, developing your way of thinking.
2. For example, I will travel to many countries such as India, China and Malizia. I will *discover new cult traditions, languages*.

3. Also, I want *to discover other places* especially famous places and to take photos with my best friends.
4. The third example of the three things that I want it in my life is travelling to visit around the world for *discovering new countries*, and new thing's.

It is worth noting that some verbs can be found in both free combinations and collocations. The reason for their noticeable existence in both formulaic categories is that they fulfil the characteristics required for a free combination or collocation.

The examples already stated were retrieved from learners' exam papers, and literally copied as they are, that is why they contain many grammatical and spelling mistakes.

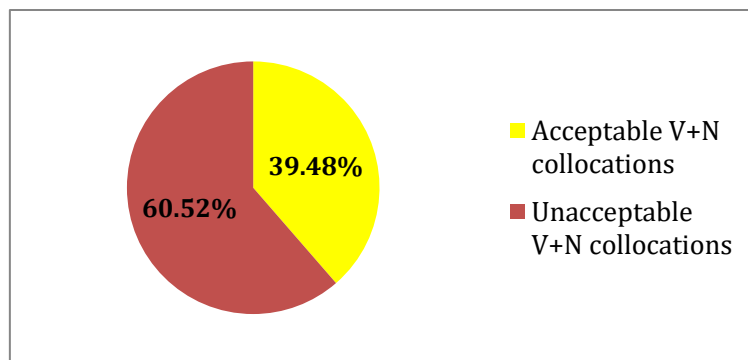
#### 5.1.1. Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations

Composition	Acceptable Collocations	Unacceptable Collocations
	92 (39.48 %)	141 (60.52 %)

**Table 02: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Students' Compositions**

The findings shown in Table 02 indicate that the frequency of collocational success in the essays of EFL undergraduate learners is low. Out of 233 recorded V+N collocations, only 92 were considered as acceptable.

This number is significantly low, because, taking into account the importance of the notion of collocation, students opted for unacceptable word combinations. Such findings denote a lack of awareness of the importance of collocations in language. Another interpretation is that EFL undergraduate students do not memorise nor do they know how to utilise V+N collocations in their writings.



**Graph 02: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations**

Considered as another type of illustration, Graph 02 highlights the significant difference between the acceptable and unacceptable V+N collocations recorded in the study.

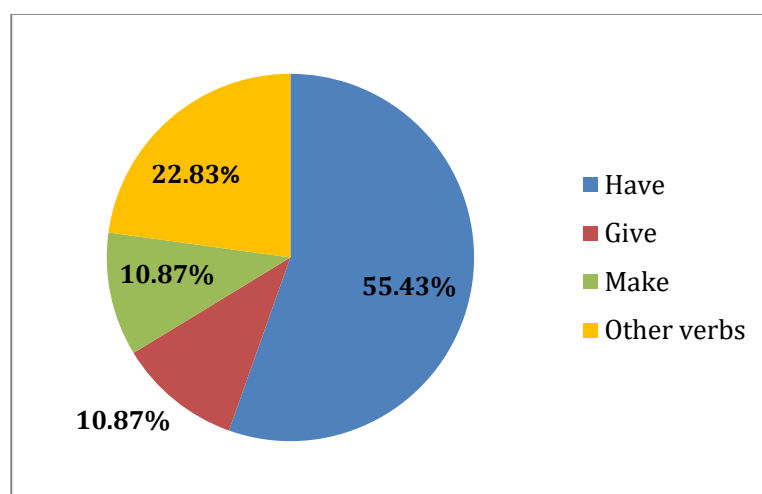
### 5.1.2. Most Correctly Used Verbs

<b>The Most Correctly Used Verbs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Number of Instances</b>
Have	55.43 %	51
Make	10.87 %	10
Give	10.87 %	10
Other verbs	22.83 %	21
<b>Total (of Most Correctly Used Verbs)</b>	<b>77.17 %</b>	<b>71</b>

**Table 03: Frequency of Most Correctly Used Verbs**

Students used the delexical verb “have” more than any other verb. In 66 essays, it was used 51 times. The interpretation of this result is that students constantly use it in order to compensate for the shortage in the lexical repertoire. They tend to attach the verb “have” with a noun to convey the meaning of another more precise verb. For example, “have a conversation” is used as a substitute for “to converse”. Thus, each time a student is unable to choose –or does not know- the correct verb, he/she tends to use the formula: “have + noun” as

a shortcut to mend the situation. “Make”, “give”, and the other delexical and non-delexical verbs have a lower usage frequency than “have” because of their more restricted sense.



**Graph 03: Frequency of Most Correctly Used Verbs**

Such findings as in graph 03 are expected from EFL learners. Open range verbs represent their only solace when they are unable to choose the precise verb corresponding to the context. Determining the formulaic nature of such verbs is no easy task. In other words, they share some characteristics which are found in free combinations and other characteristics representing collocations. The only way to draw a difference between the two, i.e. between free combinations and collocations, is to consider which characteristics are dominant in the word combination. Not only is the dominance of the characteristics required, but, also, in the context within which the word combination occurs. In some contexts, a free combination is more appropriate; a collocation is more suitable, other times, though.

The following examples illustrate more:

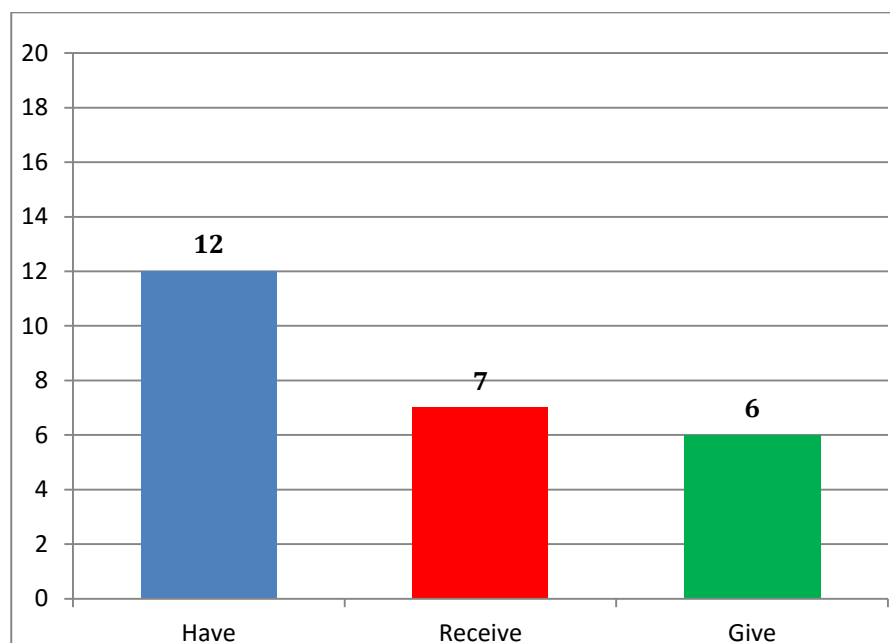
**Have:**

1. Second, *to have a smartphone* Hd in my birthday party is also one of the main things in my list. (free combination)

2. The third example of gifts and the most important one is a trip to visit an other town. this was my childhood’s dream, because I want to know other mentalities and *to have new friends*. (collocation)

In the second example, the noun “friends” should collocate with either “to make” or “to have.” The only way such conclusion could be reached is by considering the context which requires a recurrent word combination, i.e. collocation.

The “other verbs” section includes other delexical and non-delexical verbs such as, “keep the relationship”/ “accept gifts”/ “do activities”.

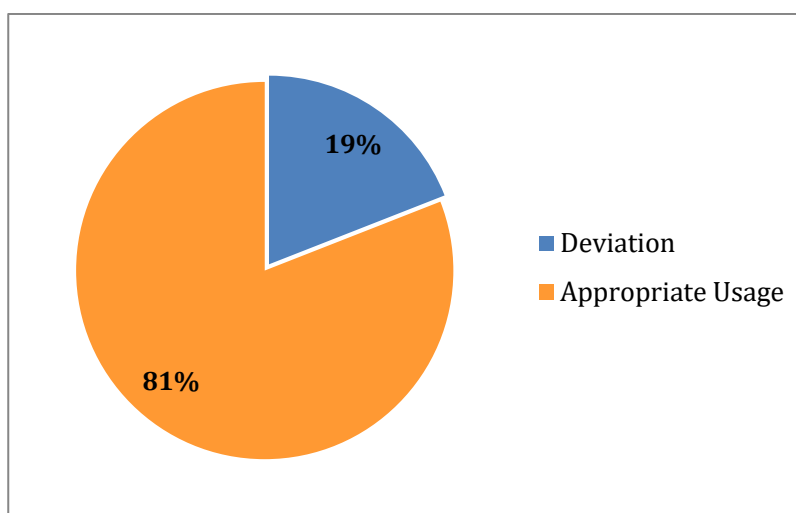


**Graph 04: Distribution of High Frequency Deviated Verbs over Inappropriate Instances**

On the other end of the spectrum, the constant use of the verb ‘have’ by EFL undergraduate learners resulted in its misuse. The verb ‘have’ alone scored 12 inappropriate instances, the equivalent of 8.51 % of all the erroneous collocations in 66 essays. This can be interpreted in the following way: despite the fact that the verb ‘have’ or any other delexical

verb is a high-priority option for EFL learners to compensate for the lack of vocabulary, the learner needs to be prudent of the limited usage of such open range verbs.

With regard to Graph 04, a question can be raised, which is “how come that the delexical verbs were more used by EFL learners, yet, the verb “to receive” scored the highest number?” The answer is that the suggested topics determined the diction in the essays. One of the topics suggested the discussion of the gifts the students wanted to receive. This topic required a constant use of the verb “to receive.” However, many students misused it or overused it. For example, when talking about cars, some students could have used “to own a car” instead of “to receive a car.”

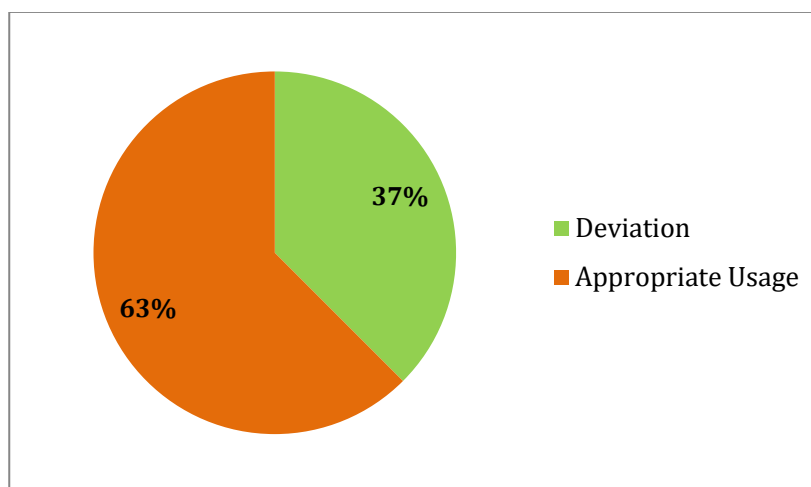


**Graph 05: Frequency of Deviation of the Simple Delexical Verb “Have”**

As previously mentioned, the verb ‘have’ scored the highest correct usage frequency amongst all other delexical and non-delexical verbs. On the other hand, it scored the second highest inappropriate usage. What can be deduced from these findings is twofold: the nature of the verb ‘have’ is tricky to an extent that only native speakers or pseudo-native speakers can master, or EFL undergraduate learners are not fully aware of the instances where this verb can be used.



In either case, this verb poses a problem for EFL undergraduate learners; being aware of its nature and areas of usage can remedy such problem.



**Graph 06: Frequency of Deviation of the Simple Delexical Verb “Receive”**

The frequency of deviation of the non-delexical verb ‘to receive’ was lower than the frequency of appropriate usage. This is due to some reasons, such as the topic suggested (describe the gifts you wish to receive) for discussion and the open nature of this verb.

Although the frequency of appropriate usage might seem positive (63 %), looking at the frequency of deviation in proportion to the overall results suggests a careful consideration. The frequency of deviation of the non-delexical verb ‘to receive’ is 4.96 % out of the 141 erroneous collocations recorded in the study.

Similar to the previous case, EFL learners’ lack of a sense of proportion when producing this verb causes misuse. Another reason is that there seems to be no clear distinction between verbs, such as “to receive”/ “to obtain”/ “to get”/ “to win” as in these examples:

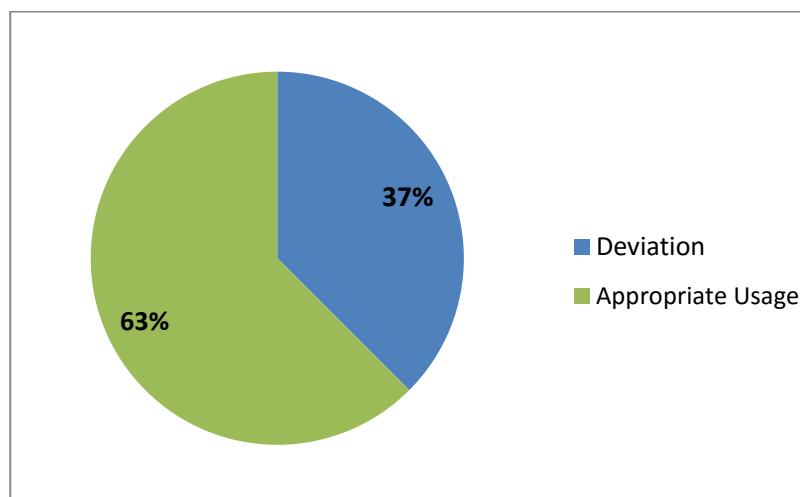
**1. To receive a ticket/ to obtain a ticket:**

I only want *receive a trip ticket* to Mexico and a car.

## 2. To receive a car/ to get a car

*To receive a car*, some cultural books and have a trip to visit another town was my favorite examples of the gifts which I want to receive.

Such lack of differentiation stems from a lack of awareness of the idiosyncratic nature of each verb.



**Graph 07: Frequency of Deviation of the Simple Delexical Verb “Give”**

In the case of the delexical verb ‘to give’, the influence of the mother tongue can be considered as the main reason for the deviations in the learners’ productions. 4.26% is the frequency of deviation, the equivalent of 6 instances out of 141. In the majority of the deviant cases, the verb “to give” was literally translated from the EFL learners’ mother tongue (Algerian Arabic) into English. The main equivalents were / ja<sub>ç</sub>t0i/ "يَعْطِي" and /jmd/ "يُؤَمِّدُ".

The following serve as examples:

1. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *giving efforts*.
2. These two particular gifts would *give me a purpose* to live for and a dream to go after.

3. As we know, usually, parents promise their children that they would *give them the passion* to do more.

The italicised collocations can be translated into Algerian Arabic in the following way:

1. To give efforts 'ايمد مجهودات' /jmd maZhu:da:t/
2. To give purpose 'يعطي هدف' /ja:t0i hadaf/
3. To give passion 'ايمد/يعطي الرغبة' /jmd ja:t0i raGba/

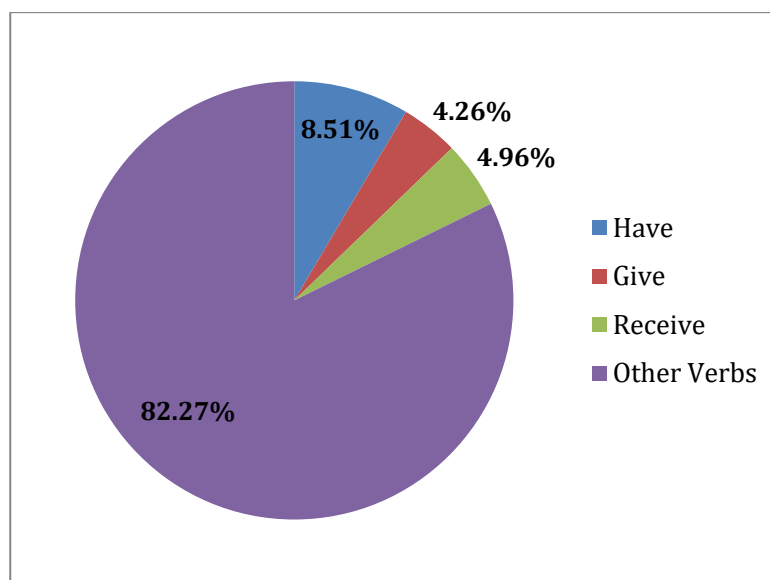
### 5.1.3. Most Mistakenly Used Verbs

The Most Mistakenly Used Verbs	Frequency	Number of Instances
Have	8.51 %	12
Receive	4.96 %	07
Give	4.26 %	06
Other Verbs	82.27 %	116
<b>Total (of Most Mistakenly Used Verbs)</b>	<b>17.73 %</b>	<b>25</b>

**Table 04: Frequency of the Most Mistakenly Used Verbs**

Although the students were excessively using the verb “have”, it was the one which caused the most trouble to them. In other words, the students always resort to it as a replacement to the contextually more appropriate verb, ignoring the fact that the formula “have + noun” does not always work as a fix for all the sentences. The verb “receive” showed a high-mistake frequency due to its large scope of compositionality. Its difficulty lies in its combining nature. A recurrent pattern with high frequency verbs is that the more they are used, the higher the possibility that they will be inappropriately chosen. This is due to the low mastery of collocations.

Another pattern that is prevailing is that students face a difficulty with the same verbs. Only three verbs make up 17.73 % of the total mistaken verbs. This shows that whenever students do not know the specific verb for the context, they resort to verbs with a general compositional nature –usually delexical verbs.



**Graph 08: Frequency of the Most Mistakenly Used Verbs**

The following examples were taken from learners' essays:

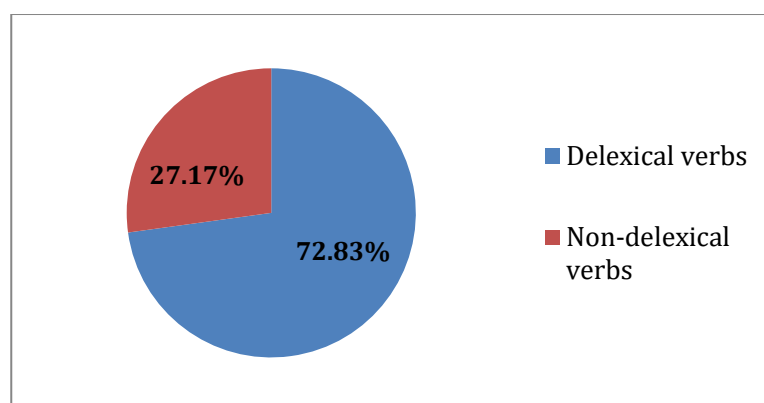
1. Leaving your town and moving to a new town effects bedly on the person phisicly where he could *have depreson* because of his mixed feeling of anger, lonlyness, sadness which are results of living his home and friends and moving to a different, strange environment that he could not adopt.
2. *Receiving a big and comfortable* car is one of those things that I dream about.
3. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *giving efforts*.
4. To sum up, receiving gifts is something that *makes relations* be more strong. And no matter what the gifts are going to be.

#### 5.1.4. Correct Delexical/Non-delexical Collocations

Composition	Delexical Verbs	Non-Delexical Verbs
Frequency	67 (72.83%)	25 (27.17%)

**Table 05: Frequency of Correct Delexical/Non-delexical Correct Collocations in Students' Compositions**

The significantly high number of delexical verbs shows clearly that students have a poor lexical competence. Their repertoire of lexis contains significantly few vocabularies, the reason that compels them to use delexical verbs to compensate for the lack of the appropriate words to be used in the given contexts. The mostly used delexical verb was 'have'. Apparently, students used it as a direct substitute for the verbs they did not know. Accordingly, students are obliged to change the whole structure of their sentence –which might result in a cluttered and unparalleled one- to use the verb 'have'. For example, instead of saying 'the beauty of air travel consists in its speed and ease', the sentence becomes 'air travel has its beauty in speed and ease'. The stylistic difference between the two is obvious, as the first one is concise and paralleled –which corresponds to the nature of English; the second sentence contains cluttering wordplay.



**Graph 09: Frequency of Correct Delexical / Non-delexical Verbs in Students' Compositions**

The constant use of delexical verb is not a sign of mastery of such type of verbs. This does not entail that one is discrediting their usefulness and usability. The point is that the overuse of such verbs is a clear sign of low mastery of the English diction, specifically, V+N collocations.

An effective way to look at the problem is to ask the question: does the English language rely on delexical verbs to describe specific actions? A more accurate question could be: does the English language lack the vocabulary that describes specific actions? One last question could be: is the problem with English or its learners?

Delexical verbs are not the only reliable resource to describe actions or feelings, despite their undeniable usefulness. This leads to the final question. Based on the previous answers, it is understood that the real problem lies in the EFL learners' lack of competence, not the English language itself.

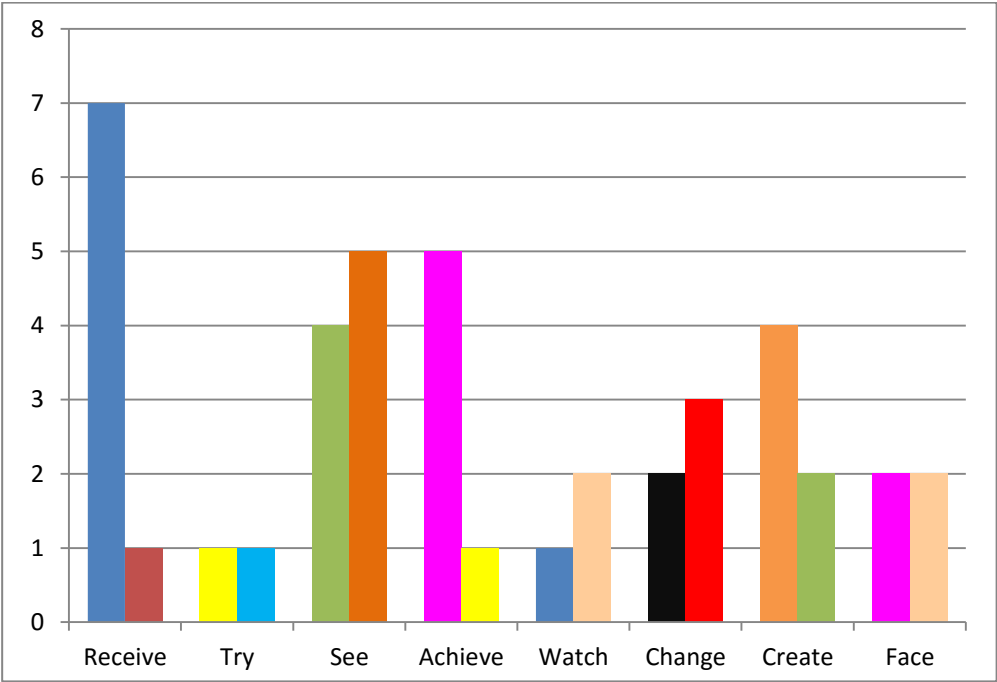
Verb	Number of Learners Using Inappropriate Instances	Inappropriate Instances	Appropriate Instances
Receive	7	7	1
Try	1	1	1
See	4	4	5
Achieve	4	5	1
Watch	1	1	2
Change	2	2	3
Create	2	4	2
Face	2	2	2
Like	1	1	1
Show	1	1	1
Know	1	2	2
Love	1	1	1
Forget	1	2	1
Live	1	1	1
Protect	1	1	1

**Table 06: Non-delexical Verbs Produced Inappropriately by One Learner or More**  
Delexical verbs were prevalent as verbs with high-frequency usage. Consequently, non-

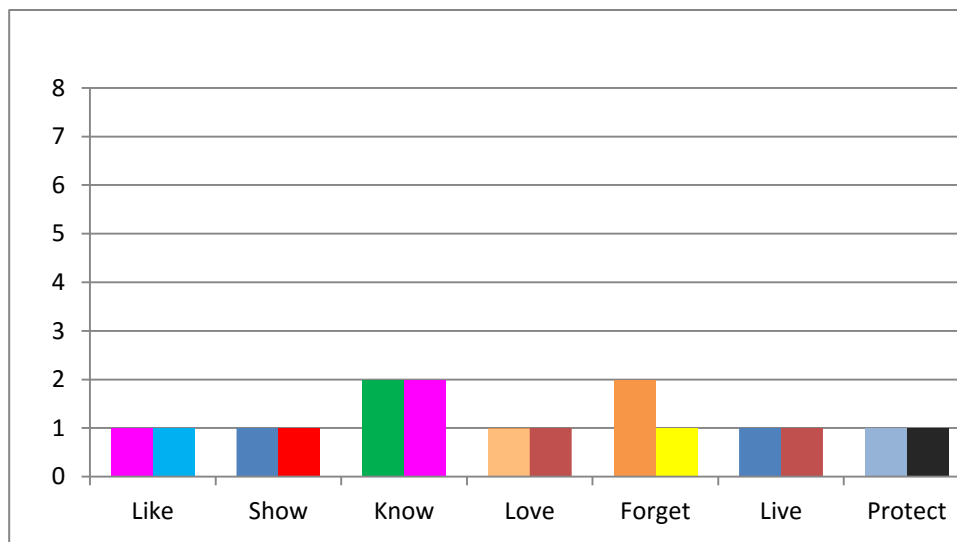
delexical verbs needed to be given more attention in terms of usage. The verb “to receive”

was the most inappropriately used. For the verb “to see”, 04 learners were unable to combine it with its appropriate collocate. What characterises the main cause for students’ mistakes is their ignorance of the difference in the range of the verbs. Some verbs have a wider range, i.e. they can collocate with many nouns; others are constrained to a few number of nouns (e.g. commit a crime). Overgeneralisation of rules was the main factor for the recurrent mistakes with the same verbs. Some of the inappropriate collocations completely altered the meaning of sentences, resulting in students’ ideas being misunderstood. Verbs such as “love”, “protect”, and “live” had a lesser mistake frequency due to their very restricted nature.

Graph 10 illustrates the distribution of the verbs with the highest frequency of deviation over the inappropriate instances on a scale of 0 to 08.



**Graph 10: Distribution of High Frequency Deviated Verbs over Inappropriate Instances (Continues)**



**Graph 10: Distribution of High Frequency Deviated Verbs over Inappropriate Instances (Continued)**

These examples show the verbs previously stated in their original contexts:

### **Inappropriate Instances**

#### **To receive:**

1. This kind of gifts would provide me with a different pattern of life, as in the case of my cousin who in his turn *received a scholarship* few years back, and look at him now!. He is an engineer in architecture who owns his private successful company.
2. *Receiving a big and comfortable car* is one of those things that I dream about.

#### **To try:**

1. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new life style, have a better job, have new friends, *try new habits* and have a new life style.



**To see:**

1. It is normal when we *see the horrible situation* of the society.
2. When I was a child, I was hoping *to see my favorite team* playing in front of my eyes.

**To achieve:**

1. Every one helps the other *to achieve a particular kind of work* or function, so they complete each other.
2. Parents are the only personne which know our benefits in this life, they work hard to achieve our needs. The only thing which they want is *to protect our traditions*, and follow the same steps as they do, and remain it existed between us untill the end.

**To change:**

1. This gift will *change your responsibilities* and it will help you in many things like avoiding the noise of your brothers while you are sleeping and many other things.

**To create:**

1. Living your whole life in a place where you have experianced and learned many things, made relationships and friends besides *creating many memories*, then leaving all of these behind and moving to a strange place is something difficult.
2. Leaving your town and moving to a new town effects bedly *on the person* phisicly where he could have depreson because of his mixed feeling of anger, lonlyness, sadness which are results of living his home and friends and moving to a different, strange environment that he could not adopt so he *create a wall* between him and this new envirnment.

**To face:**

1. Some of them stay where they born and others moving to new places, also, some of them prefer big cities according to their purpose or needs and others not, but their are ones who moving moving to a new places due to some causes and obviously, they will *face either good or bad effects*.
2. This changement has an influence in everything has related to their life. A person can find good neighbours in the first change where they help each others in all the circumenstances of life and also they make each other as the family members and they always benefit from each other, and they can't find all of this in the second change and they *face the opposite*.

**To like:**

1. I like to wear golds. I *like its shiness* and color. So, that gold is one of my special gifts.

**To show:**

1. This kind of gift is more important is "watches" it really *show me a time* but when I look it I rembere the person who offered me this watches.

**To know:**

1. Theard moving to a new town will make you *know a new culture or new habits*.
2. Getting old in your town within your friends your neighbours and *knowing every places* is one of the most wonderfull thing's that you can have in your life.

**To forget:**

1. So, live where you want but do not *forget or loose your principal*.

**To live:**

1. I *lived the best days* with my family and my friends until now.

**To protect:**

1. Parents are the only people which know our benefits in this life, they work hard to achieve our needs. The only thing which they want is *to protect our traditions*, and follow the same steps as they do, and remain it existed between us until the end.

**Appropriate Instances****To receive:**

1. People like different types of gifts, those who like *to receive money* or houses or many other things.

**To try:**

1. The most common one within all the societies is giving gifts, where people *try their best* to choose the right gift to their beloveds.

**To see:**

1. The first effect of moving to a new city is the personality of people. when they go to a new city which is more developed than they were living in. They *see the new things*.
2. First, visiting new countries is the best gift that I would like to receive. I want *to see other people* because all the time I am seeing the same ones.

**To watch:**

1. I will just introduce three examples. Visiting many countries, *watching a match* in a European stadium and studying in a foreign country.
2. So, in order to save his/her children he must follow some system. for instance they will not let him/her *watches TV* any more and they will take-off their mobiles until they finish their studies.
3. **To change:**
  1. Parents should not move so much because they *change their children's life to the bad*.
  2. So, it is hard for me *to change the place* of living.

**To create:**

1. Moving from one place to another sometimes *creates social problems* such as lack of communication.
2. God *created the world* so big, and human beings choose where they live and where they educate.

**To face:**

1. If someone goes or changes his place. And live in an other one which is new for him. He may *face many problems*.
2. Everyone in this earth *face difficulties* of moving from place to another one, and this is the case for me too.

**To like:**

1. I like to wear golds. *I like its shiness and color.* So, that gold is one of my special gifts.

**To show:**

1. There are many ways for *showing love* to other people.

**To know:**

1. Getting old in your town within your friends your neighbours and *knowing every places* is one of the most wonderful thing's that you can have in your life.
2. *Knowing new friends* is the most dangerous effect of moving to a new town.

**To love:**

1. then, parents *love so much their children* and without any doubt they want to see always their children at the top and living in happiness.

**To live:**

1. Each one of us has his own place. And live in where he finds himself feel comfortable. But nowadays, people leave many places and go to a new ones. And the reason behind this is *to live a better life.*

**To protect:**

1. The most important thing is protection. Parents want *to protect their children* from negative things such as drugs.

<b>Stretched Verb Construction</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences</b>	<b>Suggestion for Improvement</b>
have a symbol	01	To symbolise
use discussions	01	To discuss
use speech	01	To speak
convey gratitude	01	To be grateful
result effects	01	To affect
have a research	01	To research
have a start	01	To start

**Table 07: Stretched Verb Construction Instead of the Corresponding Verb**

Collocational deviations do not just include a non-felicitous verb or an inappropriate noun. The category ‘whole collocation inappropriate’ includes a type of deviation where a stretched verb construction is used. What is in fact needed is a derivation of the verb used in the original collocation. As an example, the use of ‘to relax’ in lieu of ‘to give relaxation’ was spotted. The study recorded only 07 instances where a stretched verb construction was used, the equivalent of 4.96 % out of 141 erroneous collocations.

As far as the unacceptable collocations are concerned, the question which arises here is what makes these collocations erroneous. The answer is provided by Nesselhauf (2005, p. 113) who states that “in several cases, the reason why a certain stretched verb construction is inappropriate is because the construction can only express one of several meanings of the unstretched verb and/or one of the meanings of the noun.” In other words, an unstretched verb can be polysemous, and the derived stretched verb construction represents only one of its meanings. However, EFL undergraduate learners, unaware of this fact, treat the stretched verb construction as monosemous, i.e. conveying one meaning only.

Learner unawareness needs to be questioned, not only on the part of the learners, but, also, on the part of the teachers and teaching materials. Drawing a line between the semantic

and pragmatic differences and stretched and unstretched verb constructions is important for EFL learners.

The instances shown in Table 07 answer three of the research questions. The questions revolve around EFL undergraduate learners' awareness of the importance of the concept of collocation, their ability to produce and understand Collocational language, and their mastery of collocational language while writing essays, respectively.

1. Are second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri aware of the importance of the concept of collocation?
2. Are second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri able to produce and understand V+N Collocational language?
3. To what extent do second year EFL undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri master V+N collocational language while writing essays?

It goes without saying that some of the word combinations already mentioned can also be categorised as verb deviations. Moreover, the only delexical verb that is a deviant stretched verb construction is 'have'; it is recorded in 03 instances out of 07 which is 42.86 % of all the deviated stretched verb constructions. Such frequency is expected, since the verb 'have' is the highest mistakenly used verb in the whole study. This is to be related to its loose nature and collocability with several nouns; this makes it difficult to employ properly by an EFL learner.

The following are the sentences where the stretched verb deviations were used:

1. A golden ring from my husband will be the best gift for me at all, because a simple gift from an important person *have a lot of symbol* to me.
2. Either children or teenagers like to be convinced by *using discussions* and this what should most parents know and understand.

3. Parents *use strong and violent* speech in order to children feel a few responsibility to achieve what their parents fail to achieve it.
4. I can maintain that regardless of the gift I receive, I would always be grateful and *convey gratitude* to the person and this is most importantly indeed.
5. Well, every one in the world has own town where was living, and grown up in it, but sometimes the person obliged to leave her/his town may be under some causes (to work, to study...), or may be he/she wants to leave it and moving to a new town just because he/she wants to change his/her mother town, but this moving sometimes *resultes effects*.
6. Computer makes every thing easy, it can helps me if I *have a research* or broject, if I have any complex lesson with computer I can search for it.
7. Moving to a new town *to have a fresh new start* is probably included in everybody's dream list.

Since, in the aforementioned examples, the problem is solely with the stretched verb, the following verbs can be considered as suggestions for improvement:

1. A golden ring from my husband will be the best gift of all, because it *symbolises* importance.
2. Children or teenagers like to be convinced by *discussing matters*, and this what most parents should know and understand.
3. Parents *speak harshly* so that children feel some responsibility, and try to achieve what their parents failed at.
4. I can maintain that regardless of the gift I receive. I *would always be grateful* to that person, and this is the most important thing.
5. Everyone in the world lived in a town where he/she grew up, but, sometimes the person is obliged to leave his/her town due to many reasons (to work, to study...), or



maybe he/she wants to leave, and move to a new town just because he/she wants to change his/her mother town, but this movement sometimes *affects that person*.

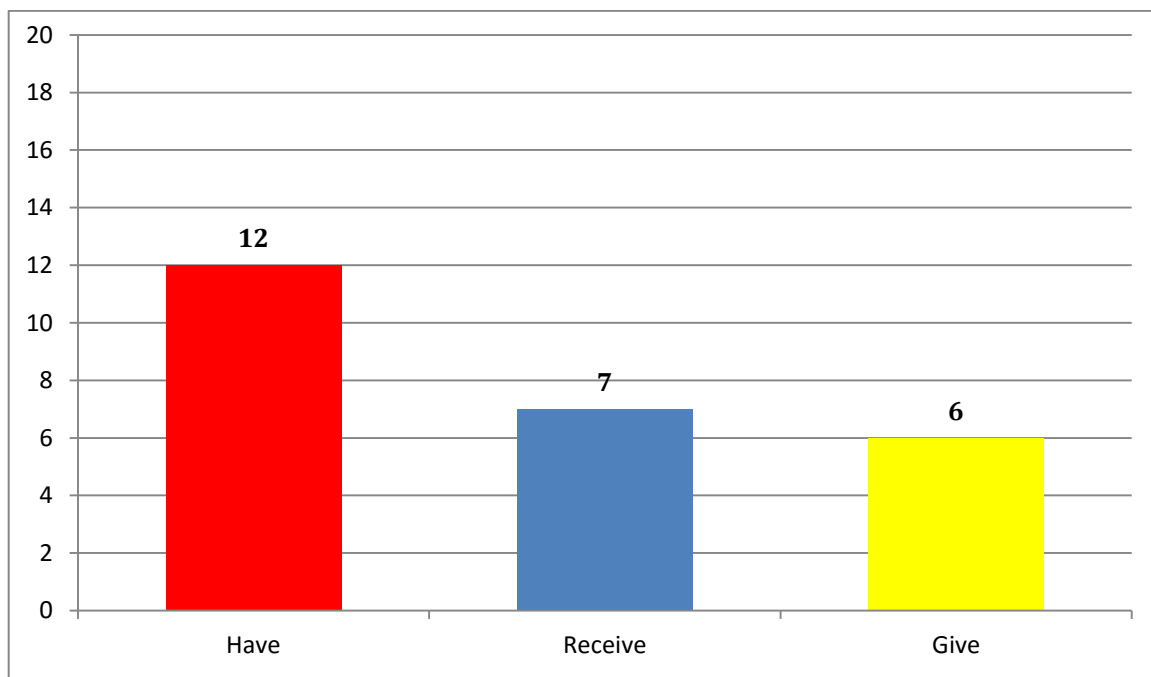
6. The computer makes everything easy. It helps me *to research a topic*, or when I undertake a project, even when I prepare complex lessons.

7. Moving to a new town *to start fresh* is probably included in everybody’s dream list.

<b>Number of Inappropriate Items</b>	12	7	6
<b>High-frequency Deviated Verbs</b>	have	receive	give
<b>Frequency of Deviation</b>	19%	37%	37%
<b>Number of Learners</b>	12	7	6

**Table 08: Distribution of High-frequency Simple Verb Deviations over Learners**

Data in Table 08 show the three verbs with the highest frequency of error: “have”, “receive”, and “give.” The verb “receive” was generally used 8 times in 66 essays; it was used mistakenly 7 times. The main reason is that the verb “receive” has a wide range of nouns to combine with. However, that range is limited, and other verbs are more appropriate. For example, it is more appropriate to say “get a car” instead of “receive a car”, because the verb “receive” does not collocate with ‘car’. 7 students used it inappropriately. In other words, it was not relevant to the context, at least, 7 times if only a single error is counted. Two delexical verbs are among the high-frequency deviated simple verbs. The verb “give” was treated in the same manner of the verb ‘have’. It was usually inserted in the same formula.



**Graph 11: Distribution of High Frequency Simple Verb Deviations over Learners**

The following collocations were also misused where another simple verb was required. The mistakes were made by at least one learner.

1. The initial example of the gifts which I want to receive is a nice fast car. The car is one of my best choices, because I like to drive fast in the empty roads, also *to have trips* to the sea or to another places with my favorit friends.

2. I want to sing and play guitar in the streets of London *to bring money*.

3. The first reason that makes parents being so strict is the society problems. Because of the new inventions of technology children learn new things everytime. They watch horrible films and play videogames in which they kill persons and because they will *make crimes* easily because they will do the same as in films and videogames.

4. Finally, I hope to have these gifts soon and I hope *to achieve them (gifts)* with the important persons which is my parents and my big family.

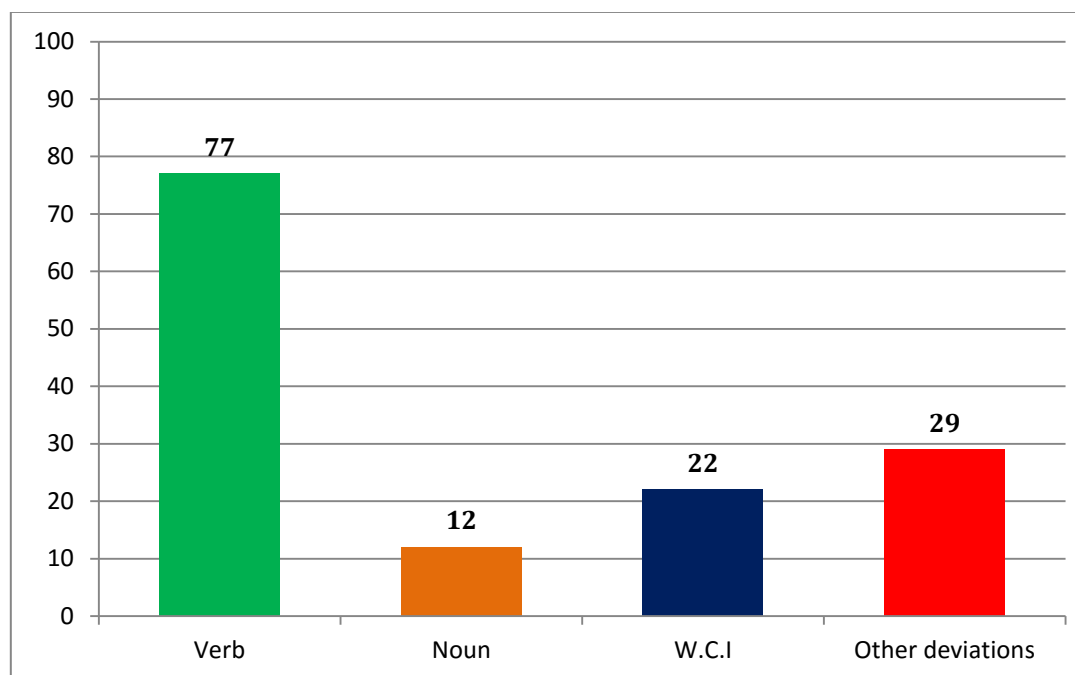
## 5.2. Deviations in Collocations

Type of Deviation	Number of Occurrences
Verb	77
Noun	12
Whole Collocation Inappropriate	22
Other Deviations	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>

**Table 09: Types of Deviations in Collocations**

Table 09 shows the types of deviations that occur in V+N collocations together with the frequency with which each type occurs. A number of previous studies have focused mainly, or even exclusively on the verb, or more generally, on the collocator (e.g. Chi Man-lai et al. 1994; Farghal & Obiedat 1995; Granger 1998c; Al-Zahrani 1998, as cited in Nesselhauf 2005, p. 71). Table 09 reveals that many components of collocations may be deviant. The verb has the highest deviation frequency. The second highest deviation case is the whole collocation being inappropriate. This type of deviation scored 22 instances amongst 141 erroneous collocations which makes 15.60 % of the total. The noun deviation, which was expected to rank second, came third. This suggests that the EFL learners do not face difficulty in nouns as much as with verbs. This is well-documented in the literature dealing with written production in EFL. This is to be explained in the light of the restricted nature of these elements. In other words, it is the verb which carries the formulaic meaning. Consequently, learners usually fall into the trap of logically selecting a verb, ignoring the fact that, in a collocation, the choice is, to a great extent, arbitrary. 77 unacceptable instances are recorded to the verb category which makes 54.61% of the total number of deviations. This signifies the difficulty EFL learners

face in producing appropriate verbs. In a similar study, the verb deviation frequency was 389 out of 836 scored in the essays of German learners (as cited in Nesselhauf 2005, p. 71).



**Graph 12: Distribution of Types of Deviations over Occurrences**

Students did not respect the restricted nature of the verbs. That is why they made such obvious mistakes (e.g. to receive a car). The open nature of the verb ‘to receive’ makes it the immediate choice for the less competent EFL learner when he/she does not know the appropriate verb. The general nature of verbs is a problem that poses itself for beginner, intermediate, or even advanced learners; they offer an easy choice. However, the latter should take into consideration that even open verbs are restricted.

Noun deviations recorded were either misspelled nouns, singular/plural errors, or completely irrelevant nouns to the collocation and context. One of the learners used ‘to wear golds’ where ‘to wear gold’ is the correct combination (misspelled noun). Another learner used ‘to express thank’ instead of ‘to express thanks’ (error in the plural). In addition, one

learner wrote ‘to use speech’; what he meant was ‘to use dialogue’ instead (completely irrelevant noun).

In the cases where the whole collocation was inappropriate, learners used combinations that did not fit both the restriction patterns and the context. ‘Using the life’ was employed, and the learner intended to write ‘getting used to life’. Another learner suggested that parents ‘take-off their kids’ mobiles’ ignoring the fact that airplanes take-off, and mobile phones are ‘taken away’. Such errors are caused by learners’ lack of knowledge of lexical collocations, namely, V+N collocations.

Other deviations include:

1. A phrasal prepositional verb where a simple verb is required.
2. The use of a simple verb when more than a verb is required.
3. The verbs that were produced could not be classified, but the appropriate replacement would have been a single verb (as cited in Nesselhauf, 2005, p. 86).

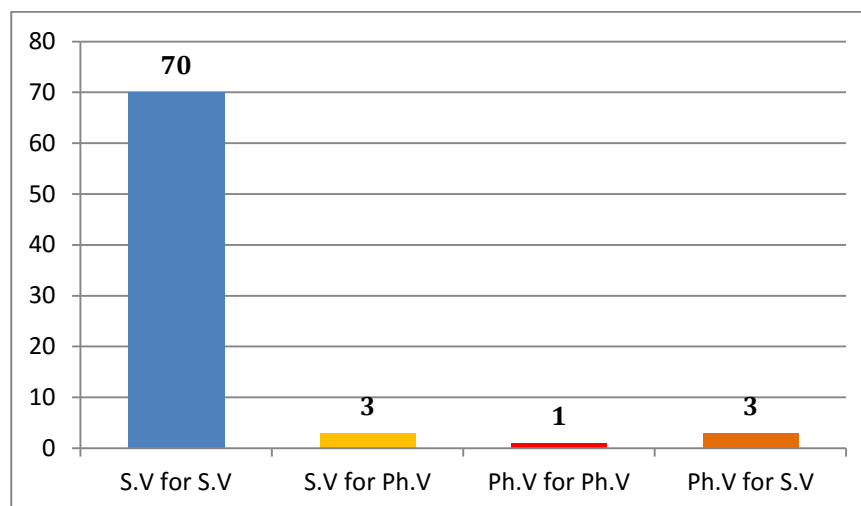
### 5.2.1. Verb Deviations

Type of Deviation	Number of Instances
<b>Inappropriate choice of verb</b> Simple verb for simple verb Simple verb for phrasal verb Phrasal verb for phrasal verb Phrasal verb for simple verb	70 03 01 03
<b>Total</b>	77

**Table 10: Deviations Concerning Verbs: Types and Frequencies**

Verb deviations come in different forms; the prominent ones are presented in Table 10. The most frequent problem in verb deviations is that EFL learners resort to more general

verbs, and combine them with a wide range of nouns. What was obvious in the present study is the lack of employment of phrasal verbs. If phrased verbs are compared to simple ones, it is obvious that the former are undoubtedly more difficult for the EFL learner. This is related to their more restricted nature, i.e. they are not compositionally free. In addition, they are different from prepositional verbs in that the latter are made up of a verb and a preposition.



**Graph 13: Distribution of Types of Deviations Concerning Verbs**

The highest frequency was the misuse of a simple verb in the place of another simple verb. Typical examples would be:

1. I want to sing and play guitar in the streets of London *to bring money*.
2. Secondly, I would like *to receive a visa* for visiting Dubai.
3. Every year, my girlfriend and me are always *exchanging gifts and secrets* to make our relation stronger each second.
4. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *giving efforts*.
5. House is one of my dreams. I like to have a nice house for example I build my room red. I *make party* with my friends at night.
6. Technology play an important role in daily lives. It is *facilitate the way* of living and people use it in everywhere.

The second type of deviation (simple verb for a phrasal verb) only scored 3 deviations.

They are presented as follows:

1. Computer makes every thing easy, it can helps me if I *have a research* or broject, if I have any complex lesson with computer I can search for it.
2. So, to move to a new town means to *loose some of the social relationships*.

The last case is the misuse of a phrasal verb in the place of a simple verb.

The study recorded 3 instances:

1. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination *to start up a fresh career* and a promising future grasping every information I lie eyes on.
2. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination *to start up a fresh career and a promising future* grasping every information I lie eyes on.
3. So one day in birthday, my sister decided to have fun with me, and play with my feelings and as she know that I like so much that kind of gift she giving to me a box when I open it I find an empty bottle of perfum, then I felt sad, she smiled and said do not worry just like look well inside the box then I find a very beautiful bottle with sweet design that *cheered up my heart*.

The previous sentences can be corrected as follows:

**Simple verb for simple verb:**

1. I want to sing and play the guitar in the streets of London *to make money*.
2. Secondly, I would like *to win a visa* to visit Dubai.
3. Every year, my girlfriend and I always exchange gifts, and *share secrets* to make our relationship stronger for each second.

4. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *making efforts*.
5. Having a house is one of my dreams. I would like to have a nice house for, and paint one of the rooms in red. I *would throw a party* with my friends at night.
6. Technology plays an important role in our daily lives. It *makes life* easier, and people can use it everywhere.

**Simple verb for phrasal verb:**

1. The computer makes everything easy. It helps me when *I carry out a research* or project, or when I prepare a complex lesson.
2. Moving to a new town results in *breaking-off some of the social relationships*.
3. The father punishes his son when he does something wrong to not be repeated again and tries to be his friend in some situations especially difficult ones *to make him pass the situation* like a death of a friend or someone else.

**Phrasal Verb for Simple Verb:**

1. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination *to pursue a fresh career* and a promising future grasping every information I lie eyes on.
2. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination to pursue a fresh career and *invest in a promising future* grasping every information I lie eyes on.

So, on my birthday, my sister decided to have fun with me, and play with my feelings. She knew that I adore that kind of gifts. Thus, she gave me a box. When I opened it, I found an empty bottle of perfume. I felt sad, but, she smiled and said “do not worry just look well inside the box”. Then, I found a very beautiful bottle with a sweet design that *gladdened my heart*.



### 5.2.2. Noun Deviations

Noun	Number of Inappropriate Verbs	Combinations	Corrections
life	06	use the life continue life complete life create a life disturb life light life	get used to life spend life end life make life (enjoyable) affect (a person's) life lighten (our) life
relationship	04	require a relationship compose relationships enhance the relationship lose relationships	to develop a relationship form relationships foster the relationship break off relationships
habit	03	avoid habits try a habit know habits	to not get into habits develop a habit discover habits

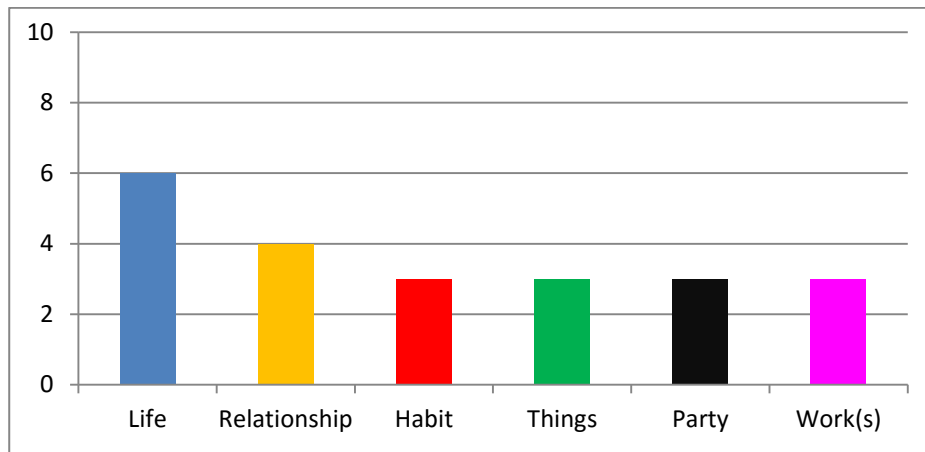
**Table 11: Nouns Frequently Combined with Deviant Verbs (Continues)**

<b>Noun</b>	<b>Number of Inappropriate Verbs</b>	<b>Combinations</b>	<b>Corrections</b>
things	03	consists the things use things settle the things	consists of the things *No suggestion organise the things
party	03	do a party prepare the party make a party	give a party arrange the party throw a party
work(s)	03	achieve works achieve a work do works	do homework do a work do chores
money	02	bring money gain money	get money earn money *No suggestion
event	02	make event remember events	commemorate events
exam	02	get an exam pass an exam	pass an exam sit an exam
lesson(s)	02	have a lesson organise the lessons	prepare a lesson prepare lessons
level	02	get a level ameliorate the level	attain level raise the level
respect	02	express respect exchange respect	show respect accord respect

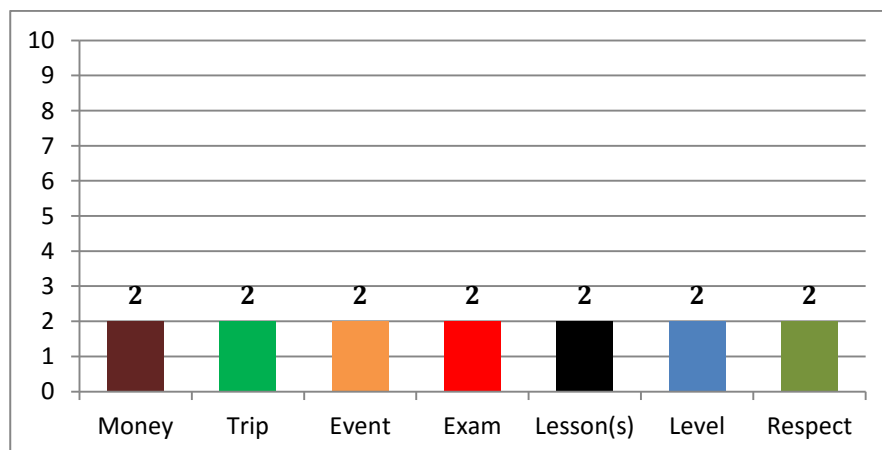
**Table 11: Nouns Frequently Combined with Deviant Verbs (Continued)**

Corpus-based studies dealing with collocation usually focus on the verb, since it is the element that conveys the arbitrary meaning within the combination. However, this study does not neglect the noun as an indispensable component of a V+N collocation. Table 11 investigates the high-frequency deviated nouns.

The causes of noun deviations can be traced back to several factors; one of which is that learners do not understand the meaning some nouns convey. Another reason is the misspelling or overgeneralisation of noun rules, i.e. applying the singular/plural rules for all the nouns, whether countable or uncountable. Ignorance of the whole V+N collocation is a strong reason for noun deviation, as well.



**Graph 14: Distribution of Nouns Frequently Combined with Deviant Verbs over Inappropriate Instances (Continues)**



**Graph 14: Distribution of Nouns Frequently Combined with Deviant Verbs over Inappropriate Instances (Continued)**

The noun ‘life’ was mistakenly used 06 times by at least one learner. This is a noun which usually collocates with verbs such as ‘to lose, to cling to, to spare, to take’, etc. In the prior examples, the combination was categorised as either ‘whole collocation inappropriate’

or ‘deviated verb’. A student wrote ‘use the life’ when he intended to say ‘gets used to life’. Another student used ‘create a life’ while the intended meaning was ‘to make life enjoyable’. The previous two examples were categorised as ‘whole collocation inappropriate.’ For the rest of the cases, the deviation was merely in the verb, and their correction would be by replacing the inappropriate verb with a more appropriate one like in this example:

Also, I want to receive a gift from the person I would like to marry and *to continue my life*.

This sentence should be phrased like this:

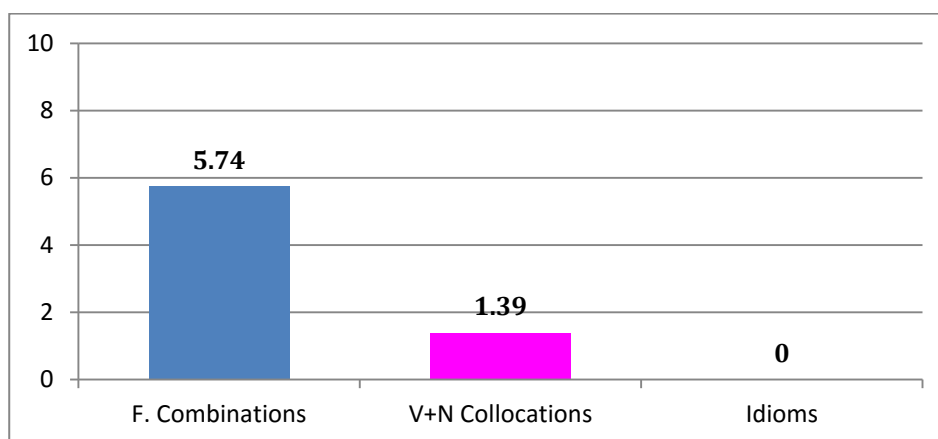
I also want to receive a gift from the man I would like to marry and *spend the rest of my life* with.

The other deviated nouns were also categorised as either ‘whole collocation inappropriate’ or ‘deviated verb’. Students’ unawareness of the existence of such word combinations as well as the lack of exposure to authentic materials was apparent in the combinations they had opted for. One student used ‘pass an exam’ while he meant ‘to sit (for) an exam’, and ‘get an exam’ was used to say ‘to pass an exam’. As reiterated before, corrections and suggestions were based on the collocations used by native speakers, in addition to the context of the sentence. Some combinations, however, could not be corrected, because there was no relatedness between what some learners had written and the context. There were not even suggestions to polish up the irrelevant erroneous collocations. An important example is the noun ‘work’. All the instances which included the plural form ‘works’ showed that the learners are unaware of the cases where the word ‘works’ can be used. The plural noun ‘works’ can only be used to refer to literary work, such as writing books, articles, or even painting. Otherwise, the plural is not used.

Average of F.C Use per Essay	Average of V+N Collocational Use per Essay	Average of Idiom Use per Essay
5.74	1.39	0

**Table 12: Average of Free Combinations/V+N Collocations/Idiom Usage per Essay**

Free combination usage dominated students' writings. Meanwhile, idioms were not used at all in all the 66 essays. In addition, erroneous collocations scored a high percentage compared to acceptable ones. What these statistics signify is that learners' formulaic competence is low. They rely on free combinations to express a certain meaning, while it would be more appropriate to use ready-made chunks (collocations and/or idioms). Therefore, their ideas are not conveyed properly, and their essays are deemed to be of low quality due to a lack of, both, preciseness and appropriateness.



**Graph 15: Comparison of the Average of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms per Essay**

Opting for free combinations more than collocations and idioms is expected, especially from non-native speakers. What is to be highlighted, though, is that the overuse of free combinations in instances where V+N collocations and idioms would be more appropriate is the problem.

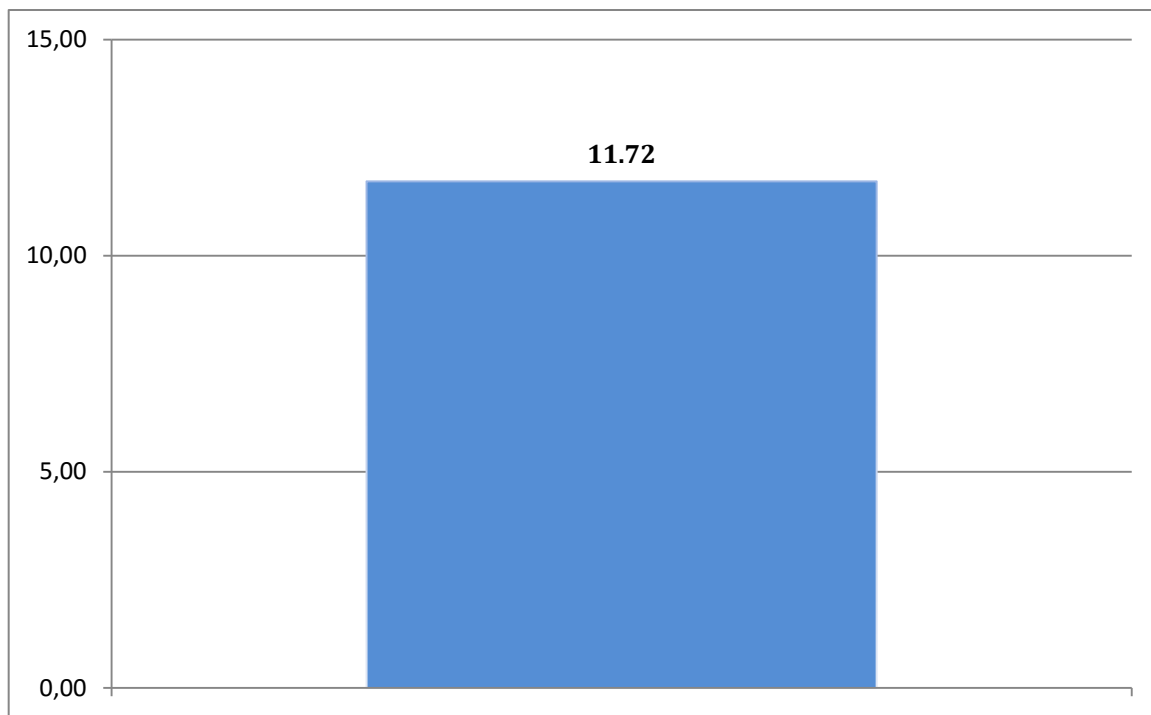
What is expected from EFL learners is to establish a balance in the use of the three (free combinations, collocations, and idioms). It is the overuse of one type of word combinations over the others that jeopardises the conveyance of the intended meaning; it also lowers the quality of writing.

Comparing the average of free combination usage to V+N collocations shows obviously the excessive usage of free combinations and the lack of usage of V+N collocations. Otherwise, how could it be acceptable that a complete essay averages less than 02 acceptable V+N collocations (1.39)? Logically, the essays were either cluttered with free combinations which were used without delimitation of their permissibility, or the V+N combinations produced by EFL learners were unacceptable. After investigation, it is obvious that both problems exist, an inappropriate overuse of free combinations and plenty of erroneous V+N collocations.

Average of V+N Collocational Use per Essay	Average of Grades
1.39	11.72

**Table 13: The Correlation between the Average of V+N Collocational Use (Success) and the Average of Grades**

The average of collocational failure is almost double the average of success in a single essay. This is evidence of the low collocational competence of the students. The study scored 141 erroneous collocations and 92 acceptable ones. Students had no real reference as to whether what verb combines or not with what noun. Therefore, they combined verbs with nouns that seemed to be appropriate to be associated with.



**Graph 16: Average of Grades of Student's Compositions**

If the average of grades (11.72/15) is compared to the average of V+N collocational success in EFL undergraduate learners' compositions, one would immediately notice that students' written productions were overvalued based on the analysis of Graph 15.

If students' essays are characterised by either an overuse of free combinations or a considerable number of erroneous V+N collocations (2.14 V+N collocations per essay), the overall average of grades should be also below average, let alone the total absence of idioms in 66 essays.

These findings show that instructors are either unaware of the various types of combinations taking place in their students' essays, or did not give enough consideration to the importance of V+N collocations in undergraduate EFL learners' writings. Thus, lack of unawareness also involves the EFL teachers. Table 14 details the issue further.

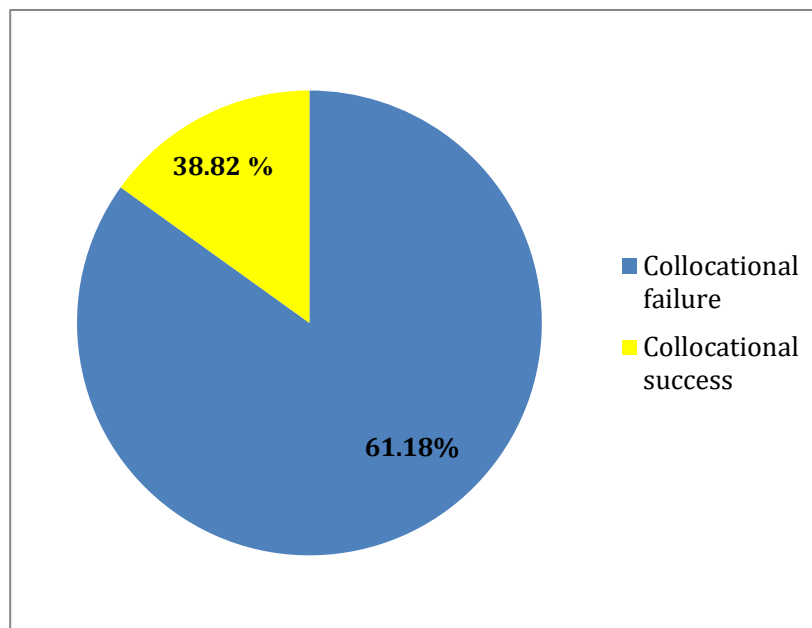
Frequency of Collocational Success	Average of Grades
38.82%	11.72

**Table 14: Analysis of the Relationship between Collocational Success in Students' Essays and Overall Grading Average**

Students were graded on a scale of 15, and the average from 66 essays is 11.72/15. This is considered to be average to good. On a different note, the frequency of collocational success is 38.82 % which is less than average. In other words, teachers awarded their students with average to good grades while they were unable to combine the verbs -the core of the sentence- with their appropriate nouns. Such sentences, according to native speakers, would be considered as sloppy and not conveying the whole appropriate meaning.

On a different level, such findings also suggest that teachers gave little to no importance to collocations (V+N in this case). Such negligence to this important notion may be due to the unawareness of the teachers themselves of the importance of collocations in improving the writing quality. Another reason is that teachers may not consider that the mistaken V+N collocations are erroneous. They might not be aware of the fact that joining a verb to a noun that does not combine with it can alter the meaning of the sentence.





**Graph 17: Frequency of Collocational Success/Failure per Essay**

The percentage of unacceptable collocations far exceeds that of the acceptable ones. If this graph were the only proof of EFL undergraduate learners' low competence, it would be enough. This is almost two thirds of the V+N collocations averaging in a single essay.

Learners' errors included both delexical and non-delexical verbs. The non- delexical verb 'to receive' has the highest score of error.

On the other hand, the delexical verb 'have' has the highest score of success followed by other delexical verbs. Non-delexical verbs come after.

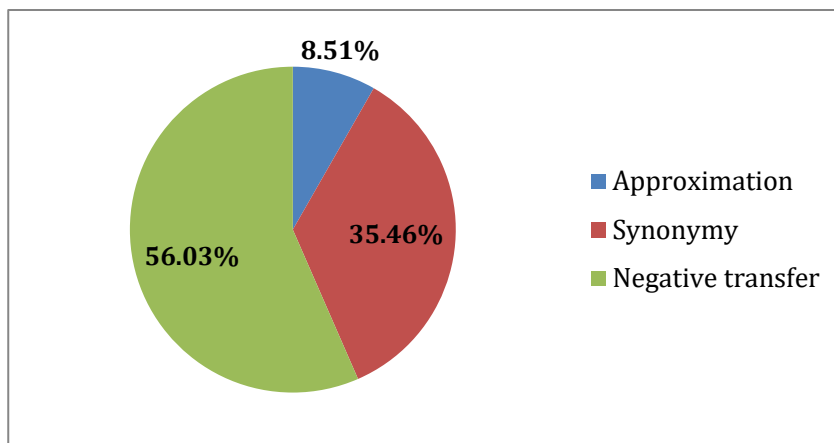
### 5.3. Error Causes

Source	Approximation	Synonymy	Negative Transfer
Frequency	12 (8.51%)	50 (35.46%)	79 (56.03%)
Total	141 (100%)		

**Table 15: Ratio of Subcategorised Errors in Students' Compositions**

Expectedly, the main cause for learners' errors is the influence of their mother tongue. Students wrote combinations such as 'ride the bus' (يركب الحافلة) /jarkab alh0afila/ instead of 'take the bus'. Synonymy is the second cause. This shows that students are not aware of the arbitrary nature of collocations, as they based their word choice on a free semantic substitutability, rather than a restricted one. On the same note, the results indicate that students do not differentiate between free combinations and collocations in terms of word selection and choice. Approximation scored a low frequency as students showed high semantic competence in differentiating between words.

According to Kuo (2009, p. 149), there are three main causes for collocational errors. These are approximation, synonymy, and negative transfer (also known as the interference of the mother tongue). Approximation refers to the incorrect use of some words and structures which have common semantic features that lead to the same meaning. An example is the use of 'fail' to say 'fell'. Synonymy is the use of synonyms which do not allow collocability in the word combination. For example, 'to make' can be mistakenly substituted by 'to do' in (to do/make a mistake). The influence of the mother tongue on the foreign language use is called negative transfer (as cited in Nesselhauf 2005, p. 86). The learner literally transfers a sentence from his/her mother tongue to the target language. For example, 'قهوة بالحليب' /qahwa balh0li:b/ is not 'milk coffee', but, 'white coffee'.



**Graph 18: Frequency of Subcategorised Errors in Student's Compositions**

Delexical verbs were given special attention in the study because of their semantic less-significant nature. The known delexical verbs are ‘have, take, make, give, go, do, and get’.

### 5.3.1. Approximation

Approximation	Number of Instances	Suggestion in O.C.D/ O.A.L.D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- able children</li> <li>- use transports</li> <li>- realise a statue</li> <li>- effect a person</li> <li>- do homeworks</li> <li>- wear golds</li> <li>- results illnesses</li> <li>- effect the individual</li> <li>- accept the chagement</li> <li>- express thank</li> </ul>	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-enable children</li> <li>- Use transportation</li> <li>- Achieve a status</li> <li>- affect a person</li> <li>- do homework</li> <li>- wear gold</li> <li>- causes illnesses</li> <li>- affect the individual</li> <li>- accept the change</li> <li>- express thanks</li> </ul>

**Table 16: Analysis of Learner Errors Caused by Approximation**

Learner errors are due to several factors; one of which is approximation. It is the incorrect use of words and structures sharing similar semantic features; the learners’ aim is to express the intended meaning. An example is using ‘*fell*’ to say ‘fail’. In the study, 12 instances were recorded, and some of the errors seem to be spelling mistakes, but this suggests a problem with an underlying difficulty to distinguish between some words which share some

phonological properties. The verb 'to enable' was confused with the adjective 'able'. This mistake occurred only once in one student's production. Such type of mistakes is not usual, yet, data lack evidence that it is a spelling mistake, since the confusion occurs between two distinct words and totally different word categories. Similar approximation difficulties extend to the use of 'golds' when 'gold' is required. Taking the context of the sentence into consideration, it is evident that, during the writing of the essay, the learner was unable to distinguish between 'to enable' (the verb) and 'able' (the adjective). On the other hand, if the mistake had been due to performance, it would have been corrected during revision. The combination 'accept the changement' can be categorised as occurring due to, either approximation or negative transfer. In the case of approximation, the close semantic features between 'change' and 'changement' play a role. The influence of L2 –which is French for Algerian students- can also be considered as a factor, because the equivalent of 'change' in French is 'changement'. The other instances revolve around the same difficulty that is the inability to distinguish between two semantically closely related words. Other cases require either the addition or omission of appropriate/inappropriate elements. Some other cases, however, require the replacement of the deviant verb by another one that is appropriate.

Another evidence supporting the idea that the prior mistakes are not spelling mistakes is the restricted nature of the erroneous verbs. The verb 'to affect', for instance, does not collocate with many nouns, because it has the negative connotation of bad influence. The verb 'to wear' only collocates with clothes and jewelry, and the deviated noun 'golds' is not commonly used even among beginners. The noun 'thanks' can be somewhat confusing due to its unpopular usage among foreign learners.

The following examples were retrieved from students' compositions, illustrating the cases mentioned in Table 16:

1. First and foremost, a car allows me to do daily chores effeciently driving a car rather than *using public transports*.
2. Besides, if people notice I am driving a porsh they will probably *realise my high statue* as nowadays many individuals judge their fellows by their appearance and what they currently possess.
3. Parents think that this [unclear word] make children having a strong personality which *able them (children)* to solve problems that facing them in their life.
4. As for me, I would like to receive three gifts, the first example is a big car, the second a house in front the sea and a visa to travel abroad. However, gifts still just a sign *to express our love and thank* and appreciate to those people whom they really deserve.
5. I like *to wear golds*. I like its shiness and color. So, that gold is one of my special gifts.
6. The last different is, the [unclear word] of communication I need in my home different means of communication such as: television, internet, and washing machines; because they help me a lot in *doing my homeworks* very quickly.
7. That influence depends on the character of the personne in the side of theme ability of *accepting the changement* in theme life.
8. Since the new life can *effect the individual* in different way. So, I advise every one to not change your home town, where he born.
9. Leaving your town and moving to a new town *effects bedly on the person* phisicly where he could have depreson because of his mixed feeling of anger, lonlyness, sadness which are results of living his home and friends and moving to a different, strange environment that he could not adopt.

### 5.3.2. Negative Transfer

Negative Transfer	Number of Instances	Suggestion in O.C.D/ O.A.L.D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- avoid habits</li> <li>- try a habit</li> <li>- give efforts</li> <li>- have depression</li> <li>- gain money</li> <li>- respect the needs</li> <li>- achieve desire</li> </ul>	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to not get into habits</li> <li>- develop a habit</li> <li>- make efforts</li> <li>- suffer from depression</li> <li>- get money</li> <li>- consider the needs</li> <li>- meet the needs</li> </ul>

**Table 17: Analysis of Learner Errors Caused by Negative Transfer**

In Table 17, negative transfer is investigated as the second cause for learner errors and the most important one. The influence of the mother tongue on the use of a foreign language is called negative transfer or the interference of the mother tongue. The learner literally transfers a sentence from his/her mother tongue to the target language. For example, قهوة بالحليب /qahwa balh0li:b/ is not 'milk coffee', but, 'white coffee'. 79 out of 141 instances of erroneous collocations are due to negative transfer from the learners' mother tongue (Algerian Arabic), standard Arabic, or L2 (French), which is the equivalent of 56.03 %. Literal negative transfer is very clear in students' productions. One student used 'bring money' whose equivalent in his mother tongue is 'يجيب الدراهم' /jZi:b drahm/. Another student used 'avoid habits' which was used in the context of bad habits. Its equivalent in standard Arabic is 'اجتناب' /juZarib ʔada ʔada 'Try a habit' stands for 'عادة (جديدة) (السنية)'. 'respect the needs' was intended to mean 'يراعي الاحتياجات'. The

source of these errors does not only stem from lack of knowledge of collocations, but from misunderstanding of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic differences between languages. Had the learners had taken into consideration such differences, the frequency of such errors would have certainly been lesser.

The following examples represent learners' errors taken from their original context:

1. The cultural books make me a knowledgeable person, also they help me *to avoid other bad habits*, like smoking, they are my favourite types of books because they talk about logical things and facts.
2. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *giving efforts*.
3. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new lifestyle, have a better job, have a new friends, *try new habits*, and have a new lifestyle.
4. Every father does his best to save his child, so it is obvious that he will try anything in order *to achieve his desire*, and being so strict is one of the aspects that the fathers or mothers should follow and every parent has his own reasons about why he should be so strict.
5. Pens Also are one of the important gift that I like to receive because I like writing with so much and I need pens to write and imagine if the pen is from someone speciall is give me rest and comfortable to write that means to me this person *respect and understand my needs* because is one of important dreams "writing" and I appreciate this a lot because there is some one you and like to help me and make my dreams come true.

6. Leaving your town and moving to a new town effects badly on the person phisicly where he could *have depreson* because of his mixed feeling of anger, lonlyness, sadness which are results of living his home and friends and moving to a different, strange environment that he could not adopt.

### 5.3.3. Synonymy

Synonymy	Number of instances	Suggestion in O.C.D/ O.A.L.D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loose relationships</li> <li>- make events (happy)</li> <li>- make crimes</li> <li>- consist the things</li> <li>- commit mistakes</li> </ul>	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- break off relationships</li> <li>- create moments of happiness</li> <li>- commit crimes</li> <li>- consists of the things</li> <li>- make mistakes</li> </ul>

**Table 18: Analysis of Learner Errors caused by Synonymy**

Synonymy is the use of synonyms which do not allow collocability in the word combination. For example, ‘to make’ can be mistakenly substituted by ‘to do’ in (e.g. do/make a mistake). In this study, synonymy scored the second highest error-frequency with 50 instances out of 141. The difficulty in the aforementioned erroneous word combinations caused by synonymy lies in the utilisation of verbs. Being close in meaning, this fact makes the learner assume that any verb that shares a part of the meaning can be a substitute for the appropriate verb. The verbs ‘lose’ and ‘break-off’ share the same negative connotation of cutting or ending the relationship. Thus, the foreign language learner reckons that they can be used interchangeably. The same thing can be said about ‘to commit’ and ‘to make’; they share a similar semantic prosody which makes them difficult to distinguish. The miscollocations stated in the previous table were recorded once, i.e. they were not repeated more than once. Synonymy errors consist 35.46 % of the overall erroneous collocations. This shows that the



learners have not mastered other lexical notions, which goes beyond memorising new words or word chunks. The problem, in this case, revolves around the awareness that absolute synonymy is an aspect languages could ill-afford. That is to say, words might share similar meanings, but cannot be considered to be identical since words are associated with specific contexts and co-texts.

The following are typical examples of errors produced due to synonymy in the learner's interlanguage:

1. I will *just introduce three examples*. Visiting many countries, watching a match in a European stadium and studying in a foreign country.
2. *To receive a car*, some cultural books and have a trip to visit another town was my favorite examples of the gifts which I want to receive.
3. I only want *receive a trip ticket* to Mexico and a car.
4. Family build up under a set of rules, followed by each member living on. Everyone helps the other *to achieve a particular kind of work* or function, so they complete each other.
5. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination to start up a fresh career and a promising future *grasping every information* I lie eyes on.
6. I wish the God *to accept my final wish* because it is very important to me.
7. Perfumes are those bottle that contain a treated liquid and has a special smell. It really a sweet present that *express the kindness* of the gifter whenever it price expensive or not.

The previous examples might sound correct to a non-proficient learner, but, for a native speaker or an advanced learner, they are non-felicitous with regard to both, the context and the word combination.

The erroneous collocations illustrated in Table 14 were produced by the learners as follows:

1. The watch horrible films and play videogames in will they kill persons and because of these they will *make crimes* easily because they will do the same as in films and in videogames.
2. the only thing which they want is to protect our traditions, and follow the same steps as they do. and remain it existed between us untill the end, for instance. if we *committed mistakes* about our religion.
3. Rather, they are a result of a long run relationships. We build our relationships with our parents, brothers, sisters, friends and with customers in our business over a long spun of experiences and transactions. So, to move to a new town means *to loose some of the social relationships*.
4. The thing that *make the happy events* better is the gifts because they are sign of love and care.
5. In the last, we can say that my birthday is coming soon and my list which *consiste the things* that I want to have such as: the car, the phone and the cat is finished.

<b>Suggested Verb</b>	<b>Number of Instances</b>
make	09
get	06
win	04
develop	04
take	04
use	04
experience	04
do	04
show	03
have	03
adopt	03
obtain	03
enjoy	03
change	02
stir	01

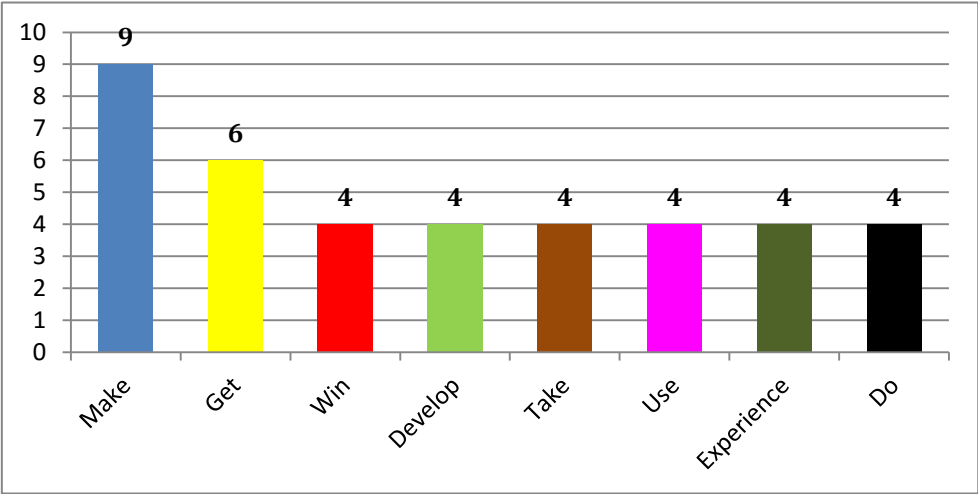
**Table 19: Verbs that Were Suggested as Corrections in the Essays of One Learner or More**

Table 19 portrays the verbs that were suggested as corrections in the essays of EFL learners. The verb ‘to make’ had the highest frequency of suggestion with 09 instances out of 141 erroneous collocations. It is worth noting that, in the verb suggestions, there are only 03 delexical verbs; the rest are non-delexical verbs. This can be interpreted mainly by the fact that the suggestions that were taken from O.A.L.D and O.C.D represent authentic English. Therefore, correctness and appropriateness norms are implemented.

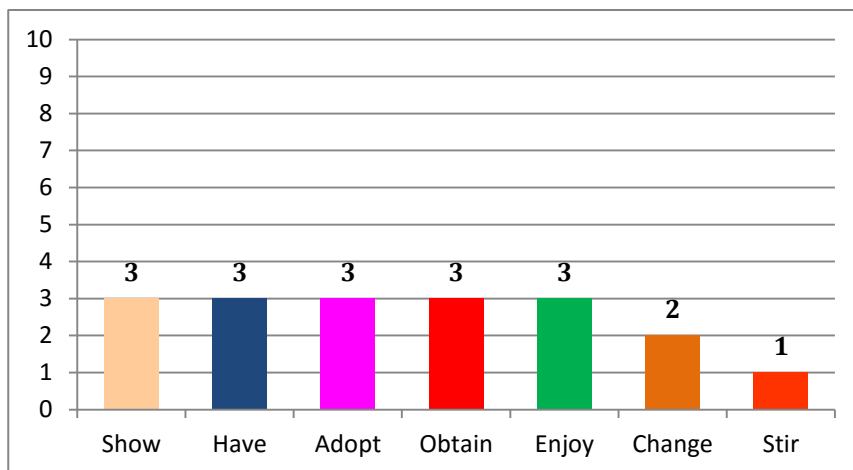
Obviously, the difference between the verbs used by the EFL learners and their counterparts suggested by O.A.L.D and O.C.D shows how important it is to consider appropriateness while writing, an aim that EFL learners did not focus on. Such conclusions provide an answer, at least, to one of the questions raised in the study (to what extent do second year EFL undergraduate students of English at Université des Frères Mentouri master V+N collocational language while writing essays?). The answer is those EFL learners have

not achieved the mastery of this important aspect of the linguistic competence. They lack both awareness and practical skills in collocational usage of V+N collocations.

On a different note, an amount of scepticism remains concerning the suggested verbs in Table 19. That is to say, since the use of delexical verbs denotes low level, why does the verb 'to make' have such a high-suggestion frequency?' The answer is correction suggestions are based on the erroneous verb used by the learner in his/her production besides the context of the whole sentence. In other words, replacing a non-delexical verb by a delexical one evidences that students are unable to successfully select the appropriate verb based on native speaker metrics. They treat the majority of V+N combinations as free combinations where the verb can be separated from the noun. Such choices are made according to their non-native linguistic inclinations which are biased by their mother tongue and L2.



**Graph 19: Distribution of Verb Suggestions as Corrections in Student's Compositions (continues)**



**Graph 19: Distribution of Verb Suggestions as Corrections in Student's Compositions (Continued)**

The following are examples of instances where the verb 'to make' was suggested:

1. The second reason is when the children stop learning and *giving efforts*.
2. Clothes make me feel good and since we are living in a society that admires the appearances, it would be right to fit in and *make a well known presence*.
3. Moving to live in a new town means a new life with new personnes, different mentalities, you will be afraid of dealing your life, *doing mistakes* in dealing with the new personnes because you don't know their thinking way.

These examples can be corrected like this:

1. The second reason is when children stop learning and *making efforts*.
2. Clothes make me feel good, and since we are living in a society that judges by appearance, it would be right to fit in and *make a good impression*.
3. Moving to live in a new town means a new life with new people who have different mentalities. You will be afraid of dealing with your life, and *making mistakes* in dealing with new people, because you don't know their way of thinking.

Collocation Intended	Combinations Produced
Spend (the rest of) life	continue life end life complete life
Form relationship (s)	require a relationship compose relationships
Develop a habit	try a habit discover habits know habits
Give a party	do a party make a party
Do work	do works
Do work	achieve work achieve works
Make money	gain money bring money
Win a trip	have a trip receive a trip

**Table 20: Collocations that Would Have Been Appropriate Several Times**

Many of the erroneous V+N lexical collocations that were employed by EFL undergraduate learners were not produced based on pragmatic metrics known to native speakers. EFL learners chose word combinations on the basis of what seemed right and sounded familiar. The influence of the mother tongue (Algerian Arabic) and L2 (French) is the main culprit for such deviations. In many cases, free combinations were used instead of collocations, or totally unacceptable collocations were produced.

The suggestions in Table 20 show non-felicity between the collocations produced and the ones intended. The erroneous collocations were produced by one student. 07 cases of non-

felicity were recorded. In the aforementioned cases, the deviations were either in the verb, the noun, or the whole collocation being inappropriate. Some students used ‘continue life’, ‘end life’, and ‘complete life’ to convey ‘spend (the rest of) life’. For a native speaker, ‘to continue life’ is an unacceptable collocation, and, thus, does not exist in the English language, even as a free combination. When a native speaker of English uses ‘to end life’, he/she means ‘to terminate life’ by killing somebody or committing suicide. The meaning, thus, is totally deviated from what the learner intended to say. The equivalent of ‘to complete life’ in Algerian Arabic (Algerian dialect) is 'نكمل الحياة' /nkml lah0jat/; in Standard Arabic, the equivalent is 'أكمل الحياة' /ukmilu alh0ajat/. The word combination ‘to complete life’- similar to ‘to continue life’- is not acceptable in the English neither as a collocation nor free combination. If the verb ‘to complete’ is defined, it means to finish doing something, and since life is neither a task nor a project, it cannot be completed. What the learners wanted to say is ‘to spend (the rest of) life’, whose equivalent in Standard Arabic is 'يقضي (بقية) الحياة' /jaqd0i: baqijat alh0ajat/. The latter is the appropriate equivalent of ‘to spend (the rest of) life’ in English.

Other deviations centre on the noun. For instance, the use of ‘to do works’ means that the learner is unaware that the term ‘works’ is used for literary works, such as ‘books, articles, etc.’ Statistics in Table 20 also reveal a strong tendency to use general verbs to barely and safely convey the meaning, neglecting the phraseological connections between the verbs and the nouns. As a result, the intended meaning is either not conveyed, or a free combination takes the place of a more appropriate collocation. The immediate outcome of such deviations is a non-coherent essay that sounds non-native-like to the Anglo-phone sensibilities.

1. For me, if I have the chance to choose my birthday gifts, I would like to have post card, self phone or clothes. Because these three things really *complete my life*.

2. The old people always know how *to require a good relationship* with the new neighbours, but the young cannot do the same thing because they are little.
3. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new life style, have a better job, have new friends, *try new habits* and have a new life style.
4. House is one of my dreams. I like to have a nice house for example I build my room red. I *make party* with my friends at night.
5. Every one helps the other *to achieve a particular kind of work* or function, so they complete each other.
6. I want to sing and play *guitar* in the streets of London *to bring money*.
7. The initial example of the gifts *which* I want to receive is a nice fast car. The car is one of my best choices, because I like to drive fast in the empty roads, also *to have trips* to the sea or to another places with my favorit friends.



## **Conclusion**

The main findings of chapter five can be summarized as follows: The frequency of the use of free combinations far exceeded that of collocations. What is also to be noticed is that learners' essays recorded no idioms. Besides this, the study recorded a high frequency of miscollocations in comparison to appropriate collocations which did not exceed 92. Amongst the appropriate collocations in learners' productions, the majority were delexical verbs (72.83%), a sign of lack in the lexical repertoire. Deviations in the verb scored more than the other types. This shows that learners have difficulty in choosing the right verb more than the right noun. Finally, the results show that learners transfer verbs negatively from their mother tongue or second language (French).

## **Chapter Six: The Influence of Success/Failure of Collocational Use on Learners' Productions and Grades**

### **Introduction**

In an attempt to measure EFL undergraduate learners' language proficiency, essay compositions with both the lowest and highest grades will be studied separately. The main goal behind such detailed investigation is to identify the influence of collocational errors (V+N, in this case) on the overall grading of the learners' essays. Another aim is to pin down the degree of influence of the overuse of free combinations on the grading and quality of essays. Another crucial conclusion to be reached in the next section is teachers' awareness of the importance of Verb+Noun collocations in their students' writings.

It has to be admitted, nonetheless, that the grading decision does not solely consider V+N collocations, but, also, grammar, punctuation, diction, style, etc. Therefore, collocational success/failure will not be the only determinants of the accuracy of grades, but the main ones.

### **6.1. The Compositions with the Lowest Grades**

#### **6.1.1. Copy 01**

<b>Number of Free Combinations</b>	<b>Number of Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Idioms</b>
00	05	00

**Table 21: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 01**

In the first copy, there was only one acceptable V+N collocation. The same thing goes for free combinations (V+N free combinations). As previously stated, the study recorded no idiom in 66 essays.

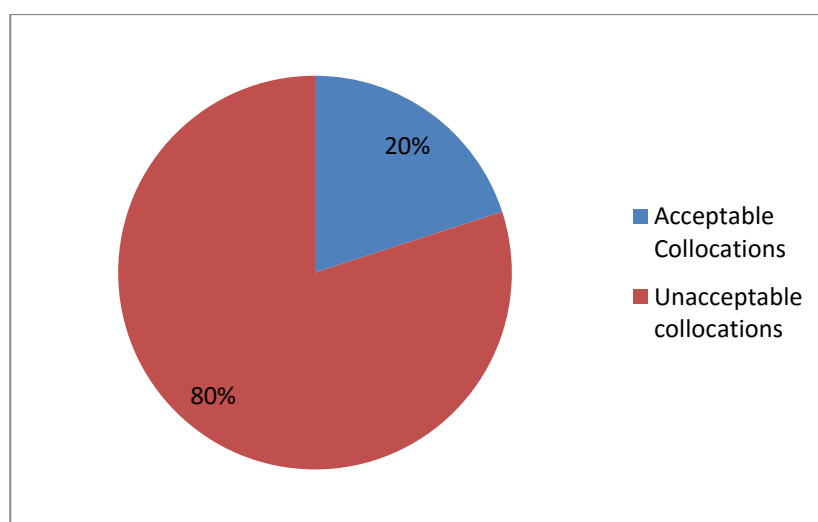
Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
07.5	01	04

**Table 22: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 01**

The only case where the V+N collocation was correctly used was in this example:

- Moving to a new town puts you in a situation where you must *to have a good and strong control* your self to have a nice life.

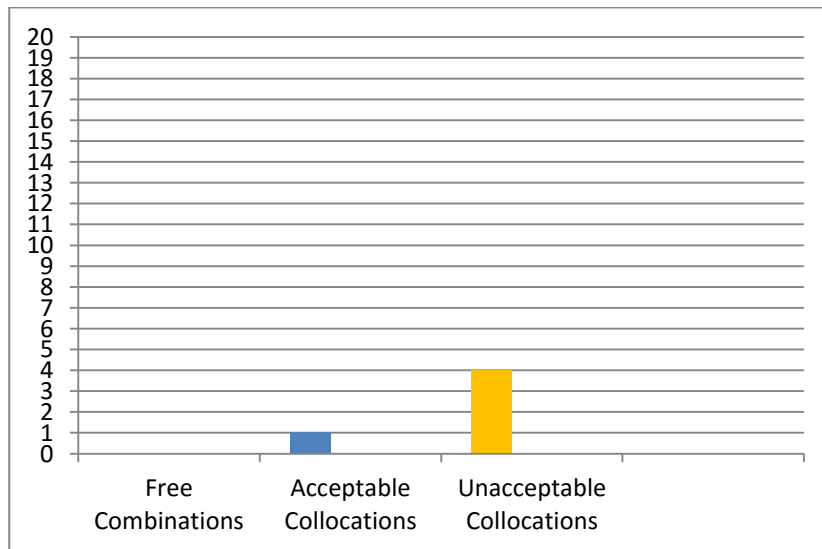
Compared to the other 04 unacceptable V+N collocations, it is obvious that the student has a low level of mastery of V+N collocations. What needs to be stressed, though, is the grade. Taking into consideration the importance of V+N collocations among other types of lexical/grammatical collocations, the teacher, in this case, was accurate to reward 7.5 as a grade.



**Graph 20: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 01**

The following examples represent all the unacceptable collocations in copy 01:

1. That influence depends on the character of the personne in the side of theme ability of *accepting the changement* in theme life.
2. Moving to live in a new town means a new life with new personnes, different mentalities, you will be afraid of dealing your life, *doing mistakes* in dealing with the new personnes because you don't know their thinking way.
3. Moving to live in a new town means a new life with new personnes, different mentalities, you will be afraid of dealing your life, doing mistakes in dealing with the new personnes because you don't know their thinking way. your mind still thinking of the causes that make you moving to this new town and afraid of *finding theme (causes)* again like the bad neighbours, bad thinking way of them, troubles with them.
4. In another way, moving to live in a new town may influence positivly on you. You will discover new ways of social life, different from your last life in your last town, you will *see new people*, have a new relations wich can rich you you with a new informations.



**Graph 21: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 01**

### 6.1.2. Copy 02

<b>Number of Free Combinations</b>	<b>Number of Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Idioms</b>
05	06	00

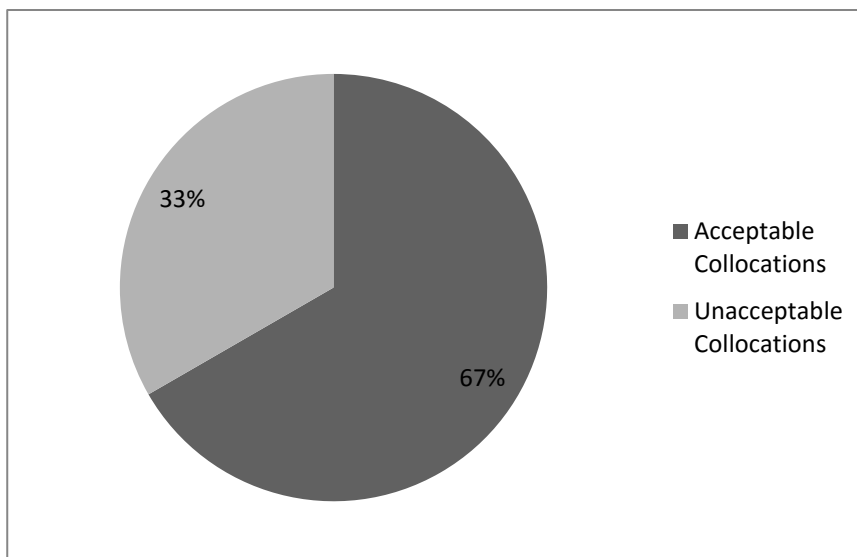
**Table 23: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 02**

In the second copy, there were 04 V+N free combinations. What was unexpected is the low number of erroneous collocations, because, regarding the final grade, it can be assumed that either the learner ignored other important techniques of essay writing, or the teacher did not consider the fact that he/she made few collocational errors.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Acceptable Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Unacceptable Collocations</b>
08	04	02

**Table 24: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 02**

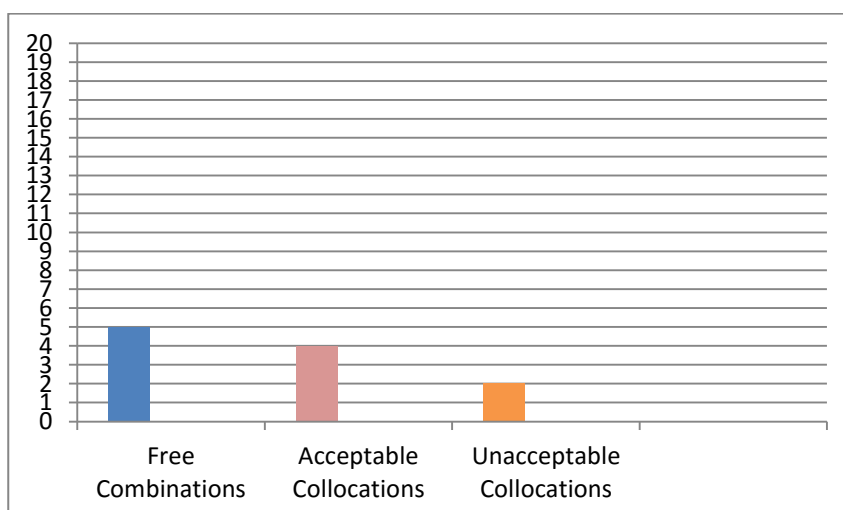
In essay writings, it is usually expected that free combinations are used more than collocations, especially for EFL learners. However, using collocations more than free combinations is not a sign that there is a lack of use in the latter. What is more important is the frequency of collocational error in the essays: the less collocational errors a learner makes, the better the grading should be.



**Graph 22: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 02**

Some of the instances where free combinations were used include the following:

1. For me, I like *to give gifts*, because I feel that is the most thing that makes people so happy, and you can sometimes achieve their dream.
2. First of all, computure is a wonderful gift. I like *to receive computure* [unclear word] the one who I like so much especially if he secceed in his study.



**Graph 23: Number of Free Combinations/Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 02**

The following are some examples of acceptable V+N collocations from the learners' essays:

1. Everyone *has a dream* in his life who works every day and every night in order to achieve it, and he do what ever he can.
2. For example, my cousin siham received her mother to El hadje, and she achieved it her mother dream, she was very happy, because *visiting Makah*.

The only unacceptable collocations in copy 02 are the following:

3. It makes him very happy especially if it is your own dream. For example, my brother Samir who always want to buy a computure which helps him in his study , I like to receive to him if he will *get his baccalorite exam*.
4. El Hadje is the most dream and gift that I dream to achieve it every day and every night, because I feel that it is the best present that any person can *give it (pilgrimage)* to his/her parants especially if his/her parents want to go there.

### 6.1.3. Copy 03

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
01	05	00

**Table 25: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 03**

In this copy, the number of V+N acceptable collocations surpassed that of unacceptable ones. What is obvious is that the student received 08/15, because he/she failed to adhere to the writing techniques (introduction, body, conclusion, punctuation, etc.). Although V+N free

combinations were not used frequently, it must be noted that that did not influence the gist of the essay.

At the beginning of this section of the analysis, it has been stated that collocational success or failure are not the only criteria for determining the correctness of the grades. This is a strong reason to welcome various interpretations of the grading decisions made by the teachers. Such premise is to be followed in analysing all the copies with either the highest or lowest grades.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Acceptable Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Unacceptable Collocations</b>
08	04	01

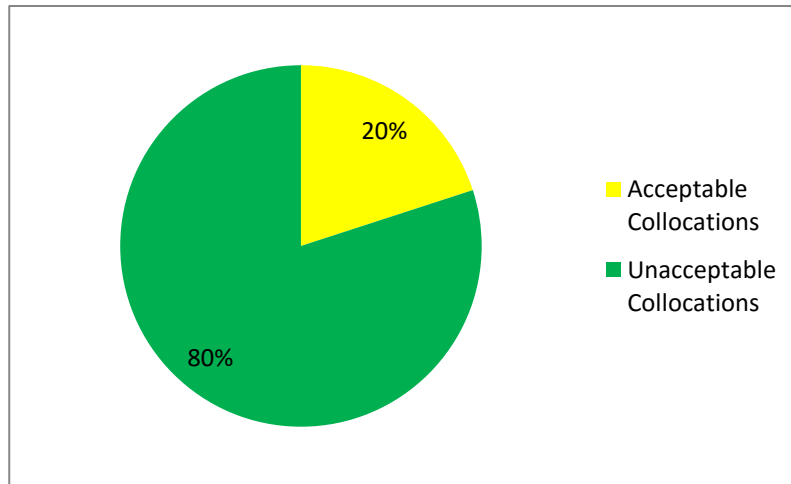
**Table 26: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 03**

The mistake that was made in the recorded unacceptable V+N collocation was the absence of the preposition ‘in’. The example is phrased in the following way:

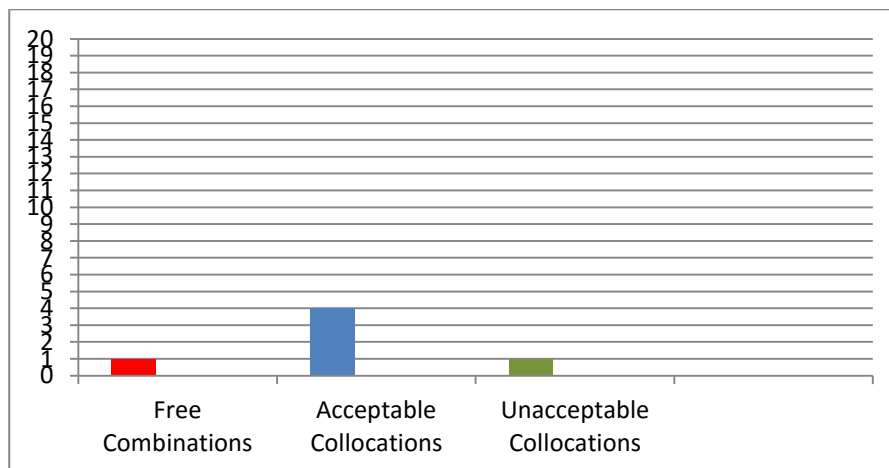
- Moving from one place to another sometimes creates social problems such as lack of communication. They find lot of difficulties to contact with the other’s and they find them selves which *results some illnesses* for them as phobia xenophobia or a fear of being among people.

The correction of this unacceptable collocation is to either use “*results in some illnesses*” or “*causes some illnesses*”





**Graph 24: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 03**



**Graph 25: Number of Free Combinations/Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 03**

The free combination example is the following:

- Moving from one place to another sometimes creates social problems such as lack of communication. They *find lot of difficulties* to contact with the other's and they find them selves which results some illnesses for them as phobia xenophobia or a fear of being among people.

The acceptable V+N collocations used in copy 03 are

1. Getting old in your town within your friends your neighbours and *knowing every places* is one of the most wonderful thing's that you can have in your life.

2. Moving from one place to another sometimes *creates social problems* such as lack of communication.
3. Although the social problems we can *find some behavioral one's (problems)*, which are mainly related to each other.
4. *Knowing new friends* is the most dangerous effect of moving to a new town.

#### 6.1.4. Copy 04

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
01	06	00

**Table 27: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 04**

The only free combination that was highlighted in copy 04 is the following:

- The other part of people that they do not leave their towns. They are always afraid for losing their friends and jobs and even their personality or do not want *to change their lifestyle*.

For the other word combinations, there were 04 correct Verb+Noun collocations, and only 02 erroneous ones. The essay, however, received the grade: 07/15. Such grade might be considered not enough for a student who only made 02 mistakes in V+N collocations. Nonetheless, there were other factors coming into play when the paper was corrected.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
07	04	02

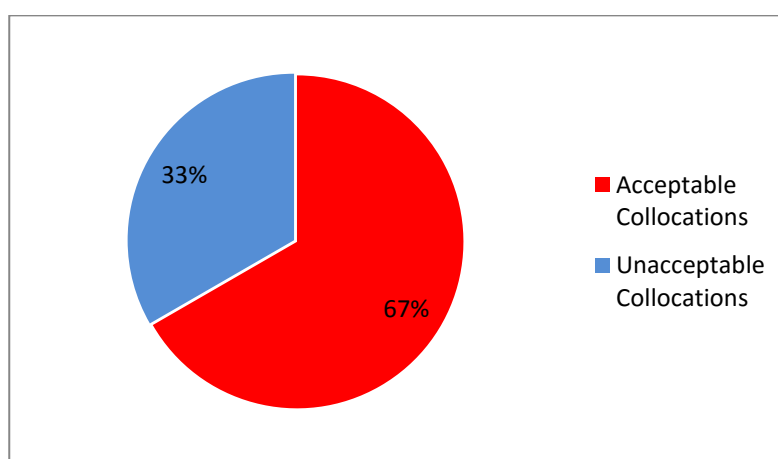
**Table 28: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 04**

Analysing copy 04 carefully, one would highlight the following mistakes:

1. Difficulty in using the appropriate tense
2. Numerous mistakes in punctuation.
3. Absence or inappropriateness of the thesis statement.
4. Lack of parallelism within sentences.
5. An insufficient development of the essay, in general.

Although all these problems contributed in the degeneration of the quality of the essay, what is noticed (in copy 04 as well as other copies) is that the teachers did not signal the collocational errors of the learners. This could be due to the significant number of copies to correct; however, skipping such mistakes shows that the teachers were not aware of these mistakes.

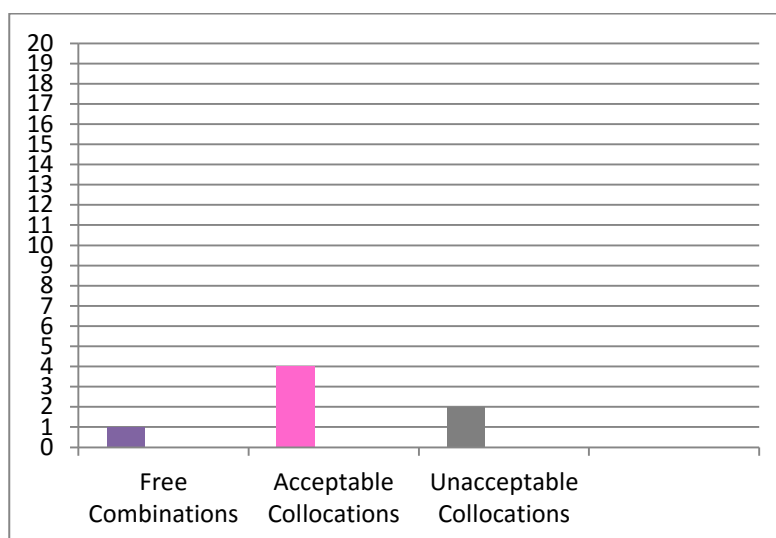
The mistakes that were constantly highlighted were spelling, tense, and, sometimes, punctuation mistakes. Such finding provokes speculation about the teachers' attitude toward collocational knowledge and collocational competence. The most justifiable interpretation is that teachers are not aware of the importance of collocations in writing.



**Graph 26: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 04**

Copy 04 contains 04 correct instances of Verb+Noun collocations.

1. Moving to a new town *have many effects*, some of them good and some of them not good.
2. The negative effects of moving to a new town is that you *left many things* behind your friends, family, work, daily life and habbits that you find it only in your town.
3. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new life style, *have a better job*, have new friends, try new habits and have a new life style.
4. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new life style, have a better job, *have new friends*, try new habits and have a new life style.



**Graph 27: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 04**

The unacceptable collocations spotted in copy 04 are the following:

1. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as *developing a new life style*, have a better job, have new friends, try new habits and have a new life style.
2. In the other side, there are many good effects of moving to a new town such as developing a new life style, have a better job, have new friends, *try new habits* and have a new life style.

#### 6.1.5. Copy 05

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
00	07	00

**Table 29: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 05**

Copy 05 has the highest number of acceptable collocations among all the lowest grades' copies, and with only one erroneous collocation. Although there were no V+N free combinations in the whole essay, the message delivery was not affected.

Similar to the other copies, the teacher did not highlight any of the collocational errors made in the essay –including V+N collocations. Copy 05 contained some grammatical mistakes:

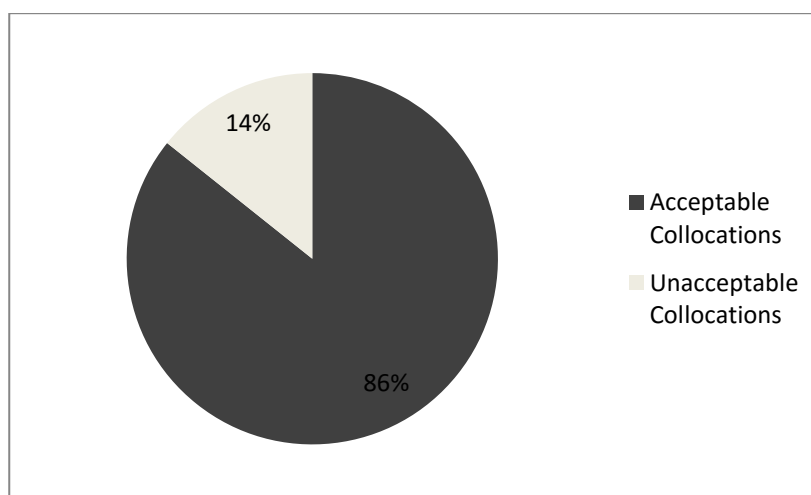
1. Articles
2. Tense
3. Prepositions

There were also spelling and punctuation mistakes.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
06.5	06	01

**Table 30: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 05**

The essay composed in copy 05 was cluttered with many mistakes that affected it negatively. The fact that it received a mark of 6.5/15 is acceptable. In other words, even though the collocational success frequency was high, that did not help in increasing the mark. Such result is acceptable since writing is an interconnected organism of various elements and techniques, carefully interwoven to produce a solid composition.

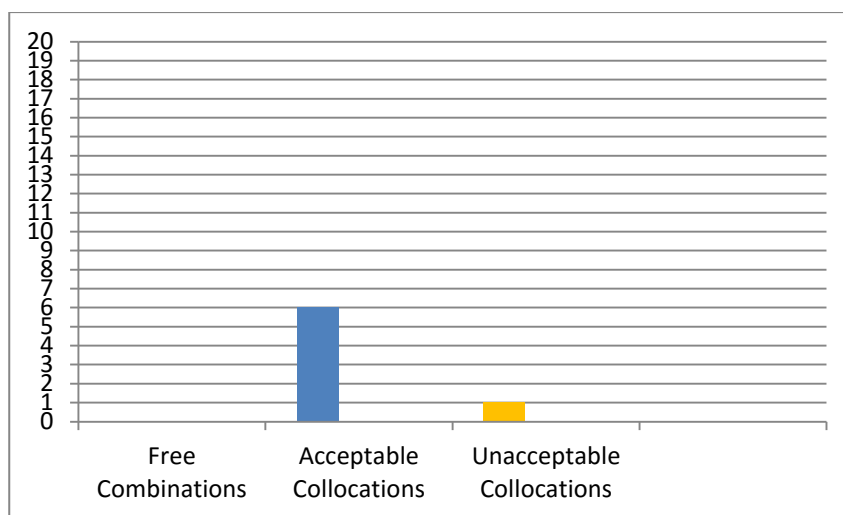


**Graph 28: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 05**

The correct examples from copy 05 come as the following:

1. Town is a beautiful place more people wanted live on this place. It *has a new places* and other situations, my family moving to a new town has a lot of effects: This moving has a set of effects.

2. Town is a beautiful place more people wanted live on this place. It *has a new places and other situations*, my family moving to a new town has a lot of effects: This moving has a set of effects.
3. Town is a beautiful place more people wanted live on this place. It has a new places and other situations, my family moving to a new town *has a lot of effects*: This moving has a set of effects.
4. Second, know a new people. in the beginning, we can't contact with any one, but with time, we know a new people and deffrence culture and new friend can help us living eazy, then *learn new things*, we don't know before in the old town.
5. whoever, in the new town in the short period, whowever, diffrences in a lot of thing, we can contact and *learn any things* we wanted.
6. Third, *find a beatiful place*. in the new town, we find a beatiful sea sea and lots of street spesific in the night.



**Graph 29: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 05**

### 6.1.6. Copy 06

<b>Number of Free Combinations</b>	<b>Number of Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Idioms</b>
03	05	00

**Table 31: Number of Free Combinations/V+N Collocations/Idioms in Copy 06**

Copy 06 received the lowest grade amongst all the lowest grades' copies. What is contradictory about this copy is that no unacceptable V+N collocation was recorded. Since this last section focuses mainly on errors –as well as other aspects- and their influence on the grading of learners' compositions, what resulted in such a low grade is the shortness of the essay. Even the teacher commented: “is this an essay???” The essay recorded:

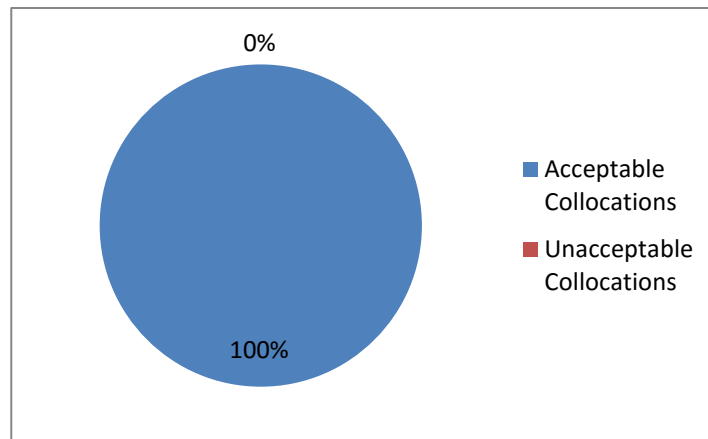
1. Absence of the thesis statement
2. Spelling mistakes
3. Insufficient development of ideas
4. Punctuation mistakes

Since there were no erroneous collocations in the study, it is obvious that the aforementioned remarks led to the low copy 05 received.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Acceptable Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Unacceptable Collocations</b>
05	05	00

**Table 32: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 06**

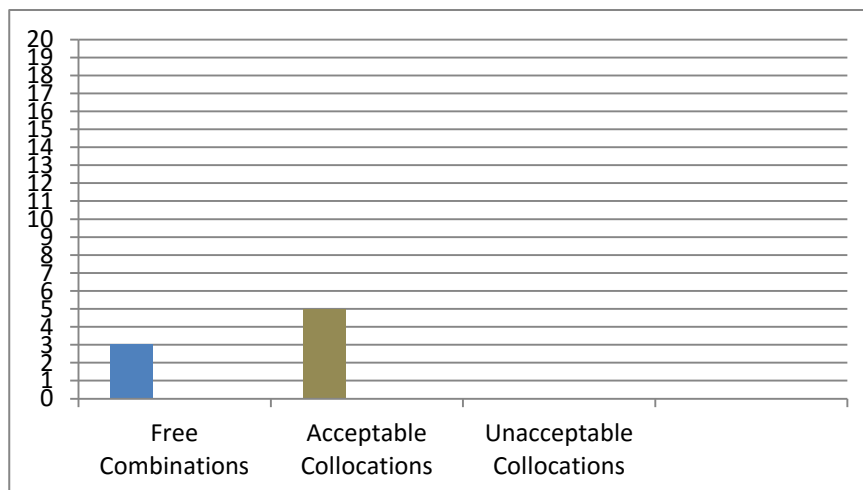




**Graph 30: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 06**

The free combinations that were identified in copy 06 are the following:

1. Some parents are so strict with their children. First, parents *have a big responsibility* which is protecting their children a maximum because parents have more experience than them.
2. After that, there are some parents who are so strict because in their childhood their parents were also so strict and this habit *influenced them (the parents)* that's why they are so strict today with their own children.
3. that's why I think, parents must be strict in some cases and should be cool in other cases too in order *to keep a good relationship* with their children.



**Graph 31: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 06**

The following are all the cases of acceptable collocations in copy 06:

1. Some parents are so strict with their children. First, parents have a big responsibility which is *protecting their children* a maximum because parents have more experience than them.
2. Some parents are so strict with their children. First, parents have a big responsibility which is protecting their children a maximum because parents *have more experience* than them.
3. then, parents *love so much their children* and without any doubt they want to see always their children at the top and living in happiness.
4. then, parents love so much their children and without any doubt they want *to see always their children* at the top and living in happiness.

## 6.2. Copies with the Highest Grades

In the following section, the same procedure is carried out except that the centre of investigation is the influence of the recorded V+N collocations (acceptable/ unacceptable) on the high grades learners received in 08 copies.

### 6.2.1. Copy 01

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
01	05	00

**Table 33: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 01**

In copy 01, the only V+N free combination that was highlighted is the following:

- Parents want to protect their children from negative things such as drugs. Always, they feel afraid about their future, they *want it (the future)* to be a better one.

Concerning the number of unacceptable collocations, there were 02 unacceptable collocations; a number that is not different from that of the copies with the lowest grades. Even for the acceptable collocations, there were 03 instances.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
14.5	03	02

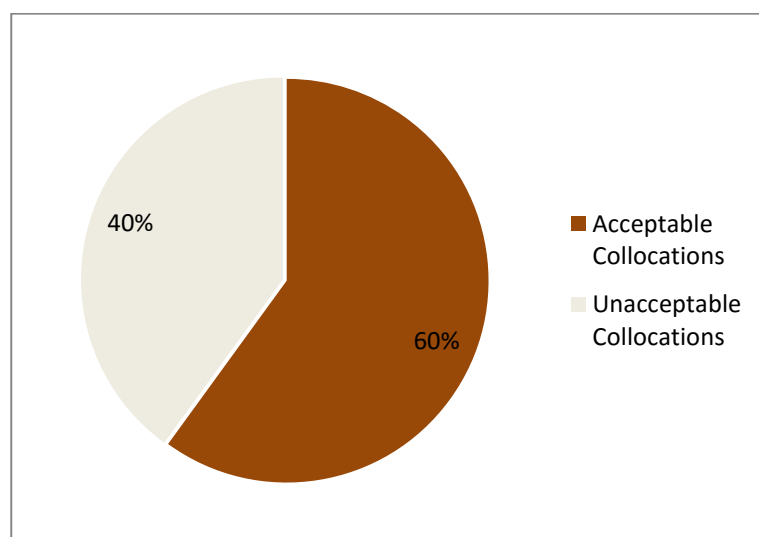
**Table 34: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 01**

With regard to copy 01, there are no significant errors that ought to be mentioned, except for very few grammatical mistakes such as the article in one case, or spelling mistakes

(“responsability” instead of “responsibility”). Therefore, when such mistakes are almost non-existent, the teacher could have turned to the erroneous V+N collocations. However, those mistakes were not taken into consideration. This, again, confirms what has been stated before that teachers pay no attention to collocational errors in the essays of their students due to a lack of awareness of their importance and existence.

It is common amongst people who are constantly exposed to English that it is not appropriate to say “to put the rules” instead of “to make/to establish the rules.”

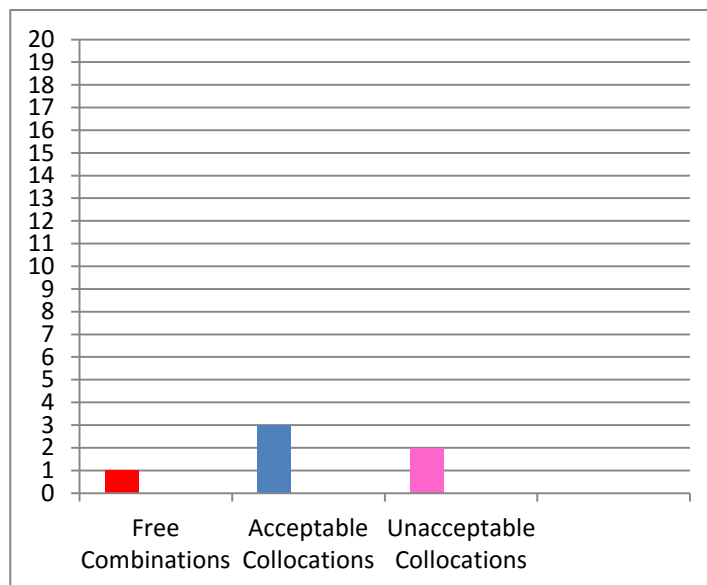
It can be said, hence, that, at least, in copy 01, the teacher did not take into consideration collocations when giving the grade.



**Graph 32: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 01**

Here is the list of erroneous collocations in copy 01:

1. Thus, they look for suitable conditions to live, they usually *put rules* to follow that is why parents seem so strict.
2. To sum up, we conclude by saying that parents are like candle which *lights our life*.



**Graph 33: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 01**

In copy 01, there were 03 cases of acceptable V+N collocations:

1. Parents want *to protect their children* from negative things such as drugs. Always, they feel afraid about their future, they want it to be a better one.
2. The second cause that *makes parents* so strict is responsibility, it is not easy to take a good care of their children.
3. Even if they are so strict they look for something beneficial, we must respect them and *follow their rules*.

### 6.2.2. Copy 02

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
01	04	00

**Table 35: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 02**

The mistakes that were collected in copy 02 can be summarised in the following points:

1. Spelling mistakes
2. Tense errors

On the other hand, the thesis statement was well-phrased, and the ideas were, to a certain extent, adequately developed. On a different note, from a collocational standpoint, the teacher gave no importance to the only V+N erroneous collocation in the essay.

This is the erroneous collocation that was recorded in copy 02:

- So, to move to a new town means to *loose some of the social relationships*.

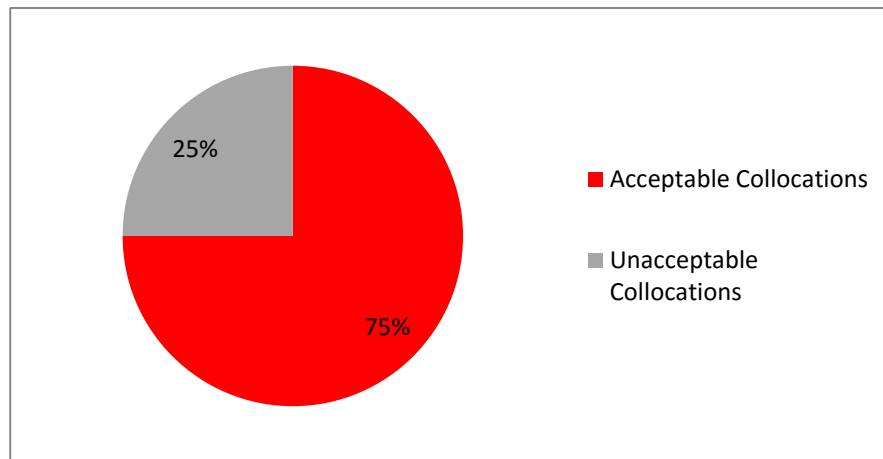
Not only did the previous example contain a collocational error, but a spelling one, too. The problem is that the teacher did not point out to any of the mistakes. In addition to that, the student was awarded 15/15, for an obvious collocational and spelling errors and for misuse of tense, too.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Acceptable Collocations</b>	<b>Number of Unacceptable Collocations</b>
15	03	01

**Table 36: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 02**

Only 01 free combination was spotted in copy 02:

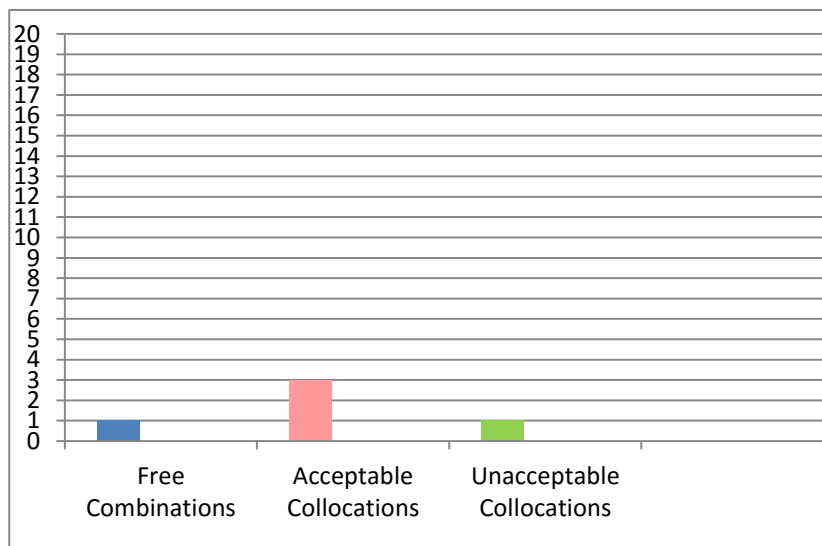
- The problem here is that many of these children can not cope with the new situation. They may *have real problems and even struggles* with the new teachers and classmates, which they find that they different from those in their origine town.



**Graph 34: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 02**

The following are the instances of the acceptable collocations in copy 02:

1. In this respect, families who choose to change their original town may *face many problems* related to their children and their social life.
2. Rather, they are a result of long-run relationships. *We build our relationships* with our parents, brothers, sisters, friends and with customers in our business over a long span of experiences and transactions. So, to move to a new town means to lose some of the social relationships.
3. So, we can conclude from the brief discussion above that moving to a new town, even if it is a necessity for some families, still *has many negative effects* whether on children or on the social relationships of people who change their original home.



**Graph 35: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 02**

### 6.2.3. Copy 03

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
00	11	00

**Table 37: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 03**

Copy 03 received the highest mark out of all the 15 copies with the highest grades. It also recorded the highest number of unacceptable collocations in both, the highest and lowest grades' copies.

The case of copy 03 is a confirmation that the teachers are not aware of the restricted relations between words –Verbs+Nouns in this case. How is it possible that a students' copy which contains 08 erroneous V+N collocations be awarded 16/15? The answer is the teacher did not consider the notion of collocation as crucial in essay writing. It also shows that teachers are not aware of the difference between “having a scholarship” and “winning a

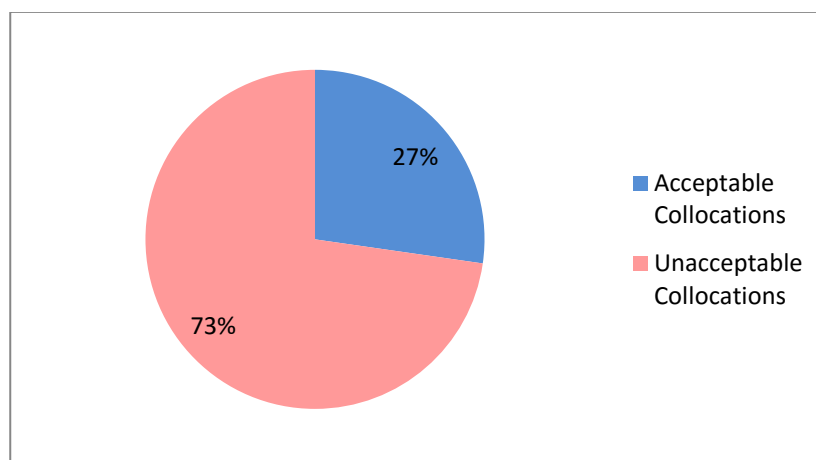


scholarship”. This trend has been recurrently noted and highlighted throughout the practical side of the thesis.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
16	03	08

**Table 38: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 03**

No V+N free combinations were found in copy 03. The essay contained almost no spelling or tense errors; the thesis statement was well-phrased, and the tense was appropriately used. All these factors led the teacher to award such a good mark, neglecting the essence of many of the sentences, that is the verb and the noun that combines with it.

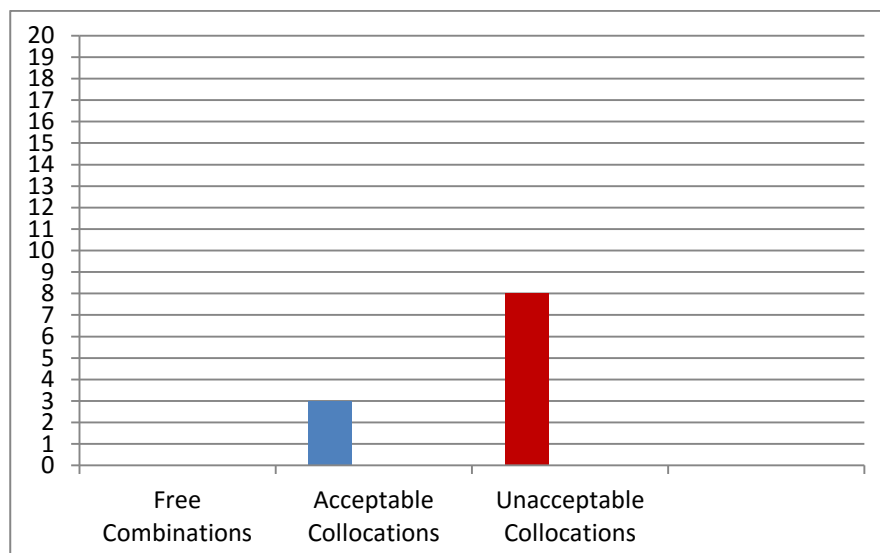


**Graph 36: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 03**

The acceptable collocations in copy 03 are stated as follows:

1. I am of course aware of the fact that every single human being is interested in a particular and certain sort of things he would like *to have as a gift*.
2. He is an engineer in architecture who *owns his private successful company*.

3. This scholarship may be a basic thing in advanced nations, but it is life saving to us, and more particularly, me. It would *provide me with opportunities* I have never dreamt of encountering.



**Graph 37: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 03**

The following are the 08 cases of unacceptable collocations in copy 03:

1. *Having a scholarship* is the first and crucial demonstration of I would like to have as a gift.
2. This kind of gift would provide me with a different pattern of life, as in the case of my cousin who in his turn *received a scholarship* for years back.
3. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination *to start up a fresh career* and a promising future grasping every information I lie eyes on.
4. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination *to start up a fresh career and a promising future* grasping every information I lie eyes on.

5. To illustrate what I have just mentioned, it would give me a more intellectual life or imagination to start up a fresh career and a promising future *grasping every information* I lie eyes on.
6. This new house would *grant me with a new perspective* of life.
7. First, he *settled all the things* the way he wanted them to be settled.
8. These two particular gifts would *give me a purpose* to live for and a dream to go after.

#### 6.2.4. Copy 04

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
09	15	00

**Table 39: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 04**

The use of V+N word combinations -especially free combinations- was prevalent in copy 04, the total of 24 word combinations (09 V+N free combinations/ 15 V+N collocations). In addition, 07 unacceptable collocations were found in copy 04.

What is expectedly similar to the previous copies is that the teacher ignored all of the 07 unacceptable collocations, the equivalent of 46.67 % and awarded the essay a mark of 14/15. Even on the student's examination paper, there were no corrections concerning the unacceptable collocations.

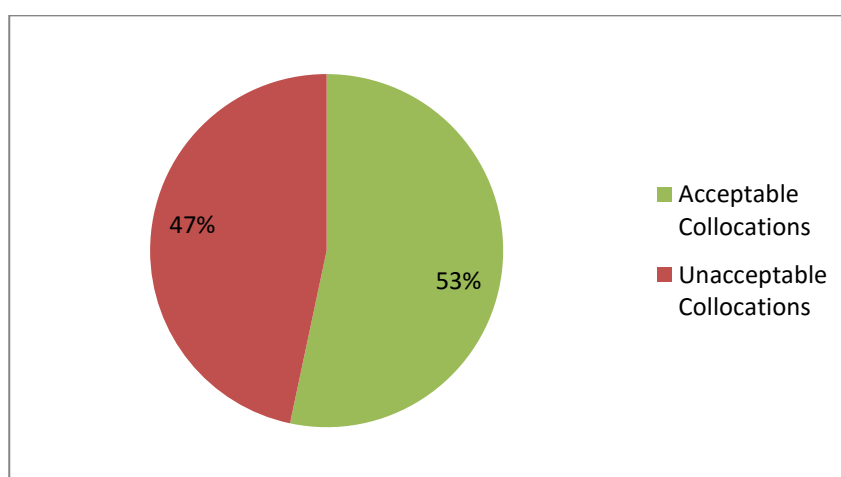
Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
14	08	07

**Table 40: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 04**

It has to be noted that the thesis statement in copy 04 was successful in terms of topic and subtopics; parallelism was present in addition to appropriate punctuation. Although there were some minute blemishes in punctuation, the procedure of writing the essay in copy 04 was successful, to a high extent. Nevertheless, adhering to the various essay writing techniques does not entail a total negligence of V+N collocations as major factors in determining the quality.

It is compulsory to ask this question: what is the point of successfully implementing all the writing techniques if the core of the sentences that make up the essay is unacceptable? It goes without saying that the answer is that it is useless. Another way to put it is to ask: does the EFL student learn syntax and semantics or writing techniques first? The answer is obviously syntax and semantics are more important to learn. Besides, many learners reach a high level of proficiency without writing a single essay.

Taking a closer look at the unacceptable collocations in copy 04, one would notice that 06 verbs are non-delexical while only one is delexical. This shows how limited the lexical repertoire of learners is; yet, they are awarded with high grades.



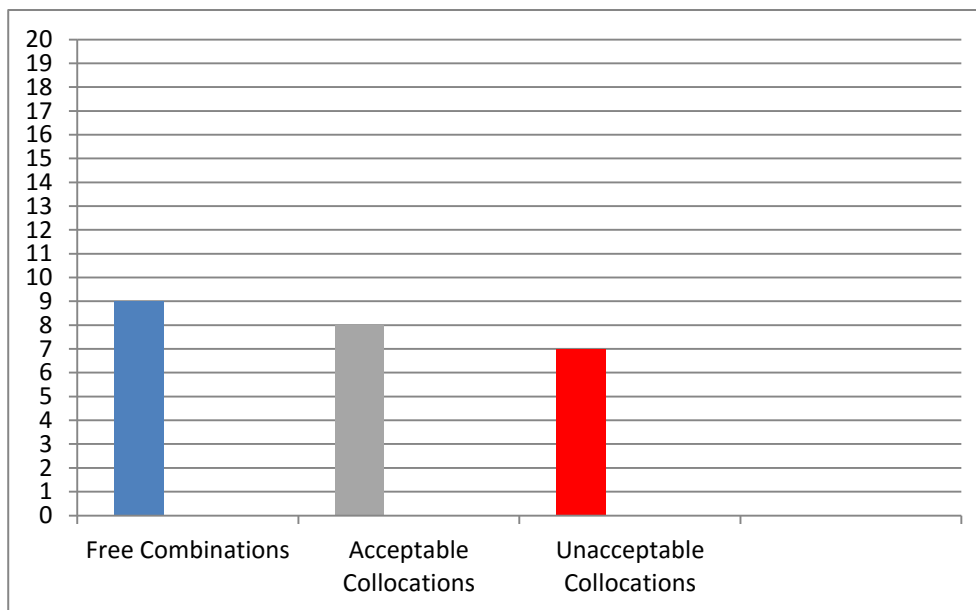
**Graph 38: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 04**

Some of the free combinations that were found in copy 04 are stated as follows:

1. Parenthood is a heavy weight and a great responsibility had been put on the neck of parents. Being a good parent is not easy especially nowadays because there are many bad things in our society which the parent's role in this time is *to protect his son* from those conditions.
2. The father *punishes his son* when he does something wrong to not be repeated again and tries to be his friend in some situations especially difficult ones to make him pass the situation like a death of a friend or someone else.
3. No father *hates his son*, he behaves like that with him because he loves him (the son) and if he does not love him, why he cares about him and about his life.
4. No father hates his son, he behaves like that with him because he *loves him (the son)* and if he does not love him, why he cares about him and about his life.

Some of the acceptable collocations that were found in copy 04 are:

1. Every father *does his best* to save his child, so it is obvious that he will try anything in order to achieve his desire, and being so strict is one of the aspects that the fathers or mothers should follow and every parent has his own reasons about why he should be so strict.
2. Every father does his best to save his child, so it is obvious that he will try anything in order to achieve his desire, and being so strict is one of the aspects that the fathers or mothers should follow and every parent *has his own reasons* about why he should be so strict.
3. But actually this is wrong, we can never think like our fathers because they *have more experience*.
4. Every father *wants the best* for his child and he does everything in order to see his son on the top.



**Graph 39: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 04**

The following are all the unacceptable collocations that were recorded in copy 04:

1. Every father does his best to save his child, so it is obvious that he will try anything in order *to achieve his desire*, and being so strict is one of the aspects that the fathers or mothers should follow and every parent has his own reasons about why he should be so strict.
2. Every father does his best to save his child, so it is obvious that he will try anything in order to achieve his desire, and being so strict is one of the aspects that the fathers or mothers should follow and every parent has his own reasons about why he should be so strict, but all the fathers *share the same three reasons*.
3. Every father teaches his son how *to organize his room*, at what time to be in the house and all the elements about being responsible.
4. The father punishes his son when he does something wrong to not be repeated again and tries to be his friend in some situations especially difficult ones *to make him pass the situation* like a death of a friend or someone else.

5. The parent may *use different things* with his son in order to make him a good man.
6. The parent may *use different things* with his son in order to make him a good man, but the son always *sees the bad side* and not the bright one.
7. Every father *has his own reasons and manners*, and for us as sons, we have Just to obbey and say “yes, father, you are right!!” because Allah said: “the heaven is under the mothers feet”.

#### 6.2.5. Copy 05

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
07	03	00

**Table 41: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 05**

In copy 05, there were 07 V+N free combinations, 02 acceptable V+N collocations and only 01 unacceptable V+N collocation.

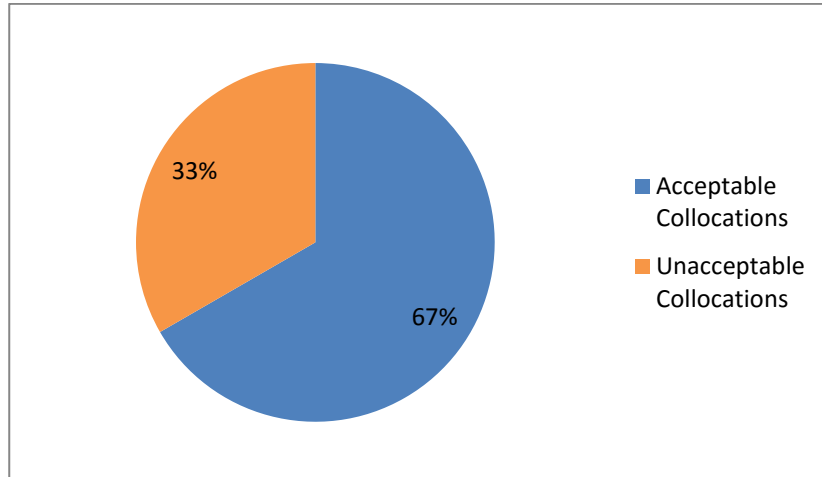
There were some spelling mistakes in copy 05. Other than that, the thesis statement was acceptable, with clear subtopics; it was concise and precise, too. The use of tense was successful throughout the essay. Therefore, with regard to the sole V+N collocational error in the whole essay, the awarded grade was deserved. However, the teacher showed, again, unawareness toward the collocational mistake that was made.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
14.75	02	01

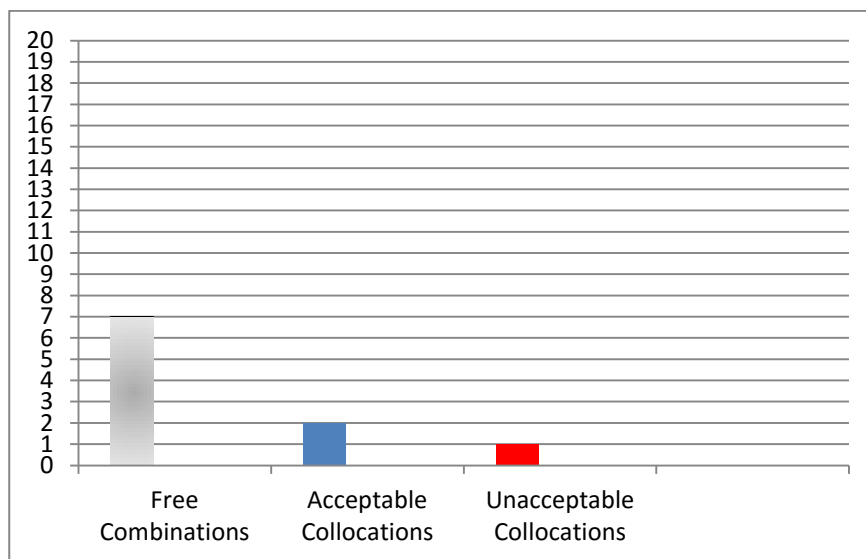
**Table 42: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 05**

The only V+N unacceptable collocation is the following:

- Indeed, moving to a new place could *bring up some unwanted effects* as ailentation and nostalgia.



**Graph 40: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 05**



**Graph 41: Number of Free Combinations/Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 05**

The two acceptable collocations in copy 05 are the following:

1. In our contineuos persuit of happiness, we may travel *to achieve that goal*.



2. In our contineuos persuit of happiness, we may travel to achieve that goal; we may *leave our homes* to seek for a new life in a new town.

Some of the free combinations in copy 05 are:

1. Although moving could be a good way to start fresh, it could also *create two negative effects*: ailentation and nostalgia.
2. It is such a painful consequence to feel alone roaming in that new place without any sense of belonging as a lost bird from the flock and what is even more bitter is that you *have to call another place* “Home sweet Home”.
3. It is when you deeply *miss your town*, remembering all the good times you have spent, the amazing memories you have made, and the rememberable friends you have met.

#### 6.2.6. Copy 06

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
09	10	00

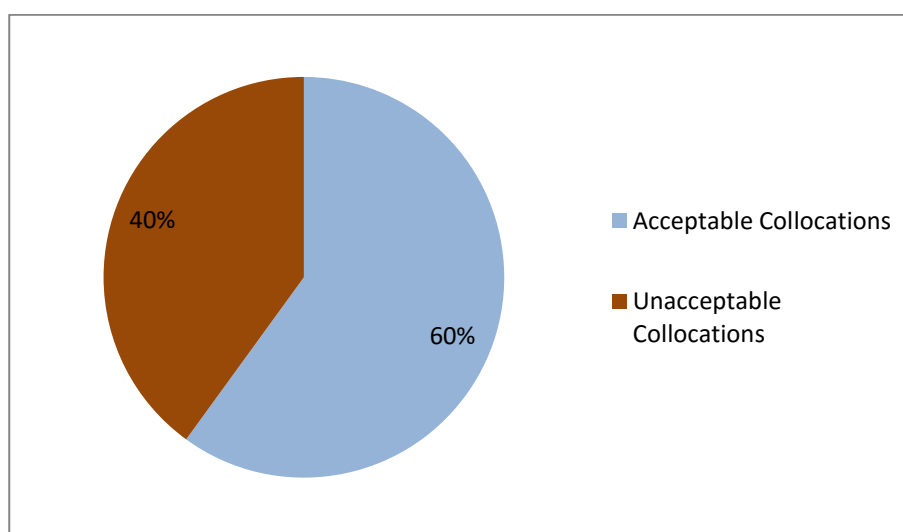
**Table 43: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 06**

The number of V+N unacceptable collocations in copy 06 is 04. That is the equivalent of 40 % of all the V+N collocations. Nonetheless, the essay received 16/15, a mark only given to “outstanding” compositions. For a composition to be labelled as ‘outstanding’, it has to be devoid of errors. So, how come that an essay containing 04 unacceptable V+N collocations receives such a high grade? The answer is because the teacher did not take into consideration collocational knowledge as a key component in language.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
16	06	04

**Table 44: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 06**

Starting with the thesis statement, although it fulfilled the requirements of a good one, two collocational errors were spotted in that sentence. All written expression teachers of undergraduate second year focus on instructing their students on how to write an appropriate thesis statement. Therefore, when correcting students' examination papers, they give more importance to the latter than other aspects of writing. In the case of copy 06, the teacher did not correct the inappropriately combined verbs and nouns.



**Graph 42: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 06**

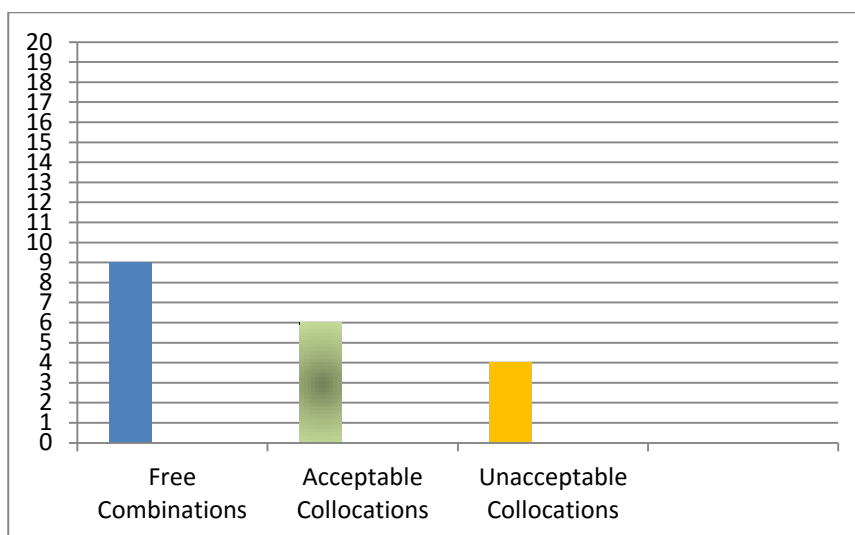
These are the unacceptable V+N collocations spotted in copy 06:

1. Personaly, if I would choose them, I would like *to receive an amazing car, a house, and a trip.*
2. I also want this house *to contain a large garden and a swimming pool.*

3. The last thing I would like *to receive is a trip*.
4. I would enjoy my time in Hawai's beaches laying on the sand and *having sunshine* on my body.

For the acceptable V+N collocations in copy 06, here are some of them:

1. *Having an amazing car* as a gift would be a great thing.
2. I would take it every night, go to the highway, and drive as fast as I can. But I would never *drive it (the car)* in town because I do not want someone to crash it.
3. Another gift that I want to receive is a house. But not any house. I *want a big one (a house)* with a view at the beach.



**Graph 43: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 06**

The following are some cases of V+N free combinations that were highlighted in copy 06:

1. In my life I have *received many gifts* for different occasions, especially in birthdays.
2. But the problem is I cannot *choose these gifts*.
3. I also want this house *to contain a large garden* and a swimming pool.

4. If a member of the family comes to me, and tells me that he has bought me a ticket to Hawaii. I would not lose a second to go to my room, *pack my things* and go to the aeroport.

### 6.2.7. Copy 07

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
10	06	00

**Table 45: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 07**

In this copy, there was only one V+N unacceptable collocation.

- Clothes make me feel good and since we are living in a society that admires the appearences, it would be right to fit in and *make a well known presence*.

In this example, the student intended to say “make an impression”.

The thesis statement in this essay was well-formulated. The essay also was devoid of errors, except for some grammatical ones at the level of the number. Besides, there were a few errors in punctuation and spelling.

The following are some of the cases where free combinations were used:

1. Many people *receive gifts* in different occasions, whether it is a birthday, marriage or graduation..
2. Clothes make me feel good and since we are living in a society that *admires the appearences*, it would be right to fit in and make a well known presence.
3. If you want *to give a person a gift*, a mobile phone is the perfect gift.

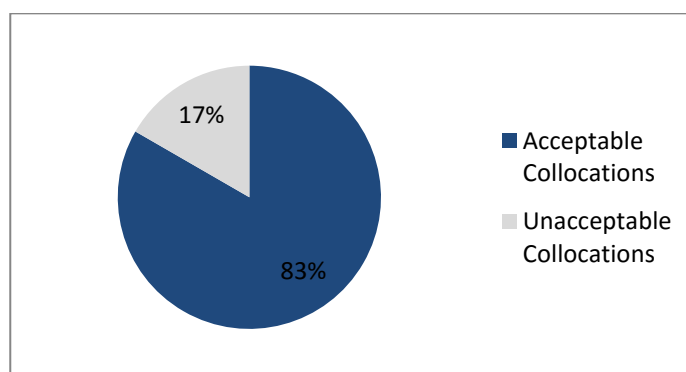
4. I *like perfumes* because it makes me smel good and everybody loves the person that smels good.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
15.25	05	01

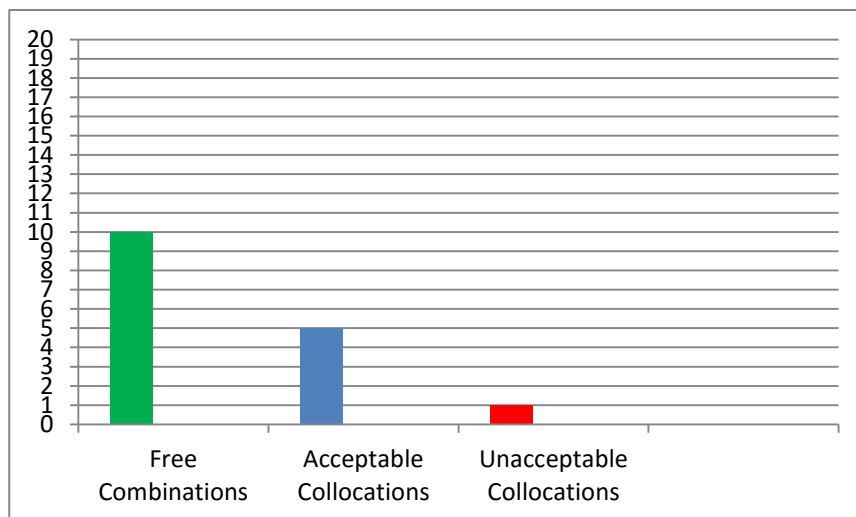
**Table 46: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 07**

There were only 02 acceptable V+N collocations in copy 07:

1. I would choose a mobile phone, if I *had the chance*, as a gift.
2. Although some people would rather keep it a surprise, it would be better to choose your gifts; just in case you did not like it because everyone *has a taste*.



**Graph 44: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 07**



**Graph 45: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 07**

**6.2.8. Copy 08**

Number of Free Combinations	Number of Collocations	Number of Idioms
13	09	00

**Table 47: Number of Free Combinations/ V+N Collocations/ Idioms in Copy 08**

Copy 08 recorded the highest number of V+N free combinations among all the other copies. It also recorded a high number of acceptable V+N collocations. Unlike copy 03, which received the same grade, there were only 02 V+N unacceptable collocations. This shows, again, that collocational knowledge was not taken into consideration while correcting the papers. It also indicates that this type of knowledge was not taught to EFL undergraduate learners during the lectures.

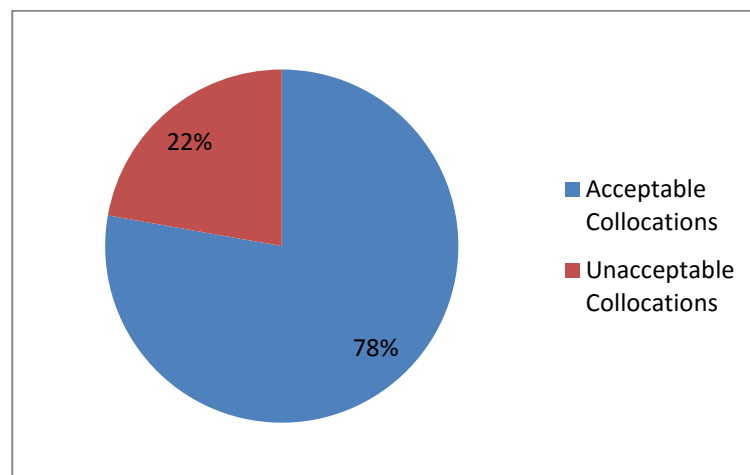
On the other hand, similar to copy 03, the erroneous collocations were not signaled by the teacher, confirming the teachers' unawareness of the notion.

Grade	Number of Acceptable Collocations	Number of Unacceptable Collocations
16	07	02

**Table 48: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable V+N Collocations in Copy 08**

These are some of the instances of V+N free combinations in copy 08:

1. Everyone of us *likes his or her birthday*.
2. Some *count the days* even the hours to their precise time of birth.
3. Some *count the days* even the hours to their precise time of birth.
4. So, *spread the love*, and get your friends and families something that will forever be kept and engraved in their memories and near to their hearts.

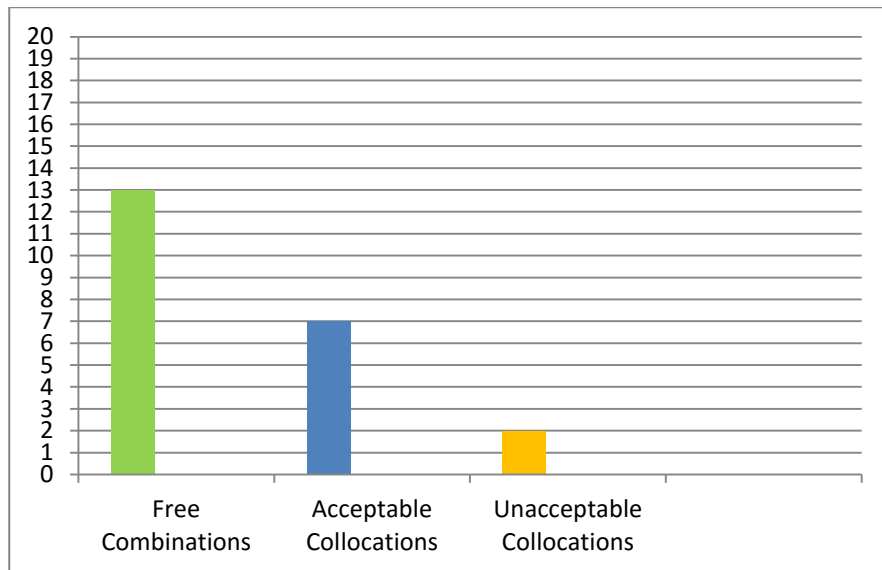


**Graph 46: Frequency of Acceptable/Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 08**

The only two unacceptable V+N collocations in copy 08 are the following:

1. Just *bringing the idea* of birthday in a conversation makes people happy, but mostly impatient to celebrate theirs.

2. I also have a lot of presentations to make on my studies and most portatly *organize my lessons* and all the work that I have to do.



**Graph 47: Number of Free Combinations/ Acceptable/ Unacceptable Collocations in Copy 08**

## Conclusion



One crucial finding from chapter six is that teachers of written expression did not take into consideration collocational errors or the overuse of free combinations when evaluating and grading their learners' productions. One way to understand is that teachers are not aware of the importance of V+N collocations in improving the overall writing and producing high quality essays. They only focused on writing mechanisms such as the thesis statement, cohesion, coherence, etc. A comparison of the highest and the lowest grades also confirms that the notion of collocation was neglected by teachers and learners.

## **Chapter Seven: Pedagogical Implications**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to suggest solutions to both teachers and learners about learning collocations. It initially starts to highlight the importance of teaching collocations to achieve a native-like proficiency. The chapter then scientifically explores some common beliefs about language learning and their validity. 'AWARE', an awareness-raising approach is introduced as one tool to learning collocations. Subsequently, further diverse techniques, to be used inside and outside the classroom are introduced. The chapter ends with a brief discussion on the materials required for the teaching of collocations, in addition to the role of the teacher and the learner.

### **7.1. The Importance of Teaching Collocations in ESL/EFL**

The importance of collocation is not only in their massive presence within language, but also in the benefits of learning and teaching them. Cowie (1992) stresses the fact that collocation is essential for both receptive and productive language competence. Carter and McCarthy (as cited in Farrokh, 2012) second him and cite that memorising collocations enables learners to understand some lexical restrictions:

Collocations teach students expectations about which sorts of language can follow from what has preceded. Students will not have to go about reconstructing the language each time they want to say something but instead can use these collocations as pre-packaged building blocks (p. 65).

Brown (1974) was among the early advocates of the importance of collocations in L2. He also called for and recommended their inclusion in L2 syllabus, inferring that an improvement in the learners' collocational knowledge will enhance their speaking, listening competence in

addition to their reading speed. Laufer (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, p. 120) pointed out that collocations make up an inherent part of vocabulary knowledge and that many problems emerge from the learners' misuse of word combinations. She also states the benefits of collocations in developing learners' vocabulary and self-learning strategies such as guessing.

There is a good reason behind the ascent of collocations as important patterns in learner language in the aspects of production and comprehension. This has established them as indispensable lexical patterns and units of description in language teaching courses and materials (Woolard, as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 65). The significance of teaching and learning collocations was endorsed by Liu (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 65) who reported that extensive teaching of collocations leads to their more effective use. On the same note, Bolinger (as cited in Gitsaki, 1996, pp. 117-118) argued that words are mainly learned and memorised in chunks, and that humans' repertoire of words is composed mainly of collocations. He described language learning as an ongoing process which starts at the level of the morpheme where words are built. It, then, reaches the level of the word where phrase formation rules are engaged. Penultimately, before storage, one witnesses the use of words to form collocations.

In collocation teaching, many linguists corroborated the benefits of teaching collocations to overcome some vocabulary problems (Leed & Nakhimovsky 1979; Cowie 1981). Linguists such as Twaddell (1973) and Korosadowicz-Struzynska (1980) urged for an early teaching of phrase and sentence patterns early on in L2 learning. According to Twaddell (Gitsaki, 1996, pp. 121-122), the practice of vocabulary expansion ought to start from the intermediate stages of L2 learning and onwards – provided that learning phrase and sentence patterns begins early on (he referred to the practice of those patterns as habits), then, new vocabulary is assimilated into L2 patterns.

Lin (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, pp. 65-66) introduced three major arguments that emphasise the importance of developing collocational knowledge:

### **7.1.1. Collocational Knowledge as Inherent Part of Language Knowledge**

According to Hill (2000, p. 53), “collocations are found in up to 70% of everything we say, hear, read, or write.” It is through collocations that patterns within language are displayed. This shows that the word-by-word approach does not make up the totality of language. Nation (as cited in Hill, 2000, p. 53) resembled language knowledge to collocational knowledge, for the memorised expressions constitute the basis for learning, knowledge, and use.

### **7.1.2. Collocational Knowledge as Essential for Efficient Language Acquisition**

Language is learned faster and more effectively in chunks (Ellis, as cited in Schmitt, 2001 p. 78). He (2000) confirms this from a psycholinguistic perspective: “lexical phrases in language reflect the way the mind tends to ‘chunk’ language in order to make it easier to process” (p. 78). In a similar vein, Aitchison (as cited in Conklin & Schmitt, 2008, p. 72) discussed the solid and long-lasting links that form amongst words in the mind. Gleason (as cited in Conklin & Schmitt, 2008, p. 72) also confirms the aforementioned claims. He provided other psycholinguistic data stating that (after his L2 acquisition research) L2 learners begin by learning chunks instead of generative processes. Eventually, in a comparison between L1 and L2 speakers of English, the findings revealed that both groups experienced more speed in reading formulaic sequences than non-formulaic ones.

### **7.1.3. Collocational Knowledge as Important for Fluency in Language Use**

The third and final argument in the teaching of collocations is the significant impact of collocational knowledge on fluency and appropriate language use. Pawley and Syder (as cited

in Conklin & Schmitt, 2008, p. 72) pointed out that clauses and clause-sequences that are stored in the brain constitute a significant proportion of everyday fluent speech. Additionally, fluency increases in speakers when using familiar phrases to describe an experience. This concludes that even in spoken discourse, prefabricated chunks continue to make up a hefty proportion.

## **7.2. Effects of Second Language Immersion on Second Language Collocational Development**

It is a common belief among educators that the most useful way to learn a language is to live amongst native speakers. This allows the learners to practise it daily, thus accelerating the learning process. This approach is known as immersion. However, such claim calls for thorough investigation. There exist two claims regarding immersion: firstly, when the correlation between time spent in an L2 environment and the rate of collocations produced by L2 learners is not positive, hence the number of collocational usage decreases. Secondly, when there is a slight improvement in collocational accuracy due to an extended period of immersion in a L2 environment (Groom, 2009, p. 32).

It can be said that the findings did not totally support immersion to be the most effective method for language learning. There was always a sense of relativity (scepticism) in terms of the validity of the claims. As for the first claim, Groom (2009) states that its validity depends on the definition and operationalisation of the concept of collocation. If collocations are defined as lexical bundles, then, the number of produced collocations should not decrease in relation to time spent abroad. It is worth noting thus far that the point of discussion in the first claim is not the learning of new collocations, but, rather, their use. In this respect, one sees a positive side to immersion. Learners consequently tend to be exposed to more formulaic

sequences –in the general sense. Not only does the number increase, but, there is also more variety in those formulaic sequences (p. 33).

As for the second claim, researchers found that not only did collocational accuracy improve, but a substantial difference emerged between immersion and non-immersion groups, contrary to what Nesselhauf (as cited in Groom, 2009, p. 32) had reported in her corpus study of German learners.

One must conclude that perhaps immersion in a native environment is altogether positive, yet, collocational development remains challenging due to the differences between languages and the lack of exposure to collocational knowledge.

### **7.3. Collocation Learning through an ‘AWARE’ Approach**

A crucial pointer to solving any problem is to firstly be aware of its existence, and then to identify it. Such awareness helps in the diagnosis of problematic areas and suggestion of remedies. The same goes for the approach in discussion. According to Ying and O’Neill (2009, p. 181), the majority of EFL learners lack this skill. This, of course, incurs consequences as three problems, in language production, emerge:

1. Production of long phrases and sentences, due to a lack of necessary collocations that make expression accurate.
2. Production of awkward language in assuming that there are similarities between word/sentence combinations in the target language and mother tongue.
3. The emergence of a style that lacks ‘writing sophistication’, because of the overuse of general items, resulting in oversimplification.

Equally important, Lewis (as cited in Ying & O’Neill, 2009, pp. 181-182) pointed out to an important idea. He argues that the only way intermediate learners would reach an advanced level in language is to memorise more collocations since learners at the intermediate level

focus mostly on mastering the grammatical rules of the language. Consequently, internalising more collocations will benefit their linguistic progress. The duty of the teachers, then, is to raise their learners' awareness of the importance of vocabulary –collocations in this case- in order to help them make the transition to the next level.

The 'AWARE' approach tries to bridge the gap between noticing collocations in speech and writing and learning them. It is an acronym that stands for the following:

1. **A**wareness- raising of important language features, in particular collocations (helping learners notice collocations in the weekly theme- based readings or any other sources of input).
2. **W**hy should we learn collocations? (helping learners see the rationale for/meaning of learning what they learn).
3. **A**cquiring noticed collocations using various strategies (learners making selective use of a repertoire of learning strategies that suit their individual learning style to promote effective learning of collocations).
4. **R**eflection on learning processes and content (learners thinking about their learning processes and making necessary adjustments for better learning).
5. **E**xhibiting what has been learned (learners making a weekly oral report in class on the theme under focus by using as many as possible of the collocations they have noticed and learned) (Ying & O'Neill, 2009, p. 183).

### **7.3.1. Theoretical Underpinnings**

One premise of the 'AWARE' approach is to highlight the role of language awareness (LA) in learning. There were two different perspectives in the understanding of LA: the psycholinguistic and the educational (Little, 1997). The psycholinguistic perspective regards language awareness as one level of awareness (Yang, 2000). According to research, there are

three levels of awareness: 1) noticing as a starting level of awareness; 2) the employment of various cognitive strategies to guarantee internalisation of word combinations; 3) developing a psychological relation between the learner, content, and the process (Ying & O’Neill, 2009, p. 183).

Another broad educational perspective on language awareness underlies three dimensions: a simultaneous focus on the learning content, the learning methodology, and the learner in teaching and learning (Gnutzman, as cited in Ying & O’Neill, 2009, p. 184). The role of the learner within the learning process is focal to the three dimensions. In other words, the aim behind learning needs to be clear to the learner (the content). In addition, they need to actively engage in the learning process. This is the role of the learner. Finally, learners have to benefit from the cognitive strategies, and develop a metacognitive awareness toward both the content and the learning process (learning methodology). This process will guarantee an increased learner performance and a repeated application of the process.

The ‘AWARE’ approach which is process-oriented is based on two main beliefs: firstly, if learners are made aware of language and language learning at three levels, their learning will become more effective; these levels are:

1. To become aware of “special/distinct” features of the target language.
2. To develop an awareness of learning strategies.
3. To consider the learning process and content that would help acquire metacognitive awareness (Ying & O’Neill, 2009, 184).

The second belief is the likelihood of effective learning to occur when learners are to understand the significance of learning and be able to share their knowledge (Ying & O’Neill, 2009, p. 184).



### **7.3.2. Related Findings**

Learners who underwent training using the ‘AWARE’ approach provided positive feedback. They referred to it as “very useful and necessary”, “good”, and “helpful.” Some participants revealed that they had to adopt the approach as their learning tool. Others said the approach was different to earlier ones confessing they had little awareness (knowledge) of collocations before trying ‘AWARE’ (Ying & O’Neill, 2009, p. 185).

### **7.4. Suggestions for Teaching Collocations**

As the previous segment provided a specific approach to the teaching and learning of collocations, this one suggests various techniques to be used by teachers to improve their learners’ collocational competence. Teachers should bear in mind that L2 learners are different from each other in ways that influence both the processing capacity and the desire and need to interact. These differences include age, memory limitations, confidence, etc. (Wray, 1999, p. 228).

The suggested techniques to improve learners’ collocational knowledge are as follows:

#### **7.4.1. Deliberate Learning of New Collocates**

Channel (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 67) introduced one of the earliest studies to call for a deliberate teaching of collocations. She noticed a problem with the learners that they safely used the words they knew, ignoring other potential combinations they could use. Accordingly, Channel deemed it requisite to expose learners to a considerable variety of collocations immediately after they learn a new word. Her recommendation entails employing examples, sentences, or collocational grids.

#### **7.4.2. Dictionaries**

The collocation dictionary is another valuable source of collocations, especially for more competent learners. Using dictionaries, especially in the classroom, encourages autonomy within learners as well as development of their collocational knowledge. According to Fox (Farrokh, 2012, p. 68), “if learners have difficulty with the phrase “She’s made a fool of you,” they could be asked to look at the entry for fool in a good English-English dictionary.”

#### **7.4.3. Collocations in Texts**

Using text in the teaching of collocations proved its utility in learner knowledge. Burger and Gallina (as cited in Alsakran, 2011 p. 69) discuss the usefulness of using authentic texts in collocation teaching. Similar texts seem to offer a richer experience than textbooks whose input is edited. They claim that “when students see words in authentic contexts, they learn how the words function and what their typical collocations are” (as cited in Alsakran, 2011 p. 69). Teachers can borrow excerpts from newspapers or magazines on which learners seek to identify the appropriate ways of combining words. Teachers may even make the learners highlight word categories, then use dictionaries to look for potential collocates (Fox, as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 69).

#### **7.4.4. Input Enhancement**

This technique was suggested by Khanchobani (2012). It revolves around increasing the learners’ perception of collocations using underlining, bolding, highlighting (as cited in Farrokh, 2012, p. 69). According to Ellis (as cited in Thornbury, 1997, p. 326), “no noticing, no acquisition.”

#### **7.4.5. Output Tasks**

The application of Production Activities was deemed effective in providing learners with an opportunity of syntactic processing. This latter is needed in the development of native-like proficiency and higher accuracy. Swain states that learners may be tempted to use the target language once they realise their inability to precisely convey the meaning they have in mind. Hence, such difficulty will allow them to reflect on their collocational competence (Farrokh, 2012, p. 69).

#### **7.4.6. Teaching Collocations through Exercises**

Speed reading can be an effective tool for learning collocations. Jiang (as cited in Antle, 2013, p. 348) suggests that the learners read a passage of 400 to 800 words, and record the reading time. They may also answer comprehension questions about the passage. As homework, learners may write the collocations they want to learn, then will have to use the identified collocations in other contexts.

Another activity is to reconstruct the content, students are required to read a short text then write 15 words from it on a sheet of paper. Subsequently, they must select words that will allow another group of learners to reconstruct the text in the best possible way. Learners then exchange papers between groups. Using the words and collocations as a framework, the learners try to retell what they have read (Lewis, as cited in Antle, 2013, p. 348).

#### **7.5. Materials for Teaching Collocations**

All methods and directions for the teaching of collocations will prove useless if the material does not correlate with the overall aims. Teaching material serves as the bridge between theorising and actualising (theory and practice); as inside the classroom, the learners will not be taught the linguists' claims of collocations teaching, and neither will they be

interested. As a result, material that are intended for the classroom teaching need to be carefully thought, and in alignment with the objectives behind designing them. In this respect, Nunan (1988, p. 98) argues that materials are an indispensable part of the curriculum/syllabus. Their usefulness lies in their practicality; they allot models for classroom exercises. They even play the role of the teacher in a self-tuition approach. Not only do these materials benefit the learner, but teachers, as well, benefit from implementing them to design their own material. They facilitate the job of the teacher, since one does not have to build new material from scratch, due to the existence of models to model.

Nunan (1988) stresses the fact that teaching materials should contain one essential element: authenticity. In other words, materials should project the real world. However, they should not be produced exclusively for language teaching. (For example, newspaper articles, excerpts from books and so forth, make for useful material for the learners. Widdowson (as cited in Ahlstrom, 2005, p. 5) who disagrees with Nunan, believes that authenticity alone is not sufficient for a useful material; what should really be considered is that the material is meaningful to the learner. Overall, the selected topics and themes have to be compelling to the learners. No one should expect the learners to actively engage with the topic of life on Mars or climate change when their everyday lives revolve around social media, the entertainment industry, and football. Lewis (2000, pp. 186-187) suggests that equilibrium be created between what is interesting and useful. Hence, the choice of text should satisfy the learner, and develop his/her mental lexicon, simultaneously.

## **7.6. The Role of the Teacher**

Since learning collocations is not an easy task, the role of the teacher, at this particular stage, becomes more important than ever. Willis (1990, pp. 130-131) argued that the role of the teacher tends to be more focused on managing learning than on teaching. However, such

claims are sometimes taken way further. If teachers help the learner manage their learning, it means that they help them in discovering their most efficient way to learn. The teacher's duty, thus, extends managing the lecture that is limited by a time span. What teachers need to do is to individually cooperate with their learners to achieve maximum results, especially with such difficult concept as collocation. One way for the teachers to help the learners is to encourage them to use a notebook. According to Woolard, "it is to record what is noticed...a single encounter with a word is not enough to ensure its acquisition" (as cited in Lewis, 2000, p. 43).

Lewis (2000, p. 117) claims that an important task for the teacher, when it comes to learning collocations, is to encourage noticing which helps transform input into intake. He notes:

The single most contribution the teacher can make to ensuring that input becomes intake, is ensuring that learners notice the collocations and other phrases in the input language. This involves an important change of perspective for many teachers, particularly those used to emphasizing the language that students produce. We now recognise that it is noticing the input language which is crucial to expanding learners' mental lexicons (2000, p. 117).

### **7.7. The Role of the Student**

Autonomy is the essential attribute for a learner to have and nurture. It is an internal trait that results from readiness and willingness. Although, these two traits are up to the learner to develop, the teacher can help by adopting a learner-directed approach (Mishan, 2005, p. 37). Autonomy can be better developed by providing the learner with authentic material, e.g. texts.

This latter encourages the learner to obtain such collocational knowledge that will be needed in real life.

## **Conclusion**

In the previous pages, various suggestions were made to help improve and accelerate the learning of collocations. Before any discussion of the approaches and techniques, the chapter discussed the importance and validity of teaching collocations. Also, the common belief of the absolute superiority of immersion for language learning was debunked. The findings indicated that there are some areas where immersion falls short. After the examination of 'AWARE' as a consciousness-raising approach, its usefulness became obvious, and its use indispensable for maximum results. The chapter also explored some useful techniques to enhance collocational competence. The experiments that were carried out confirmed their utility. That is why they should be taken into consideration by teachers. The chapter was concluded by stressing the importance of the teaching materials, the role of the teacher and the student in achieving a target-like command of collocations.

## General Conclusion

A concise definition of formulaic language is a serious challenge. One source of difficulty is the fact that formulaic sequences exist in a linear continuum which, hence, requires a syntagmatic study. This continuum is not characterised by clear boundaries between the elements where each of the elements shares some traits of the previous one or/and the next one. What is certain is that formulaic language takes up a considerable proportion of language knowledge, if not the largest one. Formulaic language is characterised by its fixedness, compositionality, and high frequency of co-occurrence between its elements. Appreciating the importance of formulaic language and its usability from both production and comprehension standpoints requires a re-consideration of Chomsky's views on the predominantly generative nature of language.

In a narrower sense, collocations are part of formulaic language and similarly are hard to define. There is no clear and definitive definition of collocations considering the different angles from which they have been studied. Incidentally, their indispensability is unquestionable in the language build up, since 70 % of any native interactions are based on collocational language, hence, a formulaic one. Collocations make the comprehension process easier for they are quickly processed, and socio-interactionally efficient. An EFL learner cannot be described as advanced unless he/she masters collocational knowledge. As a result, a reassessment of the qualifications to reach an advanced level of language proficiency is necessary since research shows the majority of EFL advanced learners face significant difficulties as regards collocations.

Collocations are difficult to learn and master. They are culturally-loaded, arbitrary, unpredictable and compositional. They are also chunks that exist in a five-word span –the



distance between the node and the collocate (s). Immersion in an L2 environment does guarantee the expansion of the collocational lexicon, a belief that existed before.

The findings of the present experiment clearly show the difficulties EFL second year undergraduate students at Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1) are facing. They also answer the questions that were posed at the beginning of the study. The hypotheses the author raised are, to a large extent, confirmed by the findings obtained. To recapitulate, EFL second year undergraduate students have a low level of mastery regarding the use and comprehension of Verb + Noun lexical collocations. Additionally, they are deemed unaware of the existence and importance of collocations in the language. Moreover, the essays of the students involved in the study lack the use of appropriate Verb + Noun lexical collocations. As far as teachers of Written Expression are concerned, they themselves appear unaware of the importance of collocations in language production. The comparison between the frequency of success/failure in the learners' essays and the awarded grades reveals that there is consideration to neither collocations nor the correlation between the final grades and the highly frequent miscollocations. This goes to suggest that they are either ignorant or unaware of their existence.

Raising the teacher awareness about the place of collocations in the language is the first step in the teaching/learning of collocations. The 'AWARE' approach may be useful in the attempt to achieve such a purpose. It incorporates lexical and cognitive strategies that were successful (in the case of the Chinese learners). Other techniques and exercises include reading, writing, role playing, and highlighting. These techniques were empirically verified far from simply being theoretical suggestions.

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## **Résumé**

La présente recherche est une investigation de la compétence en collocations des étudiants d'anglais de deuxième année sous-graduation à Université des Frères Mentouri (Constantine 1). L'étude se concentre sur les collocations lexicales, précisément, le Verbe + Nom. La contribution pratique sert à mesurer la compétence des étudiants en collocations, identifier les causes des erreurs, et faire des recommandations pour remédier le problème. Seule une compréhension totale du phénomène de formulaicité permettra aux enseignants et aux étudiants de bien agir à ce côté problématique de la langue, même pour les étudiants les plus compétents. En identifiant les côtés de difficulté principaux, les enseignants pourront désigner des matériels pour élever la conscience des étudiants sur le concept de collocation, donc, améliorer leur niveau. L'influence de la langue maternelle en même temps qu'autres facteurs sont les causes principales des erreurs. En outre, l'inconscience des enseignants concernant ce concept –lors du traitement des productions des étudiants– est une autre difficulté. Par conséquent, des efforts dans l'enseignement de ce côté crucial de la langue doivent être faites pour améliorer le niveau des étudiants en collocations, par suite, en maîtrise globale de la langue Anglaise.

## ملخص البحث

تتجسد المساهمة العلمية لهذا البحث في دراسة مدى تمكن الطلبة الجزائريين للسنة الثانية، لغة انجليزية في جامعة الإخوة منتوري - قسنطينة 1 من المتلازمات اللفظية. تركز الدراسة على المتلازمات اللفظية المعجمية، وبالخصوص الفعل + الإسم. تتجسد المساهمة العملية لهذا البحث في قياس مقدار إحاطة الطلبة بالمتلازمات اللفظية المعجمية، كما تهدف إلى تحديد مسببات الأخطاء المرتكبة، بالإضافة إلى تقديم توصيات من أجل معالجة الصعوبات التي يواجهونها. تُعتبر الإحاطة بظاهرة العبارات الاصطلاحية هي الوسيلة الوحيدة للأساتذة و الطلبة من أجل التمكن من التعامل مع هذه الناحية اللغوية التي تشكل صعوبة، حتى للطلبة ذوي المستوى العالي. يستطيع الأساتذة وضع مناهج و دروس مناسبة لزيادة وعي الطلبة بمفهوم المتلازمات اللفظية، و بالتالي رفع مستواهم العلمي، إذا تمكنوا من تحديد مواضع الإشكال التي يواجهها الطلبة. إن تأثير اللغة الأم -بالإضافة إلى عوامل أخرى رئيسة- من أهم المعوقات من هذه الناحية، كما يمكن إضافة انخفاض و عي الأساتذة فيما يخص هذا الجانب المهم من اللغة و من خلال تعاملهم مع مقالات الطلبة مشكلا آخر، و منه يجدر الحرص على تكتيف الجهود في تدريس هذه الناحية الحساسة من اللغة بهدف تحسين مستوى الطلبة عموما.