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***INVESTIGATING EFL LEARNER'S
COLLOCATIONAL COMPETENCE
CASE STUDY: MASTER ONE LINGUISTICS STUDENTS AT M'SILA UNIVERSITY.***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in linguistics.**

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DECLARATION

We declare that this dissertation is an original report of my research and has not been presented in any other institution.

The sources are cited, accredited, and referenced have been indicated clearly and acknowledged in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

SAHRAOUI MAKAREM

MEGDOUD ASMA

DEDICATION 1

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

I dedicate this work to my dear family, precisely to my mom, ‘**RADJAI BARKAHOUM**’, the most magnanimous person, who upholds me in life through her blessings and prays to

Allah for supporting and encouraging me to believe in myself. To my father,

“**MOKHTAR**”, the principal of my life for earning an honest living for us and for his continual guidance and advice, I dedicate it to my precious brothers and sisters: **HADJER, ISMAIL, IBRAHIM, ELHOSSIN, NADIA** and **FATMA** .Thanks for all support and for everything. What a blessing to be your sister. I also dedicate it to my nieces and nephews.

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Last but not the least, to the reason of being an English student to the perfect teacher ever,

BOUSSAG HADJIRA.

MEGDOUD ASMA.

DEDICATION 2

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

I do offer my modest work to my dear family, precisely to my father "Rabeh", the source of wisdom and principles of my life, the candle that enlightens my darkness. Thanks to his continual guidance and advice, I preserve the same trend of success from primary school until now.

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To the person who stands by me when things look bleak, To "Ishak Djaidja"

To all those who have been supportive, caring and patient, sometimes beyond their strength, I dedicate this simple work,

-MAKAREM SAHRAOUI-

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ABSTRACT

This research paper offer a new overview of the importance of collocation competence among EFL learners. Its aims to investigate master one linguistics Students University of M'sila awareness of collocations use and their importance, as well as develop their collocation competence. To reach this goal, the study provides an overview of relevant classifications and definitions of collocations, as well as an introduction to the theme. The last part presents an investigation of master one linguistics students' collocational competence represented by a sample of 35 students of English at the University of M'sila. The study results showed that the collocational competence of students at the department of English was generally insufficient students encounter many difficulties when using collocations due to multiple reasons. Therefore, a number of recommendations that English language instructors can implement in their classroom were presented.

Keywords: collocations, collocational competence,

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CC: collocation competence

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

TC: Teaching Collocations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

NNs: Non-Native speakers

MSQ: Multiple-Choice Question

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Background of the research

In contrast to grammar, vocabulary has long been overlooked in classroom instruction. It has always been taught alongside other skills, whereas grammar has always been taught as a separate module, which puts vocabulary as peripheral to grammar. This is obvious in curricula, which are full of grammatical rules that are said to improve the learner's language in a way that gives the impression that teaching a language is synonymous to teaching its grammar. Traditional approaches attempted to teach vocabulary in a way that introduced vocabulary items in lists, which proved ineffective. Many researchers have recently emphasized the importance of teaching vocabulary. One of them was Michael Lewis, who questioned 'the grammar-vocabulary dichotomy' and advocated a lexical approach (1993, 1997, p. 2000) that focuses on teaching collocations or 'common word combinations' (2000, p. 127). The latter is a broader term that does not include only collocations but also idioms, phrasal verbs, and fixed and semi-fixed phrases. Students struggle to combine words together even though they might know the grammar rules. For this reason, Michael Lewis and others proved that teaching collocations would improve students' language learning proficiency. It has been proved that even native speakers may struggle with word associations. Foreign language students, therefore, struggle even more with making their language sound natural when it comes to putting words together. This could be due to the lack of their knowledge of collocations and the interference of their mother tongue or even the other languages they speak, as is the case with English language learners in Algeria, who speak Arabic as their mother tongue and French as their second language. Thus, this study aims at explaining the notion of collocations, and investigating learners' collocation competence. Assessing this competence allows us to raise students and educators' awareness and provide some suggestions on how to teach collocations so that they can improve their skills because collocations knowledge is one of the most important parts of vocabulary.

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Statement of the Research Problem

The term collocation is used to describe a kind of syntagmatic relationship between words, and it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other. For example, *pay* and *attention* go together *blond* goes with *hair* and *heavy* goes with *rain*. Mastering collocations in English can be a formidable challenge for language learners. To this end, this study addresses uncovering whether and to what extent are there difficulties encountered by the EFL students at the University of M'sila be they in speaking or in writing. Uncovering the nature of these difficulties would be useful for us in order to address them and enhance learners' ability to use collocations smoothly and correctly as natives do. Previous studies have uncovered multiple difficulties of different sources such as; failure to make a sense of idiom or recognizing words' definitions, familiarity of vocabulary items, overgeneralization of collocation rules as well as negative transfer from the mother tongue. Thus, this research will be therefore to assess EFL learner's knowledge of English collocations and to provide some suggestions of how to teach collocation.

Objectives of the Study

- 1-Highlighting the importance of collocations among master one linguistics students at M'sila University.
- 2- Investigate the use of collocations among EFL students at M'sila university.
- 3- Raise the students' awareness and as regards developing their collocation competence.

Significance of the Study

This study is important considering the significance of collocational competence itself. It can help learners to use an appreciation of collocations, which will help them to make use of the words they know more accurately and sound more natural when they speak or write. For example, it is more natural to say *of great importance* rather than *of big* or *high* importance.

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Moreover, the analysis of participants' mistakes will also help in understanding the types of common mistakes among EFL learners when using collocations, since no study has been conducted to report such performance and the relationship between the familiarity of collocation items and the difficulties with collocation, hence the result of study could provide some suggestion on how to use collocation appropriately.

Research Questions

This study seeks to find answers to following questions:

- 1-What is the degree of collocation strength among master one linguistics students?
- 2-What are the types of collocations that are the most problematic for students?
- 3-Does the degree of difficulty with collocation have any relation with the familiarity of collocation items?

Literature Review

Although many researchers have considered the significance of collocations in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), they approached them from different perspectives. Some researchers approached the problem of translating collocations in a purely linguistic description, others have been particularly interested in contrastive and error analysis, while the remaining researchers have looked into the use of collocations and, in some cases, their relationship to proficiency in speaking and/or writing. Because research on this subject is extensive, we will only provide a few examples from each category. In 1987, Emery (as cited in Mahmoud, Abdelmoniem, 2005, p.119) has investigated Arabic/English translation of collocations by comparing collocations in the two languages. In 1991, he has dealt with collocations in modern Standard Arabic by specifying the types of collocations (ibid). Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) also approached collocations in

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relation to English / Arabic translation. In 2002, Al-Salmani focused in his Master thesis on Collocations and idioms in English-Arabic translation. Apart from translation, other researchers investigated other matters related to collocations in Foreign Language Learning. In 2003, Hassan Abadi Siavosh has studied learning English lexical and grammatical collocations by Iranian EFL learners. After examining learners' collocations types, he found that their performance differs according to the patterns of collocation "in favour of verb-noun collocations" and that acquisition of lexical collocations is easier than grammatical ones. In her research about learning collocations, Gitaski (as cited in Siavosh, 2003, p. 51) pointed out that learning collocations is facilitated by the level of ESL learners; the higher is the level, the easier is learning collocations. She further stated that easiness depends also on the degree of complexity of the collocation itself. As regards the issue of collocational errors, some researchers have approached it within their mother tongue. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989, as cited in Mahmoud, Abdelmoneim, 2005, p. 118) focused on verb-noun collocations in their analysis of collocational errors made by Arabic learners of English. Later in 1997, lombard studied the use of collocations by non-native speakers of Mandarine in his Doctoral Dissertation. He relied on learners' written assignments to collect the necessary information about collocations' problems and types. Abdelmoneim (2005) studied collocation by tackling the subject of the errors made by Arab Learners of English indicating that collocations constitute a problem for Arabic learners. This problem could be overcome by raising learners' consciousness about collocation with the help of a simple contrastive analysis of English and Arabic. Hongquan, Nishina, and Kikuko (2007) analyzed errors of Japanese adjectival collocations by administering a survey questionnaire, their results helped in classifying collocational errors and constructing an error database. Using collocations in speaking was also dealt with by Sung (2003, as cited in Hsu, p.2) and revealed the existence of strong correlation between the use of English lexical collocations and speaking fluency; a finding had to face its

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contrary result in a 2008 study carried out by Hsu, Jeng-yih and Chiu, Chu-yao. However, the study found that a strong correlation exists between knowledge of collocation and speaking proficiency but no correlation exists between knowledge and use of collocation. Furthermore, Hsu (2007) conducted an empirical study about the impact of lexical collocations on the writing of Taiwanese College English majors and non-English majors and proved the existence of correlation between writing proficiency and using collocation. His study was the first of its kind which tried to teach collocations as a treatment to see whether teaching collocations could lead to fluency in writing. Recently, Lombard (2009) explored the use of collocations by ESL students from a task-based approach perspective. All in all, there were many researches which dealt with collocations from different angles but the scope of this study does not give us enough room to cite them all. Lately, linguists attempted to narrow the scope of collocation definition in order to better understand this linguistic phenomenon.

Methodology:

Research Design

The current study is descriptive by nature as it attempts to test learners' collocations' competence. The target population in this study are master one linguistics students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila. The data collected in such research will be significantly based on the quantitative method as the most appropriate way to investigate the students' levels of collocations knowledge and obtain data analysis results through statistical analysis. The instruments that are used in this method are various tests in order to collect data as well as to test the hypothesis that correspond to the research question. In addition to the quantitative method, a qualitative assessment was also employed to address the research questions 2 by approaching through illustration and analysis examples of the most difficult areas in collocations competence.

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The method :

The data collected in this present study will be significantly based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative measurement will assist us to know the level of difficulty with collocations learners encounter. The qualitative method will address the research questions to explore the main findings .

Participants

The subjects recruited for the purpose of this study constituted 35 male and female master one linguistics students at the Department of English at the University of M'sila . They have English language as their foreign language while their first language is Arabic. These EFL learners were randomly selected during the oral expressions course.

Procedure

The test tasks to be completed were distributed to students inside the classroom by the teacher of oral expression. They had about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the tasks. We chose Master one linguistics students because they have more advanced than the other levels and are supposed to write their final graduation dissertation the next year. Mastering collocations is an advanced step in English acquisition so that it would be less valuable to test it with first to third year students.

Data Collection Instruments

As a data collection method we prepared four tests for master one linguistic student at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila; the first was a filling gap task, the second was a multiple-choice questions MSQ, the third and the fourth constituted collomatch tests. The tests were simple to administer and designed so that it requires little time to complete. The

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researchers intend to interpret the results which were recorded in the form of tables, percentages and numbers using the descriptive method.

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REVIEW OF THE
LITERATURE**

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1.1 Definitions of the Word Collocation

The word '*collocation*' comes from the Latin verb '*collocare*,' which means 'to arrange/put in order.'. The term was first introduced by Firth (1957) who defined it as “a combination of words associated with each other” Collocation is defined as “the method in which two or more words are commonly used” (McCarten, 2007, p. 5). For example, we use the words *heavy rain* and *heavy sun* in the same phrase, but we don't use the words *make* or *come to a decision*. As a result, we say that *heavy* and *rain* are collocations and also *make a decision* are collocations, and that *heavy* combines or collocates with *rain*; or that *heavy* and *rain* are collocates of each other.

According to Deveci (2004), the relationship between words is known as collocation. They involve structural patterns and word combinations. *Take a break* is an example of an idiom, and word combinations such as *get on a bus* are examples of collocations.

As part of his theory of meaning, Firth introduces the term collocation into linguistic theory. According to him (1957, p. 196), collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to word meaning. A word's collocability with another word is one of its meanings *dark night*. Collocations of a given word, according to Firth (1957, p. 181), are statements of the habitual or “customary places of that word order but not in any other contextual order and emphatically not in any grammatical order”.

Moreover, the collocation of a word or a “piece” should not be considered “mere juxtaposition, but rather an order of mutual anticipation”. “The occurrence of two items in a context within a specific environment”, Sinclair (1970) defines it as “a regular collocation between two elements that occurs more frequently than their respective frequencies” (as cited

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in Hori, 2004, p. 5). Sinclair (1966) defined collocation as the co-occurrence of two items and distinguishes between casual and significant collocations, which is an important aspect in this regard. A significant collocation, as opposed to a casual collocation, occurs more frequently than would be predicted based on the individual pieces. Halliday (1976) defines collocation as the syntagmatic relation of linear co-occurrence among lexical units that co-occur with some measurements of substantial closeness, either with a scale or at least with a cut-off point, within the framework of lexis. Sinclair (1991) used Halliday's term in his book *Corpus, Concordance, and Collocation*. Greenbaum (1974) contends that collocation research should be based not only on Halliday's item-oriented approach, but also on an integrated approach that incorporates both local syntactic structures and sentence patterns. Furthermore, Carter and McCarthy (1988, p. 32) define collocation as “how words typically occur with one another,” as well as “a group of words that occur repeatedly in a language” (Carter, 1992, p. 51) and as “the ways in which words regularly occur near each other” (Diegnan et al., 1998, p. 35). Lewis (1997) provided a clear and well-defined definition for the term collocations, explaining that “collocations are those combinations of words that occur naturally with greater than random frequency” (p. 44). There is a general consensus, therefore, that collocations are all word combinations that occur frequently together.

1.2 Nature of collocations

Words alone rarely convey the full meaning. There must be some kind of combination or cohesion to convey the full meaning. In any language, words can be combined in many ways to form meaningful groups if the words are restricted. From the perspective of the research literature, it seems that collocations can be viewed in three ways, depending on its nature; either as a textual phenomenon, i.e. physical instantiations within a text, or as an abstract type, in terms of links between words in a language system, or as a combination of both. The clear

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dominant view among scholars is that view adopted by in Nesselhauf (2005), Cowie (1998), and Howarth (1996) in which collocation is seen both as some kind of abstraction, and as a more textual phenomenon. The view adopted in this study is that which considers collocations as both textual instantiations and abstractions. A textual instantiation can be a written or spoken text which is recorded and transcribed in some way. However, since texts are produced by language users, it seems reasonable to assume that any textual instantiations derive from associative connections between words present in these language users' minds. Hoey (2005) claims that the view of text instantiation is a method, and what is really important is the abstraction view, which tells us something interesting about aspects of psychological textualization of language arrangement as a phenomenon. Usually, native speakers are good at finding relationships between words, whereas L2 learners often lack this skill. Meara claims that L2 learners cannot observe word-to-word connections that are obvious to native speakers (1996, p. 48), while Partington (1998) claims that normal collocation is part of the communicative skill of native speakers. Michael Lewis offers a different definition of collocation saying that "collocation describe the way individual words occur with one other" (p. 93). Halliday and Hassan consider collocation to be lexical cohesion if there is any combination of words that share the semantic characterization of lexicon, it ultimately has a cohesive function string.

1.3 Approaches to Collocations

There are two approaches to defining collocations; the Statistical/ Frequency-based Approach, also known as "the phraseological approach" (Nesselhauf, 2005, p. 12), and the Traditional Approach. Herbst (as cited in Nesselhauf, p. 14) refers to the first approach as a "statistically oriented approach." Linguists' attempts to define the term collocation have yielded a variety of definitions. We attempted to categorize the most common ones under each approach.

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1.3.1.The Lexical Approach

The lexical composition approach for studying collocation is based on the assumption that words derive their meaning from the words in which they appear. The lexicon is considered independent and separable from the grammar. Therefore, part of a word's meaning is in fact collocated with another word. The English linguist John Firth's interpretation of collocation became the most popular among other methods of syntagmatic analysis. Firth introduced the first formal definition of collocation. The meaning of a word is determined by the co-occurring words "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth, 1957, p.195). Firth calls company "collocation" which is a part of the meaning of a word. Meaning by collocation is a syntagmatic level abstraction. Therefore, part of word's meaning is the fact that is connected to another word but these combinations are strictly limited. After Firth (1957), Halliday (1966) added some insight to the term by clearly separating lexical problems from grammatical ones. For Halliday, collocations are examples of word combinations. He introduced the term "lexical set" which refers to a series of lexemes that show tendencies similar to collocations. In his works, he emphasized the crucial role of collocations in the study of the lexicon. However, Lyons (1977) argues that the meaning of a lexeme is only determined syntagmatically. He speaks of "encapsulation" of meaning, i.e. the lexicalization of the syntagmatic modifier component so when a lexeme is frequently used in collocation with a restricted set of phrase-modifying lexemes or phrases. Sinclair argued early in the study that collocation in the purest sense only recognizes the lexical co-occurrence of words. Then Sinclair (1996) abandoned the previous notion that lexis is separated from grammar and changed his position slightly. This new approach takes into account both the lexical and grammatical aspects of collocation. For the above linguists, collocation at this stage of collocation analysis is the occurrence of independent lexemes. If possible, it should be analyzed at the lexical level.

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1.3.2. The Semantic Approach

This approach goes beyond simply observing collocations and attempts to determine their specific shape. Its supporters attempt to investigate collocations from a semantic standpoint, as well as separately from grammar. Their main goal is to figure out why certain words collocate with others, such as why we can say *blonde hair* but not *blonde car*. Linguists are still grappling with this question today.

1.3.3. The Structural Approach

The third approach emphasizes the importance of including grammar in the study of collocations. According to this approach, lexicon and grammar are complementary and cannot be separated. Mitchell (1971) and Gitsaki (1996) state that collocation can be defined as lexicogrammatical items. This means that collocation must be studied inside a grammatical matrix. Mitchell (1971) additionally considered collocations as roots rather than words that may be related in different special roots. For instance, *smoke* and *heavy* are roots they may be *smoke heavily* and *heavy smoking*. However, Mitchell's view was criticized by many linguists. For example, *faint praise* is an appropriate English collocation but **praise faintly* is not. Without regarding syntax, the perception of collocation will become vacuous. Greenbaun (1974), for example, we may say "*I much prefer a dry water*" when *prefer* collocates with *much* in a pre-verb position. This confirms that certain objects only collocate in positive uses in certain syntactic relationships. Collocation determines the structure and occurs in a pattern. Therefore, collocation studies should include grammar (Gitsaki, 1996), which is in contrast to the above two approaches; the lexical and semantic. Lexis and grammar cannot be separated. As a result, two categories are defined; lexical and grammatical collocations, these represent two different but related aspects of one phenomenon. A similar distinction was early made by Sinclair (1966), who once emphasized the separation between lexis and grammar. He later changed his attitude

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and created an integrated technique that combined both lexis and grammar and divided collocations into two categories, i.e. upward and downward collocations. Upward collocations include prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, and pronouns. These words are used more frequently. For example, *back* collocates with *at*, *in* and *up* that are used 18 times more frequently than itself. Downward collocations include verbs and nouns that collocate with words less used than they are, such as *commit suicide*. The study of collocations is not only concerned whether grammar is included, but mainly with the degree of frequency.

1.4. Collocations' Patterns

The grammatical words that constitute a collocation are grouped in various patterns.

We classified the most common patterns in the following two tables.

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

Table 1. Collocations' Patterns according to Lewis, M (2000, p. 133)

Adjective + noun	bright color
Noun + verb	the economy boomed
Noun + noun	a sense of pride
Verb + preposition + noun	filled with horror

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Verb + adverb	smiled proudly
Adverb + adjective	happily married

Table 2. Collocations' Patterns according to McCarthy and O' Dell (2005, p. 12).

McCarthy and O' Dell introduced many types of collocations according to the nine parts of speech which exist; noun, adjective, adverb, verb, preposition, conjunction, article, pronoun and interjection. The first five parts could be combined to compose collocations. We observe that Michael Lewis' patterns are nearly similar to McCarthy and O' Dell's ones. As shown in the two tables above, we notice that in both classifications there are the following patterns: adjective + noun, noun + noun, verb + adverb, noun + verb and adverb + adjective.

But in the first classification, there is the pattern verb + adjective + noun while in the second one there is: verb + preposition + noun. In the second table the pattern verb + noun is not found whereas in the first one we find both patterns: verb + noun and noun +verb. In this study, we included all the patterns with the same examples in the following table:

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

Table 3. Collocations' Patterns according to McCarthy, O'Dell and Lewis,

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

1.5.Types of Collocations

Collocations were categorized in different ways, and each scholar divided them according to different dimensions. Some scholars considered their strengths, others considered their uses ...etc, and the most common types are described below:

1.5.1 Lexical and grammatical collocations

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

Combination	example
-------------	---------

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L1 - Verb + noun	Compose music, wind a watch
L2- Verb + noun	Reject an appeal, reverse a decision
(eradication and/or nullification and a noun)	
L3- Adjective + noun	Strong tea, a sweeping generalization
L4- Noun + verb	Bees buzz, bombs explode
L5- Noun + noun	A bit of advice, a pack of dogs
L6- Adverb + adjective	Deeply absorbed, strictly accurate
L7-Verb + adverb	Affect deeply, amuse thoroughly

Table 4. Lexical Collocations by Benson et al (1986)

Combination	Example
G1-Noun + preposition	Blockaded against, apathy towards
G2- Noun + to infinitive	It was a pleasure to do it
G3-Noun + that clause duty	He took an oath that he would do his
G4-Preposition + noun	By accident, in advance
G5-Adjective + preposition	Be angry at, be fond of
G6- Predicate adjective + to infinitive	It was necessary to work
G7- Adjective + that clause	It was nice that he was able to come home for the holidays
G8-Consist of 19 English verbs	Send (the dative movement transformation verb)

Table 5. Grammatical Collocations by Benson et al (1986)

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1.5.2 Open and restricted collocations

Cowie and Howarth (1996, p. 81) differentiate two types of collocations “open and restricted” Cowie maintained that open collocations are a combination in which one of the elements has/have a “figurative meaning” and they are freely combinable. Examples include *big flat, black man, short women*, whereas restricted collocations are “a combination of two or more words used in one of their regular, non-idiomatic”. Howarth (1996) referred to limited or “restricted collocations” as an institutionalized combinations of lexical items in which there is an arbitrary combinability restriction on one of the words with other words outside the combination such as *dry framing, vested interest*.

1.5.3 Strong, fixed, and weak collocations

Classifying collocations according to strength refers to the degree of words’ association. Some words co-occur so often that when a word appears, its collocate follows it most of the time. Here, it is qualified as a “strong collocation”. But when two words collocate rarely, the strength reduces and the collocation is not strong enough for the collocate to be predicted since the words are not always together.

Hill (as cited in Lewis, 2000, p. 63) classified collocations according to strength into four categories: unique, strong, weak, and medium-strength collocations. First, there are unique collocations. As an example, Hill gave the two collocations *foot the bill* and *shrug your shoulders*. The two collocations are unique because the verbs *foot* and *shrug* are not used with any other nouns. Secondly, there are strong collocations like *trenchant criticism* and *rancid butter*. These are not unique because there are other things that can be trenchant or rancid, but these collocations are very few. Thirdly, there are weak collocations; to illustrate, adjectives like *long, short, cheap, expensive, good* or *bad* could be combined with many things (nouns)

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for instance *red car*. These combinations are “more predictable” and easy for to the majority of students. Finally, the fourth type is medium-strength collocations. For example, *holds a conversation* and *a major operation*. Hill (2000) thinks that students are concerned with this type, which is neither strong nor weak.

1.5.4 Technical and academic collocations

This section describes Collocations types from a particular English dimension in general. Technical collocations differ from lexical and grammatical collocations in that the former is used in specific areas within specific registers. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) helps learners to learn and acquire specific usage and language usage. However, the latter is an academic/general and can be used in both general English and ESP. moreover, technical collocations are “powerful indicators of register” (Partington, 1998, p. 20). They are used in “texts of many genres”. Since each genre has a specific collocation, what is a regular collocation within one genre may not be considered that way in another genre. Sinclair (as cited in Partington,1998, p. 20) illustrated this case with the collocations *vigorous depression* and *dull highlight* that are common only in morphology and photography respectively. In this context, Fuentes and Curado (2001, p. 118) argued that “the level of technicality in word behavior is closely related to subject domain. He shows, from his point of view, certain combination of the noun network such as *access network*, *local area network*. Moreover, technical collocations are the potential of learners to acquire a particular language. Fuentes (2001, p. 111) notes that the free collocations that appear in different registers are considered as a “semi-technical” combination of words. He provided examples such as “*information*, *information systems*, *information technology*, and *digital information*. Farrell (as cited in Fuentes, 2001), semi-technical collocations are “formal, context-independent words with a high frequency and/or wide range of occurrence across scientific disciplines, not usually found in

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basic general English courses; words with high frequency across scientific disciplines.” In brief, all types are useful in learning ESP but only academic collocations are useful in general English especially “core collocations” which are common frequent collocation.

1.6.Collocation in First and Second Language Acquisition

The majority of linguists in the field of first- and second-language acquisition recognize the existence of collocations. Young children learning their first language create unanalyzed chunks that an adult would recognize as multi-morphemic, such as *lemme see* and *I want to do it*, according to Bloom (1973, as cited in Miyakoshi, 2009), this fact calls into doubt the widely held belief that most children begin speaking in single words. Wray (2000) emphasized the importance of collocations in the first-language acquisition process. He explained the importance of collocations in learning a first language. Young children supplement gestures and other nonlinguistic behaviors with collocations to convey important signals before developing their rule-governed language. As a result, before establishing their grammatical expertise, children store and employ complicated strings. Before understanding the internal nature of wh-questions, a youngster might construct the string *what's-that?* Another benefit of collocations is that they can “lower the child's processing load once innovative construction is possible” (p. 128). This permits the child to keep his or her fluency while gaining control over his or her processing. Peters (1983) also emphasized the importance of collocations in the acquisition and use of a first language. Peters’ research shows that young toddlers learn languages using both a gestalt (holistic) and analytic (inferential) method. Children start by extracting speech formulae from adults, which they then store and later utilize in innovative ways as both analyzed and unanalyzed speech or segmented units and unanalyzed or whole chunks.

When it comes to the acquisition of collocations, children appear to have numerous advantages over adults in the field of second language acquisition. Aside from the biological

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element, youngsters interact with other children who are tolerant of their inability to understand. They also engage in a variety of “ritualized play” activities that expose kids to highly anticipated, consistent, and contextualized language. Furthermore, unlike a child, an adult avoids the shock of being a non-speaker of the new language by refusing to communicate with peers (Wray, 2002). Such advantages aid in the acquisition of a second language in general and help youngsters seem native and idiomatic when using formulaic expressions in particular. To support the aforesaid viewpoint, Fillmore (1979, a cited in AlZahrani, 1998) looked at the acquisition of formulaic speech of five Spanish-speaking learners of English paired with their counterparts (English-speaking children) for one year. The results of her research showed that the two groups use formulaic sequences in very similar ways. She noted that her students first learned the formulaic statements in unanalyzed or complete chunks, then segmented them into separate pieces after they gained confidence in their use. She noticed that “Once they become familiar in the learner's speech repertory, they can be compared to other utterances in the repertory as well as those made by the speaker”. Their role in the language learning process is not only social, but also cognitive, as they give the facts on which the children’s analytical activities in figuring out the structure of the language are based” (p. 29). Second language acquisition after childhood, on the other hand, is more difficult. Adult second language learners, according to Wray (2002), reveal themselves by not knowing the grammatically available methods to deliver a message that sounds idiomatic to native speakers. She claims that this is because an adult language learner starts with individual units and builds them up, but a first language learner starts with vast, complicated units and only segments them when necessary. “While learners may encounter phrases and clauses in their input material, it is words and how they can be glued together that they notice and engage with” (p. 206). As a result, a classroom learner focuses on individual words rather than the possible combinations of those words. For instance, when native speakers come across the collocation *major catastrophe*, it is saved as a

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sequence without the need to analyze or segment its units. Thus, native speakers would understand that the proper way to express a large or terrible disaster is *major catastrophe*. Adult second language learners, on the other hand, would segment the string *big* and *disaster* and then store them separately, not realizing that this combination goes together. As a result, when it comes to discuss the same concept again, they will look for any pairing that conveys the same meaning as *major* (e.g., *big, large, important*) and *catastrophe* (e.g., *disaster, calamity, mishap*), which may or may not sound like native speech (Wray, 2002). Nevertheless, formulaic language still plays a crucial role in the field of second language acquisition. Ellis (1984c, as cited in Al-Zahrani, 1998) indicated that wholes or chunks can form an entire script of L2 performance such as with the greeting sequences. In his study, Ellis points out that three ESL learners employed some sort of formula as a communication strategy (e.g., *how do you do? I wanna, I can't speak English*). He determined that formulas are common in both classroom and naturalistic settings and are utilized by L2 learners to decrease the learning burden, while increasing the communicative demands. Although collocations were not the focus of this study, but rather were included under the umbrella of formulas, this does not undervalue the importance of collocations.

1.7. Collocation and L1 Transfer

Several studies were conducted to test second language learners' knowledge of lexical collocations with an emphasis on the role of the L1 in creating transfer of forms from L1 to L2. Hussein (1991), Marton (1977), Bahns and Eldaw (1993), and Biskup (1992) conducted studies on homogeneous L1 groups of EFL students using doze and L1 -L2 translation-type items. All of these studies based their tests on using verb-object restricted collocations. These researchers have consistently found that learners make many errors in such tasks, and that they are very likely to transfer restricted collocations from the L1 to the L2 when they are not really sure of

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the correct L2 form. To improve students' knowledge of the target language form, the researchers recommend contrastive analysis and corresponding pedagogical intervention. A study of this kind does not appear to have been attempted as of this writing, Regardless of whether it produced interesting and potentially useful results. Unfortunately, the studies cited above do not provide necessary information regarding the general proficiency level of the examinees, or statistical data on the test instruments themselves, making it difficult to determine how reliable their findings are. Nevertheless. It appears entirely plausible that L1 transfer could play a significant part in the production of second language collocations when there is a knowledge deficit, and that this could be a reflection of a general hypothesis of 11 Testing Collocations 11 lexical similarity as a production strategy, as long as the collocates figurative sense does not seem to be too far from its core meaning (Kellerman, 1986).

1.8.Collocations in Phraseology

For Gitsaki (1999), semantic transparency is considered by a lot of linguists to be the only criterion that could differentiate between idioms and collocations. However, if the fact that idioms, collocations, and free combinations are the three main phraseological combinations is taken into account, not only semantic transparency but also collocational restriction is considered as an important criterion by many linguists (Benson, Benson & Ilson, 1986; Carter, 1987; Cowan, 1989; Cowie & Howarth, 1996; Cruse, 1986; Fernando, 1996; Gramley & Pätzold, 1992). In addition, some linguists add one or two more criteria to make the distinction more apparent recognizing the continuum nature of the criteria and the difficulty to set a boundary between the three categories.

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1.9.collocations, idioms and free word combination

Collocation, idioms, phrasal verb are often used interchangeably. Therefore, it is interesting to point out the possible relationship between them. ‘Phrasal templates’ are collocations which contain very free elements within a restricted structure (prepositions used with other constituents, especially numbers). These correspond to the collocative frameworks of Renouf and Sinclair’s (1991) and the phrasal constraint of Nattinger and Decarrico’s (1992). Phrasal verbs are very common in English, especially in spoken English. A Phrasal verb is a word combination, used as a verb consisting of a verb and an adverb or a preposition. For example, *give in* or *come up with*. Each instance of these combinations has some general meanings. These meanings are often extensions of the core meaning and can be abstract. Moreover, the meaning of an English phrasal verb is usually associated with a particular set of collocates within a sentence. For example, the word *complaints* is a collocate of *to deal with*. Also, the collocate *complaints* provides an indication of the appropriate meaning of *deal with* (Gledhill, 2000, p. 14). Phrasal verbs are often used in idioms. The meaning of idioms is rarely understood as they have figurative meaning. Similarly, the meaning of an English phrasal verb is rarely inferred from an individual word. Therefore, collocation is often idiomatic. Idioms and phrasal verbs are a bit like collocations because they contain words that belong together. However, verb-preposition collocations proposed by Quirk et al. (1989) consist of a lexical verb followed by a semantically and /or syntactically linked proposition, the combination of which is called a ‘prepositional verb’. Furthermore, verb prepositional collocations are usually considered different from phrasal verbs in some respects. That is, in the former, the relevant particle always functions as a preposition rather than an adverb. The collocation that retains the original meaning of the relevant verbs and the verbs preceding the preposition is usually intransitive.

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1.10.collocation, idioms and phrasal verbs

Collocation, idioms, and phrasal verb are often used interchangeably. ‘Phrasal templates’ are collocations which contain very free elements within a restricted structure (prepositions used with other constituents, especially numbers). These correspond to the collocative frameworks of Renouf and Sinclair’s (1991) phrasal constraint of Nattinger and Decarrico’s (1982). Phrasal verbs are very common, especially in spoken English. It refers to a verb consisting of a verb and an adverb or a preposition. *Give up* or *put up with* are examples of phrasal verbs. Instances of these combinations have some general meanings each time they co-occur which can be abstract and are generally extensions of the core meaning. In addition, each meaning of a phrasal verb is associated with some collocates in a sentence. For *complaints* collocates with *to deal with* and helps to indicate the appropriate meaning of him (Gledhill, 2000, p. 14). Phrasal verbs are often used in idioms. The meaning of idioms is rarely understood (that is it has a figurative meaning). Similarly, the meaning of an English phrasal verb is rarely inferred from an individual word. Therefore collocation is often idiomatic. Idioms and phrasal verbs are a bit like collocations because they contain words that belong together. However, verb-preposition collocation proposed by Quirk et al. (1989) consists of a lexical verb followed by a semantically and /or syntactically linked proposition, the combination of which is called a ‘prepositional verb’. In addition, verb-prepositional collocations are usually considered different from phrasal verbs in some respects. That is, in the former, the relevant particle always function as a preposition rather than an adverb.

1.11.Teaching Collocations

Lewis (1997) in his “lexical approach” regards collocation as a main features of a language production, therefore teaching collocations should be a top priority for any language course. Handson and Padua (2011, p.10) maintain that explicit vocabulary instruction will help

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students to acquire depth knowledge that they will need to know the meaning of words they will encounter when writing or listening. Furthermore, Ahmad (2011) noted that incidental vocabulary learning allowed students to recognize common vocabulary phrases and related grammar patterns. Generally, there is a correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Davis, 1994). Thus, vocabulary can be explained by reading. Indeed, there is other direct ways to teach vocabulary. For instance: keywords learning, synonyms exercises, classifications, definitions, and sentences formations tasks (Beeck, 1982). However, knowing the meaning of collocation from the context is a complex and often a difficult strategy. Therefore, learners need to learn most words in a text. Teachers recognize that new information should be represented in a systematic and meaningful context in order to be remembered (Lewis, 2000). To teach collocation through context, it is advisable to provide learners with a variety of exercises.

1.12.Vocabulary Teaching and Collocations

Learners' vocabulary grows throughout time and thus it is not possible to teach large vocabulary in a short time. It is only when learners acquire the ability to use collocations properly that we can say they have become near native-like. Hill (as cited in Lewis, 2000, p. 48) saw that we can start teaching collocations starting from the intermediate level, whereas others like Higuera (2004) and Castillo Carballo (2009) believe that explicit collocations instruction should start at a beginning level. Gitsaki (1996) criticized the absence of a general consensus about what and how many collocations should be taught, at which level, the way they should be practiced (Ruben Chacon-Beltran, 2010, p. 172). Besides, there is a lack of lexical collocations' material in EFL classes. Nesselhauf (2003) emphasized that it is necessary to explicitly teach collocational phrases, especially which are different in the students' first

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language and the most frequent types such as verb + noun and adjective + noun or noun + adjective combinations.

In addition, most of the vocabulary in textbooks is introduced as lists relevant only to their context of use without including day to day English collocations.

The lack of collocations teaching material extends from textbooks to English classroom behaviors and practices. Teachers usually made students memorize vocabulary lists and rarely tackle learning lexical items with little attention paid to collocation learning even though “collocation is an important organizing principle in the vocabulary of any language.” (McCarthy, 1990, p. 12). Teaching vocabulary with collocations is more important than grammar teaching for intermediate to advanced levels. So, it is necessary to identify the learners’ problems with collocations in the classroom. In this regard, unfortunately, there is little research conducted to highlight the area of learners’ difficulties with collocations.

1.13.Learners difficulties with collocations

Low-frequency lexical items and restricted collocations have always made it hard for even advanced learners due to their low collocational competence. For this reason, it is demanding and time-consuming to build a native-like collocational knowledge in an L2 context. McCarthy (1990, p.15), for example, refutes the claim that “knowledge of collocation is based on years of experience of masses of data... statement about collocation, namely typical patterns of word co-occurrence, can never be absolute”. This clearly refers to the fact that achieving common agreement and acceptance of collocation acceptability among adult native English speakers is next to impossible.

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1.14. Significance of collocation in English learning

English learners have to make collocation as a part of their vocabulary learning (Hill & Lewis, 1997) and teachers should make them an essential part of the English curriculum. Corpus based studies have supported the importance of that so far. For example, Erman and Warren (2000) found 58.6% of multi-word units in spoken English discourse and 52.3% in writing. This is also consistent with Carter, McCarthy, Mark, and O'keeffe (2011), who reported numerous collocations words that exist in all languages. Another reason is that collocations make L2 processing easier and more efficient for learners. Willis (2003) states that using collocation and language naturally at high speeds. In contrast to native speakers who naturally recognize multiword units, non-native speakers often process L2 word by word.

Pawley and Syder (1983) were among the pioneers who put forward the idea that multi-word units such as collocations leads to native fluency and accuracy.

1.15. Importance of Collocations

Many benefits are reported by scholars for collocations. These include enhancing language performance (Brown, 1974; Nattinger, 1980; 1988); the development of L2 vocabulary (Laufer, 1988, Aghbar, 1990); enhancing communicative competence (Yorio, 1980; Channell, 1981; Cowie, 1988; Lewis, 2000); and improving L1 learners' language in the direction of the extent of a native speaker (Fillmore, 1979; Howarth, 1998; Nation, 2001). Brown (1974) emphasized the significance of collocations in increasing students' oral proficiency, listening comprehension, and reading speed. According to Lewis (2000), collocations can increase vocabulary size and use in both spoken and written language (p.8). collocations are and give important information about its semantics. It has also been argued that collocations help us to clarify the possible meanings of words (Bartsch, 2004, p. 21). This fact is pointed out by

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Halliday (1966), who asserted that apparent synonyms, such as *strong* and *powerful*, may have characteristically different collocations (e.g. *strong/*powerful tea*, **strong/powerful engine*). This idea was further developed by Partington (1998) who shows how synonyms like *sheer*, *pure*, *complete*, *utter* and *absolute* can be distinguished using knowledge about their in typical collocation. Many researchers have emphasized the importance of collocations for L2 learners learning. Brown (1974) claimed that learning collocations helps learners to observe the way native speakers use language in both spoken and written contexts. Furthermore, Brown has claimed that knowing this helps language learners to use these expressions themselves. Similarly, Pawley and Syder (1983) pointed out the importance of collocations in producing native linguistic structure for L2 learners. Laufer (1988) also highlighted the importance of collocations to enhance the learning strategy of guessing the words collocate. Along the same lines, Lewis (2000) states that learning chunks helps students develop their communicative competencies better than learning words in isolation. Nesselhauf (2003) stresses the importance of collocations for highly competitive learners. In addition, collocations constitute an important aspect of L2 vocabulary development. In order to acquire natural language like native, foreign language learners should know that the more collocations they learn, the better their L2 proficiency will be. Collocations are believed to be of great importance for many aspects of language competence, especially language production. Overall, Benson and Ilson (2009:XIII) seem to summarize the importance collocation by saying that:

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

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Conclusion

Students' difficulties with word groupings may be due primarily to their lack of knowledge of collocations. The issue of "mis-collocations," or the incorrect association of words introduced by Lewis might be due to several factors including the interference from Arabic as the mother tongue. Learners frequently translate L1 collocations into their L2, resulting in unnatural writing or speaking. In summary, this chapter discussed the core subject of collocations. It went through the various definitions of collocations proposed by linguists and probed the main types and variations of collocations, as well as their relationship to idioms and phrasal verbs, to give the impression that the collocational phenomenon is rich and deserving of the attention it receives. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the acquisition of collocations in first- and second-language acquisition, It also presented the issues that learners and teachers may encounter when dealing with them.. It concluded. with the importance of collocations in L2 learning and teaching.

CHAPTER TWO:

The practical framework

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Introduction

In this chapter, we will investigate English collocations' knowledge among master one linguistics students at Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila. The primary testing instrument material consists of a filling gaps task, multiple choices MSQ and collomatch test upon getting findings, this chapter with a summary of findings and conclusions from the entire research work will be presented. The focus will be on the problematic areas learners encounter.

2.1. Methodology and Sampling

2.1.1 Methodology

We intended to create a test format aimed at tapping learners' collocations competence We aimed for one which is simple to administer and contain a large number of items, and one which would produce meaningful and analyzable interval data. We selected various tasks (filling the gaps, multiple choices questions, MCQ, collex and collomatch).

The first task was a fill in the gaps with the appropriate words according to the context of each sentence. In the second and the fourth tasks, students were asked to indicate which of the objects felicitously may combine with. The instructions guided the informants to put a cross in the intersecting box of those words they think form combinations that exist in frequent use in English. The third tasked for asked to choosing the right answer.

2.1.2 Sampling

The participants were 35 thirty-five master one linguistics students at the Department of Literature and English language at the University of Mohammed Boudiaf in M'sila. The participants were both male and female students whose L1 background was Arabic. The sample

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was representative and suits the subject investigated as collocations are problematic even for the advanced levels where learners have went through instruction in English.

2.2.3. Research design

In this research, we applied quantitative method in the design to get statistics and numbers for analysis. This method is used to obtain results from a statistical analysis of data. The instrument that is used in this method is a test containing several tasks in order to collect data and also in order to confirm the hypothesis that correspond to the research questions.

2.2.4. Procedure

Students were tested during the oral expression module in the classroom. They were given about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the task. The test was done anonymously. Data was collected and classified according to collocations types and familiarity.

2.4. The Analysis of Results and Findings

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the subjects' answers to the collocational test. The answers collected from student's "filling the gaps , MCQ, COLLEX and COLLMATCH' tasks . Informants' answers were counted as correct or incorrect and were transformed into percentages and statistical data tables in order to quantify the results which are presented below:

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Table 6. Descriptive statistics for correct and incorrect answers in percentages.

N	35	Percentage 100%
Correct answers	72	17,14%
Incorrect answers	348	82,85%
Total	420	100%

Table 07. Task 03: descriptive statistics of students' correct and incorrect answers

N	35	Percentage 100%
Correct answers	167	53,01%
Incorrect answers	148	46,98%
Total	315	100%

Research question n°:01:

What is the degree of collocations strength among master 1 linguistics students?

On the basis of the results from the tables its apparent that students level is fairly low specially table8 (only p_s correct answer=17,14%). Furthermore, another observation can be made while analyzing the results of task 03 which the students found the easiest, students scored 53.01% of correct answers in task 03. Therefore, it can be concluded that the degree of strength of collocation competence is average.

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Research question n°:02:

Research question two targeted particularly knowing which type of collocation might be the most problematic and challenging for master one linguistics learners.

To answer this question “**what are the types of collocations that are the most problematic for students?**”. It required from us a thorough qualitative analysis of the data collected from learners as well as the ability to relate them to the types of collocations. Answers have been counted in tables which are presented below:

Table 08. Task two: statistical data of students

N	35
Mean	7,81
Std .D	6,81
Variance	46,40
Range	33,00
Min	00
Max	33.00

This table shows that the total mean of correct answers in the test was (7,81))which is considered low so it can be concluded that students faced difficulties with all different type of collocation .

According to Benson and Ilson (1997) they classified collocations into lexical and grammatical collocations. Lexical collocations are composed of two or more words, i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, as shown below:

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Verb + noun	Compose music, wind a watch
Verb + noun	reject an appeal
Adjective + noun	Strong tea
Noun + verb	Bees buzz
Noun + noun	A bit of advice
Adverb + adjective	deeply absorbed
Verb + adverb	affect deeply

Grammatical collocations are a combination of a content word and a function word particularly a preposition, such as:

Noun + preposition	Blockaded against
Noun + to infinitive	It was a pleasure to do it
Noun + that clause	He took an oath that he would do his duty
Preposition + noun	By accident, in advance

The next step will be checking out whether Master one linguistics students at M'sila University find it easier to deal with grammatical or lexical collocations. In order to do this, we have ordered learners performance from those collocations which had the highest score to those which had the poorest performance.

Table 10. Highest score collocations

Unfriendly person	27
Difficult situation	25
Unkind	27
Tell a story	22
Taking evening classes	28
Lose weight	23

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As shown in table 2.2, collocations with the highest performance by learners were all lexical collocations, with adjective + noun coming in first place and verb + noun coming in second. As a result, we can conclude that the above-mentioned lexical collocations represent the less challenging and the least difficult for master one linguistics students.

The second phenomenon that we can observe from the data in table 2.2 above is that the units that comprise the collocations are words that learners are familiar with, such as *tell, joke, long, speech, lie, say, prayer*, and so on. This observation leads to the conclusion that learners' correct answers and collocational competence are correlated with their familiarity with the units that comprise the collocations, rather than just the type of collocations themselves. This conclusion is further supported by examples: *adjourn trial* scoring: 6 correct answers, also, *mitigating, a broad agreement* scoring 3 correct responses.

Research question 03:

Does the degree of difficulty with collocation has any relation with the familiarity of collocation items?

Unfamiliar –familiar		Familiar –familiar		Familiar-unfamiliar	
Correct	Incorrect	correct	incorrect	Correct	incorrect
20,33%	79,60%	23,28%	76,70%	12,14%	87,85%

Table 11. descriptive data of familiar and unfamiliar collocations (correct and incorrect)

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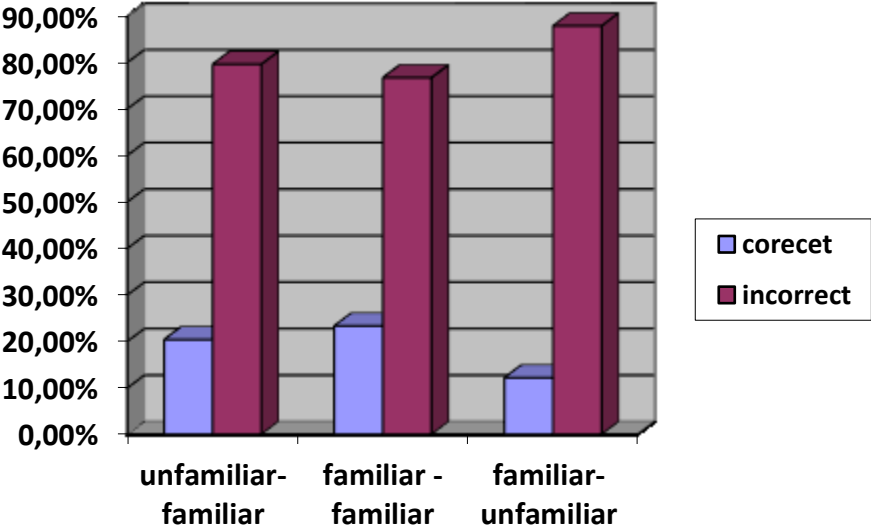


Figure 01: histogram shows familiar and unfamiliar collocations (correct and incorrect)

The table presented in this graph shows students’ answers; correct and incorrect ones “based on calculating the familiar and unfamiliar words that were found in the fourth tasks .it can be seen that we divide the collocates words into three criteria and it is evident that students scores are low in all less than 30%. While a significant number of students failed in knowing the collocates specially when they faced a Familiar word with unfamiliar word so it’s obvious that students difficulties with collocations it is not concerned only by the unfamiliarity words but also with familiarity.

Discussion of the Results and Finding

The results of this inquiry have demonstration that student’s difficulties with collocations are caused by several reasons:

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- **Interference of L1:**

The findings yielded by students answers showed that the interference of student's mother tongue influences their way of thinking in FL and it is a major cause behind students mis-collocate, for example: *small importance* which is in Arabic signifies "أهمية قليلة" instead of saying "*little importance*". ;8

- **Lack of collocational competence:**

Based on students' answers. Lack of collocational competence was standing us the second reason of mis-collocations. Large number of students answers shows that they have limited knowledge of collocations. For example: instead of saying (*Tony dropped out of the university*), they said (*Tony left the university*), (*He is learning English Literature*) instead of "*He is reading English Literature*".

The latter examples clearly show that students are not capable of producing accurate collocations to express their ideas.

As mentioned in the literature review, Lewis (2000) confirmed that learners are not familiar with the concept of collocational competence. As a result, they fail to combine chunks appropriately.

- **Overgeneralization:**

Some students overgeneralized the use of one word to other combination. For example, most students generalized the use of "to speak" with a large number of inappropriate words such in "speak a prayer", "speak a joke", and "speak a story".

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- **Familiarity:**

The results of question: 03 show that students faced difficulties regardless whether the collates (words) was familiar or unfamiliar items because they considered words as single items and accordingly acquired them separately.

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Conclusion

The findings indicated that English language students at the Department of English Language and Literature at Mohamed Boudiaf University have difficulty producing collocations and their knowledge is generally low. This could be due to a variety of factors, including the interference of L1, lack of collocational competence, overgeneralization and familiarity. Considering all of the above mentioned factors, more effort should be made to develop learners' collocational competence, taking into account their importance in the process of language acquisition.

Pedagogical Implications

This study, like previous studies on collocations, found a consensus on L2 learners' lack of collocational knowledge. The findings highlight the importance of emphasizing collocations in the classroom. As a result, the pedagogical implications suggested below can serve as a framework for teaching collocation. Because the educational language environment is important in learning collocations, as demonstrated in this study, using authentic texts in teaching collocations in an EFL context may be beneficial. Such texts appear to provide a richer environment for exposure to collocations than typical EFL textbooks with modified input. Moreover, this study helped to demonstrate the importance of incorporating collocation teaching into the ESL/EFL curriculum for developing students' English proficiency. Collocations should be introduced by L2 teachers to raise students' awareness of the significance of collocations competence. Instructors should demonstrate the uniqueness of collocations and added vocabulary as a fundamental module. Thus, students will be able to speak and write as natives do. Furthermore, encouraging students to use English collocation dictionaries whenever they are

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unsure about the usage of a particular word is one way to improve their knowledge of collocations.

Recommendation for Further Research

As previously stated, collocations are important in many aspects of language acquisition. However, the field of collocations is still in its infancy, and much remains to be learned about:

- The nature of collocations, such as L1 interference, collocational strategies, collocation acquisition, the effect of explicit and implicit approaches on collocation learning, and collocational proficiency development. As a result, more research on collocations is required.

- Another idea is to expand the scope of this study to include female participants to see if there is a link between collocation competence and gender.

- It would also be interesting to assess learners' collocational knowledge at different levels of language proficiency to see if there are any patterns of collocational knowledge development and how it relates to overall language proficiency development.

- Moreover other research may investigate students' capacity with linguistic collocations. In this way, we will have a clearer and total picture of EFL students' collocational competence.

**GENERAL
CONCLUSION**

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

For EFL learners, learning English as a foreign language is somewhat complicated because it is based on the integration of four skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) to master that language appropriately, without neglecting some other aspects of language such as grammar, lexis, pronunciation, punctuation, and culture. Although EFL students are familiar with some of these skills and aspects, they are unable to achieve proficiency due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge, which plays a vital role in students' production in the classroom or in their daily interactions with others.

The results of the present study proved what has long been reported by previous studies in the literature that collocations constitute one of the difficult and neglected area in L2 teaching and learning. Master one linguistics students at M'sila University were found to have difficulty with collocations, indicating that their collocational competence is low. This difficulty ranges from the most difficult types, such as grammatical collocations, to less difficult lexical collocations and collocations that contain a word unfamiliar to learners. This will ultimately lead to mis-collocations, or incorrect combinations that students produce. These will make students appear less native-like and less competent, which may have a negative impact on their overall linguistic competence.

From the research results, it can be said that Master one linguistics students encountered difficulties with collocation competence. Firstly, there is the interference of L1 because students rely more on their mother tongue in thinking and expressing their ideas during language production, learners make collocation errors due to their unfamiliarity with collocation use in English; as a result, they misuse collocations. Secondly, the lack of collocational competence seems to be a persistent factor. This latter leads learners to commit errors because they do not

General Conclusion

know how to combine and choose words that fit with each other. Finally, overgeneralization of rules and familiarity are the most used strategies for learning that lead to the misuse of collocations by Master one linguistics students. As a result, teaching collocations would be advantageous to them. Teachers should assist students in developing their communicative and collocational competence so that they can become fluent in English in general. This could be accomplished through explicit collocations teaching, which focuses on increasing students' awareness of the most common collocates of a word.

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APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix n°:01

University of M'sila department of English language

Level: Master 01 (linguistics)

Dear students,

These tasks are used for the purpose of our research completion. It mainly deals with collocation competence. We would greatly appreciate your collaboration.

Task1: Complete the collocation using the words in the box. You will need to use some words more than once:

Adjourn	auburn	broad	deliriously	inclement	mitigating
picturesque					

1- A..... accent

7- a.....smile

2- In agreement

8- a..... location

3- circumstances

9-a meeting

4- factors

10- a.....town

5- hair

11-.....a trial

6-happy

12.weather

Appendices

Task2: Put a tick in the box if the collocation is possible.

	Minority	Majority	Amount	Number	Percentage	quality	Importance	Significance
Small								
Little								
Large								
Great								
big								
High								
wide								

personsmellsituationtimeeventresult
Mean						
unfriendly						
unpleasant						
difficult						
Bad – tempered						
bad						
unkind						

Appendices

Task 3: Choose the right word or phrase.

1. Joanna's **doing** / **making** research into the environmental impact of global warming.
2. A recent study has been **done** / **made** to investigate the beneficial effects of tea.
3. My exams are coming up and I've got a lot of revision to **do** / **make**.
4. Tony **dropped out of** / **left** the university and started work as a builder.
5. I can't decide whether **to do** / **make** Spanish or French next year.
6. I'm **taking** / **studying** evening classes in Computer Science.
7. Gary's **in** / **at** university in Manchester. He's **reading** / **learning** English Literature.
8. I've got an essay to **hand in** / **give over** on Monday morning, so I'd better get on with some work.
9. Research has been **conducted** / **performed** into the hazards of working in a noisy environment.

Appendices

Task 4: Tick the possible word combinations

1

	charges	patience	weight	hints	anchor	blood
drop						
lose						
shed						

2

	a diary	one's balance	a promise	sway	one's breath	a secret
break						
hold						
keep						

3

	a prayer	a language	a joke	farewell	a story	lies
say						
tell						
speak						

4

	time	a play	eggs	a blow	a divorce	a miracle
beat						
strike						
perform						

5

	conclusions	a glance	a party	a breath	a vote	parallels
throw						
cast						
draw						

6

	amends	headway	attention	a decision	precautions	a mistake
take						
make						
pay						

7

	weather	colour	hair	eyes	paint	skin
fair						
blonde						
light						

8

	meat	drugs	facts	drinker	traffic	demand
hard						
tough						
heavy						

Appendices

Word		Correct answer	Incorrect answer
Small	Minority	8	27
	Amount	10	25
	Number	16	19
	Percentage	5	30
	Quality	1	34
Little	Importance	9	26
	Significance	4	31
Large	/	2	33
Great	Minority	0	35
	Majority	4	31
	Amount	3	32
	number	3	32
	Percentage	8	27
	Quality	5	30
Bug	Importance	7	28
	Significance	5	30
High	Percentage	4	31
Wide	/	10	25
Mean	Person	4	31
Unfriendly	Situation	14	21
	Person	27	8
Unpleased	Person	3	32
	Smell	5	30
	Situation	3	32
	Event	7	28

Appendices

	Result	7	28
Difficult	Person	7	28
	Situation	9	26
	Time	2	33
Bad tempered	Person	25	10
Bad	Person	10	25
	Smell	17	18
	Situation	9	26
	Time	16	19
	Event	7	28
	Result	13	22
Unkind	Person	27	8

Task 04:

word		correct	Incorrect
drop	Changes	16	19
	Weight	5	30
	Hints	7	28
	Anchor	5	30
close	Charges	0	35
	Patience	12	27
	Weight	23	12
	Anchor	0	35
	Blood	5	30
Shed	weight	1	34
	Blood	12	23

Appendices

break	A promise	14	21
	A secret	2	33
Hold	A promise	4	31
	Sway	2	33
	one's balance	13	22
	A secret	8	27
Keep	A dairy	7	28
	One's balance	6	29
	A promise	9	26
	One's balance	1	34
	A secret	17	18
say	A prayer	15	20
	A joke	11	24
	Farewell	10	25
	A story	2	33
	Lies	5	30
tell	A prayer	1	34
	A joke	14	31
	Farewell	2	33
	A story	22	23
	Lies	11	24
speak	A language	26	9
	Lies	1	34
beat	Time	9	26
	Eggs	8	27
Strike	A blow	5	30

Appendices

perform	Time	1	34
	A play	19	16
	A miracle	10	25
Throw	A glance	10	25
	A party	8	27
	A vote	4	31
Cast	A glance	4	31
	A vote	8	27
	parallels	2	33
Draw	Conclusion	18	17
	A glance	3	32
	A breath	2	33
	A vote	2	33
	parallels	8	27
take	Attention	1	34
	A decision	16	19
	Precaution	8	27
	A mistake	0	35
Make	Amends	3	22
	Headway	33	2
	Attention	0	35
	A decision	18	17
	Precaution	2	33
	A mistake	21	14
Pay	attention	25	10
Fair	Skin	5	30

Appendices

	Weather	6	29
	Color	1	34
	Hair	12	23
blonde	Color	5	30
	Hair	12	23
light	Weather	4	31
	Color	16	19
	Hair	0	35
	Eyes	6	29
	Paint	6	29
	Skin	2	33
hard	Meat	7	28
	Drugs	5	30
	Facts	10	25
	Drinker	4	31
	Traffic	3	32
	Demand	9	26
Tough	Meat	2	33
	Drugs	1	34
	Demand	6	29
Heavy	Meat	6	29
	Drugs	6	29
	Drinker	6	29
	Traffic	9	26
	Demend	2	33

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من الكفاءة في استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة المسيلة بهدف رفع وعيهم حول استخدام هذه المتلازمات اللفظية وأهميتها، وكذلك تطوير كفاءتهم في استخدام المتلازمات. لهذا الهدف، تقدم الدراسة لمحة عامة عن التصنيفات والتعريفات المصاحبة ذات الصلة. بالإضافة إلى مقدمة للموضوع. يقدم الجزء النظري بحثاً عن الكفاءة في المتلازمات اللفظية لطلاب الماستر 1 في اللغويات ممثلة بعينة مكونة من 35 طالباً من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المسيلة. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الكفاءة في المتلازمات اللفظية لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كانت بشكل عام غير مرضية كما أن الطلاب يواجهون العديد من الصعوبات عند استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية لأسباب متعددة. لذلك، هناك عدد من التوصيات التي تفيد باللغة الإنجليزية تم تقديمها للمعلمين الذين يمكنهم التنفيذ في الفصل الدراسي الخاص بهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المتلازمات اللفظية، الكفاءة في المتلازمات اللفظية