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English lexical collocation knowledge of Libyan university students

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ENGLISH LEXICAL COLLOCATION KNOWLEDGE OF

LIBYAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

BY

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School of Linguistics and English Language

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To the memory of my beloved Mother

It is you Mum Who is behind any success I ever achieve!

To my beloved father

To my husband and my beloved children: Abdulrahim, Yasser,

Mohammed and Fatima

To all my brothers, sisters and dearest friends

ABSTRACT

One of the most challenging problems for EFL students is to be able to express themselves not just grammatically but also acceptably and naturally in English in appropriate contexts. The ability to produce acceptable and natural expressions in English is closely related to the EFL students' competence in collocation—which words go together in normal usage. This study, therefore, investigated Libyan EFL university students' lexical collocation use. It also aims to examine how learners' L1 (Arabic) influences their production of collocations. It analyzes their problems in the usage of six patterns of lexical collocations: verb+ noun, noun+ verb, noun+ noun, adjective+ noun, verb +adverb, adverb+ adjective.

Participants of the present study were 185 Libyan university students majoring in English at the department of English language at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University. Data for the study was collected from a multiple-choice test consisted of 60 items and a translation task comprised of 28 items, alongside a self-reporting questionnaire. The data were examined and the results revealed that the informants' ability is lower than expected. The findings also showed that Libyan university students do have problems with English lexical collocations in both reception and production of all patterns of lexical collocations.

Results also indicated that learners' L1 and their amount of exposure to English had a strong influence on the learners' acquisition of English lexical collocations. The findings of this study have some immediate implications for both language learners and teachers of EFL/ESL, as well as for writers of materials.

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KEY TO ARABIC TRANSCRIPTION

(MSA AND NSA)

Orthographic symbol	Transliteration	Transcription Value in IPA	Example in Arabic	The corresponding word in English
ء	ā	/a/	/alam/	Pains
ب	b	/b/, /p/	/ba ab	Door
ت	t	/t/	/taraka/	Left/Leave
ث	th	/θ/	/θawb/	Dress
ج	j	/dʒ/, /ʒ/ or /g/	/ʒamal/	Beauty
ح	h	/ħ/	/halafa/	Swear
خ	kh	/x/	/xareef/	Autumn
د	d	/d/	/dumuʕ/	Tears
ذ	dh	/ð/	/ðahaba/	Went
ر	r	/r/	/ramaa/	Threw
ز	z	/z/	/zubda/	Butter
س	s	/s/	/Saada/	Helped
ش	sh	/ʃ/	/ʃams/	Sun
ص	ṣ	/sˤ/	/sabour/	Patient
ض	ḍ	/dˤ/	/daraba/	Hit
ط	ṭ	/tˤ/	/ta ahir/	Pure
ظ	ẓ	/ðˤ/ or /zˤ/	/ðˤalaam/	Darkness
ع	ʕ	/ʕ/	/ʕalam/	Flag
غ	gh	/ɣ/	/ɣazaal/	Dear
ف	f	/f/or /v/	/faʕla/	Did
ق	q	/q/	/qamar/	Moon
ك	k	/k/	/kareem/	Generous
ل	l	/l/	/la abaa/	Played
م	m	/m/	/maher/	Clever
ن	n	/n/	/nahaar/	Afternoon
ه	h	/h/	/haðaa/	This
و	w	/w/ or /ū /	/walad/	Boy
ى	y	/y/ or /ī/	/jad/	Hand

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNC   British National Corpus

CCED   COLLINS COBUILD English Dictionary

DDL   Data-driven Learning

ELT   English Language Teaching

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ESL   English as a Second Language

FL   Foreign Language

FLT   Foreign Language Teaching

G (1)   Grammatical (collocation)

IELTS   International English Language Testing System

KWIC   key words in context

ICLE   International Corpus of Learners' English

L1   First Language

L (1)   Lexical (collocation)

OALD   Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary

MSA   Modern-standard Arabic

NSA   Non- Standard Arabic

SLA   Second Language Acquisition

TOFEL   Test of English as a Foreign Language

Chapter 1

1.1 Overview

It has been widely argued over the last decade that learning a language involves learning its vocabulary. In other words, it is not possible to learn a language without learning its vocabulary. Wilkins (1972:110, cited in Lewis, 2000) states that "...without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This argument has been supported by many researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) who have stressed the importance of vocabulary learning (Laufer, 1986; Nation, 1990, and McCarthy, 1990). For example, McCarthy (1990) summarizes the importance of vocabulary teaching for second language (L2) learners in the following statement:

> No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings; communication in a L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way (p. viii).

Therefore, in order to be able to use a language productively, students must know a certain amount of vocabulary, not only for communicating orally, but also for mastering writing skills. This is why it is recommended that teachers should pay more attention to the teaching of vocabulary in much the same way as the teaching of grammar (Krashen, 1988).

Within the area of vocabulary, the topic of word combinations, which are usually referred to as formulaic language[1] has been a common concern among linguistics, lexicographers and language pedagogists. The study of word combinations has achieved importance because many linguists have surmised that there are fixed forms of expression in every language that are stored in the minds or memories of native speakers of each language as whole chunks of language forms and not as single words. Whenever learners want to speak or write, they

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[1]Although there is no one satisfactory definition of formulaic language, the term typically includes: idioms, collocations, turns of phrase, preferred ways of saying things, routines, set phrases, prayers, proverbs, rhymes and songs. While researchers differ in what they consider to be formulaic language, the following definition is one of the most inclusive. A formulaic sequence is:

"a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other 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, 2002:9).

recall these ready chunks instead of brainstorming their mind searching for which word goes with which.

As stated by Durrant and Schmitt (2008) formulaic language is widely recognized to be of central importance to fluent and idiomatic language use. Conklin & Schmitt (2007) argue that formulaic expressions are widespread in language discourse and distinguish the speech of native speakers from non-native speakers. For instance, in their study, Erman and Warren (2000) found that formulaic language creates 58.6% of the spoken English discourse they analysed and 52.3% of the written discourse. Moreover, it is also argued that formulaic sequences help facilitate language development not only for first language (L1) learners but also for second language (L2) learners since they provide them with the raw materials that help them improve their language (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002).

According to Boers et al., (2006), there are three psycholinguistic reasons why formulaic expressions are beneficial for learners: firstly, they help them achieve native-like competent performance, secondly, they are retrieved from memory in chunks which helps learners produce fewer hesitations, and thirdly, they facilitate fluent language production under real-time conditions.

Collocations, as a sub-category of formulaic language placed between idioms[2] and free combinations,[3] have attracted the attention of second language acquisition researchers and are considered as an important dimension in language learning processes. There are as many different definitions of collocations as there are authors who have tackled this topic. The most commonly shared definition is the tendency of one or more words to co-occur frequently with other words (Firth, 1957; Halliday, 1966; Carter, 1987; Lewis, 1993; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005). For example, in the sentence 'He committed a crime,' the verb 'commit' recurrently co-occurs with the noun 'crime'.

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[2]Idioms are made up of small group word combinations and relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the basic literal meaning of their constituents. For instance, *to have an axe to grind (= to seek personal advantage)* (Benson et al., 1986)

[3]Free combinations are a combination of words following only the general rules of syntax: the elements are not bound specifically to each other and they can be substituted with other lexical items freely (read a book, read a newspaper, read a magazine, write a book, borrow a book, etc.) (Benson et al., 1986).

According to McCarthy (1995), collocation is "an important organizing principle in the vocabulary of any language." Firth is often quoted as having said 'you know a word by the company it keeps.'(Firth, 1957:11). In fact, in order to use a word both receptively and productively requires not only knowing its dictionary definition but also requires knowing the types of words with which it is often associated. As Halliday pointed out back in 1966, "knowledge of collocation is knowledge of what words are most likely to occur together"

Also, Carter (1991) asserts that knowing a word completely and for the purposes of accurate productive use involves at least knowing (among other things) the network of relations it forms with other words, either collocationally, or colligationally[4]. In other words, learning new words in chunks is meaningful and necessary to help L2 learners become successful communicators, since much of language consists of prefabricated chunks so that learners have to acquire not only new words in their isolated forms but also their collocations.

Collocations are considered as one of the features that differentiate native speakers from non-native speakers of English. Lewis (1997) states that native speakers carry hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of lexical chunks in their heads, ready to draw upon, in order to produce fluent, accurate and meaningful language. In other words, native speakers intuitively know which words frequently combine and which do not. As claimed by Williams (2000), "automation of collocation" helps native speakers fluently express themselves since it provides "chunks" that are ready to use. Second language learners, however, lacking this automation of collocation, may make non-native errors when producing utterances.

The lack of collocational competence often leads learners to "create longer utterances, because they do not know the collocations which express precisely what they want to say" (Lewis, 2000). As claimed by McCarthy and O'Dell, (2005: 6) collocations"...give you the most natural way to say something: *smoking is strictly forbidden* is more natural than *smoking is strongly forbidden*"

Hence, collocations as a specific area within lexis are of particular importance and recognized as one of the challenges that EFL learners encounter in their journey of English language learning. Different researchers in ESL/EFL have found that L2 learners from different

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[4]Colligation can be defined as 'the grammatical company a word keeps and the positions it prefers'; in other words, a word's colligations describe what it typically does grammatically' (Firth, 1956 and Hoey 2000)

proficiency levels face difficulties in combining words together, resulting in texts that are not native-like. Wardell (1991) points out that one peculiarity of the English of second language learners is the failure of these learners to produce collocations in the proper order. In Lewis' (2000: 8) words:

> "the single most important task facing language learners is acquiring a sufficiently large vocabulary. We now recognise that much of our 'vocabulary' consists of prefabricated chunks of different kinds. The single most important chunk is collocation. Self-evidently, then, teaching collocation should be a top priority in every language course."

One reason for this may be due to the fact that unlike native speakers, L2 learners seem to focus on learning individual words and gradually building up bigger units, so it becomes particularly hard for them to establish strong associations between pairs of words forming collocations (Schmitt and Underwood, 2004; Wray, 2002). As a result, L2 learners tend to resort to a creative mechanism to combine isolated words, rather than store, retrieve and produce ready-made collocations.

Consequently, second language learners need to be aware that an essential requirement for the overall mastery of L2 is the ability to comprehend and produce collocations as unanalyzed chunks in order to achieve native-like competence and fluency, i.e. in order to speak a language the way its native speakers do (Brashi, 2009). Thus, collocations require to be given more focus because they help learners not only to understand lexis but also to communicate ideas more effectively in writing and speaking.

Collocation is one of the most difficult problems for EFL Libyan students. Not many of them are aware of the existence of collocations due to dominance of the grammar-translation approach which has played a key role in the teaching of English in Libya for decades. Willis (1990) considers that, at present, the knowledge of language that teachers offer learners is heavily loaded towards grammar, and teachers need to pay more attention to lexical elements in classrooms as, if teachers emphasise grammar too much, the students are less likely to be able to create a significant and native-like output in language terms.

Given these considerations, it is the focus of the present study to examine the knowledge of English lexical collocations of EFL Libyan learners.

1.2 The status of English language teaching in Libya

English is well established as the primary foreign language in Libya and most people, both young people and adults, are essentially motivated and committed to learn it. It is valued as a prestigious subject in the curriculum. At the official level the following objectives are set for English language Teaching (ELT):

- To enable and develop the ability to use English for communication;
- To develop an awareness of the nature of language and language learning and hence achieve cross-cultural awareness.(National Report, 2001)

In Libya, English is taught as a foreign language (FL) in schools and colleges and at university level. Learning English was an obligatory component within the Libyan curriculum during the 1970s and until the mid 1980s. Sawani (2009) points out that during the 1970s and until the mid-1980s learning English was a compulsory component of the Libyan schools and universities. However, in 1986, the teaching and learning of English were completely cancelled. This was due to political, cultural and economic factors which deeply influenced the education system at that time. This, in turn, meant that the teachers of English were made "jobless or otherwise had to teach other subjects such as history and geography" (Swaini, 2009:5). As indicated by Swaini, at that time students were unaware of the problems this might cause until they had finished their secondary schools and became university students where their failure to study many subjects in English became evident.

Later in 1997, the teaching of English was welcomed again in Libyan schools and universities and became a compulsory subject in the Libyan curriculum from the fifth grade of elementary schools. Additionally, efforts and plans undertaken by the Ministry of Education were devoted to induce a change in teaching materials and in the syllabus level, but the quality of English teaching at that time was, and continues to be, still quite low. This could be due to the fact that such a change in the syllabus and the teaching materials was not synchronized with a parallel change in teaching and assessment methods and, most importantly, these efforts did not address programmes for teacher preparation.

Gadour (2006:180) points out that the introduction of new textbooks integrated cultural aspects of the English language that required the application of new teaching methodologies. This created an obstacle in the teaching learning environment because "many teachers have

forgotten the English language, but culturally they have to teach it" (ibid). There were only a few teachers left who were still capable of teaching languages, particularly English.

Generally, teaching English in Libya still, for instance, reflects a teacher-centred ideology with all its underpinning assumptions. The instructional approach used in most classes is grammar translation where the formal teaching of grammar is ultimately still a panacea; grammar is at the heart of what is done in the classroom. Teachers in this context are perceived as the dispensers of knowledge who are unquestionably empowered with the expertise to set goals, assign tasks, correct mistakes and assess progress. In contrast, students are ultimately passive recipients who easily give themselves up to the teachers who supply them with grammatical rules and vocabulary lists as well as ready-made well-written paragraphs that suit any topic to be learnt by heart for the exams only to be completely forgotten afterwards.

1.2.1 English vocabulary teaching in Libya

In Libya, vocabulary is mainly taught using traditional methods and techniques which, no doubt, enable the learners to cram in a lot of new vocabulary items without giving them any idea of the usage. As a result, the items learnt in this way just remain a part of their passive vocabulary and can never become active as the learners are unaware of their usage in their productive skills: writing and speaking.

Libyan learners, at different levels, are usually provided with long lists of isolated and decontextualised vocabulary items with their English meanings (definitions) or Arabic translation, and they are supposed to cram in the spelling and meanings of these words. After they have finished learning, they are asked to articulate the spelling and the meanings and sometimes they are guided to make sentences. These words are usually selected from the texts given in their textbooks. At the end of a session or semester, the Arabic translation of those words and sometimes sentence formation is demanded. It is noticeable that the learners find sentence formation a very hard task as they do not know word forms and their occurrences in different contexts as well as their collocations. The learners are not taught proper usage either. As a result, students actually memorize the words but they are unable to express themselves well in English, and make frequent collocation errors.

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1.3 Purpose of the study

The importance of collocations and the difficulties they pose to EFL/ESL learners have been understood by various second language acquisition researchers (Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Bahns, 1993; Channell, 1981; Lewis, 1993; Takizawa, 1999; Willis, 1990). These researchers agree that learners' knowledge of lexical collocations is an essential requirement for the overall mastery of their second language. Yet, despite the important role that collocations have in language acquisition, relatively few studies have been conducted to investigate the English lexical collocation knowledge of EFL Arabic-speaking learners (e.g., Al- Zahrani, 1998; Farghal and Obiedant, 1995; Hussein, 1991; Mahmoud, 2005; Zughoul and Abdul-Fattah, 2003; and Shehata, 2008). Suffice to say, and to the knowledge of the researcher, to date no studies have been conducted in order to investigate the knowledge of English lexical collocations of EFL Libyan students who are English majors.

In addition to what has been said about the importance of collocation in language learning, the present study has been motivated by the observation that, even at intermediate to advanced stages, Libyan learners of English have considerable difficulties in using English. In other words, they often remain stuck at a certain level of language competence, even though the majority of them are familiar with the basic, and most common, grammatical structures of English language. This inefficiency seems to be due, to some extent, to the lack of collocational knowledge among Libyan EFL students.

Many factors contribute to this problem, including the unawareness of Libyan learners of the importance of collocations in language learning, the teaching methods used, the inadequate emphasis given to collocational patterns in the content of the syllabus and the type of instructions they receive. As a result, students graduate from schools with a very low ability to communicate or to express themselves properly in English in real life situations.

Therefore, there is a need to investigate the English lexical collocation knowledge of Libyan Arab EFL University students and know what problems they encounter when using English lexical collocations.

Having said all this, the present study, therefore, attempts to fill this gap in research by investigating the knowledge of English lexical collocations among Libyan EFL students' majors in English in four Faculties of Arts at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University

1.4 The scope of the study

As mentioned above, this study aims to examine English lexical collocations among Libyan EFL learners in four Faculties at the University of Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi majoring in English. The scope of the present study is restricted to six types of lexical collocation defined by Benson et al. (1996) including verb+ noun, noun+ verb, noun+ adjective, verb+ adverb, adverb+ adjective and noun+ noun collocations. The selection of these particular patterns of collocations is motivated by the following reasons:

1- Many collocational studies conducted by various researchers in EFL/ESL, such as Bahns and Eldaw (1993), indicate that EFL learners face relatively greater difficulties with the use of lexical collocations rather than grammatical ones since they make more errors in lexical word combinations in writing.

2- In most cases, these investigations into L2 language were narrowed down to collocations of particular structures such as verb+ noun, adjective+ noun or adverb +adjective collocations. For instance, Bahns and Eldaw (1993), Al-Zahrani (1998), Howarth (1996) examined verb + noun collocations, Fan (1991) and Chi et al., (1994) looked at delexical verbs, and Granger (1998) and Lorenze (1999) studied the adverb +adjective collocations. Therefore, the findings were related only to a particular type of lexical collocations and it was not possible to have a broader understanding of EFL learners' lexical collocational knowledge.

By investigating a variety of lexical collocation patterns, the present study explores which collocation types cause more difficulties and which types cause fewer difficulties for Libyan EFL students.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide a useful insight for Libyan EFL teachers, as well as learning material designers. By exploring the main areas of the problems of using appropriate lexical collocations, one can grade, classify and select the most problematic type of lexical collocations and decide on how to incorporate them into the EFL curriculum in Libyan high schools and universities. The result of this study may also help learners to be aware of the role and importance of collocations in language learning.

1.5 Overview of the thesis chapters

The present study consists of six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study. It provides a general background to the study, and stresses the rationale behind the study and its significance for the wider field of ELT in general and for Libya in particular. Finally, the chapter ends with an overview of the thesis chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature considered in this investigation. It is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides a theoretical framework on the notion of 'collocation', attempts to define collocation, the classification of collocation, as well as the importance of collocation and its challenges to EFL/ESL learners. Part 2 discusses the previous empirical studies on the acquisition and use of collocation in ESL/ EFL settings in general and empirical studies on the acquisition and use of collocations by Arabic-speaking learners of English in particular.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in the investigation. It presents the research questions and provides a detailed account of the participants who took part in this study. It reports on the instruments used in the study, the multiple-choice test, the translation task and the self-reported questionnaire. The pilot study and the final experimentation with the instruments are also highlighted. The chapter ends with a report on the data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents the quantitative results of the study and their interpretation. It discusses the descriptive statistics and then the inferential statistics in the dependent variables involved.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in this investigation, attempting to answer the research questions formulated in chapter 3.

Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of the entire study, and summarises the final conclusions resulting from this study and their pedagogical implications. It also presents the study limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature on Collocations

Section I: The Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section presents a theoretical framework which aims at exploring and discussing the main points relating to the study. In particular, it begins with a brief overview of the study of lexis, then moves on to a discussion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships, followed by a review of studies that define the notion of collocation from the perspectives of the lexical composition approach, and the semantic approach and the structural approach. This is followed by making a distinction between three main phraseological combinations: idioms, collocations and free combinations, and the criteria that differentiate them. The topics covered also include the common classification of collocations, the importance of collocations in ESL/EFL, difficulties of collocations of ESL/EFL, and errors and collocations. Finally, this section sheds lights on the pedagogical implications for teaching collocations.

The second section of this chapter aims at reviewing the previous studies relating to the collocation competence of learners of English in general and Arab learners of English in particular.

2.1.2 Overview of the study of lexis

In the last two decades, vocabulary has become an essential aspect of language learning and its importance has been imposed on all parties (learners, teachers, language specialists, and programme designers). Nation's (1990) 'Teaching and Learning Vocabulary' appeared at the beginning of the 1990s and proved influential in its inclusive review of research on vocabulary while providing pedagogical guidance through interpreting the research in terms of classroom applications. Language specialists have emphasized the need for curriculum designers, teachers and learners to create a systematic and principled approach to vocabulary. This increased interest in vocabulary has produced an expanding body of experimental studies, pedagogical materials and computer-aided research, most of which addresses

questions of crucial importance for both teachers and learners such as, '*what does it mean to know a word?*' (Decarrico, 2001).

Research in this subject area has shown that most learners, even advanced ones, have at least *some* problems with their vocabulary, particularly in their production. One reason for this may be that learners usually try to learn the meaning of words individually without paying much attention to the relationships that words form with each other. This may be a consequence of their teachers' way of teaching. Lewis (1993:9) argues that there has been a tendency for teachers to teach single words and grammar at the expense of poly-word and fixed expressions. He sees this as misguided in the sense that language is made up of chunks of language in the main, dotted with many fixed phrases and collocations, and concentrating on single words prevents the learner from seeing the essential patterns of the language that are in lexis.

In reaction to the shortcomings of such teaching practices, Michael Lewis described an approach to language teaching, 'The Lexical Approach', which moved vocabulary to the forefront of language teaching in two books: 'The Lexical Approach' (Lewis, 1993) and 'Implementing the Lexical Approach' (Lewis, 1997). Within the lexical approach, special attention is paid to collocations and, as Lewis (1997: 204) states, "instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions. Rather than trying to break things into even smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic, ways".

The literature shows that knowledge of collocations is an important and necessary one for the successful learning of language in general and vocabulary learning in particular. Hill (1999) contends that 'collocation is the key to fluency' both in written and oral language. In addition, Hill (*ibid.*) claims that learning words in chunks improves pronunciation and intonation, and speeds up reading through the chunking of phrases. Previous research also shows that unfamiliarity with collocations often leads to serious problems in language production.

2.1.3 What are collocations?

The term 'collocation' was first used in the 18th century (Carter & McCarthy 1988:32) but as a formed concept it was firmly grounded only in the 20th century. Collocation as a linguistic phenomenon was studied in association with lexical semantics by Greek Stoic philosophers as early as 2,300 years ago (Robins, 1967:21 cited in Gitsaki, 1999). Robins (1967) states that Greek Stoic philosophers rejected the equation of "one word, one meaning" and put forward an important aspect of the semantic structure of language. They believed that "word meanings do not exist in isolation, and they may differ according to the collocation in which they are used" (Robins, 1967:21). This view of word collocations has continued to be central to the study of language at the present time. The majority of linguists have come to recognize the fact that certain fixed expressions, among which collocations are, are stored in the memory of native speakers of a language as whole chunks and are used, as such, in their written and oral production.

The term 'collocation' has its origin in the Latin verb *'collocare'* which means 'to set in order/to arrange' (cited in Martynska, 2004: 2). However, it is Firth who is widely regarded to be the father of collocation and the developer of the lexical composition approach. He believed in the separation of Lexis and semantics because he thought collocation was the central part of a word's meaning "at the syntagmatic level" (1957:169). His attempt to describe the meaning of a word on the collocational level was innovative in that it looked at the meaning relationships between lexical items, not from the old perspective of paradigmatic relations (e.g. synonyms, antonyms) but from the level of syntagmatic relationships.

Over the last five decades many attempts have been made to define collocations, but up until now, studies on collocations have been insufficient in defining the concept of collocation in a more rigorous way (Cowan 1989:1). The term collocation has been defined and used differently by researchers for different purposes. Bahans (1993:57) reports that 'Regrettably, collocation is a term which is used and understood in many different ways'. A number of labels have been given to formulaic language, including 'phraseological' units' (Ginzburg et al., 1979; Gläser, 1986 cited in Cowie, 1998), 'word combinations' (Akhmanova, 1974cited in Cowi, 1998; Cowie, 1994), and 'phrasal lexemes' (Lipka, 1991; Moon, 1998). Despite differing labels, researchers are, more or less, investigating the same phenomenon. The following quotations offer a varied view on the concept of collocation, variously defining it

as a lexical, grammatical or research phenomenon, but all containing a focus on the co-occurrence of words:

"You shall know a word by the company it keeps." (Firth, 1957:179).

"the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" (Sinclair, 1991: 170).

"... the study of lexical patterns " (Brown, 1974:1).

"collocation as the co-occurrence of two or more lexical items as realization of structural elements within a given syntactic pattern" (Cowie, 1978).

"... sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur [i.e. occur together]" (Cruse, 1986:40).

"a group of words that occurs repeatedly i.e. recurs, in a language" (Benson, 1986:61).

"... a sequence of words that occurs more than once in identical form .... and which is grammatically well structured." (Kjellmer, 1987:133)

"... the meaning of a word has a great deal to do with the words with which it commonly associates." (Nattinger, 1988:68).

"... a recurrent co-occurrence of words." (Clear, 1993:277).

"...the way individual words co-occur with others." (Lewis, 1993:93).

"collocates are the words which occur in the neighbourhood of your search word." (Scott,1998).

"How words typically occur with one another" (Carter and McCarthy, 1988: 32).

"collocation refers to the probability that lexical items will co-occur, and is not a semantic relation between words. " (McCarthy, 1991: 65).

"... the way in which words occur together in predictable ways." (Lewis & Hill, 1998:1)

"collocation as a subcategory of multi-word items, made up of individual words which habitually co-occur and can be found within a free-fixed collocational continuum" (Lewis, 2000).

"the habitual co-occurrence of words and a purely lexical relation between words in linear sequence, irrespective of any intervening syntactic boundaries" (Stubbs, 2001:245-246).

There seems to be no general consensus as to an exhaustive and uniform definition of collocation. Definitions widely vary from one linguist to another depending upon their

orientation and upon the paradigm to which he/she subscribes (for more details, see section 2.5). The only common denominator to these definitions is the explicit statement of the syntagmatic relationship of words. Nesselhauf (2005:11) points out that the only consensus between researchers is that the term collocation refers to 'some kind of syntagmatic relations of words.'

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopts Carter and McCarthy's (1988:32) definition of collocation, 'How words typically occur with one another'. But, before more detailed discussion can take place, one important characteristic of collocation needs to be presented, that is that collocation operates on the *syntagmatic* rather than on the *paradigmatic* relationships.

2.1.4 Syntagmatic versus Paradigmatic relationships

Every language has its own lexical structure and this structure varies from one language to another. This, accordingly, causes difficulties for foreign language learners. In a language system sentence constituents enter into different relationships. These relationships are of two kinds: paradigmatic and syntagmatic. The Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics defines Syntagmatic relationships as the ability of elements to be combined horizontally (linearly), whereas paradigmatic relationships are defined by the ability of elements to be combined in a vertical level. Lyons (1977) discusses these two kinds of relationships: "The syntagmatic relations which a unit contracts are those which it contracts by virtue of its combination (in a syntagm, or construction) with other units of the same level. For example, the lexeme *old* is syntagmatically related with the definite article *the* and the noun *man* in the expression *the old man*. The paradigmatic relations contracted by units are those which hold between a particular unit in a given syntagm and other units which are substitutable for it in the syntagm, e.g. *'old'* is paradigmatically related with *young, tall*, etc. in expressions like *the old man, the young man, the tall man* etc. (Lyons, 1977: 240).

In this regard, McCarthy (1990) and Carter (1992) state that to know a word involves mastering its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. The syntagmatic relations of a lexical item help define its semantic range and the context where it appears. Awareness of the restrictions of lexical occurrence can facilitate ESL/EFL learners' ability to encode language (Nattinger, 1989; Seal, 1991). It also enables them to produce sentences that are

grammatically and semantically acceptable. They thus can conform to the expectations of academic writing or speech communication (Bahns, 1993; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Granger, 1998). Other linguists involved in the study of lexical collocation have also contributed to the development and better understanding of lexis. Halliday (1961) indicates that collocation refers to 'the syntagmatic association of lexical items'. In other words, collocation refers to lexical relations on the syntagmatic or horizontal plane, as opposed to relations on paradigmatic or vertical plane. This can be shown in Fig .2.1 below, taken from Walker (1996 cited in Nelson, 2000). Walker explains that 'On the syntagmatic dimension we can see the relation between words'. Therefore, looking at Fig.2.1 we can see a syntagmatic relationship between *writhed, ground, excruciating* and *pain*. Conversely, 'The paradigmatic dimension looks at the way in which one word can be replaced with another' (Walker, 1996). This is shown in the diagram, where four separate paradigmatic choices are presented, e.g. *auntie* could be replaced by *uncle, cousin, mother* or *milkman*.

Syntagmatic: Horizontal relationships

It writhed on the ground in excruciating pain.

Syntagmatic sequence

Paradigmatic (Substitution): Vertical dimension

My	**auntie has**	**bought**	**a**	**red**	**automobile**
	uncle	*sold*		*green*	*car*
	cousin	*purchased*		*black*	*Ford*
	mother	*hired*			*bike*
	milkman				
	Paradigm 1	**Paradigm 2**	**Paradigm 3**		**Paradigm 4**
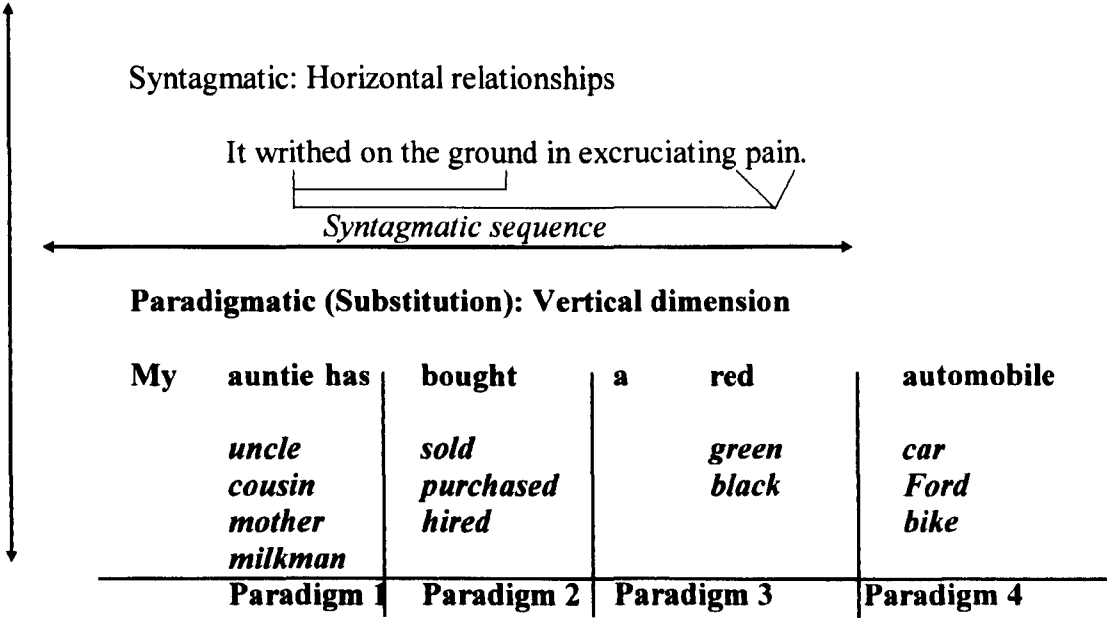
Fig.2 .1: Syntagmatic/paradigmatic relationships adapted from Walker (1996).

In short, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships can be explained according to the following equation:

Paradigmatic ⟶ (vertical) ⟶ lexis = substitution

Syntagmatic ———————➤ (horizontal) ———————➤ lexis = collocation

2.1.5 Different Approaches to Defining Collocation

As mentioned before in this chapter, the term collocation has been defined in various ways. One of the reasons why collocations are defined and looked at in a variety of ways is that it is notoriously difficult to classify them as a category in phraseology. Generally, they are defined according to the research area or practical purpose for which they are an immediate concern. Thus, a lexicographer will define a collocation in a different way to a computational or a descriptive linguist.

Since the 1960s there have been a number of studies, including descriptive studies, semantic studies, lexicographical studies, computational studies and pedagogical, studies which have all attempted to describe and investigate collocation. These studies (e.g., McIntosh, 1961; Halliday, 1966; Sinclair, 1966; Cruse, 1986; Mitchell, 1971; Greenbaum, 1970) have focused on three distinctive approaches: the lexical composition approach, the semantic approach and the structural pattern approach. The lexical composition approach characterizes collocation as a different level of lexical meaning. The semantic approach attempts to predict the collocates of lexical units by reference to their semantic features. The structural approach, on the other hand, uses grammatical patterns to examine collocations (Gitsaki, 1999). The three approaches are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.1.5.1 The lexical composition approach

The lexical composition approach is centred on the notion that words obtain their meanings from the words with which they co-occur. Pioneering work within this approach was carried out by Firth (1957) who was the first scholar who introduced the term 'collocation' into lexical studies. Firth suggested that part of the meaning of a word could be established by collocation. He summed this up in his famous exclamation 'you shall know a word by the company it keeps' (1957:179). He looked at collocation as a component separated from grammar and was careful to distinguish 'colligation' within the syntactic level from collocation arguing that one of the meanings of 'night' is established through its collocability with the word 'dark'.

According to Firth, collocation is a "mode of meaning" (p. 192). He maintained that the lexical meaning should be analyzed on four levels: the orthographic level, the phonological level, the grammatical level and the collocational level. The word *peer* is used by Firth as an example to illustrate this; at the orthographic level, its meaning is distinguished from the group of *pier*. Next, at the phonological level, the pronunciation of *peer* is stated; then, at the grammatical level, the word *peer* can be used either as a noun or a verb, thus adding a further component of meaning. Finally, at the collocational level another meaning of the word *peer* can be obtained when it collocates with the word *group* (as in *peer group*) (Gitsaki, 1999).

On one hand, Firth saw collocations as sequences of co-occurring words, where the length of sequences varied greatly from two words up to fifteen words. He imagined different types of collocations such as 'habitual', 'more restricted technical', 'unique', and 'a normal' (Firth, 1957b), but he did not define or distinguish them clearly from one another.

Subsequently, a number of linguists, known as Neo-Firthians (e.g., Halliday, 1966; Sinclair, 1966 and McIntosh, 1971) adapted and developed Firth's theory of meaning and emphasized the importance of lexical collocations (e.g., verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations). They argued that grammatical description does not account for all the patterns in a language and promoted the study of lexis on the basis of corpus-based observation.

In his works, Halliday emphasizes the crucial role of collocations in the study of lexis and considered collocations as examples of word combinations. He maintains that collocation cuts across grammatical boundaries, giving such examples as *he argued strongly /the strength of his argument*, where the collocation between *strong* and *argument* survives the grammatical change in the sentence (Halliday, 1966:150-151). Moreover, he proposes the lexico-grammatical system in his own framework as follows:

	grammar	lexis
Paradigmatic axis	system	set
Syntagmatic axis	structure	collocation

Table 2.1: Lexical-grammatical system by Halliday (1966: 152-153)

According to Halliday, collocation is considered to be one of the main components in his lexico-grammatical system. He defines collocation as a systematic relation of words which is

linear co-occurrence together with some measure of significant proximity (1966:152) and states that collocational relations intersect with structural ones. He points out that grammar does not always give an explanation of the relations between *strong* and *powerful*. In fact, *strong* and *powerful* are both members of a set of items and both of them collocate with *argument*, but they cannot always collocate with the same words. While *strong car* and *powerful tea* will either be rejected as ungrammatical (or un-lexical), *strong tea* and *powerful car* can be acceptable. This explains that both of them depend on the syntagmatic relation into which each enters but that collocational patterning is independent of grammatical structures (1966:150).

Also, Halliday adds the notion of 'set' as an additional dimension to the collocability of words, which he distinguishes from collocations. In his definition , a collocation is a linear co-occurrence relationship among lexical items which co-occur together, whereas the 'set' is " the grouping of members with like privilege of occurrence in collocation" (1966:153). According to Halliday, for instance, *bright, hot, shine, light,* and *come out* belong to the same lexical set, because they all collocate with the word *sun* (Halliday, 1996:158).

In terms of the notion of collocation and 'a lexical set' Malmkjaer (1991) explains that it can be exploited in decision-making on polysemy and homonymy. For instance, the different collocational environments associated with the word *bank,* (e.g., *cheque, deposit, manager, money,* etc.) show that *bank* is a homonym (Malmkjaer, 1991). In the meantime, non-congate word forms (e.g., *city* and *urban*) have the same collocations. Therefore, it can be shown that they belong to the same set (1991:303).

Like Halliday, Sinclair (1996) also regards grammar and lexicon as 'two different interpenetrating aspects'. Sinclair (1966:411) also considers grammar and collocation as two different facets. He explains that in grammar, language structure is organized by a system of choices (for example, choosing between active and passive choices), whereas collocation deals with individual lexical units and their tendencies to co-occur. In other words, it is a matter of likeness of occurrence rather than a matter of choice. However, he changed his attitude later and created an integrated technique that combined both lexis and grammar.

Sinclair, within the Firthian tradition (1991:170), defines collocations as the 'occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text'. A short space, or "span", is usually defined as a distance of around four words to right and left of the word under investigation, which is called a "node". If, for example, in a given amount of text, the word

house is analyzed, and the word occurs in an environment such as *He went back to the house. When he opened the door, the dog barked.* The words *went, back, to, the, when, he, opened, the,* are all considered to form collocations with the node *house;* all these words are then called "collocates". Sinclair, also, introduced the following terminology for the structure of collocation: a *Node* which refers to the lexical items being investigated, a *Span* which refers to the number of lexical items on each side of the node which are considered relevant to that *node* and *Collocates* which refer to those items that are occurring within the *span.* For example, if one wants to study the collocational patterns of the word *accident,* then *accident* is the 'node'. If one decides to have a 'span' of four items, it means that one studies the four lexical items that occur before, and the four lexical items that occur after, the word *accident* (cited in Brashi, 2009).

This definition of collocation does not consider the existence of any syntactic link between the words. According to Partington (1998), Sinclair's definition is a textual definition; it is not useful and can result in a woolly confusion of single instances of co-occurrence with repeated patterns of co-occurrence. Partington has further noted that the probabilities of lexical items are affected mainly within a span of around four items. An important point in Sinclair's theory is that he distinguishes between casual and significant collocations. A significant collocation, he explains, is a collocation that occurs more frequently than would be expected on the basis of the individual items.

McIntosh (1971:13) was also influenced by Firth's point of view and looked at it further. He adds a notion of ranges and claims that "words have only a certain tolerance of compatibility" and calls the recurring lexical patterns "ranges" (cited in Carter and McCarthy, 1988:33). For instance, the words such as *mental, iron, lava,* may be qualified by the adjective *molten.* Therefore, "our knowledge of this range and others such as the range of *postage* and *feather* enable us to dismiss *the molten postage feather scored weather* as unacceptable and uncontextualizable."

Furthermore, McIntosh proposes a useful framework of four categories for the determination of style in language as follows; that there is the possibility of four obviously distinct stylistic modes: *normal collocations* and *normal grammar, unusual collocations* and *normal grammar, normal collocations* and *unusual grammar, unusual collocations* and *unusual*

grammar. He argues that "normal collocations are too familiar and thus banal and abnormal collocations are unfamiliar and thus indecipherable" (McIntosh: 193).

Thus, in order to bridge the gap, standard language norms are imperative for communication; because without this, it becomes impossible to communicate, as no one has the same experience or sets of association. Moreover, McIntosh also states that only native speakers of English have the ability to produce new word combinations, using their intuition of collocational ranges of words. For instance, the lexical item *key* has recently considerably extended its range: *key move, component, policy*, etc.

McIntosh's argument in this regard is generally considered invalid in the light of the fact that English is now regarded as an international language around the world. Crystal (2003) who updated Kachru's (1992) model of World Englishes explains the English-speaking population as follows: in the Inner Circle, 320 to 380 million people use English as a mother tongue, in the Outer Circle, 300 to 500 million people use English as a second language, and in the Expanding Circle, 500 million to 1 billion people use English as a foreign language. This figure indicates that many non-native speakers around the word communicate with each other in English. As a result, there is a great possibility that non-native speakers of English can also produce intelligible and acceptable word combinations.

Furthermore, Jackson (1988) also points out some important features of collocation such as a certain mutual expectancy, range and collocational restriction. He gives the following example to demonstrate the certain mutual expectancy which is especially associated with Firth's definition, '*tooth* and *false*'. *Tooth* is more likely to collocate with *false* than *false* is to occur in combination with *tooth*, because a number of alternatives nouns can be combined with *false* such as *eye, nose, beard* and *expectation* and *paper*, whereas tooth can be combined with fewer adjectives such as *irregular* and *decayed*.

According to Gitsaki (1999), one of the good points of the lexical composition approach is that it draws attention to lexis and uncovers the insufficiency of grammatical analysis to account for the 'patterns' a word enters in, in the Hallidayan sense, and the collocatory idiosyncrasies of lexical items. The main problem with lexical analysis has been identified as "the circularity of the definition of the basic unit of description, the lexical item" (Sinclair, 1966:412), that is, every item is described in terms of its environment which in its turn is defined in terms of the item. For example, one of the meanings of *night* is its collocability (i.e. ability to collocate) with *dark*, and *of dark* its collocation with *night* (Firth, 1957:196).

The above realization makes lexical statements look weaker and less precise than grammatical ones which are based on a well-defined and explicit framework.

Briefly, the advocates of the lexical composition trend consider collocations as separated and as independent entities from grammar. They emphasize lexical analysis as the best way to describe collocations without underestimating the role of grammar.

2.1.5.2 The semantic approach

The study of collocations by Firth and his followers have been criticized by semanticists who consider those studies inadequate because they sort lexical items into sets according to their collocations, but they are unable to explain why there are lexical items that collocate only with certain other lexical items. In other words, semantics claim that Firth and his followers did not provide strong support for their concept and for the function of collocations.

The semantist attempt to explore collocations from the semantic point of view separately from the grammatical point of view (Gitsaki 1999). Their main goal is not only to find out how certain words collocate with each other, but why they collocate, e.g. why we can say *blond hair* but not *blond book*. They consider the semantic properties of 'lexical items' to be responsible for deciding what words are combined with other words. For example, *rancid* collocates with *butter, lard, oil* and *salad dressing* since they all have the same semantic feature of *oily* in common (Decrarrico, 2001).

This view results in a criticism directed against the semantist because there are a number of collocations that are arbitrarily restricted. For example, there is nothing in the meaning of the word *drinker* that should make it collocate with *heavy*, rather than *strong* or *powerful*.

Chomsky was among the first to suggest the treatment of collocations by semantics. Even though Chomsky did not examine collocations, he distinguished between 'strict subcategorisation rules', i.e. rules that "analyze a symbol in terms of its categorical context", and 'selectional rules', i.e. rules which "analyze a symbol in terms of syntactic features of the frames in which it appears" (Chomsky 1965:95). These rules assist in the generation of grammatical strings.

Lyons (1966), Palmer (1976), Katz and Fodor (1963) and Lehrer (1974) criticize Firth's theory of meaning and have attempted to explain collocations in the semantic field.

Katz and Fodor (1963) introduced a semantic theory that is different from, but also complementary to, grammar. Their theory provides organized and generalized facts about the knowledge of meaning. As mentioned by Katz and Fodor (1963), "semantics takes over the explanation of the speaker's ability to produce and understand new sentences at the point where grammar leaves off" (p. 173). They acknowledge that a dictionary is one component of a semantic theory of a natural language. Dictionaries present the semantic markers of some lexical entries. Each entry of a word, based on the theory, has to meet with a condition, referred to by the authors as "selection restriction," to allow collocation with other words. For example, one selectional restriction of the lexical item *kill* would require an object of the semantic feature [+Animate] (Kim, 2009).

Lyons (1966:289-297) claims that Firth never defined the notion of collocation in his general theory. In Firth's 1957 paper, he mentioned that "meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level" (cited in Lehrer, 1974: 174) and is not directly concerned with the conceptual approach to the meaning of words. Although Firth gives an example of *night* and *dark* as a collocation, he never gives a proper definition.

Lehrer (1974) also criticizes Firth's theory of meaning and provides more explanation for the insufficiency of collocation studies by Firthian linguistics. From her semantic point of view, she mentions that frequency studies have been exaggerated as a useful way of determining what words belong together in a lexical set and that there has been a failure to give an explanation of why certain pairs of terms occur less often than expected. She also states that Firth never gives exact definitions or paraphrases of collocational meanings.

Nonetheless, one weakness of the semantic theory is that it does not explain arbitrary collocations. To deal with this limitation, Cruse (1986) defines collocation in terms of three important points: frequency, collocational restriction and semantic opacity, and he considers these three points as forming one of the most important components in the semantic field. According to Cruse (1986:41), collocation is regarded as 'sequences'of lexical items which habitually co-occur, which are highly restricted contextually, but which are basically transparent in the sense that each lexical constituent is semantic. Compared with idioms, collocations are semantically more transparent; however, they have some distinctly idiom-like characteristics too. For instance, *kick the bucket* can only be used with a human subject

although its propositional meaning is simply 'die' and not 'die' in just a characteristically human way; that is the restriction to human subjects is semantically arbitrary (1986:279).

Cruse also distinguishes three kinds of collocational restrictions: firstly, Systematic collocational restrictions when they can be fully specified. For example, *grill* and *toast* denote the same process or action from the point of view of the *agent*, but are different from the point of view of *patients*. They are different in method, in that one *grills* food that is raw, while one *toasts* food that is already cooked. Secondly, Semi-systematic collocational restrictions occur when some collocations have certain exceptions. For instance, a *customer* obtains something material in exchange for money, whereas a *client* receives a less tangible professional or technical service. Therefore, grocers, bakers and butchers have *customers*, but *architects* and *solicitors* have *clients*. However, banks seem to have *customers* rather than *clients* (Cruse 1986:281). Finally, idiosyncratic collocational restrictions occur when their collocational ranges can only be illustrated by listing all their acceptable collocates (Cruse 1986:281). For instance, it is possible to say *spotless kitchen* but not to say *flawless kitchen*, and it is acceptable to state *flawless performance* but not *unblemished* performance.

Despite Cruse's efforts to provide an explanation for collocational restrictions, there are a great number of idiosyncratic collocations that are arbitrarily restricted. Such arbitrarily restricted collocations have created problems for semanticists as many have been left marginal or unexplained (Gitsaki, 1999). Due to the difficulty of syntagmatic relations, Cruse (1986), like most lexical semanticists, finds that paradigmatic sense relations are "a richer vein to mine than relations of the syntagmatic variety" (Cruse1986:86).

Since the 1990s, and due to the development of computer technology, collocation has been studied in terms of a new semantic framework, which is semantic prosody. Semantic prosody was first introduced by Sinclair (1991) and Louw (1993) and it refers to "a standard distinction between aspects of meaning which are independent from speakers (semantics) and aspects which concern speaker attitude (paradigmatics)" (Stubbs, 2001:65-66). The development of corpus helps semantic prosody, which cannot easily be obtained through intuition, and it has become easily accessible through the objective examination of how language is actually used via a computer. Thus, with the assistance of corpus linguistics, collocation has been studied within the new semantic domain.

Sinclair (1991) applies the term *prosody* to the semantic features of collocations whose habitual collocates are capable of colouring them. He uses concrete examples to support his argument that noting how carefully language is patterned can be gained by selecting text and considering all the instances of that text. One example he uses is a phrasal verb *set in* and by the search of the COBUILD corpus 114 examples are examined. His main finding is that *set in* commonly collocates with unpleasant states of affairs and only three collocates refer to weather; a few are neutral, such as reaction and trend. What typically 'sets in' is *bad weather, decay, despair, rot, and rigor mortis* and not one of these is conventionally desirable or attractive. He advises teachers to access to such information from corpora to help them to provide a more confident way of teaching to learners, but he does not show concrete materials to assist in direct exploitation in the classroom.

Similarly, Louw (1993) examines semantic prosodies of *utterly* which are found in Larkin's poems. 99 citations drawn from the original 18 million word corpus at COBUILD were analyzed. The concordance shows that *utterly* implies the meaning of *bad* as in *utterly confused* and *utterly ridiculous*, and only four examples are found as *good* but all of them carry a fairly obvious ironic intention. "The prosody on *utterly* is as consistent as it is that it admits the possibility for irony" (Louw, 1993: 164).

Like Sinclair (1991), Louw (1993) and Stubbs (1995) attempt to explain the semantic prosody of lexical collocation and argue that semantic prosody should be examined by studying the corpora of naturally occurring data in order to identify lexical collocations. They analyzed the semantic prosody of the word *cause* (verb and noun). Their finding was that more than 90% of its collocates are negative (e.g. *cancer, crisis, accident, delay, death, damage, trouble*). Stubbs also observes that the word *effects* (in its plural form) is usually featured with a negative semantic prosody. Its collocates usually include *adverse, devastating, harmful, ill, negative* and *toxic*.

One of the weaknesses of the semantic approach as indicated by Gitsaki (1991) - the view that co-occurrence of words is the result of their semantic properties - is that there is a large number of idiosyncratic co-occurrences or combinations that are arbitrarily restricted. These constructions create problems for the study of collocations under a theory of lexical fields and, therefore, they are left unexplained and marginal by semanticists (Gitsaki 1991:147).

In short, semanticists have criticized the studies of collocations by Firth and his followers and have developed an approach to collocation in terms of a semantic framework and the syntagmatic lexical relations under the scope of semantics. However, they have not proceeded any further with the study of collocation and they have not made the phenomenon of 'collocation' any more explicit.

2.1.5.3 The structural approach

While the lexical and semantic approaches focus only on lexical words, the structural approach stresses the importance of including grammar in the study of collocations. According to this approach, lexis and grammar complete each other and cannot be separated (Mitchell, 1971).

Mitchell (1971 cited in Taeko, 2005), one of the advocates and the leading figure in this approach, criticizes the Neo-Firthians for their separation of lexical study from grammar. He emphasizes the necessity of studying collocations in their grammatical structure. He regards collocation as a lexico-grammatical unit and that it "brings morphology and syntax back into the centre of lexical matters". He maintains that the meaning of collocations is influenced not only by their contextual extension of lexis but also by the generalized grammatical pattern within which they appear.

Therefore, he proposes the notion of *root* to the study of collocations. According to Mitchell, the abstraction of a word form is called root, while *word* is the attachment of inflectional markings to the root. He claimed that collocations are of roots rather than of words and "are to be studied within grammatical matrices" (p. 65). For instance, Mitchell (1971) considered *drink* as the root of the word *drinker* and the conjunction of the roots *heavy-* and *drink* in the example *heavy drinker* or *drink heavily* as collocations.

Similarly to Mitchell, Greenbaum (1970) also argues for the necessity of taking syntactic relationships into account when analysing collocations. According to Greenbaum (1970), limited homogenous grammatical classes yield the most useful analytic results. He also points out that the serious disadvantages of an item-oriented approach in collocation studies is that ignoring syntactic restrictions on collocations leads to inaccuracy (p.12, cited in Taeko, 2005). To exemplify this, Greenbaum used the word *much* which collocates with the word *like* in a negative sentence (e.g., *I don't like him much*) but not in an affirmative sentence

(e.g., *I like him much)*. Greenbaum (1974) also believes that without tying collocation to syntax any two lexical items can collocate at a certain arbitrary distance. Thus, one can say: *his sincerity frightens us* but not that *we frighten his sincerity*. This is because the acceptability of the collocation of the lexical items *sincerity* and *frighten* can only be determined by syntax.

Carter (1987) basically follows Firth's definition of collocations and has acted like a bridge between Greenbaum (1970), Mitchell (1971) and McIntosh (1961). He describes collocations as a group of words which co-occur repeatedly and studies these patterns of co-occurrence grammatically and lexically. As already undertaken by Greenbaum (1970) and Mitchell (1971), Carter highlights the study of both grammatical patterning and lexical patterning as both of them influence the meaning of collocation.

Like McIntosh (1961), Carter also explains collocation in terms of frequency and ranges and states that the latter is the most suitable tool to describe collocational restriction. He uses the following example to show the differences of ranges between words: *putrid, rotten, rancid* and *addled* which have restrictive ranges and refer to a substance which has decayed and can no longer used. *Putrid* collocates with fish, *rancid* with butter, oil, lard, etc. and *addled* is only used with eggs, whereas *rotten* can collocate with fish, eggs and also with fruit. Therefore, according to this criterion *rotten* is a core word and, by contrast, *putrid, rancid, addled* are less core. Briefly, synonymic relations between words can be usefully distinguished with reference to the different collocational ranges of the synonyms involved. Carter stresses the importance of this aspect of collocation and considers it is one of particular relevance to vocabulary in language teaching.

Kjellmer (1984), whose interest is both computational study and lexicographic study, outlines a set of criteria for examining whether a combination of words is a collocation or not. He suggests the study of collocations in a grammatical framework and defines collocation as "lexically determined and grammatically restricted sequences of words" (1984: 163). *Lexically determined* means that in order to be considered as a collocation, a word sequence should recur a certain number of times in the corpus. *Grammatically restricted means* that the sequence should also be grammatically well formed. For example, during a search of the Brown Corpus, Kjellmer found the following sequences: *green ideas, try to, hall to*. From these strings, it is only *hall to* and *try to* that recur, and from these two, only *try to* that is

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grammatically well-formed. Therefore, only *try to* is a collocation (Kjellmer 1984:163,cited in Gitsaki, 1999).

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986) advocate the view of non-separability of lexis and grammar and define collocation as words which regularly combine with certain other words or grammatical constructions. They divide collocations into grammatical (G) and lexical (L) collocations. Grammatical collocations usually consist of the dominant words such as a noun, an adjective or a verb plus a preposition or grammatical structure such as 'to-infinitive' or 'that-clause' and are characterized by eight basic types of collocations; the types are designated by G1, G2, etc. Lexical collocations, in contrast to grammatical collocations, normally do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or clauses but consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. There are seven types of them designated by L1, L2, etc. From the pedagogical point of view, they emphasize the importance of collocation acquisition in order for second or foreign language learners to achieve an active mastery of English.

Later work by Sinclair (1991), Willis (1993) Hunston et al. (1997), Hunston & Francis (1998), Hoey (1997, 2000) and Stubbs (1993, 1996) sees lexis and grammar as dependent on each other and interrelated. In fact, Sinclair (1991: 109- 112) provides further insights into the concept of collocation in relation to its lexical and grammatical aspects by proposing the idea of two principles in order to explain the way in which meaning arises from language text. The grammatical level is represented by the open-choice principle which refers to the many options a speaker has in order to produce sentences according to a given language's system of rules. Whereas, the idiom principle represents the lexical level and it postulates that language users have a large number of pre-fabricated phrases at their disposal which they use in the production of speech as building-blocks that are larger than words which accounts for the usage of more complex items, or in Sinclair's words:

The principle of idioms is that a language user has available to him or her a large number
of semi- pre constructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might
appear to be analysable into segments. (Sinclair, 1991:110)

Willis (1993) suggests that, rather than seeing grammar and lexis as separate, the starting point should be the 'word' and that the traditional concepts of grammar should be broadened to consider the grammar of structure, necessary choice, class, collocation and probability

(Willis 1993:84-85). Later studies (e.g. Hunston et al., 1997; Hunston and Francis 1998) indeed present an even stronger case for this.

Stubbs (1995) sees collocation as a relationship of habitually co-occurring words, either lemmas or word-forms. This view positions Stubbs in the frequency-based tradition. However, he does, in practice, use grammatical relations as an identification criterion for collocates of a node word: collocates which occur as subjects or objects of the verb *cause* or as prepositional object of the noun *cause* (1995:27). Stubbs presents a list of eight of the central conclusions that can be made about lexico-grammatical relationships. Two key points are given below:

1. Any grammatical structure restricts the lexis that occurs in it; and conversely any lexical item can be specified in terms of the structures in which it occurs. (Stubbs 1996:40).

2. Every sense or meaning of a word has its own grammar: each meaning is associated with a distinct formal patterning. Form and meaning are inseparable. (Stubbs 1996:40).

Hunston et al. (1997) concludes that there are correlations between grammatical patterns and lexical meaning. All words can be represented by specific patterns and the meanings of words which share patterns have a lot in common. That means that a word has a specific meaning when it co-occurs with a certain word. This hypothesis is followed by Hoey (2000) who maintains that some meanings of the same word have their own grammatical patterns, which are called 'colligations'.

Briefly, the structural trend underlines the significance of both lexis and grammar in the examination of collocations. According to Fan (2008), the structural approach is, by comparison, more pedagogical as it takes into account collocation of not only lexical, but also lexical and grammatical, words.

2.1.6 Idioms/Collocation/Free Combination

It is obvious that there is significant disagreement and a lack of clarity in the definition of collocations among different linguists. What additionally makes the issue unclear is the fact that sometimes collocations are categorized as idioms, since it is often thought that no clear distinction can be made between a collocation and an idiom (e.g., Smith, 1947; Wallace, 1979; Sinclair, 1991). For instance, Smith (1947, cited in Brashi, 2005) considers collocations as idiomatic expressions, in which two words are habitually combined together for the sake of emphasis. For example, *far and away* (emphatic), *over and over* (emphatic repetition), *part and parcel* (emphasis by alliteration), *fair and square* (emphasis by rhyme), *heads or tails* (emphasis by the contrast of two words), *now and then* (emphasis by inclusive phrases). Similarly, Wallace (1979) does not seem to differentiate between collocations, proverbs and idioms. He perceives collocations (e.g., *to be honest with*) and proverbs (e.g., *don't count your chickens before they are hatched*) as subcategories of idioms.

Sinclair (1991) also gives a very general definition of a collocation: "A collocation is the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" (1991:170). He suggests, as a measure of proximity, a maximum of four words intervening in between standing together. Certainly, this definition suggests that all occurrences of two or more words, including idioms, are considered to be collocations. Again, this dissipates the technical usefulness of the notion of collocation to the point where almost any fixed forms of expression can act as such.

Bollinger, on the other hand, does not think that it is necessary to make a differentiation of the three word combinations and says that "it is of course, a matter of terminology whether collocations should be classed separately from idioms or as a major sub-class" (1976: 5).

However, there are other linguists who draw a clear line between collocations, idioms and free combinations (Aisenstadt, 1980; Benson Benson & Ilson, 1986; Carter, 1987; Cowan, 1989; Cowie and Howarth, 1996). Among the most reliable criteria are ''fixedness'' including restrictions on both syntactic and lexical variability, ''semantic transparency'' or ''semantic compositionality'' and ''frequency'' of co-occurrence.

Aisenstadt (1980) claims that the main feature that differentiates restricted collocations from idioms is that their constituents are either transparent or not. She defines restricted collocations as "a type of word combination consisting of two or more words, unidiomatic in meaning, following certain structural patterns, restricted in commutability not only by semantic, but also by usage, belonging to the sphere of collocations" (1981: 55)

In view of these characteristics, restricted collocations can be separated from idioms and free combinations. In this regard, Aisenstadt explains further with the following example using the verb 'face': *face the facts, face the truth, face the problem, face the circumstances,* and *face the music* (1979:71). *Face the music* is an idiom, while the others are restricted collocations in terms of semantic units, that is, the meaning of each combination is composed from the sum of the meaning of its constituents. *Face the music* means to expose oneself to a serious position where one will be criticized for something wrong one has done and the general meaning of each constituent does not reflect the whole meaning at all. One the other hand, the meaning of each constituent of other combinations is clear. Thus, idioms have unique meanings, which are never reflected from the meaning of each constituent of the combinations and they do not have other patterns and other variable constituents, while restricted collocations have variability and usually occur in patterns with some interchangeable constituents (Taeko, 2005).

Moreover, Aisenstadt maintains that restricted collocations differ from free combinations by their commutability restrictions conditioned by usage. He cites an example of *carry* to distinguish between the two combinations. When *carry* has the meaning of supporting the weight of something or taking something from one place to another, it can collocate freely with any noun denoting what is being supported or moved such as in *carry a book/bag/chair,* which are free combinations. However, when *carry* has another meaning such as convening something or winning the argument as in *carry conviction* and *carry weight,* it is a constituent of restricted collocations, because the verb is connected with only a few possible variations of nouns. In short, Aisenstadt (1979) claims that restricted collocations are different from idioms in commutability restrictions by grammatical and semantic level and from free combinations in commutability restrictions by usage.

According to Cruse (1986:40), collocations are "sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur, but which are nonetheless fully transparent in the sense that each lexical constituent is also a semantic constituent" and suggests that the lexical items have semantic cohesion as

the items are mutually selective to a varying degree. On the other hand, an idiom is "an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts" (Cruse, 1986:37).

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) and Carter (1987) established three criteria to differentiate between idioms, collocations and free combinations including flexibility, compositionality and productivity. Compositionality refers to the meaning of the combinations which is predictable from each constituent, productively looks at whether the form of a combination is structurally unique. Depending on these criteria, Nattinger and DeCarrico attempt to define the continuum of word combination more precisely with idioms, collocations, colligations and free combinations. Figure 2 shows the continuum of word combinations suggested by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992:178).

Idioms	collocations	colligations	free combinations
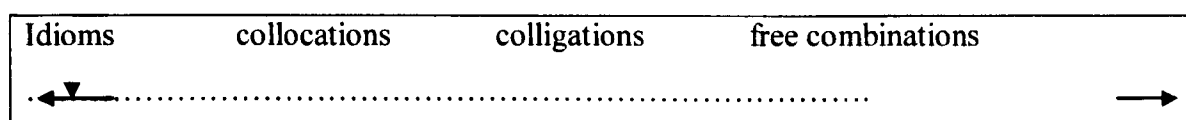
Figure 2.2: Continuum of word combinations by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992:178)

According to the above categorization, idioms are considered fully non-compositional and non- productive collocations i.e. they are completely unpredictable in their meaning and form such as in *by and large* and *hell for leather* .They are completely frozen expressions and they are relatively few in number since most other phrases admit some degree of compositionality or productivity. Free combinations, which are placed at other the end of the continuum, are fully compositional and productive collocations, i.e. they are completely predictable from each of their constituents such as in *see the river*. Collocations and colligations are laid in between these two extremes. Collocations are generally compositional but are restricted to certain specific collocations. For instance, *kick the bucket* is not completely frozen because *kick* in the sense of die can be connected with off and out into *kick off* and *kick out*. However, it is less compositional than free combinations such as in *drink milk/tea /coffee*. When substitutions are limited by syntactic category and semantic features, the combinations are called colligations such as in *off with his head* (Taeko, 2005).

Supporting the same point of view, and presenting a clear illustration for the continuum of word combinations, Cowie and Howarth (1995) propose a four-level scale of collocational complexity (see Table 2.2). At level one, idioms (e.g., *bite the dust* or *shoot the breeze*) are considered as frozen collocations allowing no variation or insertion of words and, hence, are

the least complex. As the scale moves down, variation and complexity increase. For example, invariable collocations such as *break a journey* or *from head to foot* are at level two while collocations with limited choice at one point (e.g., *give/allow/permit* access to) and collocations with limited choice at two points (e.g., *dark/black as night/coal/ink*) are at level three and four.

LEAST COMPLEXITY AND VARIATION
1. IDIOM
bite the dust, shoot the breeze
2. INVARIABLE COLLOCATION
break a journey, from head to foot
3. COLLOCATION WITH LIMITED CHOICE AT ONE POINT
take/have/be given precedence [over noun phrase]
give/allow/permit access to [noun phrase]
have/feel/experience a need [for noun phrase]
4. COLLOCATION WITH LIMITED CHOICE AT TWO POINTS
as dark/black as night/coal/ink
get/have/receive a lesson/tuition/instruction [in noun phrase]
MOST COMPLEXITY AND VARIATION

Table 2.2: Levels of collocational complexity by Cowie and Howarth (1995)

Korosadowicz-Struzynska (1980) also proposed three criteria to distinguish between collocations and idioms which are slightly different from those offered by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) and Carter (1987). They are semantic opacity, the impossibility of passivization and peculiarity to a language. With regard to the second criterion, the impossibility of passivization is called productivity by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) and collocation restriction by Carter (1987).

According to the first criterion, semantic opacity, idioms are phrases whose meanings cannot be inferred from the meaning of their constituents, while collocations are kinds of set expressions whose meanings can be inferred if learners know the meaning of their constituent lexical items and if they have some background knowledge in certain specific cases. According to Cowie (1998), at least one element of collocation should have a literal meaning and at least one element should be used in its non-literal sense. Based on the second criterion, idioms cannot be changed and any word in the idiomatic phrase cannot be substituted by synonyms and the arrangement of words can rarely be modified. Collocations, however, mostly do not lack syntactic flexibility. With regard to the third criterion, peculiarity to language, which is listed only by Korosadowicz- Struzynska to identify idioms and

collocations, idioms are considered to be natural to native speakers seem to be shared by speakers of any language.

Fontenelle (1994) states that collocations are 'non-idiomatic expressions' on the one hand and 'non-free combinations' on the other. This gives a more precise and useful definition of collocation; for example, *sour + milk, bad/addled/rotten + egg,* and *rancid + butter.* Fontenelle argues that the adjectives *sour, bad, addled, rotten,* and *rancid* can all be combined with nouns denoting food items, but are by no means interchangeable. Therefore, the collocations *rancid egg, sour butter* or *addled milk* are unacceptable in English, with the exception that they could be used in slightly poetic forms to add emotive meaning. Fontenelle also gives an example of the idiomatic expression *to lick somebody's boots* and suggests that what characterizes idiomatic expressions is the fact that they constitute a single semantic entity and the fact that their meaning cannot be derived from the sum of the meanings of the words from which they are made up. Thus, in the above example, there is no actual licking taking place and the expression is not about boots either. Idioms sit at a greater distance from what is signified than collocation.

Other researchers such as Benson et al. (1986) suggest that the most reliable criteria to discriminate collocations from free combinations are "restricted commutability" and the "frequency" of co-occurrence. According to Benson et al., free combinations occur the most frequently and their constituents are able to be combined freely with the widest range of other lexical items. In other words, they are the least cohesive of all combinations. For example, the noun *murder* can be used with many verbs such as to *analyze, boast of, condemn, describe, disregard, film, forget,* and *remember,* and so on. These verbs in turn can be combined freely with other nouns such as *accident, adventure, discovery, event, experience,* etc. Idioms, on the other hand, are made up of a small group of word combinations and are relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the basic literal meaning of their constituents. For instance, *to have an axe to grind (= to seek personal advantage)* and *to have someone's back to the wall (= to be in a desperate situation)* are idioms (1986: 252-253).

From Benson et al.'s point of view, collocations are loosely fixed pairings between free combinations and idioms. For example, *commit murder* is not an idiom, because the meaning of the whole reflects the meaning of the constituents. Moreover, the word combination is also different from free combinations in two ways. Firstly, *perpetrate* seems to be only verbal

synonym which can replace *commit*. Secondly, and most importantly, the combination *commit murder* is used more frequently.

Nesselhauf (2003: 225) attractively proposes the notion of "restricted sense" for delimitations of different types of word combinations. According to this notion, the sense of a word is said to be restricted if it satisfies one of the following criteria: (1) its sense is so specific that its combinability is limited to a small number of words. (2) It cannot be used in this sense with all words that are syntactically and semantically possible. For example, the sense of the word *want* is considered unrestricted since it can combine with a great number of words such as *toys, a child, a drink, a car, truth*, etc. While *dial* is considered as having a restricted sense as it can only combine with one (or at most very few) words, e.g. *number*.

Consequently, Nesselhauf distinguishes between collocations and free word combinations, saying that the component elements of free combinations are used in their unrestricted sense, while at least one of the participating constituents of collocations should be used in a restricted sense, e.g. *take a picture / take a film*.

As stated above, many linguists attempt to differentiate between the three lexical combinations which are free combinations, idioms, collocations, by using various linguists ' own criteria. However, these three word combinations exist along a continuum but have 'an unclear boundary' between them. Roughly speaking, two criteria are common among the linguists listed above: (a) semantic opacity, which means that the meaning of the combinations is retrievable from each constituent, and (b) collocational restriction, which means that another synonymous word can be substituted for the constituent word in the word combinations.

Briefly, idioms are characterized as relatively frozen expressions whose meaning cannot be built compositionally from the meanings of its component words, and the component words cannot be replaced with synonyms (*kick the bucket* but not *boot the bucket* or *kick the pail).* In contrast, collocations are sequences of words which habitually co-occur and whose meanings can be derived compositionally; they often permit a limited degree of substitution of their component words (such as *do one's best, try one's best,* but *not make one's best*) (Bentivogli and Pianta, 2003). Free combinations are a combination of words following only the general rules of syntax: the elements are not bound specifically to each other and they can

be substituted with other lexical items freely (*read a book, read a newspaper, read a magazine, write a book, borrow a book,* etc.) (Benson et al. 1986).

2.1.7 Classification of Collocations

Various classifications of collocations can be made through investigations of different criteria which can form a basis for the classifications. In his study of collocation, Firth (1957) includes not only *usual collocations* but also *unusual* collocations. This classification seems to be based on the frequency of co-occurrence since usual collocations are more frequent and can be utilized in various fields while unusual collocations are more restricted technical or personal collocations.

Sinclair (1991, 115) uses the same criterion as he makes a distinction between *casual collocations* and *significant collocations.* According to him, a collocation is said to be 'significant' if the probability of co-occurrence is in a higher degree than that which he calls 'casual' collocations. The words *dog* and *bark* would very likely constitute a significant collocation since *bark* is expected to be found near the word *dog.* Sinclair is inclined to exclude those items that are very frequent in all kinds of texts - noticeably grammatical words - which are participating members of significant collocations. Perhaps this inclination is based on his commitment to a view that lexis is a separate and independent level of grammar.

Later on in his studies Sinclair slightly changes his attitude and forms an integrated approach by which both lexical and grammatical aspects of collocations are taken into consideration. As a result, he divides collocations into two categories: *upward* and *downward* collocations in which upward collocations include prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, and pronouns that collocate with words more frequently used than themselves. For example, Sinclair notes that the word *back* collocates with *at, down, from, into, on* and *then,* all of which are more frequent words than *back.* Downward collocations, on the other hand, include verbs and nouns that collocate with words less frequently used than they are. Again, Sinclair uses the example of the word *back* giving *arrive, bring* and *climbed* as examples of less frequently occurring words that collocate with *back.* He makes a sharp distinctions between these two categories claiming that the elements of *upward* collocations (mostly prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns) tend to form grammatical frames while the elements of the

downward collocations (mostly nouns and verbs), by contrast, give a semantic analysis of a word.

> There appears to be a systematic difference between upward and downward collocation. Upward collocation, of course, is the weaker pattern in statistical terms, and the words tend to be elements of grammatical frames, or superordinates. Downward collocation by contrast gives us a semantic analysis of a word. (Sinclair 1993:116)

Carter (1987, cited in Martyńska, 2004) divides collocations into four categories, depending on how restricted they are: 'unrestricted', which collocate freely with a number of lexical items, e.g. *take a look/a holiday/a rest/a letter/take time/take notice/a walk;* 'semi-restricted', in which the number of adequate substitutes which can replace the elements of collocation is more limited, e.g. *harbour doubt/grudges/uncertainty/suspicion.* The other two categories include 'familiar' collocations whose elements collocate on a regular basis, e.g. *unrequited love, lukewarm reception* and 'restricted' collocations which are fixed and inflexible, e.g. *dead drunk, pretty sure.*

Lewis (2000, 63) lays down the criterion of "collocational strength" to classify collocations. His classification is pedagogically motivated. For him collocations are of four types: "unique collocations", "strong collocations", "medium strength collocations" and "weak collocations". In a unique collocation like *foot the bill* one cannot imagine *footing the invoice* or *footing the coffee.* This shows the uniqueness of *foot* in the collocation. Similarly, one *shrugs our shoulders* but not other parts of one's anatomy. Examples of strong collocations are *trenchant criticism* or *rancid butter.* Although this does not mean that other things cannot be *trenchant* or *rancid,* the collocational bond is too strong. In Lewis' view the medium strength collocations are of prime importance in expanding learners' mental lexicons. *Make a mistake* and *significantly different* are examples of medium strong collocations. A *white shirt* and *red wine* represent weak collocations. Although many things can be *white* or *red* there is something more predictable and so more collocations about these examples.

On another dimension, collocations can be divided into two major types depending on the word class of their constituents. For example, In the BBI Dictionary of English Words, Benson et al., (1997) divided collocations into two groups: grammatical and lexical

collocations. The first category consists of the main word (a noun, an adjective, and a verb) plus a preposition or 'to + infinitive' or 'that-clause' and is characterized by 8 basic types of collocations as shown in table 2.3.

Type	Pattern	Example
G1	noun + preposition	Blockade against, apathy towards
G2	noun + to-infinitive	He was a fool to do it; they felt a need to do it.
G3	noun + that-clause	We reached an agreement that she would represent us in court, he took an oath that he would do his duty.
G4	preposition + noun	By accident, in agony
G5	adjective + preposition	Fond of children, hungry for news
G6	adjective + to-infinitive	It was necessary to work, it's nice to be here
G7	adjective + that-clause	She was afraid that she would fail, it was imperative that I be here
G8	19 different verb patterns in English e.g. verb + to-infinitive and verb + bare infinitive	They began to speak, we must work.

Table 2.3: Grammatical collocations categorized by Benson et al., (1997)

Lexical collocations, in contrast to grammatical collocations, normally do not contain prepositions, infinitive or relative clauses but consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. There are 7 types of them as shown in Table 2.4.

Type	Pattern	Example
L1	Verb (denoting creation and /or activation) + Noun/ pronoun or a prepositional phrase	Make an impression, set an alarm.
L2	Verb (denoting eradication and/or nullification) + Noun.	lift a blockade, withdraw an offer
L3	Adjective + Noun	Strong tea
L4	Noun + Verb (the verb names an action characteristic of the person or thing designated by the noun)	Blood circulates, bomb explodes
L5	Noun + noun	A colony of bees, an article of clothing
L6	Adverb + Adjective	Deeply absorbed, hopelessly addicted
L7	Verb + Adverb	Anchor firmly, amuse thoroughly

Table 2.4: Lexical collocations categorized by Benson et al., (1997)

Hill (2000) further categorized collocations based on the elements they contain to six types as shown in Table: 2.5.

Type	Example
Adjective + noun	Huge profit
Noun+ noun	Pocket calculator
Verb+ adjective+ noun	Learn a foreign language
Verb+ adverb	Live dangerously
Adverb+ adjective	Completely socked
Adverb+ adverb	**Half understand**
Verb+ preposition +noun	Speak through an interpreter

Table 2.5: classification of collocation suggested by Hill (2000)

Comparatively, it seems that Hill (2000) agrees with Benson et al. (1997) on dividing lexical category into seven sub-categories but he omits some elements and substitutes others with more than two elements. Also, he adds that some collocations can be longer; for example, adverb + verb + adjective + noun + preposition + noun as in *seriously affect the political situation in (Northern Ireland)*, described as a semi-fixed expression.

Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (2002:ix) lists a full range of collocations that covers all the types of combinations shown in Table 2.6.

Type	Example
adjective + noun	Bright/ harsh/intense/ strong light
quantifier + noun	A beam/ray of light
verb + noun	Cast/ emit/ give/ provide/ shed light
noun + verb	Light gleams/ glows/ shines
noun + noun	A light source
preposition + noun	By the light of the moon
noun + preposition	The light from the window
adverb + verb	Choose carefully
verb + verb	Be free to choose
verb + preposition	Choose between two things
verb + adjective	Make/ keep/ declare something safe
adverb + adjective	Perfectly/not entirely/ environmentally safe
adjective + preposition:	Safe from attack
short phrases including the headword	The speed of light, pick and choose, safe and sound

Table 2.6: classification of collocation suggested by Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English

Obviously, this model includes the main seven sub-categories of lexical collocations like Benson et. al. (1997) model, but it adds grammatical collocations sub-categories that include prepositions.

In a related direction McCarthy and O'Dell (2005), also divide collocation into six types as shown in Table 2.7:

type	Example
Adjective + noun	Bright colour
Noun+ verb	Pose a problem
Noun+ noun	A sense of pride
Verb+ preposition	Burst into tears
Verb+ adverb	Pull steadily
Adverb+ adjective	Happily married

Table 2.7: Collocation types suggested by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005)

Another group that can be categorized under collocations consists of "de-lexicalised words" (e.g., take, get, do, make, etc.). Although they have little or no meaning on their own, the expressions where they occur have idiomatic qualities (e.g., *get the door* means *answer the door*), for this reason, de-lexicalised words need to be learnt in chunks as well.

For the purpose of this study, the lexical collocations categorized by Benson et al. are adopted. Since this study is concerned with lexical collocations, grammatical collocations will not be discussed any further. From this point onwards, the term collocation and lexical collocations will be used interchangeably.

2.1.8 Collocation in First-and Second-language Acquisition

The existence of collocations and thus their influences on both first and second language acquisition and teaching has been acknowledged by the majority of linguists in this field According to Bloom (1973, cited in Miyakoshi, 2009), young children acquiring their first language produce unanalyzed chunks that an adult would recognize as multi-morphemic, such as *lemme-see, i-wanna-do-it.* This phenomenon questions the validity of the general assumption that most children start producing only one word at a time.

Supporting the same point of view, the results of Fillmore's study (1979) shows striking similarities in the use of formulaic sequences such as *I wanna play, Do you wanna play? I gotta hurry up, shuddup your mouth* between the two groups of her subjects. In her study, Fillmore examined the acquisition of formulaic speech of five Spanish-speaking learners of English paired with their counterparts (English-speaking children) for one year. He explains that children began to learn these expressions as unanalyzed or whole chunks, and later, after gaining confidence in their use, they start segmenting them into individual units. He comments:

> "Once in the learner's speech repertory, they become familiar, and therefore could be compared with other utterances in the repertory as well as those produced by the speaker. Their function in language learning process, is not only social, but cognitive too, since they provide the data on which the children were to perform their analytical activities in figuring out the structure of the language" (p. 29).

Wray (2002: 206) also claims that first language learners focus on large strings of words and decompose them only as much as they need to, for communicative purposes. She describes several essential roles of collocation in learning a first language. By using collocations, young children supplement gestures and other non-linguistic behaviours when conveying salient messages prior to the development of their rule-governed language. Thus, children store and use complex strings before developing their grammatical knowledge. For example, a child may produce the string *what's-that?* before knowing the internal makeup of 'wh'-questions. Another role that their use of collocations can play is to "reduce the child's processing load once novel construction is possible" (p. 128). This allows the child to maintain fluency while obtaining control of processing.

The significant role of collocations in children's first language acquisition also was highlighted by Peter (1983). The results of her study (1977) reveal that young children use both analytical (inferential) and gestalt (holistic) strategies to acquire their first language. Children start employing utterances used by adults in the form of formulas. They store such formulas and later reuse them creatively as both analyzed or segmented units and unanalyzed or whole chunks.

In the field of second language acquisition, as claimed by Wray (2002), children seem to have many advantages over adults with regard to the acquisition of collocation. Naturally children become involved with other children, who are very lenient of incomprehension, and in various types of "ritualized play" that presents them with highly anticipated, constant, and contextualized language. On the contrary, adults avoid the shock of being a non-speaker of a new language by choosing not to communicate with other peers. Such advantages can facilitate the second language acquisition process in general, and assists children to sound native and idiomatic in their use of formulaic expressions in particular.

Wray (2002) also claims that adult second language learners reveal themselves by not knowing the grammatically possible ways of conveying a message that sounds idiomatic to native speakers. The reason, she maintains, is that an adult language learner starts with individual units and then builds them up, whereas a first language learner begins with large and complex units and never segments them unless it is necessary: "Phrases and clauses may be what learners encounter in their input material, but what they notice and deal with are words and how they can be glued together" (p.206).

Nevertheless, Ellis (1984) emphasizes the role of formulaic language in second language acquisition. He indicates that wholes or chunks can form an entire script of L2 performance such as with 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 determines that formulas are common in both classroom and naturalistic settings and are utilized by L2 learners to decrease the learning burden, while increasing 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.

To sum up, research in the area of both first and second language acquisition highlight the role of collocations in language acquisition. While collocations are important building blocks in children's language acquisition, this researcher agrees with other researchers that collocations also play a significant role in adult second language learning. The relevance of these findings to the current study lies in the need for developing ESL/EFL learners' collocational knowledge, which results from the process of learning and from storing the collocations they encounter.

2.1.9 The Importance of Collocation in ESL/EFL

As mentioned previously, the literature on collocations shows agreement among second language acquisition researchers and language pedagogues as to the importance of learning collocations in order to increase EFL learners' language competence and enhance their communicative competence (e.g., Brown, 1974; Nattinger, 1988, 1989; Aghbar, 1990; Bahan & Eldow, 1993; Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997; Howarth, 1998; Hussein, 1990, Gitsaki, 1999, Cortes, 2004; Alskran, 2011). For instance, Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) highlight the importance of this as follows:

> 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 (p. ix) .

According to Cortes (2004, p. 398), the "use of collocations and fixed expressions has been considered a marker of proficient language use" and he approvingly quotes Haswell's (1991: 236) claim that "as writers mature they rely more and more on collocations". Similarly, in their studies of the development of collocational knowledge in non-native writers, both Nesselhauf (2005, pp. 234-236) and Kazsubski (2000: 33) assume that increased proficiency will correlate with an increased use of conventional collocations.

It is obvious that the knowledge of normal collocations is part of a native speaker's communicative competence in using the language and is also a major factor that distinguishes native speakers from learners of the target language. Bonk (2000) indicates that native

speakers have an extensive knowledge of how words combine in their language and they use this knowledge when they retrieve lexical items and link them appropriately in language production. The systematic use of these combinations in the case of second language learners is considered to be very crucial in achieving native-like production (McCarthy, 1990).

Brown (1974) is among the early advocates of the importance of collocations in L2 learning and their inclusion in L2 teaching. She emphasizes that learning collocations not only increases learners' knowledge of collocations but it improves the learners' oral proficiency, listening comprehension and reading speed. In addition, she points out that learning collocations enables learners gradually to realize the language chunks used by native speakers in speech and in writing and to get the feel of using words in natural combinations with other words as well (cited in Gitsaki and Taylor 1997). Accordingly, Brown highlights that collocations should be included when advanced learners are taught new words because of their significant role in language learning.

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) follow a similar approach to that of Brown (1974) concerning collocations. In their book 'Lexical Phrase and Language', Nattinger and DeCarrico present an account of the nature of lexical phrases and their role in language acqusition and use. They also provide a comprehensive pedagogical approach to integrating lexical phrases, including collocations, into the teaching of reading, writing, conversation and listening comprehension.

Aghbar (1990) has also understood the importance of collocations. He argues that the knowledge of formulaic language (in which he includes idioms, proverbs, sayings and collocations) is essential in the overall fluency of the language of both native and non-native speakers.According to Alsakran (2011) "without the knowledge of collocations, ESL/EFL learners' expressions can be seen as unidiomatic, unnatural, or foreign, despite the fact that learners' speech would be grammatically correct."

The significant role of collocations in the development of EFL learners' communicative competence is underscored also by Yorio (1980). Yorio claims that conventionalized language forms, including collocations, "make communication more orderly because they are regulatory in nature" (p.438). Additionally, Cowie (1988) maintains that lexical phrases and

collocations serve communicative needs and allow learners to reuse and produce the institutionalized units.

Cowie (1992) also stresses the importance of collocation in ESL/EFL settings. In his words, 'It is impossible to perform at a level acceptable to native users, in writing or speaking, without controlling an appropriate range of multiword units (i.e., collocations). These are realities which communicative language teaching in particular has to accommodate itself to' (Cowie, 1992:10).

Similarly, Lewis (2000) states that learning chunks of words helps language learners develop their communicative competence better than just learning words in isolation. He also adds that collocational knowledge will help learners expand their proficiency of vocabulary in both spoken and written language; instead of saying *poverty causes crime, a big meal*, they can say *poverty breeds crime* and *a substantial meal* respectively.

By the same token, Pawley and Syder (1983) point out that collocations play a significant role in language learning and they lead to the improvement of language competence. Therefore, Pawley and Syder (1983) argue that the more fixed expressions, including collocations, language learners use in useful basic chunks, the more they produce a native-like language structure. Herbst (1996) confirms this by saying that 'competence in a language involves knowledge about collocations'.

According to Ellis (2001), language knowledge and language use can be explained by the storage of chunks in long-term memory and the experience of how frequently chunks occur without the need to mention underlying rules. In other words, if not just single words but chunks containing important words can be seen many times and if they can be stored in the long-term memory, language reception and language production are made more effective. This view is supported not only by Ellis (2001) but also by Lexical Approach proponents such as Lewis (1993, 2000) and Hill (2000).

Fluency in a foreign language, as implied by Kjellmer (1990), is determined by the "automation" of collocation and the more accurately language learners are able to use collocations, the fewer pauses and hesitations they make during long chunks of discourse.

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This is only one of many reasons why it is necessary for language learners to master collocations. Furthermore, Howarth (1998) suggests that collocations play an essential role in the learning of L2 and assist ESL/EFL students towards speaking more like native speakers. According to Pawley and Syder:

> "Memorized clauses and clause-sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation ... Speakers show a high degree of fluency when describing familiar experiences or activities in familiar phrases ...We believe that memorized sentences and phrases are the normal building blocks of fluent spoken discourse". (Pawley and Syder, 1983: 208).

There have been several studies which support this position. Towell, Hawkins and Bazergui (1996) in a study of learners of French as a second language found that increased fluency resulted from learners storing memorized sequences. Sung (2003), in a study of international students in the USA, found a significant correlation between the knowledge of lexical collocations and the subjects' speaking proficiency as did Hsu and Chiu (2008) in a study of Taiwanese EFL learners. The three studies' summaries stressed the importance of teaching collocation in ESL/EFL classrooms. Accepting that collocation should be taught to ESL/EFL learners, one needs to consider how this might best be done.

Wray (2002) also emphasizes that collocations are particularly important for learners striving for a high degree of competence in a second language because they enhance not only accuracy but also fluency. Furthermore, Nesselhauf (2003) states that "collocations are of particular importance for learners striving for a high degree of competence in the second language but they are also of importance for learners with less ambitions and aspiration, as they not only enhance accuracy but also fluency".

For Nation (2001:318) knowing a word involves knowing the words that co-occur with it. He emphasizes that collocations are parts of the reception and production of vocabulary knowledge. He asserts that collocational knowledge is significant in enhancing fluency: "all fluent and appropriate language use requires collocational knowledge".

Thus, collocations should be taught to language learners to be able to produce the target language appropriately. Along the same lines, Benson and Ilson (1997) state language learners must acquire how words collocate with each other so as to be able to produce language with native-like accuracy and fluency in both oral and written forms. Thus students'

vocabulary and their overall language proficiency increase as their collocational knowledge increases. Similarly,

Similarly, Gitsaki (1999) reveals the importance of collocational knowledge in second language acquisition and insists that some kind of modular theory is necessary, because she found that several factors affect ESL learners' collocational knowledge such as familiarity, frequency of the input, and salience of the collocation types. Moreover, Laufer (1988) reports that collocations can be found to provide help in many levels of vocabulary development and in the development of self- learning strategies such as guessing.

In conclusion, by focusing on teaching and learning collocations, students will be able to produce collocations fluently and accurately rather than by merely comprehending word meanings. They then thus can use appropriate word patterns rather than simply putting individual words together according to English syntactic rules (Wei, 1999).

2.1.10 Collocation and Errors

Collocational errors may block mutual communication. Since a collocation is not determined by logic or frequency nor any rules but arbitrary, it has become one of the main obstacles for foreign learners to achieve native- like competence.(Tang,2004:40)

As the researcher's concern is in examining the lexical collocation knowledge of EFL Libyan learners, and in analyzing quantitatively their collocational errors in terms of the effect of their L1 on their production of English lexical collocations, it is essential not to neglect what linguists have contributed to the area of errors.

Errors have become a field of interest not only for teachers but for linguists and psychologists as well (Gass and Selinker, 1994: 66-67).

Dulay and Burt (1974:95) state that errors have played an important role in the study of language acquisition in general and in examining second and foreign language acquisition in particular. In the applied linguistics' community, it was Corder (1967:19-27) who first advocated the importance of errors in the language learning process. In his opinion (1981: 11) there are three different ways in which errors are significant. First of all, they provide the

teacher with information regarding how much the learner has learned and what remains for him/her to learn. Secondly, errors provide researchers with evidence of how language is learned. Finally, they are an indication of the strategies used by learners for testing hypotheses about the second language.

Thus, it becomes obvious then that, within an error analysis, errors are no longer seen as 'unwanted forms', but as evidence of the learner's active contribution to foreign language acquisition. Therefore, making errors should not be treated as a negative factor in language acqusition (Ellis, 1995:51-54).

It can be said that linguists pay considerable attention to language errors in a broad sense. Thus, the researcher can narrow down this general view of exploring errors into investigating collocation errors in particular.

2.1.11.1 The Boundary between Errors and Mistakes

It is essential here to make a distinction between errors and mistakes. Both Corder (1967, 1973) and James (1998) reveal a criterion that helps one to do so: it is the self-correctability criterion. A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are "systematic," i.e. likely to occur repeatedly and are not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher can locate them, the learner cannot (Gass and Selinker, 1994). Foreign language learners make *errors* largely and systematically because of the paucity of their knowledge of the target language. In other words, they occur because the learner does not know what is correct and thus cannot self-correct. In this case, they have not learnt the correct form. Once they have been taught or have noticed that native speakers do not produce such forms, it is supposed that these learners will say or write these forms consistently. In the case where the learners produce the right forms, but at other times they are unable to produce the accurate one, these inconsistent deviations are called *mistakes.*

Ellis (1997) suggests two ways of distinguishing between an error and a mistake. The first one is to check the consistency of a learner's performance. If he/she sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However if he/she always use it incorrectly, it is then an error. The second way is to ask a learner to try to correct his/her own deviant utterances. Where he/she is unable to, the deviations are errors; whereas if he/she is successful in correcting, they are mistakes.

2.1.11.2 Types of Errors

It has been common to categorize errors into three or four general types: interlingual (transfer), intralingual, unique (e.g. induced) and/or other types of error e.g. developmental and communication-strategy (Coder, 1967, 1973; Ellis 1994; James 1998).

Interlingual Errors, which are generally referred to as Transfer Errors, occur when the learner uses L1 features rather than those of L2. In other words, errors in this category are largely caused by the learner using their first language's structure and applying it to the target language (i.e. L1 interference). Intralingual Errors, on the other hand, reflect the complex characteristics of the target language and arise when the learner fails to fully comprehend the conditions under which the target language's rules and restrictions apply. Overgeneralization[5] is a good example of such an error type. According to Richards (1971: 124), "the sources of errors in studying a language might be derived from the interference of the learners' mother tongue and the general characteristics of the rule learning. The errors that are caused by the general characteristics of the rule learning are also called the intralanguage errors. And the errors caused by the interference of the learners' mother tongue are called the inter language errors."

Induced Errors (Ellis, 1994) refer to those errors made because of inappropriate instruction or instructional materials, while Developmental Errors (Richards, 1971) occur when the learner falsely hypothesizes rules and concepts on the basis of earlier learning experiences, and thus this reflects on the stage of his/her language development. Communication-Strategy Errors (James, 1998) arise when the learner attempts to use an approximate form of the required word or an indirect expression called *circumlocution*.

A point that should be made in this regard is that, in many instances, it is not an easy matter to make a clear-cut decision for attributing the collocational error to only one of the above-mentioned types. Probably, many processes might equally occur simultaneously and reinforce each other (Littlewood, 1984:27). For example, when some Arabic learners of English say *open the light* instead of *turn on the light*, this error may be a literal translation of the Arabic colloquial expression /eftah al daw/ or it may be an overgeneralization error, as the learners

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[5] *Over-generalization* means that the learner produces an abnormal structure based on his or her previous knowledge of other structures of the target language such as *he can sings, we are hope, it is occurs,* and *he come from*

may generalize *open the door/window* and say erroneously *open the light*. Another example, *shattered silence* instead of *break silence* can be a false analogy to /*mazzaqa ʒeddara assamt*/ and might be where students manipulate their native language for foreign language production, since they did not have the necessary relevant knowledge of the target collocations. In this context, Norrish (1994:27) indicates that such errors can be regarded as a communication strategy and to be a means whereby learners wish to communicate their ideas within the language system that they are familiar with, namely that of their mother tongue.

According to Selinker (1972) and Selinker and Lamendella (1978) errors of competence could be "fossilized" if the learner, as claimed by Huxley, "stops adapting hypotheses before reaching full mastery of the target language. For example, he/she may continue to speak with a "foreign accent," despite apparent ability, opportunity, and motive to attain native-speaker pronunciation patterns" (Huxley, 1986: 68).

In the current study, the term *error types* is adopted because most of the other terminologies such as *sources, causes* and *factors* potentially imply a broader meaning than *error types*.

2.1.12 Learners' difficulties with collocations

There is no doubt that learning collocations is indispensable for second language learners in order to achieve native-like skills. However, learning collocations seems to be an uphill task for second language learners, even at an advanced level. McCarthy (1990) mentions knowledge of collocation appropriacy is part of a native speaker's competence and it can be problematic for learners in cases where collocability is language specific and does not seem solely determined by universal semantic constraints. According to Benson et al. (1986), many "collocations are arbitrary and non-predictable". Non-native speakers of English find them very difficult to cope with unless they have "a guide". Even a native speaker sometimes has to refer to some reference point before deciding which word collocates with a word he/she wants to use.

The difficulty that EFL/ESL learners have with using a combination of lexical items in vocabulary acquisition has been noted by many researchers in language acquisition. For instance, Bahans & Eldaw (1993) and Gitsaki (1999) argue that EFL learners face great difficulties with lexical collations in their language production.

Lombard (1997) explains that 'collocations are difficult constructions for non-native speakers because collocations follow some constraints that are completely unmarked for non-native speakers unless they are aware' (1997:4). In other words, collocations may impose difficulty or confusion on learners of English due to the fact that there are no clear-cut guidelines for non-native learners to decide which combinations are acceptable and which ones are simply unacceptable

It should be pointed out here that collocations differ greatly between languages and provides a major difficulty in mastering foreign language. In other words, what comprises collocation in one language does not necessarily collocate in another language (Crystal, 1978; Zughoul, 2003; Baker, 1992). For example, the word "strong " in English and /qawi/" قوى " in Arabic collocate with the same equivalent in some combinations as in " strong man "/ raʒul qawi " رجل قوى ", "strong influence"/ taθer qawi/ " تاثير قوى ". However, they differ in other combinations such as " strong tea"; one cannot say/ ʃahi qawi/ "شاهى قوى" in Arabic but / ʃahi murakz/ "شاهى مركزا " (Mehdi, 2008:30).

Moreover, the same lexical item may be expressed differently in one language compared to another because of differences in their collocational patterning. As Baker states (1992: 68), "A language may express a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent fixed expression and the third may express it by means of idiom". For example, the English collocation "to shake hands" consists of two words, while its equivalent in Arabic / yusafḥ/ "يصافح " is only one word. Arabs do not usually say / yusafḥ bel aidi/ " يصافح بالأيدي " but only / yusafḥ "يصافح , since this word already expresses the use of hands and people have a hand-shake musafaḥa/ "مصافحة" only by hands (Ghazala, 1995:08).

A number of researchers have attempted to categorize L2 learners' problems with acquiring collocational competence (Korosadowicz-Struzynska, 1980; Bahans, 1993; Farghal & Obiedate, 1995, Gitsak, 1999; Biskup, 1992; Granger, 1998; Gitsaki, 1999; Bahns & Eldaw, 2000; Zughoul and Hussein, 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003; Mahumed, 2005).

Based on the results of their studies, these researchers have found that there could be many factors contributing to this problem, including negative transfer, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule' restrictions, and the misapplication of synonyms.

Korosadowicz-Struzynska (1980) reports that students face interlingual and intralingual problems in the use of collocations and even advanced students who have considerable fluency of expression in a foreign language make collocational errors. As a consequence, Korosadowicz-Struzynska considers the teaching and learning of collocations for production reasons is essential for EFL learners and describes certain steps that should be followed in order to promote the teaching of collocations from the initial stages of foreign language learning.

Interlingual problems (i.e. transfer from the mother tongue) are considered as one of the common factors which cause problems for EFL/ESL learners. Mahmoud (2000) points out that the availability of a native language to foreign language learners brings about a difference between the mother tongue and other tongues in the sense that the native language is an additional source of linguistic knowledge. Littlewood (1984:26) illustrates that learners use their previous mother tongue experience as a means of organizing the second or foreign language data and to make sense of such a new experience. This means that learners do not have to discover everything from zero. In other words, their L1 collocational knowledge may represent their assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 collocational choices.

Thereby, as Mahmoud (2005) argues, 'the influence of the mother tongue and the pervasiveness of interlingual transfer is indisputable, especially in learning situations where the students' exposure to the foreign language is confined to a few hours per week of formal classroom instruction'. Hence, insufficient exposure to the target language could make it be filtered through the native language at all linguistic levels and could give rise to different errors (Rivers, 1983). This language transfer becomes a learning strategy that most foreign language learners fall back on (Odlin, 1989 and Mahmoud, 2002).

A lot of collocational errors that learners commit are found to be due to negative transfer from L1; for example, Biskup (1992) collected interference errors made by Polish and

German learners of English (Polish interference errors: '*to state a record*' instead of 'to *set a record*' and German interference errors: '*to lead a bookshop*' instead of '*to run a bookshop*').

In the case of EFL Arabic learners, researchers such as Mohmoud (2000, 2004) and Ab-samara (2003) point out that Arab EFL learners commit serious interlingual errors because they depend heavily on their L1 (cited in Al-Khreshen, 2010).

In his study, Mahmoud (2005:1) reports that sixty one percent of the unacceptable combinations made could be due to negative transfer from Arabic. He attributes this problem to "the fact that the post-intermediate and advanced students of EFL have a relatively large stock of vocabulary which might have motivated interlingual transfer in the belief that it would be easy to find the EFL equivalents of the Arabic lexical items". In addition, he finds that some of interlingual errors could be attributed to [6]NSA (Non-Standard Arabic) from MSA[7] (Modern-Standard Arabic) as in:

* *bring   problems*   (NSA   =   yiʒeeb)   (MSA   :   yusabbib   =   cause)
* *say his opinion* (NSA = yaqool) (MSA : yubdi = show - yuʕbbir = express)
* *make   problems*   (NSA   =   ya'mal   )   (MSA   :   yusabbib   =   cause)
* *bring a high grade* (NSA = yiʒeeb) (MSA : yaħsul ala = get / obtain) (Mahmoud, 2005)

Research by Bahans (1993), Bahans & Eldaw (1993), Farghal & Obiedant (1995) indicate that learners lacking collocational knowledge rely heavily on L1 as the only source and thus do better in those collocations that have L1 equivalents than those do not.

Nesselhauf (2003) provides support for the previously mentioned studies in stating that L1 influence, in her study of collocations used by German EFL learners, is considerable, resulting in several L2 errors. She also confirms the significance of native language impact on L2 collocation learning, suggesting that since L1-L2 collocational incompatibility is a

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[6] Non-Standard Arabic (NSA: اللغة العربية لعامية) *al-luġatu l-'arabīyatu Ammiaa* 'Colloquial Arabic'

[7] Modern-Standard Arabic (MSA: اللغة العربية الفصــحى) *al-luġatu l-'arabīyatu l-fuṣhā* "the most eloquent Arabic language"), standard Arabic or Literary Arabic is the standard and literary variety of Arabic used in writing and in formal speech.

major source of errors in learner language, English teachers should concentrate on such non-congruent collocations in the two languages in order to prevent learners from committing such transfer errors.

But Granger (1998) argues that the learners' L1 may affect learning collocations either positively or negatively. He found evidence of successful collocational transfer from L1. For instance, French learners of English produce 'severely punished' which corresponds to the French 'sévèrement punis'. In brief, positive transfer can occur then when the target collocations match those of L1, that is, when collocation has a direct translation equivalent in the learners' L1. Conversely, negative transfer appears when patterns in L2 do not exist in L1, or the patterns in the two languages are different.

Intralingual problems present another problem. As O'Neil points out English words have typical word patterns. For instance, in English one can say 'catch or miss a bus', ' watch a film on television but see it in the cinema'; 'one rides a horse and a bike, but drives a car'. Nagy and Anderson (1991) give a similar example: one can say 'grant him permission, but one cannot say grant him a shove' (cited in Zarei, 2002). A review of the literature on collocation competence shows that EFL language learners tend to 'generalize a particular rule or item' in the target language. Overgeneralization occurs especially when they are uncertain about words that combine properly. For example, Yarmohammadi (1997) reports the following errors committed by Iranian EFL learners:
*The chief of the bank (manager)

*The chief of the college (dean)

*The chief of the university (chancellor)

The misapplication of synonyms is also considered as another problem that poses more difficulties to EFL/ESL learners. It is worth noting that, the more synonyms an item has, the more difficulty learners encounter in producing accepted collocations (Li-Szu, 2001).

Martelli (1998) reports errors in which students assume that related words like job, career, employment and occupation are complete synonyms and can be used interchangeably, for example, *look for a work* instead of *look for a job, dangerous career* instead of *dangerous job.*

Another probable reason for the difficulty with collocations, as Shokouhi (2010) argues, is that learners acquire L2 words individually or in isolation, without adequate attention to the relations that words have with one other. In other words, ignorance of restriction rules in word choice. For instance, as Shokouhi (2010) mentions, although many EFL learners appear to know the meanings of *big, heavy* and *smoker*, they produced strings like *big smoker* instead of *heavy smoker*.

In this regard, Flowerdew (1999) finds evidence, from an examination of the KWIC (key words in context), that students have reasonable knowledge about the key lexis, but are not familiar with the naturally occurring environment in which the word usually occurs. As a result, learners produce many wrong utterances such as:

- This butter is sour.   (rancid)
- My tea is very powerful (strong)
- Flocks of cows   (sheep)
- The enemy used a fatal weapon (lethal)
- Herd of sheep   (cows)

According to Shokouhi (2010), such problems arise partly because of the arbitrary and unpredictable nature of collocations. Moreover, McCarthy et al. (2010) point out that a register could be another way in which learners might create untypical collocations because of their knowledge of single words within a register. For example, Taiwo (2004, cited in McCarthy et al., 2010) gives some examples such as *borrow a loan* instead of *take out a loan* and *type the keyboard* instead of *use the keyboard*.

Another dimension embodied in the issue of lexical competence is culture-related knowledge. Baker (1992:59) defines culture-specific collocations as "collocations that reflect the cultural setting in which they occur". Culture-specific collocations may denote a concrete concept that bears some cultural specificity which may carry a connotative meaning. For instance, in Arabic, the collocation / tartadi alheʒab/ "ترتدى الحجاب " is a culture-specific collocation which denotes the kind of clothes worn by Muslim women; it has a cultural and religious background. , it has no total equivalent in English; although it can be referred to as ' /heʒab/ حجاب as *veil* or *scarf*, it does not convey the same meaning, because /heʒab/ in Arabic does

not mean "scarf" that covers the head only but it covers the whole body and it has specific characteristics. Similarly, the English culture specific collocation *Easter egg* which denotes some kind of food used on a special occasion, has no equivalent in Arabic because it is not a part of Arabic culture, thus it is unfamiliar to Arabs. Thus, a lack of cultural competence might be responsible for learners' failure to acquire such culturally- marked collocations. Shokouhi (2010) gives the following example *food stamps* as an example of a culturally specific concept; for Iranian EFL learners the correct translation would be either *coupon* or *voucher*. The word *coupon* is more likely triggered because the word has a cultural tradition in Persian; almost anything that is rationed can be messaged linguistically by *coupon*. Thus, a lack of cultural competence might be responsible for learners' failure to acquire such culturally- marked collocations.

To sum up, interference from the EFL learners' native language plays a crucial role in L2 collocation acquisition. As shown in the aforementioned studies, the first language seems to have a negative effect on their use of English collocations, resulting in L2 erroneous combinations.

Based on the discussion above, it is to be expected that Libyan-speaking learners of English will have similar kinds of problems in terms of their production of, and reception of, lexical collocations in English. This thesis, therefore, will focus mainly on the effect of interlingual transfer on the performance of Libyan EFL learners, taking into account errors that can result from the interaction of the interference of L1 (Arabic) with other factors such as intralingual transfer and cultural interference.

2.1.13 Teaching Collocations: Strategies, Activities and Materials

As indicated before, the proper use of collocations is crucial in order to sound like a native speaker (Ellis, 1996). Therefore, collo]
cations should be introduced and taught systematically at the earliest possible stage in language learning. Also, they should be highlighted when teaching any English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hill (2000:60) states that collocation should play an important part in teaching from lesson one.

Despite wide recognition of the importance of collocations in language learning, it remains largely unclear how they should be taught. This section looks at strategies and activities that teachers have developed in order to help their students explore collocations and retain them in their long-term memory, and to further expand and enrich their collocations' repertoire. Then the kind of collocations researchers recommend should be selected and prioritized for learning are discussed.

2.13.1 Teaching Principles

Researchers and teachers working in the EFL paradigm have tried to provide practical principles and tips to teach collocations to EFL learners. The following general practice involves three aspects: *awareness-raising, deliberate teaching* and *recording and recycling.*

2.1.13.1.1 Awareness-raising

The first, and most important, principle indicates that adequate attention should be directed towards building students' consciousness and awareness of how words work in combination with one another. According to Schmidt (1990), "what language learners become conscious of ... what they pay attention to, what they notice ... influences and in some ways determines the outcome of their learning". Hence, in becoming aware of collocations, students will have the psychological readiness to continue developing their collocational competence after they leave the English class (Wei, 1999; Hill, 2000:47-70; Kavaliauskiene and Janulevieiene, 2001; Taiwo, 2004; Shojaee, 2005 and Morley, 2006).

McCarthy et al. (2010:36) emphasize the importance of awareness and claim that 'without awareness, it would be very puzzling for learners to have to work with collocation exercises and activities'. According to them raising awareness in teaching collocations can be achieved either in a *deductive* (direct way) or *inductive* (indirect way). In the direct way, the teacher uses the term collocation in the classroom, explaining what it means and giving examples, then going on to use various activities and exercises, whereas in the indirect way the learners practice putting words into pairs through various simple examples and activities.

One of the earliest studies recommending the explicit teaching of collocation (Channell, 1981) found that learners fail to realize the potential of known words as they only use them in a limited number of collocations with which they feel confident. To overcome such limited

use of collocations, Channell argues that it is essential to expose learners to a large variety of typical collocations whenever a word is first acquired.

One important level of awareness is identified as "noticing." Noticing or paying attention to specific features of the target input is considered a necessary step in learning and "those who notice most learn most" (Schmidt and Frota, 1986). With regard to this point, Lewis (1997, 2000) defines noticing as a teaching strategy the way in which a teacher draws the learner's attention to the lexical features of the input to which they are exposed. This, he argues, raises the consciousness of the learner which, in turn, helps him/her to turn the input into intake. Although Lewis (2002) notes that noticing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for input to become intake, he argues that if learners are not directed to notice language in a text there exists a danger that they will 'see through the text' and therefore fail to achieve intake.

Carlos (2003.) believes, like Lewis, that encouraging learners to notice language, specifically lexical chunks and collocations, is central to any methodology connected to a lexical view of language. Since "there is no learning without awareness" (McLaughlin, 1990: 626), the teacher has to develop students' awareness of the language by attracting the learners' attention which is a necessity in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) because no attention means no consciousness. "When people pay attention to something, they become conscious of it" (Baars, 1988, cited in Schmidt, 1993: 208). So, awareness is a prerequisite of acquisition. It helps the learner to acquire the language efficiently. The implication, according to Thornbury (1997) is "No noticing, no acquisition."

Affirming the significant role of the teacher in the learning process, Williams (2005) argues that the most useful role of the teacher in consciousness-raising is encouraging noticing on the part of the learners. Similarly, Lewis (2000) claims that the most important task of the teacher is to encourage noticing because it helps to convert the input into intake. He explains:

> "...the single most important 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" Lewis (2000: 117).

In Morgan's view (cited in Lewis, 2000: 14), the learners will not make progress unless they are trained to notice words that go together. This training, he thinks, will increase their fluency in speaking and writing.

> "The reason so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply
> because they have not been trained to notice which words go with which. They
> may know a lot of individual words which they struggle to use, along with their
> grammatical knowledge, but they lack the ability to use those words in a range
> of collocations which pack more meaning into what they say or write."
> (Morgan cited in Lewis, 2000: 14)

Woolard also recommends turning students' attention to collocations as a learning strategy. He reports from his teaching experience that in the beginning the teacher will have to point out useful language in texts or in listening and get the students to record it. In the long-run, however, students should be trained to recognize these chunks themselves inside and outside the classroom, thus becoming more independent learners (Woolard, 2000:33-36).

Another good way to raise the students' awareness of collocations is by helping them to pay more attention to their mis-collocations in their production of language (Woolard, 2000). For instance, if teachers can see the learners' collocational errors and point out these errors to learners, that can help them to raise EFL learners' awareness of collocations. In addition, it helps the EFL learners understand difficult collocations and realize what should be emphasized in their classes. Lewis (2000) also proposes that EFL learners need to know not only what is right but also what is wrong. In the same vein, Schmidt and Frota (1986) claim that, in order for noticed input to become intake, learners have to carry out a comparison between the forms they have produced and the forms that appear in their input. In this way, learners gradually realize that learning more vocabulary is not just learning new words, but being familiar with word combinations.

As a general comment, noticing collocations facilitates language acquisition but it is "a complex process" that has to be guided by the teacher who should be selective in highlighting collocations and draw the learners' attention towards them in a suitable context.

2.1.13.1.2 Collocation Selection

Secondly, the enormous number of collocations raises the question how, and which of the great number of, collocations should be taught. For example, in *Collins COBUILD English Words in Use*, more than 100,000 collocations are given, covering the core vocabulary of English. Also, there are more than 70,000 collocations listed under about 14,000 entries in the *BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English*. Hence, a decision must be made regarding the selection of collocations to be taught.

Brown (1980) uses the notion of 'normal' and 'unusual' collocations and recommends teaching the former because they form the basis of the latter. However, he does not define what 'normal or 'unusual' collocations are and implies that they are largely based on intuition. Other researchers propose frequency-based selection. Channell (1981) suggests that words should be presented with high-frequency collocates when they are first encountered by learners. According to Fox (1998), words should be taught according to their absolute frequency. He adds that it is not the only criterion but it helps teachers to focus on the most important and common words. Fox makes the assertion that teachers should give students strategies to cope with collocation, one of which is the use of concordances (Fox, 1998:80). The data-driven learning (DDL) proposed by Johns (1991), for instance, is a good way to realize this. In classes teachers can utilize concordance printouts, which consist of authentic examples of the most frequent patterns. Teachers can have students explore corpora and look for collocations for themselves. In the DDL approach teachers abandon the role of expert and take on that of research organizer and, through the use of concordance data, students may "develop inductive strategies that will help them to become better language learners outside the classroom" (Johns, 1991: 31).

Allan (2006) similarly gives the advantage to DDL, although she was working with far fewer students and also admits certain design problems. Intriguingly, she provides some evidence that her learners also performed better on non-target items, suggesting that the process of DDL leads to greater language awareness, noticing skills, and ultimately better learning – even from paper-based resources. Finally, three controlled experiments by Boulton (2008) show learners making significant gains on target items in post-tests, although differences with control groups were mostly small or not significant. However, the learners in these studies are experiencing their first taste of DDL with no prior training, so the results not only show that

DDL can lead to immediate learning on a par with traditional approaches, but also suggests that training and further experience would give it a distinct advantage over traditional teaching,
even at lower levels

On the other hand, Nation (2001) takes into consideration limited classroom time and adopts two main criteria: frequency and range. According to Nation in a classroom situation, frequent collocations only deserve attention if "their frequency is equal to or higher than other high-frequency words."

Wei (1999) points out that it is important to select the most common collocations which will help learners to be precise in their language use. For example, under *manage*, the meaning *succeed in* has much higher occurrence than the meaning *be in charge of* according to the semantic count. The two meanings have their own distinct collocations: the former frequently occurs in the structure *manage to do something;* the latter usually collocates with a noun that refers to a business such as *a shop, a company, a restaurant.* A useful source in this regard is *A General Service List of English Words* for featuring a semantic count (West, 1953). Yorio's (1980) selection criteria are based on need, usefulness, productivity, currency, frequency and ease.

Lewis (1997) criticizes the use of frequency as the sole guide to choosing which collations to teach and suggests that good collocations are those that occur more often than is statistically likely. According to him, collocations may be any combination of strong and frequent, strong and infrequent, weak and frequent, or weak and infrequent. For example, a frequent collocation such as a *warm day* is not necessarily strong, as either word in the partnership can suggest a number of other collocates as follows:

	sweater		bad	
	blanket		wedding	
(a) warm	smile	(a)	sunny	day
	hug		rainy	
	breeze		glorious	

Hill (2000) recommends drawing the learner's attention to collocations that follow particular syntactic patterns, such as adjective + noun, noun + noun, verb + adjective + noun, verb + adverb, adverb + adjective and verb + preposition + noun. He stresses the power of nouns in selecting collocations. He suggests identifying key nouns in the text and then looking for noun, verb and adjective collocations. He also suggests that teachers think of collocations on a spectrum, with weak and strong collocations at each end and medium-strength ones in the middle. It is those of medium-strength that are particularly important for learners, because they make up a large part of what we say and write every day. However, Hill (2000) does not describe how to differentiate them.

McCarthy et al. (2010: 38) suggest that choosing collocations according to the word-class which commonly combine with each other (e.g., adjective + noun, verb + adverb) is a useful way of organizing collocation for teaching and learning. They also suggest leaving the stronger ones such as *profoundly disturbing* and *utterly reliable* to the more advanced levels.

Considering the fact that it is not possible for teachers to present every example of collocation in English due to the huge number of collocations, a number of other language specialists attempt to reduce this burden of learning by putting other suggestions in terms of selecting collocations on the basis of differences in the collocational patterns in L1 and L2. Bahns (1993), for instance, proposes that collocations which are equivalent in both the learners' mother tongue and the target language can be neglected, since such collocations allow positive language transfer; however, those that are not equivalent in L1 and L2 should receive special attention. For example, the following collocations in Arabic such as يأخذ الدواء /yaxud aldawa/ and / yasgi a lnabat / يسقى النبات have direct correspondence in English, 'take medicine' and 'water the plant' respectively. Thus there is no need to concentrate on them. However, collocations such as/ yaa zor/ يزور , and / Amtar ɣazera/ امطار غزيرة which in English are 'pay a visit' and 'heavy rains' need to be specifically taught because they are subject to negative language transfer and cannot be translated directly.

Nesselhauf (2003) and other researchers who have detected learners' collocational deficiencies stemming from L1 stress that students should be aware of L1-L2 differences; otherwise, although they know appropriate collocations, they have a tendency to use L1 equivalents. Taiwo (2004) indicates that studies of collocation errors reveal that collocations

in the mother tongue are often translated directly into English. Mahmoud (2002) gives examples of some collocational expressions produced by Arab learners of English such as: 'gave me the *red* eye *(evil)*', 'from time to *another (time)*' and a cat has *seven* lives *(nine)*. Teachers in EFL settings should also direct their students' attention to collocations which are common and which have cultural differences, for instance, Easter egg, food stamps, etc.

In this regard, Grami (2012: 9) claims that a direct application of knowledge gained from L1 interference research in the classroom can be achieved by assigning special sessions for recurring interference errors at the right time of the course. Doing so should help students realise the problem whenever it occurs which, in turn, can help students avoid them.

In short, it can be concluded that the teaching of collocations is supported by researchers but it does not mean that all collocations deserve equal attention in language classrooms. While the problematic collocations (which cannot be paraphrased or which cannot be learnt in the expected way due to L1-L2 differences) need special attention, other collocations which can be directly translated from L1 or which can be paraphrased easily do not need a teaching priority or special classroom time.

2.1.13.1.3 Teaching Collocations through Context

It is valuable to mention that teaching collocations in isolation is a kind of teaching that is no better than teaching single words in isolation (Hill, 2000:47-70; Kavaliauskienё and Janulevieiene, 2001). In other words, unless students are taught in context-based classes, collocations will not make sense to learners and meaningful learning will probably not take place. Consequently, the best learning opportunities occur in the context of real language use. Hill (2000:47-70) and Thornbury (2002:121) emphasize the importance of teaching collocations through context as this will help students know how to use new vocabulary items according to their collocational fields and contexts. Hoey (2000) remarks that "learning items in context may be easier than learning them out of context". Here, it is the teacher who should direct the learners' attention towards the meaning of word combinations in context because it is not an easy task to guess the meaning.

The context in which a collocation is used is important. Certain collocations or expressions are appropriate for certain contexts. Generally, the importance of using context for implicit

vocabulary learning has been emphasized (Sökmen, 1997) because words have a habit of changing their meaning from one context to another (e.g., *the doctor <u>ordered</u> me to stay in bed / He called our names in alphabetical <u>order</u>)*.

It is useful to point out that teaching and learning collocations contextually should not be restricted only to course books. Teachers can utilize texts from newspapers or magazines as authentic materials and semi-authentic materials. These could be used to identify the appropriate ways of combining words. Teachers should also encourage learners' creativity through the use of various ways and resources to aid vocabulary learning (Meara, 1997:28-47). One of these ways has been suggested by Hill (2000:47-70) and Taiwo (2004) who insist that learners should be encouraged to be involved in listening as well as in extensive reading of a lot of literature written in English. This will not only expose them to a massive amount of vocabulary, but will also help them to discover, notice and acquire new collocations. Writing and speaking skills, on the other hand, give students the opportunity to practice collocations.

It is also worth mentioning that print dictionaries and software dictionaries are other effective resources for understanding that words usually exist in variable contexts, and not in isolation. The next section shed light on these resources and their role in teaching collocations to EFL learners.

2.1.13.2 Materials for Teaching Collocations

Nunan (1988: 98) emphasizes the importance of teaching materials as a crucial element in the curriculum which acts as a model for both the teacher and the learner. He claims that:

> "materials are, in fact, an essential element within the curriculum, and do more
> than simply lubricate the wheels of learning. At their best they provide concrete
> models of desirable classroom practice, they act as curriculum models, and at
> their very best they fulfil a teacher development role. Good materials also
> provide models for teachers to follow in developing their own materials."
> (Nunan, 1988: 98)

Mackin (1978) has claimed that foreign language students need to be exposed to teaching materials that present a careful selection of collocations geared to the specific difficulties of

learners with a particular L1. The researcher argues that specially-tailored teaching materials on collocations would allow teachers to teach phraseological units more effectively and help learners to use them more accurately and productively.

There are multiple sources to rely on in teaching collocations. These may include dictionaries, authentic materials (e.g., newspapers, magazines, internet, etc.), concordances, corpora, in addition to other published materials such as McCarthy and O'Dell's textbook *English Collocations in Use* (2005) which would be very helpful since it includes various collocations in different fields: travel, lifestyle, work, etc. The teacher could rely on it to teach written expressions by introducing some useful collocations that can be used in writing about various subjects.

2.1.13.2.1 Using Dictionaries

The most common source for collocations is dictionaries which can be considered as reliable sources that the learner can refer to whenever he/she finds difficulties concerning which words go with a specific word. According to Woodward (2002: 132-133), "dictionaries ... can be helpful in many ways. You can use them, for example to ... check the use of a word or phrase by studying the examples and noting collocation ... to find out about the register, connotation or association of a word or phrase..." For example, "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" (Fox, 1998:82). The entry for *fool* in the *Collins* COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (2003) provides the following information and examples:

"If you make a fool of someone, you make them seem silly by telling people about something stupid that they have done, or by tricking them. *Your brother is making a fool of you... He'd been made a fool of".* In addition, this particular dictionary entry also has examples of other expressions using *fool,* such as *more fool you, play the fool* and *act the fool,* providing a further learning opportunity for the more advanced learner.

One important aspect that needs more attention, in this regard, is how learners should make full use of a dictionary as a tool for the active production of the target language. Learners need to be trained in a systematic way of how to record the information they receive. If learners can be taught to use dictionaries effectively, they will be more able to independently

explore collocation and thus develop their collocational knowledge outside the classroom (Fox, 1998).

With the widespread recognition of the importance of collocations, modern general-purpose dictionaries pay more attention to collocations by including them as a part of their word entries. For example, the *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (OALD)*[8] and *the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations*[9] are based on extensive natural-occurring data and they are particularly good for the acquisition of the collocation properties of English lexical items. With adequate training, dictionaries can potentially provide a useful tool for the learning and teaching of collocations (Hunt, 1997; Farghal and Shannaq, 1999; Wei, 1999; Macedo, 2000; Taiwo, 2004; Shojaee, 2005).

In addition to normal dictionaries, software dictionaries are also possible aids for teachers to help students better understand collocations. For instance, there is the *COBUILD*[10] dictionary which is an essential electronic dictionary for all foreign language teachers and learners to utilize for the understanding of collocations. Such an electronic dictionary can provide excellent illustrated meanings by way of presenting actual, natural-occurring usages. Basically, the use of the *COBUILD* corpus available on CD-ROM is an efficient way for students and teachers to quickly find vocabulary. Such aids to learning should not be presented as immutable, but rather as a creative and dynamic hypothesis against which learners can test further data (Macedo, 2000).

2.1.13.2.2 Using Authentic Materials

It goes without saying that authentic and semi-authentic materials play an important role in teaching collocations, especially when teachers are working with textbooks that do not contain naturally-occurring language. Hoey (2000) emphasizes the use of authentic texts which present language in real contexts. According to Nunan (1988: 99), the essential feature

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[8] The *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* is based on the 100 million words in the British National Corpus and covers over 150,000 collocations for 9,000 headwords.

[9] The revised version(1997) contains 18.000 entries and 90.000 collocations

[10] The *Collins Cobuild's English Collocations* published on CD-ROM and based on 200 million words in the Bank of English, provides 140,000 collocations and 2,600,000 examples

of materials used in the classroom is authenticity. The term "authentic" is used by Nunan to describe materials that "reflect the outside world" and "have been produced for purposes other than to teach language". However, for Widdowson (1990) authenticity alone is insufficient if the material is not "meaningful" to the learner. Such material can be chosen by both the teacher and the learner.

As authentic materials bring the real world into the classroom and also provide context for learners, they are found to be very helpful in effective language teaching. They may include newspapers, magazines, letters, reports, advertisements, greeting cards, movies, songs, etc. The use of newspaper, for instance, can offer good opportunities, especially for advanced learners, to learn various collocations including those within the spheres of politics, economics, sociology, life /culture and so on. In other words, if teachers use newspapers for language teaching, they can teach collocations within specific topics as well as introduce current issues and culture.

2.1.13.2.3 Using the Concordance

It is worth mentioning that the use of concordancing materials as a basis for developing models and descriptions of language has been shown to be among the most crucial contributions of computer sciences to language pedagogy. Guelbuck (2009:149) claims that collocation extraction is a time-consuming task for a human and requires the expertise of a professional lexicographer. Therefore, recently, corpora in this field have been a focus of interest as a main source of data related to collocations. A corpus (plural: corpora) is a collection of language samples, either written (texts using extracts from newspapers, business letters, popular fiction, books, magazines, published or unpublished school essays, etc.) or spoken (texts involving any recorded and transcribed formal or informal conversations, radio and TV shows, weather broadcasts, business meetings, or even birthday parties, etc.), processed on a computer using one or more software tools for the purpose of analyzing the language itself for word use/usage and frequency and mainly for linguistic and dictionary use (Flowerdew, 1996).

Johns (1990) points out that a concordance can be utilized to find instances of authentic usage to demonstrate features of vocabulary, collocations, grammar points or even the structure of a text, to generate exercises based on examples drawn from a variety of corpora. In other words, it selects some examples of a given word or phrase used in contexts extracted from a

corpus, thus it gives different kinds of information about the language; i.e., meaning, functions, syntactic and cultural information, idioms and collocations (Mishan, 2004; Gavioli, 2001). Hoey (2000) also emphasizes the use of concordances to study the same collocations in different texts and to find keywords in a text and learn how they combine with other words in context.

According to Woolard (2000), concordances provide much richer sources of co-textual information than dictionaries and they are good sources for exploring the collocates of a word. The role of the teacher is to show students how to use these concordances in order to uncover language usage and to correct their mistakes in their written works.

Furthermore, by using concordance software, language learning may be more learner-centred; learners can be motivated to discover new meanings and to examine lexical and grammatical collocations. Johns refers to learners studying concordance lists as "language detectives" (1997: 101) whose task is to discover the rules of the language they are focusing on by finding, identifying and inferring these linguistic implications from context. In other words, concordances are a huge source of information concerning collocations as they can be used with any textual source. Therefore, it opens language classes to the use and integration of up-to-date and often authentic language even at lower levels.

One of the most valuable concordances is the *Collins COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM* which is considered of great help in drawing students' attention to collocations. It is worth quoting Hirvila's (1997: 418) statement about it:

> "There are several reasons to appreciate this package. Most important is its
> exclusive focus on collocations, which is valuable in two major regards. One is
> that it allows users to concentrate solely on the desired word associations,
> without the distractions or confusion potentially caused by the presence of other
> information (as in the case of a dictionary)"

Relying on these sources, or any other material that can be developed by the teacher, will help, in one way or another, in enhancing students' knowledge of collocations and should make their English more natural. Wilkins (1976: 77) states that "the success of our teaching should be judged by whether or not our pupils are able to communicate meanings

appropriately. To ensure that this is so, we need to introduce new forms of language learning materials".

As a general comment about materials, researchers, generally think that a combination of available materials and teacher-developed ones would be helpful to the learners in the field of collocation learning. It would also be beneficial if the learners participate in the choice of the materials.

2.1.13.3 Techniques and Activities for Teaching Collocations

A lot of efforts in applied linguistics are being concentrated on the area of teaching collocation in order to find helpful techniques and activities for teaching collocations to EFL learners. The following techniques and activities are divided into two sections: the first relates to raising collocation awareness, and the second is relates to collocation practice.

2.1.13.3.1 Techniques and Activities for Raising Collocation Awareness

Recording and organizing collocations are considered as important techniques that might reinforce the 'noticing' strategy in teaching and learning collocations. In other words, to insure that output becomes intake, learners need to be encouraged to keep an organized vocabulary notebook to record and store collocations. McCarthy et al. (2010: 38) claimed that 'probably the most important aspect of learning collocations is recording them in a vocabulary notebook as, otherwise, they will be difficult to remember'. Woolard (2000: 43) also emphasizes the importance of a recording technique: "it is important to record what is noticed ... a single encounter with a word is not enough to ensure its acquisition". Recording and organizing collocations in notebooks helps students consolidate what they have noticed as they are able to go through all the collocations dealt with so that they can memorize them easily and recall them when needed.

Learners can organize their notebook in different ways: grammatically, by common key words, by topics, etc. Learners can also record certain collocations under headings such as *have, take, do* or *make*. According to Lewis (1993), "language should be recorded together which characteristically occurs together". In this context, collocations can be easily acquired as wholes and stored as units to be easily retrievable and highly accessible without the need

for analysis by the rules of syntax (Porto, 1998). This means that students should be told to record collocations not in a linear, alphabetical order but in a variety of ways: collocation tables, journals, mind maps, word trees, boxes, grids, scales, matrices and word maps. Learners can add new words in appropriate sections as they come across them in texts, lessons, etc. (Hill, 2000:47-70; Williams, 2000).

As indicated by McCarthy et al. (2010:37), the use of bubble-diagrams are also a good visual way of recording collocations, especially for learners who prefer a more visual approach to learning things. This activity makes students aware of the different combinations that a particular word can form. In this activity, students can start by filling empty bubbles, find more collocations by using dictionaries and add more bubbles, and so on. One example can be the words that go with the verb *catch*.
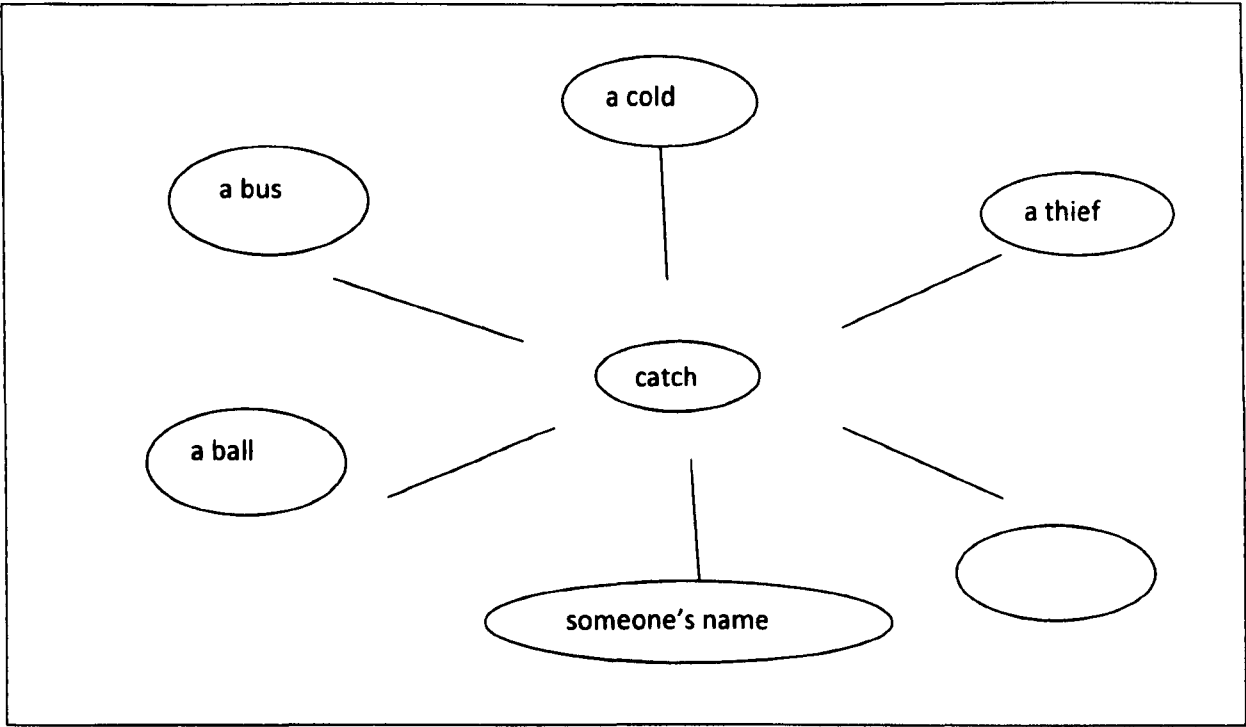
Figure 2.3: Diagram showing word association/vocabulary network

Thornbury (2002:118-121) also gives some ideas for teaching collocations. For example, he advises preparing 'collocation maps' of high-frequency verbs (such as *have, take, give, make, get*) and using collocational grids or odd-one-out tasks. He gives detailed examples for

sorting and organizing collocations. He states that learners can sort words on cards into their collocational pairs (e.g. *warm welcome, slim chance, golden opportunity, lucky break, mixed reception*, etc). Learners can sort them as binomial pairs such as *hot and cold, to and fro, out and about, sick and tired*. Or they can group them according to whether they collocate with particular headwords such as *trip (business, day, round, return, boat), holiday (summer, family, public, one month's, working)* and *weekend (long, every, last, next, a holiday)*. The teacher can follow up the students' work by asking them to write sentences using these combinations. Channell (1980:120) also recommends the use of sentences or collocational grids, as shown below, in order to expose learners to variety of collocations which they will encounter while learning.

	woman	man	child	dog	bird	flower	weather	landscape	view	house	furniture	bed	picture	dress	present	voice
handsome		+									+				+	
pretty	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+		
charming	+		+								+				+	+
lovely	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Figure2.4: Collocational grid from Channel(1981:120)

For example, grids can be used to demonstrate acceptable adjective + noun collocations, such as *qualified physiotherapist*, as well as unacceptable ones (ibid). However, Nesselhauf believes that grids are limited in their effectiveness as they only provide information on the form, not the usage of collocations. She argues that knowledge of all aspects of usage (for example, semantic prosody, pragmatics and stylistics) can only be learned in typical contexts (Nesselhauf, 2005: 269). Therefore, it is important to remember the limitations of grids and to use them appropriately in conjunction with other learning activities.

Preparation activities, such as brainstorming, are other activities that can be used to let students recall collocations containing a particular word. Thornbury (2002:118-121) points out that collocation brainstorming is a good technique in preparation for writing or speaking activities. Firstly, learners can spend some time searching databases for useful collocations. Next, students can be asked to brainstorm any nouns and verbs they are likely to need and

then to check for common collocates using a concordance programme or simply any good learners' dictionary, for example:

Make: *a decision, an effort, an improvement, progress, arrangements for, a change*

Peace: *bring about peace, negotiate a peace agreement, sign a peace treaty*

(McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005: 18, 80).

Textual analysis is another great technique that can be used to heighten learners' awareness of collocations. In this case, the use of concordances seems to be beneficial as students should be exposed to a wide variety of authentic and semi-authentic materials. The materials include either written or spoken texts taken from newspapers, magazines and literary genres which tend to throw up different varieties of text. Drawing students' attention to collocation expressions within these texts and helping them to record them effectively is important for raising their collocation awareness (Shojaee, 2005).

According to Willis (1998), concordances help students to speak and write fluently, especially at the present time when most students will have access to electronic databases. He believes that using concordances could be useful for raising awareness of delexical verb + noun collocations (*get my tea*) and phrasal verbs (*put the light on*).

In this context, students are asked to read a text and underline the chunks they can find in the text. It is helpful to give them different kinds of chunks to look for (noun + noun, adjective + noun, or verb + noun collocations) because more complex chunks could confuse them (Williams, 2000). After they see certain collocations in a text, learners can be asked to find pairs of collocations arranged randomly. According to McCarthy and O'Dell (2005: 69), a possible matching activity could be:

1. shape	a. an argument
2. come under	b. a contribution
3. play	c. attack
4. make	d. a part
5. set out	e. people's thinking

In order to highlight the central importance of collocations against individual words students may be asked to reconstruct the content of a text from only a few words.

2.1.13.3.2 Activities for Collocations Practice

In order to help learners to practice and consolidate collocations, McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) and Taiwo (2004) suggest miscellaneous activities and exercises to achieve this purpose:

* Learners of different levels can be given gapped texts to fill in with the correct collocation. The text could be topic based. For instance:

*When **war broke out**, my grandfather **joined the army**. **War was declared** on his 25th birthday. He didn't want to **go to war** but he had no choice* (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005:80).

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* Learners can be given a text or some sentences that include collocational errors and asked to correct them using collocation dictionaries. For instance:

-The police fought a walking battle with a group of violent demonstrators. (Correct: a running battle)

- The students made up a heroic fight against the plan. (Correct: put up a heroic fight)

(McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005: 63)

*Intermediate and higher-level students can try to find synonyms which can collocate with certain words. For example, students can be asked to find a synonym for *wrong*, which is *false*; it collocates with *a false tooth*, or *false eyelashes*.

*Students can be given several word combinations that collocate with certain verbs, but include an odd collocation. Students must identify which words do not collocate with the verb, as in the following example: *miss: a chance, the point, the school, the train, an opportunity, the boat.* Also, Shojaee (2005) adds that sometimes it is meaningful if miscollocations can be drawn from students' own work without attributing them to particular students.

Dictionary collocation activities are also effective in practicing collocations. Students can use collocation dictionaries to find better ways of expressing ideas with better and stronger words to create typical collocations. In this regard, Williams (2000) suggests some dictionary-based activities for developing collocation competence and practice:

- Students can be asked to add the word that does not collocate with the bold word. For example:

Can you find the verb which does not collocate with the noun in bold?

acquire, brush up, enrich, learn, pick up, tell, use **language**

assess, cause, mend, repair, suffer, sustain, take **damage**

derive, enhance, find, give, pursue, reach, savour **pleasure**

- Students can be given a number of words which collocate with the same core word. The students have to guess this word before looking it up the dictionary.

-Which collocates with all the words given?

Civil, cold, conventional, nuclear, full-scale ____ *(answer:* **war***)*

Dangerous, desperate, common, born, hardened, master ____ *(answer:* **criminal***)*

Additionally, McCarthy and O'Dell (2005: 39, 69, 81 and 95) offer a wealth of dictionary-based activities. The following are some examples:

-Look in your dictionary. Can you find any other collocations?

.. Where *temper* relates to behaviour? (Answer: to have a bad/a sweet temper, to control your temper)

.. Where *sense of* relates to an aspect of character? (Answer: sense of fun, sense of honour)

-Use your dictionary to find two collocations for each of these words:

army soldier battle weapon to fight peace

2.1.14 Conclusion

To conclude, in order to help students use collocations effectively and appropriately and in order to minimize their collocation errors, teachers must raise students' awareness of collocations as early as possible. Teachers must also provide their learners with practical activities in order to help them notice collocation patterns in language and so become more autonomous learners. Morley (2006) remarks that it is important to be aware that collocation competence development may take a considerable time; a teacher and students will not see instant results. However, in the long term, constant practice cannot only increase students' vocabulary and the degree of accuracy with which they use it, but it can also develop their abilities to notice collocation patterns in language and so become more autonomous learners. According to Schmidt (1990), "what language learners become conscious of ... what they pay attention to, what they notice ... influences and in some ways determines the outcome of their learning". Certainly, linguists' contributions are not solely confined to describe collocations' pedagogy, but they are also extended to investigate English learners' collocational proficiency and their errors through conducting extensive studies.

Section II: Empirical Research on Collocation

2.2.1 Introduction

After a long time of neglect, the area of collocations has recently attracted the growing attention of many researchers for its prime importance and fundamental role in EFL instruction (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1997; Farghl and Obiedat, 1995; Wei, 1999; Taiwo, 2001; Zughoul and Fattah, 2003 and Mahmoud, 2005). To obtain a holistic picture of the related research on collocation from the perspective of L2 acquisition, this chapter briefly reviews the main empirical research on collocation to date. It has been divided into two parts, the first part reviews previous studies related to overall collocational competence of English language learners in the field of ESL/EFL, in terms of measuring learners' receptive and productive knowledge, the influence of L1 and other factors on the performance of L2 learners' knowledge of collocation, and also in terms of the strategies used by L2 learners in producing lexical collocations. The second part of this section reviews the empirical studies relating to collocational studies involving Arab learners of English.

2.2.2 Collocational studies in the field of ESL/EFL: an overview

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, collocational competence is often recognized as an important component of vocabulary acquisition (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Woolard, 2000) which might contribute to a better understanding of specific difficulties faced by learners from different mother tongues. Consequently, during the past two decades, many studies have been conducted on collocations, exploring EFL learners' knowledge of collocations, analysing L2 learners' collocational errors, examining the correlation between collocations and general language skills, and assessing direct collocation instructions (Martin, 1977; Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Shei and Pain, 2000; Altenberg and Granger, 2001; Koya, 2005). Many of these studies have reported insufficient collocational knowledge among EFL learners and confirmed that collocations create a challenge to language learners in EFL settings.

In general, research on L2 collocations may broadly be divided into main categories in terms of the techniques they employed to achieve the aims of their studies (Nesselhauf, 2005). Some of them used elicitation techniques ranging from translation tests (e.g., Martin,1977; Biskup,1990; Bahns and Eldaw,1993) to cloze tests (Herbst,1996; Shei,1999; Al-

Zahrani,1998), multiple-choice (Fayez-Hussein,1990; Arnaud and Savignon,1997), blank-filling (Aghbar,1990; Aghbar and Tang,1991) and grid (Channell,1981).Normally in blank-filling, subjects are given part of a collocation and are required to supply the rest so that the combination makes an acceptable collocation in the target language. In the translation task, subjects are generally asked to translate collocations of their native language into the target language. Both the tasks provide contexts on the sentence level. By examining whether the learners'elicited production of collocations are acceptable and valid, researchers come to conclusions as to whether learners have acquired the target collocations or not.

The other category included studies which employed L2 learners' own writing to achieve their purposes (e.g., Chi et al., 1994; Lombard, 1997) and those who compared the performance of L2 learners to that of native speakers (e.g., Fan, 1991; Granger, 1998; Lorenz, 1999; Howarth, 1998; Kaszubski, 2000; Zhang, 1993)and the resultant International Corpus of Learners' English (ICLE) was used in a number of these contrastive studies (e.g. Altenberg and Granger, 2001).

This section is divided into two parts: empirical studies of collocations of EFL/ESL learners and empirical studies of collocations with EFL Arabic learners, in particular.

2.2.2.1 Part 1: Collocation research on EFL/ESL learners in terms of measuring learners' knowledge of collocations

Among the earliest researchers, Martin (1977) conducted a study to investigate Polish learners' knowledge of collocations and their abilities to use them. To this end, Martin used pre-treatment and post-treatment translation tests, and also two comprehension tests that included the same collocations used in the translation tests. However, the results showed no significant differences in the participants' scores on the two translation tests, which confirmed the learners' poor productive knowledge of collocations. Therefore, Martin concluded that limited exposure to collocations would not improve learners' productive knowledge of those structures.

In her study, Channell (1981) tested a group of eight advanced students of English in collocating words. The students were asked to fill in collocational grids which had adjectives as its vertical axis (e.g. *handsome, pretty, charming* and *lovely*) and nouns as its horizontal

axis (e.g. *woman, voice, view* and *dress*). The result showed that learners failed to mark a large number of acceptable combinations between nodes and collocates although they were individually familiar with these words in the study. Channell believed that only knowing the meaning of words is not enough. Therefore, she mentioned, as a pedagogical implication, that words should be presented with high-frequency collocates when they were first encountered by learners.

In their study on the acquisition of collocations by advanced learners, Dechert and Lennon (1989, as cited in Shokouhi, 2010) analyzed errors in essays written by two university students who had studied English for at least ten years with extensive contact with native speakers. The study reported that the participants' collocational knowledge was low as they could not produce the language that conformed to native speaker criteria (p. 103).The researchers maintain that the errors made by the participants are not grammatical, but lexical ones. They concluded that collocation is a neglected area of research and language acquisition that deserves careful consideration.

The findings of Aghbar's study (1990) were similar to the findings of Channell's study. Aghbar (1990) tested verb-noun collocations to assess ESL and native speakers' knowledge of collocations. The participants in this were 27 faculty members teaching college level English courses, 44 native undergraduate and 97 advanced ESL students at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. His test included 50 items, and in each of these items, the verb was missing. Participants were required to provide the verb most likely to be used in a formal written context. Aghbar's results showed that ESL students did well where 'get' was the desirable word. However, they used 'get' even when other more specific and more appropriate verbs were needed. For example, *'This is an opportunity for you to _____ knowledge in your field of study'* could be filled with *get* but also with other more appropriate verbs such as *acquire, accumulate, gain, demonstrate, display,* etc. Aghbar convincingly argues that the ESL students' poor performance is not due to a lack of vocabulary acquisition, but simply because the required verbs are simple, high frequency words such as *achieve, find,* and *win.* He attributes the reason for the poor ESL performance in the test to the "lack of acquisition of those language chunks that make discourse fluent and idiomatic" (Aghbar 1990:6).

In an experiment carried out by Bahns and Eldaw (1993), 58 German EFL university students' productive knowledge of English collocations was examined by employing a cloze

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test and a translation test. 24 of the students took a cloze test and 34 students completed a German-English translation task. The translation task consisted of 15 sentences, each including a collocation in context that had been translated into German. The cloze test, on the other hand, included 10 sentences, each of which contained a verb-noun collocation with the verb missing. The collocations used in their study were selected from variety of sources including collocational dictionaries and a bilingual dictionary. Examples were: *keep a diary*, *admit defeat*, and *achieve perfection*. The results of the study revealed that learners' capacity for collocations does not expand in parallel with their knowledge of general vocabulary. Bahns and Eldaw suggest that the results of their study are due to the fact that collocations are not taught explicitly in the classroom and, therefore, learners do not pay any attention to learning them (Bahns and Eldaw,1993: 109).

The results of Cowie and Howarth's (1995) study which compared four essays of one native speaker with one non-native university student also indicated that a gap between the collocational knowledge of the two participants and the lack of collocational knowledge of the non-native was obvious.

Howarth (1998, as cited in Siyanova and Schmitt, 2008) also conducted a study to examine verb-object collocations extracted from academic writing by native and non-native writers. Howarth found deviation from standard collocational forms in both native and non-native writing; a much greater proportion of non-idiomatic language, however, was discovered in non-native essays. He reported that native speakers produced 38% of the verb-object collocations while, in the non-native writing, the percentage was 25%. Howarth's findings also revealed that there is not a strong relationship between the use of collocation and general L2 proficiency. On the basis of the findings of this study, Howarth suggested that the use of collocation might depend more on an individual's stylistic choice rather than on her/his general L2 proficiency. Bonk (2001) agreed with Howarth's suggestion regarding the development of collocation and L2 proficiency based on the results of collocation and general English proficiency tests administered to 98 adult learners of English. Bonk observed that there was a lack of correlation between general English proficiency and collocation competence.

In his study, Herbst (1996) conducted a translation test, a cloze-test and a completion test, which consisted of 100 test items, to 100 students of English at two German universities and to 58 English students at four English universities and compared the results of the two groups. The result clearly revealed that a particular collocation was more used by native speakers of English than by German speakers of English. Strong supporting evidence of his argument came particularly from the completion test. This research showed that the German students' collocational knowledge was obviously deficient, compared with that of English native speakers.

Furthermore, Wang (2001) arrived at conclusions similar to those of Howarth (1998). She conducted a study on the competence of English lexical collocations of English majors in Taiwan. Students with four academic levels at Fu-Jen University in Taiwan were tested on lexical collocation production. The result of her study showed that "the English department students' lexical collocations do not exhibit a series of developmental stages" (p. ii). In other words, the English training that the English majors received had no significant effect on their collocations. That is, lexical collocations were not acquired alongside the students' academic level.

Bonci's research (2002) is a study that investigated the collocational knowledge of advanced Italian learners. The participants were 127 non-native speakers who were divided into three different levels of proficiency in Italian corresponding to their proficiency level at the end of their first, second and final year of study at university. They were all majoring in Italian in an English University College. There was also a control group consisting of 26 Italian native speakers studying interpretation and translation at the University of Bologna. Three tests were designed to measure the subjects' collocational knowledge. The first test was a cloze gap filling which consisted of 10 sentences in Italian, containing overall 17 gaps (or missing words). This test aimed at measuring the knowledge of a set of specific collocations of different structural types, degrees of frozenness and frequency of occurrence. The second test was a translation test which aimed at investigating the production of a specific set of collocations. The third was an essay writing task which aimed at exploring the free production of collocations as well as providing evidence of language proficiency. Results indicated that collocations are a problematic aspect of vocabulary acquisition for advanced learners of Italian as a second language.

Similar results were also found by some other researchers in other different EFL contexts, for instance, in the experimental study performed by Martyńska (2004) which aimed at examining the English collocational competence of 35 intermediate Polish high school students by using four tasks: matching, a completion task, circling the correct option, and identifying and correcting errors in underlined parts of sentences. Results showed that, overall, the students performed poorly on all tasks. She found that, on average, students achieved 55% of the correct answers, a result that was independent of the amount of time they had been studying the language. In other words, there was no relationship between learners' length of time of learning English and their collocational competence, since some of students who had studied English for shorter periods of time performed better on the English tests than those who has studied English for longer time, which proves that proficiency in second language learning is determined by a number of various factors. Additionally, some students got higher scores on the multiple-choice tasks but lower scores on the completion tasks, which indicated a lack of consistency in their production of collocations, which is apparently lower than their receptive skills. Based on her findings, Martynska asserts that language teachers should pay more attention to collocations when teaching the English language.

Similarly to the aims of the previous studies, Gyllstad's (2005) study intended to measure English language learners' recognition of English collocations. In this study, two test formats based on verb and noun phrase collocations were constructed. The pilot and initial test administrations involve Swedish upper-secondary school and university level learners. Administrations of the test formats produced highly reliable scores and the performance of native speakers provided evidence of test validity. In terms of results, differences were observed between the different learner groups taking the two test formats. These differences were, however, not always statistically significant. The more advanced the level the learners were studying at, the better they performed on the tests. The most advanced Swedish university learners performed very close to the native speakers' scores on the tests. This suggests that the former, in terms of receptive recognition knowledge of verb and noun phrase collocations, have developed near-native speaker skills. The researcher found that a measure of vocabulary size correlated highly with scores on both tests, which showed that learners with a large vocabulary have a better receptive command of verb and noun phrase collocations than learners with smaller vocabularies.

Another study conducted by Koya (2005) attempted to identify the basic collocations to be taught to Japanese learners. For this purpose, two kinds of analysis were conducted: a corpus-based analysis to identify basic collocations and an empirical analysis to investigate the development of collocations in Japanese learners, who were reported in the study, to lack basic collocational knowledge. The study reported the following findings: (1) a significant positive relationship between learners' general knowledge of vocabulary and their knowledge of collocations, (2) the depth of the participants' receptive knowledge of collocations when compared to their productive knowledge, and (3) learners' difficulty with some collocation categories, such as adjective-noun collocations, compared to others. Based on the findings of this study, textbook writers were recommended to present basic collocations in the English textbook taking into account the appropriate order of presentation in terms of importance and difficulty in order to help learners develop their collocational knowledge.

In their cross-sectional study, Zhang and Chen (2006) attempted to investigate the receptive and productive knowledge of adjective-noun collocations of three groups of EFL learners in China. The subjects of this study were from three different levels: Grade 3 high school students, sophomores majoring in English, and graduate students majoring in applied linguistics. The three groups took two types of tests including the receptive collocation test which comprised 66 collocations and a translation test which included 48 collocations. In the first test, subjects were required to give judgments on the 66 collocations, and in the second test, they were asked to translate 48 collocations into English. The findings revealed that learners' acquisition of collocation expands with each year of learning. However, even the high level learners, generally, did not have a good command of English adjective-noun collocations. The results also showed that there was a gap existing between, and within, different groups of subjects in terms of their receptive and productive knowledge of collocation .

The final study under review for measuring learners' competence of English collocations is that of Ganji (2011). This study investigates the Iranian EFL learners' Knowledge of Lexical Collocation at three academic levels: freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. The participants were forty three English majors doing their B.A. in English Translation studies in Chabahar Maritime University. They took a 50-item fill-in-the-blank test of lexical collocations. The test included five types of collocations: *verb-noun, adjective-noun, noun-verb, adverb-adjective, and verb-adverb*. Descriptive statistics, t-test, and One-way ANOVA were

employed in the data analysis. According to the results, Iranian English majors are weak in lexical collocations, answering just more than 50% of the questions. A significant difference was found among the performance of the students at three academic levels, but there was no significant difference between boys and girls in their knowledge of lexical collocations. While noun-verb collocation was revealed to be the easiest type of collocation, adverb-adjective collocation proved to be the most difficult type. These findings have immediate implications for language learners, EFL teachers, and material designers.

2.2.2.2 Collocation research mainly in terms of the influence of L1 and other factors on the performance of L2 learners' knowledge of collocation

A number of recent empirical studies (Kellerman, 1979; Farghal and Obidedat, 1995; Fayez-Hussein, 1990; Gitsaki, 1999; Elyildirm, 1998; Allan, 2001; Dechert and Lennon, 1989; Lennon, 1996 and Blum and Levenston, 1978 cited in Koya, 2005) have attributed L2 learners' insufficient collocational knowledge to various factors including semantic fields, meaning boundaries and collocational restrictions. According to Allan (2001), the semantic fields of a lexicon are determined by its conceptual field such as colour, kinship and marital relations.

Transfer (L1 interference) is one of the common factors which cause problems in second language acquisition. Kellerman (1979, cited in Koya, 2005) believes that learners could make use of their native language in their target language production. To prove L1 influence on learners' target language production, Kellerman (1979) investigated the 'transferability' of the different meanings of the Dutch verb *breken* into its English cognate *break*. He showed that while Dutch learners of English accepted the structures that were least 'marked' in their mother tongue (*'he broke his leg'*, *'the cup broke'*), they tended to reject what they perceived as 'language-specific' items (*'his voice broke when he was thirteen'*, *'some workers broke the strike'*). 'Marked' in this context means "semantically odd, or syntactically less producible or less frequent when compared with 'normal' forms" (Kellerman 1979:46). Thus, Kellerman strongly argues that transfer from the native language plays a big role in the process of acquisition of the target language.

Biskup (1992) investigated the difficulty L2 learners have with lexical collocations in general and verb-noun collocations in particular. The results of her study revealed a strong L1

influence on the production of collocations by the two groups; for instance, a number of subjects provided to *state a record* for the target collocation *to set a record* and *to lead a bookshop* for the target collocation to *run a bookshop.*

In her study, Biskup conducted a comparative study of 34 Polish and 28 German students of English in an attempt to examine the role of L1 interference in comprehension and production of lexical collocations and the role of the distance between students'L1 and English. The findings showed that Polish students produced more restricted collocations than the German group. German students, on the other hand, were found to use strategies such as definition and paraphrasing. For example, they used *make the clock working* for *winding a watch, a trade within the country* for *domestic trade.* Comparing the two language groups, Biskup writes 'Polish students, perceived the distance between these two languages, and their errors reflect assumed semantic similarities instead. The German students, on the other hand, tend to produce errors resulting from assumed similarity' (Biskup, 1992: 91). According to Biskup, the Germans' errors were the result of negative L1 transfer. On the other hand, the Polish students' errors were either loan translations or extensions of L2 meaning on the basis of the L1 word. Biskup concluded that the wider the semantic field of a given lexical item, the more L1 interference errors it might trigger. By the same token, the more synonyms an item has, the more difficulties learners encountered in producing restricted collocations. The researcher attributed this to the influence of the respective educational systems. It was claimed that the Polish system emphasizes accuracy and the German system emphasizes fluency.

A similar view is reported by Caroli (1998) who investigated the influence of L1 (Italian) on learners' collocational knowledge and the relationship between learners' general vocabulary knowledge and their knowledge of 40 collocations in terms of the role of L1 transfer in producing English collocations by EFL learners. The participants of this study were 73 Italian high school students who took three tests: Nation's vocabulary test, a receptive test and a productive test, which included 30 English collocations, half of them (15) had the literal Italian equivalents and the other 15 did not have literal Italian equivalents. Like previous studies, Caroli reported that participants resorted to their L1 (Italian) in selecting the English word that collocated whenever they lacked collocational knowledge in the L2, English. It was also noticed that collocations with the Italian literal equivalents were easier than those collocations with no Italian equivalents. Like Bahns and Eldaw's (1993) study, Caroli found

that there was no significant relationship between Italian learners' general vocabulary knowledge and their collocational knowledge. Therefore, the researcher recommended that teachers should present the new words with their frequent collocates to improve learners' collocational knowledge.

Granger (1998) reported similar results in terms of the important role that learners' L1 plays in the use and acquisition of collocations, but she argues that the learners' L1 may affect learning collocations either positively or negatively. Her research aimed to study the differences between native speakers of English and French learners of English in producing English collocations, in particular adjective amplifiers, such as *totally* and *highly*. She found evidence of successful collocational transfer from L1. For example, French learners of English produced *severely punished*, which corresponds to French: *sévèrement puni*. She attributed that finding to L1 positive transfer that facilitated the learners' acquisition of similar amplifiers to their L1. Granger's finding were congruent with Irujo (1986) who also found evidence of positive transfer in learning idiomatic expressions by German learners of English, and claimed that it is unnecessary to teach idiomatic expressions if literal translation equivalents exist in the learners' native language.

Simiarly, Eker (2001) investigated the development of second language learners' collocational competence according to time, collocation type, native language influence and transparency of collocations. It was found that Turkish learners produced more collocations which had direct translation equivalents in their native language than those which did not have a direct translation equivalent and transparent collocations are significantly higher than non-transparent collocations.

Huang (2001) designed a study with 60 EFL students from a college in Taiwan and investigated their knowledge of English collocations and the collocational errors they made. He used a self-designed Simple Completion Test to measure students' knowledge of four types of lexical collocations: free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative idioms and pure idioms. The results indicated that free combinations caused the least amount of difficulty, whereas pure idioms were the most challenging. Huang concluded that most subjects'collocational errors could be attributed to negative transfer from their first language (such as *a black horse* for *a dark horse*, *red tea* for *black tea*, *eat a bite* for *take a bite*) and others could be attributed to the learners' tendency to use high-frequency words to substitute

for the lexical items and a lack of cultural awareness. Similarly, Liu (2002) searched verb-noun miscollocations of Taiwanese senior high school students and college students by collecting essays of these learners in the English Taiwan Learner Corpus. Liu concluded that learners' miscollocations are not arbitrary, especially the verb noun miscollocations; learners' lexical choices were influenced by their first language, thus instructors should spend more effort on the emphasis of collocational knowledge in vocabulary teaching.

Other studies have also explored the nature of learner collocation problems and confirmed what has been concluded in previous studies (Nesselhauf, 2003; Miyakoshi, 2009).

Nesselhauf (2003) reported on an exploratory study that analysed the use of verb-noun collocations such as *take a break* or *shake one's head* used by advanced German-speaking learners of English in free written production. In her research, she distinguishes between three major classes of collocations: free combinations, such as *want a car* (both the verb and the noun are used in an unrestricted sense; words can be freely combined); collocations, such as *take a picture*, and idioms, for example, *sweeten the pill* (both the verb and the noun are used in a restricted sense; substitution is not possible, or is very limited. In order to determine whether the combination written by the students is a free combination, a restricted combination or an idiom, Nesselhauf consulted many sources including several native speakers of English, dictionaries such as the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (*OALD*, 2000) and the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (*CCED*, 1995) and the British National Corpus (BNC). Her study yielded two results, one of which is similar to the results found by Bahns (1993) and Biskup (1992), that is, that the L1 influence on the production of collocations is rather high. The other result showed that learners made the greatest proportion of errors with collocations (79%), followed by free combinations (23%) and idioms (23%). However, Nesselhauf also found the highest rate of errors (33%) in collocations with a medium degree of restriction (e.g., *exert influence)*, where a number of other nouns such as control, pressure, and power are also possible) and a much lower rate (18%) in collocations with 'a lot of restriction' *(e.g., fail an exam/test)*, where fewer nouns are possible). Therefore, Nesselhauf suggests asserting that the focus should be on the verb in the teaching of verb-noun collocations, since it is the verb that causes the greatest difficulties.

In addition, Fan (2008), in an examination of Hong Kong ESL learners' collocation production in writing, also discovered an adverse effect that L1 Chinese had on the participants' use of English collocations. In particular, the study found non-standard L2 collocations that seem to result from word-for-word translation from Chinese, such as *left/right face* or *left side face*, which are not present in native speakers' corpora (Fan, 2008:118).

A more recent study which was conducted by Miyakoshi (2009) confirmed the influence of learners' L1 on their English collocational knowledge. In her study, Miyakoshi examined ESL learners' use of verb-noun collocations, such as *take notes, place an order* and *make a discovery*, and the effects of instructions which are used to direct learners' attention to input and to the restrictions of combinations. 60 Japanese students (30 intermediate, 30 advanced) were recruited in this study and introduced to a fill-in-the blank test followed by one session of instructions which involved a brief introduction to collocations and a discussion of common mistakes with collocations and differences in the collocational restrictions between English and Japanese. The findings revealed that the Japanese learners committed eleven types of errors. Among these error types, it was found that interference by native language paraphrases and the misuse of light verbs[11] are the strongest indicators of the difficulties of collocations for learners. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher asserts the effectiveness of improving second language learners' collocational knowledge in order to enhance their proficiency in the target language, and shows that explicit instruction on drawing learners' selective attention to input indeed improves their collocational competence in the target language (Miyakoshi, 2009: vii).

Another study that is in line with the aforementioned ones regarding L1 transfer is a study by Ying (2009). In a study of English collocations produced by Chinese speakers, i.e. English majors and non-English majors, Ying found that collocations which have no translation equivalents in L1 are considered difficult, in comparison to those which are congruent with L1. Basically, the learners probably searched for L1 equivalents with no awareness of L1-L2

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[11] Verbs with no meaning of their own that serve merely to convert another word in a sentence into a verb form. English verbs that serve as light verbs include *do, make, have, give, receive,* and *take.* Jesperson (1965) first coined the term *light verb* to refer to verbs which, though they may have a fuller semantic usage in other contexts, can be used in combination with some other element, typically a noun or verb, where their contribution to the meaning of the whole construction is reduced in some way. For example:

a we *had* a walk = we walked

b they *did* a dance = they danced

incongruity and then produced L2 deviant combinations, which accords with the research of Nesselhauf (2003). Moreover, for both groups of learners, errors in lexical collocations clearly outnumbered those committed in grammatical collocations.

Many other researchers (e.g,Gitsaki, 1999; Elyildirm, 1997; Lennon, 1996; Blum and Levenston, 1978) attribute L2 learners' insufficient collocational knowledge to various factors. Gitsaki's study (1999), one of the few which focuses on the development of collocational knowledge, confirms the influence of L1 on the production of English collocations. Gitsaki'sstudy is the first to closely examine English collocational knowledge from a developmental prospective. The subjects were 275 Greek learners of ESL at three proficiency levels: post-beginners, intermediate and post-intermediate. She used three tests to measure students' knowledge of collocations: essay writing, a translation test and a blank-filling test. The writing test was used to measure the free production of collocations, whereas the translation test, which included 10 sentences in Greek, measured the cued production of collocations. The blank-filling tests were designed to measure the cued production of collocations.

Gitsaki's study yielded a number of interesting findings in relation to free production and the cued production of both types of collocations among the three groups of students. The findings show that collocational knowledge increased steadily as the level of proficiency increased, which contradicts the studies of both Bahns and Eldaw (1993) and Caroli (1998), but confirms the results of Al-Zahrani (1998), Bonk (2001) and Koya (2005). Gitsaki also argued that grammatical collocations are easier to acquire than lexical collocations and she considered some factors that affect the acquisition of English lexical collocations such as maturation, language proficiency, instruction, saliency, L1-L2 differences, complexity, the arbitrariness of collocations, predictability and idiomaticity. She explained these factors as follows:

> Collocational knowledge develops as overall language proficiency develops, as
> students become more mature, and as more exposure to collocations takes place.
> The development of collocational knowledge is also influenced by the 'salience'
> of the particular collocation types. Grammatical collocations that are simple and
> frequent in everyday speech are acquired early. The more complex structures
> are acquired later. Lexical collocations are more difficult to acquire than the
> simple grammatical collocations. They are syntactically simple, but their
> acquisition is affected by other factors of 'semantic complexity', e.g.

arbitrariness, predictability and idiomaticity , i.e. the more fixed and idiomatic they are, the more difficult they are to acquire (Gitsaki, 1999: 146).

Based on these results, Gitsaki stressed the significance of the acquisition of collocations and suggested two pedagogical implications that might help curriculum designers and teachers facilitate the gradual development of collocational knowledge. A knowledge of order of acquisition of collocations can help syllabus designers and teachers present collocations to facilitate learners' step-by-step development of collocational knowledge. The other is that teachers can easily access many teaching materials for learners' different English proficiency and provide them with more information on collocations.

Elyildirm (1997) conducted a study to examine the comprehension and production of target collocations of L1 Turkish learners of English. Three types of tests were used in order to achieve the purpose of this study: a correct or incorrect test, a translation test and a gap-filling test that comprised two collocation categories, i.e. verb-noun collocations and adjective-noun collocations. The results indicated that participants tended to generalize the unfamiliar combinations in reference to the familiar or frequently used collocations in textbooks. In addition, it was noticed that participants have a tendency to incorrectly overgeneralize their L1 collocational knowledge with unknown collocations which resulted in L1 negative transfer. The findings also confirmed the ease of acquiring collocations that have L1 equivalents is greater than those which have no L1 equivalent. Based on the results of this study, the researcher concluded by recommending that textbook writers take into consideration learners' needs and interest and high-frequency collocations in an appropriate context, and that material writers should check the collocational differences and similarities between L1 and L2 before preparing materials because L1 is an influential determiner. Additionally, language teachers should teach high- frequency collocations and learners should spend much time reading and listening in order to improve their collocational knowledge.

Lennon (1996) conducted an error analysis in a corpus of 745 oral errors made by four female advanced German learners who spent six months at the University of Reading in Britain. The errors were divided into 10 discrete categories: intra-lexeme, intra-VP, intra-Verb-Group, preposition and adverbial particle choice, pro-forms choice, adverbial and particle position,

verb complementation, clause linkage, sentence structure and lexical choice. The results showed that these learners had an insufficient knowledge of collocations and they tended to transfer their native language to the target production or over-generalize the use of some high frequency verbs such as *put, go* and *take*. The main reason lay in these verbs' rich polysemy and syntactic complexity. As they formed phrases with prepositions, these verbs created collocational restrictions that required special attention in their collocational environment. Thus Lennon (1996) stated that learners should not rely on translation; they should practise frequently occurring verbs (by which learners can explore their collocational possibilities and restrictions).

2.2.2.3 Collocation research in terms of the strategies used by L2 learners' in producing lexical collocations including L1 transfer

In addition to the previous studies, there are a series of studies conducted by Liu (1999, 2000) which reveal the strategies that EFL students might use in producing collocations, either acceptable or unacceptable, in their writings. Firstly, in the study of Chinese college freshmen's collocational competence, Liu (1999) found that the EFL students had difficulties in producing acceptable collocations. He further concluded that the causes for producing unacceptable English collocations could be mostly attributed to a lack of the concept of collocation and interlingual transfer. The results of the study were summarized as follows:

1. Lack of knowledge of the collocational concept: Some students only understood the basic meaning of a word and did not know which words it would go with. Thus, they were not competent to produce any collocation.

2. Direct translation: some students remembered only the Chinese translation of the word. Therefore, they relied on direct translation to produce collocations (e.g. *learn knowledge* instead of *gain knowledge* or *absorb knowledge).*

3. Ignorance of rule restrictions: Some students did not know that some collocational restrictions were based wholly on the meaning of the word and range; others did not take grammar into consideration. As a result, they produced grammatically unacceptable collocations (e.g. *few knowledge* instead of *little knowledge*).

4. Lack of knowledge of collocational properties: Many students did not understand the

potential collocational properties of the words they knew. Take the word *good* for example. It could be assumed that most students knew the collocation a *good boy*, but few students generated the collocation *a good knowledge*.

Furthermore, in another study on students' strategy use in producing lexical collocations, Liu (2000) mentioned seven types of strategies that EFL students might make use of in their writing, including observable actions and unobservable mental processes. The following were the seven types of strategies.

1. Retrieval: The students' ability to recall collocations from their memory.Without the understanding of the notion that language not only consists of words but also of chunks, many students had no intention of storing collocations in their memory. Consequently, they often failed in searching for the proper collocations they needed when they communicated in either speaking or writing.

2. Literal translation: students tended to transfer thoughts word-for-word from L1 toL2 when they did not succeed in finding stored collocations. They took the strategy of literal translation to produce either acceptable or unacceptable collocations.

3. Approximate translation: Approximate translation is a process of paraphrasing the thought from L1 to L2. Sometimes students relied on their intuition to create collocations of their own and chose an approximate translation as another strategy other than literal translation.

4. Use of de-lexicalised verbs: Students were inclined to use de-lexicalised words (e.g.do, take, make, and keep) carelessly and substitute one for another casually in their writing. Intermediate EFL students often thought de-lexicalised verbs as words that had little or no meaning outside the context of particular use.

5. Use of synonyms: It was by using synonyms that students solved L2 lexical problems when they encountered the collocations. Nevertheless, more often than not, they produced erroneous collocationsas a result of their lack of collocational information on the synonyms they used.

6. Appeal for assistance: Learners had a tendency to depend on others for guidance and instruction. In such cases it was also possible that such advice would be sought from poor writers of L2.

To conclude looking at the above research, EFL students make collocational errors in their English writing mostly because of the interference of their mother tongue, because of a lack of awareness of the concept of collocation and because of interlingual or intralingual transfer.

Additionally, students' production of deviant collocations may be because they undertake strategies such as avoidance, paraphrasing and literal translation in English writing tasks. These can be the possible reasons for explaining why EFL students frequently produce unacceptable collocations in their English writings.

2.2.3 Part 2: Collocational studies with Arab learners of English

A careful review of the literature shows that there is a conspicuous lack of Arabic research on collocations in spite of the necessity of using collocations for Arab learners of English. Such studies are relatively rare and the few available ones were only recently conducted (e.g., Hussein, 1990; Farghal and Obiedant, 1995; Al-Zahrani, 1998; Zughoul and Abdul-Fattah, 2003; Mahmoud, 2005; Al-Amro, 2006). A detailed discussion of some of these studies is presented below.

Elkatib's study (1984) is considered as one of the earliest studies that examined Arab EFL learners' lexical problems. In his study, Elkatib analysed four freshmen students' writing samples in an attempt to classify their lexical problems, determine their causes and to examine whether students were attuned to the form or the substance of the language. The results of his study revealed that 'unfamiliarity with word collocations' is one of the major lexical errors that some Arab EFL students make when expressing their thoughts in writing. The following examples, for instance, show the students' lack of knowledge of lexical collocations: "... *the aircraft or ships which can remove us in a short time to many countries...*" and "*any one lives in glass house should not shooting stone.*"According to Elkatib, the use of the verb *remove* instead of *transport* in the first example and *shoot* instead of *throw* or *hurl* in the second example is due to the students' unfamiliarity with collocations.

To help learners cope with their collocational problems, Elkatib (1984) recommends that new words should be presented in company with their most typical collocations in the form of example sentences or in a collocational grid which was suggested by Channell (1981).

In another study, Hussein (1990) employed a 40-item multiple-choice test with the aim of assessing and evaluating the subjects' receptive collocational knowledge. The sample consisted of 200 third- and fourth-year undergraduate students majoring in English at Yarmouk University in Jordan. Each item in the test included four choices. The majority of

the collocations used in the test were verb-noun, adjective-noun, and noun-noun. The findings revealed the subjects' overall level of performance on the receptive test were unsatisfactory. Only 48.4% of the collocations were answered correctly, which was far below the initial set rate (60%). Hussein maintains that the students' low achievement on the test can be traced to some general factors such as: negligence of the lexicon, including collocations, in the teaching of English as a foreign language, insufficient reading habits, and reduction and simplification, which seem to be characteristics of the teaching components of a foreign language"(p:67). Other factors related directly to the test are: L1 negative transfer (e.g., *death number* in place of *death toll*), over-generalization (i.e. the use of generic terms rather than specific, e.g., *pipe water* in place of *tap water*).

In a later investigation, the issue of collocations as a neglected variable in EFL classrooms was addressed by Farghal and Obiedant (1995). In their study, they examined the lexical collocational knowledge of 57 Jordanian advanced EFL learners. They administered two tests, an English blank-filling version and an Arabic translation version to two groups of Jordanian students: Group A consisted of 34 senior and junior English majors and Group B consisted of 23 senior English majors at a Higher College for the certification of teachers. The blank-filling test was given to Group A to complete, whereas the Arabic version was given to Group B to translate into English.

Farghal and Obiedant (1995) used ten common collocations relating to specific topics such as food, colour and weather to examine Jordanian ESL students' knowledge of English. The results of their study showed both groups of students did well in tasks involving collocations with equivalents in Arabic (*e.g., hot food and salty soup*) but had problems when they faced English collocations that do not exist in their native language (*e.g., depth of water, stormy sea and height of summer*). This conclusion supports the findings of Bahns and Eldaw (1993) and Biskup (1992) who have suggested that only the necessary collocations, (i.e., the ones that do not exist in the students' L1) need to be taught.

The researchers attributed the results to the fact that learners were not 'made aware of collocations as a fundamental genre of multi-word units'. In addition, and based on learners' performance in the two tests, Farghal and Obiedant (1995) noted that students rely heavily on lexical simplification strategies, such as synonym, avoidance, transfer, and paraphrasing, all of which are listed below in their order of frequency:

(1) Synonymy: where students provide collocations such as *steady colour, stable colour* instead of the target collocation which was *fast colour.*

(2) Avoidance: the authors stated that both groups employed the avoidance strategy of lexical simplification in which 'the learners avoid the target lexical item in favour of another' (p. 322). For example, students used *soft food* and *drinking too much,* for the target collocations *light food* and *heavy drinker* respectively.

(3) Transfer: according to the authors, both groups relied on their L1 for providing some targeted collocations resulting in both positive and negative transfer. For example, students correctly provided the target collocation *striped shirt,* which has an equivalent collocation in Arabic. However, they provided *heavy tea* for the targeted collocation *strong tea.*

(4) Paraphrasing: this strategy, according to the authors, was a frequently used technique by both groups. As good examples of this strategy, students used *drinking too much* for *heavy drinker.*

Based on the results of this study, Farghal and Obiedant (1995) offer a number of valuable suggestions:

(1) Syntagmatic lexical relations should be taught to complement pragmatic relations.

(2) Collocations should be singled out in a foreign language syllabus. There should also be pedagogic dictionaries that include collocations.

(3) English teachers and prospective translators should be well qualified and aware of the collocational nature of English through extensive training that ensures that collocations are a central concern (Farghal and Obiedat, 1995).

Another study on measuring collocational competence was conducted on Arab students of English by Kharma and Hajjaj (1997). They administered a test that included a few sets of some very common English verbs. These verbs were chosen with Arabic interference in mind. Each set of collocates had lexical items different from those which were its nearest equivalent Arabic verb. The test was of the gap-filling type with two, three, or four options to choose from. According to the study results, the overall achievement on the test was very low (25.4 percent) in spite of the fact that the subjects belonged to last three forms of secondary schools. Also, the verbs were some of the most common verbs in English and are usually taught at a very early stage of the English course in any school. Additionally, the results showed that the expectations of the mistakes made on the basis of Arabic interference were fulfilled in most areas.

Al-Zahrani (1998) also carried out a study to investigate the relationship between learners' general language proficiency and their knowledge of lexical collocations. In this study, the participants were 81 male Saudi EFL students majoring in English at the Department of Language and Translation, at Imam Mohammad IbnSudi Islamic University. They represented four groups, each of which represented one academic level, i.e. freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Three tests were used to collect the data for this study: a writing test, a collocation test and an institutional version of TOFEL. The test of collocation was a blank-filling task consisting of 50 sentences, each of which contained one collocation from which the verb was missing except for the first letter/phoneme. This test was designed to measure students' knowledge of collocations. The writing test and TOFEL were used as measures of the students' overall language proficiency.

The results of this study showed that there was a positive relationship between participants' knowledge of collocations and their general language proficiency. In other words, highly proficient English learners have a high collocational knowledge and low proficiency participants have a low knowledge of collocations.

Zughoul and Abdul-Fattah (2003) conducted a study to investigate three aspects of collocational knowledge: the use of collocations as an indicator of language proficiency, the strategies L1 Arabic learners of English used to produce proper collocations and how differently Arabic and English words combine together. The participants were two groups of English as a Foreign Language undergraduate and graduate students from the English department at Jordan's Yarmok University (38 graduate students and 32 undergraduate students). The participants received two tasks: the first task included a multiple-choice test which included 16 randomly selected idiomatic expressions and collocations of the Arabic verb *kasara* (broke). This test was designed to reveal learners' ability to recognize the correct collocation from among four distracters, whereas the second task was a translation task of the same selected Arabic idiomatic expressions and collocations, and it was intended to explore the learners' proficiency in this linguistic area. The results of this study revealed that the overall performance of the students in the target idiomatic expressions and collocations was far from satisfactory considering the fact that they were high level English majors. The study also showed that participants used varieties of communication strategies such as avoidance, paraphrasing, literal translation, assumed synonmity, over-generalizations and analogy substitutions when translating into English the collocation sequence of the Arabic verb

kasaras. The researchers suggested having more studies that focus on the phenomenon of collocations in English at both school and university level.

Mahmoud's study (2005) which examined the production of English collocations of EFL Arabic learners confirms the results of the previous studies. The participants of this study were 42 Arabic speaking university students majoring in English. They were asked to write an essay as a homework assignment. The overall results of this study revealed that Arabic speaking students commit errors when they produce collocations in English, especially lexical combinations. Although the learners used different kinds of collocations, such as lexical and grammatical collocations, 64% of the collocations they used were wrong and 61% of the word combinations they used were bad. The researcher explained that some of these mistakes were due to negative transfer from their L1, Arabic. In conclusion, the researcher confirmed the necessity of teaching collocations for foreign language learners of English.

In a recent study, Al-Amro (2006, cited in Alsakran, 2011) assessed the lexical and grammatical collocations of Saudi EFL learners as well as their productive and receptive collocational knowledge. The data was drawn from 51 Saudi advanced English learners at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The subjects' collocational knowledge was measured by a C-test, a multiple choice test and an essay writing task. The C-test consisted of 34 productive items (verb-noun and verb-preposition collocations) in which the initial letter of the target collocations was provided to reduce the possibility of guessing.The multiple choice test included 16 receptive items (figurativeuse of verb phrases) where the subjects had to select from four alternatives for the underlined verb that sounded strange or miscollocated. The results showed that there was a lack of collocational knowledge among the subjects as manifested by their poor performance on the collocational test. The data also revealed that there is a relationship between the EFL learners' receptive and productive knowledge of collocations. The author attributes this to the fact that the target collocations in the receptive test were of lower frequency than those in the productive test. Al-Amro concluded that the EFL learners' lack of collocational use is a direct result of the neglect of a lexical approach in foreign language teaching and learning environments. When the teaching of collocations is overlooked learners focus mainly on single-word units while disregarding all the important associations of the word or its partners. Moreover, the over-emphasis of using synonyms in dictionaries to find a particular meaning of a word has resulted in the misconception among learners that conceptual equivalence involves distributional equivalence.

A further relevant study was undertaken by El-Masharwi (2008) and was aimed at identifying, classifying and analyzing collocation errors made by English and journalism majors at the Islamic University of Gaza. The participants of this study consisted of 245 Palestinian male and female English language majors and journalism majors enrolled at fourth level in the academic year 2007.To fulfil the aims of the study a diagnostic test was constructed. The diagnostic test consisted of two main parts: the first part was related to collocations used within the English language. This part had three closed questions: matching, multiple choice and crossing out the odd collocation. The second part was a translation task that was related to collocations used across both English and Arabic. This part consists of three translation questions: translation from English into Arabic and vice versa. The findings of the study indicated that the English language and journalism majors made different types of collocation errors which showed their low and deficient competence in using collocations within the English language and in dealing with such collocations across both Arabic and English. The findings also showed that both majors demonstrated limited collocation knowledge as they depended on interlingual and intralingual transfers. It also showed that both majors had insufficient exposure to practical opportunities, real life experiences and situations relating to English language collocations.

Shehata (2008) also carried out a study to investigate L1 influence on the reception and production of collocations by advanced ESL/EFL Arabic learners of English. The major purpose of this study was to explore whether the learning environment (EFL vs. ESL) and the amount of exposure to the language had an influence on the acquisition of English collocation. The participants were 97 students in an English Department in a university in Egypt. The study used five instruments: a self-reporting questionnaire, two fill-in-the-blank productive tests, an appropriateness judgment receptive test, and a vocabulary recognition test. 32 target collocations were included in the productive collocation tests (16 each of adjective-noun and verb-noun collocations). The receptive test consisted of 50 items that included the 32 target collocations in the productive tests plus 18 mismatched collocations that served as distracters. The participants' familiarity with collocational components was checked using the vocabulary recognition test, two production tests and one reception test dealing with two types of English collocations: verb-noun and adjective –noun collocations. In addition, the study used a vocabulary recognition test to check the participants' familiarity with the meaning of the collocational components (i.e. the individual words).

The findings indicated that the learners' L1 and their learning environment had a strong influence on their acquisition of L2 collocations. The findings also revealed that there was a moderate positive correlation between the learners' knowledge of collocations and their amount of exposure to the language. Furthermore, the study concluded that the learners' receptive knowledge of the two target collocations (noun + verb and noun+ adjective) was broader than their productive knowledge of collocations. Based on the study results and findings, recommendations were given regarding considerations that should be taken into account when teaching collocations. Overall, collocations are important in language learning, and they need more attention and practice in order to be adequately acquired.

By the same token, Brashi (2009) undertook a study to examine some EFL learners' productive and receptive knowledge of English verb + noun collocations. The participants in this study were 20 senior undergraduate students majoring in English at Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, and they were in their fourth year of study (the final year). The study used a blank-filling test of English collocations to test the participants' productive knowledge of English collocations and a multiple-choice test of English collocations to test their receptive knowledge of the same items. The results showed that the participants performed better at the reception level than at the production level with regard to English verb+ noun collocation. Based on the results, this study therefore, suggested a number of implications with regard to collocations in EFL/ESL learning. It recommended trying out the possibility of teaching collocations explicitly to EFL/ESL learners. In addition, and most importantly, it recommended that more attention should be given to collocations in developing and enhancing language learners' performance in general.

In a more recent study, AbuNaba'h (2011) conducted a study aimed at investigating the English collocational knowledge of Jordanian graduate students and analyzing quantitatively and qualitatively the collocational errors they made. The sample of the study involved 30 M.A graduate students at the Hashemite University in Jordan. The researcher adapted a completion test that measured the students' knowledge of four types of lexical collocations: free combination, restricted collocations, figurative idioms, and pure idioms. The results showed that free combination created the least amount of difficulty, whereas pure idioms were the most challenging. Additionally, the students had unsatisfactory performances in restricted and figurative idioms. In general, the students' deviant answers demonstrated their

insufficient knowledge of English collocations, and most their errors can mainly be attributed to negative first language transfer.

Abdul Ridha et al. (2011) also investigated the lexical collocational errors in the writings of Iraqi EFL learners. A total of 40 students at Basra University participated in this study. Over 100 pieces of essays extracts written by the participants were collected and analyzed to check various lexical collocational errors. The unacceptable lexical collocations were identified based on the modified version originally proposed by Benson et al., (1997). It was found that the lexical collocational errors are mainly due to the negative transfer from Arabic.

Furthermore, Alsakran (2011) examined the productive and receptive knowledge of lexical and grammatical collocations among advanced Arabic-speaking learners of English. This study investigated whether the language environment (ESL or EFL) has an influence on the acquisition of collocations. It also explored whether there is a significant difference between participants' performance on three types of collocations: verb+ noun, adjective +noun, and verb+ preposition. Data for this study were collected from 68 participants: 38 Saudi students at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and 30 Arab students on the Intensive English programme at Colorado State University. The participants' productive collocational knowledge was measured by three gap-filling tests: verb+ noun and adjective+ noun collocation tests where the initial letter of the collocant was provided and a verb+ preposition collocation test where the meaning of the phrasal verb was supplied. Their receptive collocational knowledge was measured by an appropriateness judgment test in which participants had to circle the number corresponding to the underlined part of a sentence that is judged unacceptable.

The results of the statistical analysis revealed that the participants' learning environment has a strong effect on the acquisition of L2 collocations. The ESL learners had significantly higher scores than the EFL learners. Moreover, there was a significant difference between the participants' productive and receptive knowledge of collocations. The participants' productive knowledge of collocations lagged far behind their receptive collocational knowledge. The findings also revealed a statistically significant difference between the three types of collocation. The participants performed far better on the verb+ noun collocations test than on the adjective +noun and verb+ preposition collocations tests. Overall, the results showed that Arabic-speaking learners of English demonstrated poor knowledge of

collocations in the four tests. The study concluded with pedagogical implications, limitations, and suggestions and recommendations for future research.

2.2.4 Commentary on the previous studies

Reviewing several studies directly relevant to the theme of this study has enriched the researcher's background knowledge and broadened her scope of understanding in this area. Several comments can be made in this regard.

Firstly, the findings in all the studies discussed above have been quite consistent and have confirmed how collocations represent a major problem for EFL/ESL learners (English majors and non-English majors) in the production of correct and natural English. This emphasizes the necessity of examining the collocational proficiency of Libyan learners' especially English majors. Secondly, one main reason why EFL learners generally lack collocational knowledge is that collocation has been neglected in EFL classrooms and, thus, learners have tended to ignore the learning of collocations. All the researchers have stated that collocations, the most needed and useful genre of prefabricated speech should be highlighted in EFL classrooms. Additionally, EFL/ESL classrooms would benefit from a pedagogical approach that regards lexis and their properties as valuable avenues in language learning. Thirdly, interlingual (negative transfer) and intralingual transfer (over-generalization, paraphrase, etc.) can provide the possible reasons for explaining why EFL students frequently produce unacceptable collocations in their writing.

To sum up, while there are relatively a few collocation studies that have included Arabic-speaking learners of English, all of these studies have been conducted in only two or three Arabic speaking countries including Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and no research (to-date, as far as the researcher is aware) has aimed to investigate the collocational knowledge of Libyan EFL students. Thus, it is crucial to investigate to what extent this problem exists among Libyan EFL English majors in order to develop university teaching methods and materials in this area.

The present study is in line with the above studies in acknowledging the difficulty L2 learners have in the area of collocations. However, the focus of most studies in collocations has been mainly on only a limited number of lexical collocation types such as verb+ noun and

adjective +noun to measure both the reception and production of the participants' knowledge of collocations. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap in the existing research by investigating a variety of collocation types (verb + noun, noun+ adjective, noun + noun, verb+ adverb, verb+ noun and adjective+ adverb) give a comprehensive measurement of learners' lexical collocation knowledge and to explore which collocation types cause more difficulties for Libyan EFL learners' collocational competence. Roughly speaking, the present study attempts to add to the existing research by exploring the lexical collocational knowledge of EFL Libyan learners. The design of the study will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.2.5 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has provided a discussion of the core subject of collocations. In particular, it has explored the various definitions of collocations as proposed by linguists and has suggested a workable definition with the purpose of distinguishing collocations from other multi-word units. Moreover, the chapter has reviewed the acquisition of collocations in first and second languages as well as the significance of collocations in L2 learning and teaching. It concluded with an investigation into some empirical studies on the knowledge of collocations relevant to the current study. Many researchers have conducted empirical research in terms of various perspectives to realize how learners' collocational knowledge is developed. Their empirical research on collocation to date is summarized in Table 2.8 below.

Year	Researcher	Focus	Subject	Instrument	Results
1977	Martin	Lexical collocations	Polish learners of English	Pre-treatment and post treatment translation tasks as well as two comprehension tests	Poor production of collocations
1979	Kellerman	Sentences containing core and non-core senses of the word 'break'	81 Dutch learners of English at a university	Correct or incorrect test	Coreness and frequency are the factors affecting transferability from the mother tongue
1981	Channell	Adjective-noun collocations	8 advanced EFL students	Collocational grid	Students failed to mark a large number of acceptable collocations, although they were individually familiar with the words.
1984	Elkatib	Lexical collocations	4 freshmen Arab students of English	Free writing task	Lack of knowledge of lexical collocations

1989	Dechert and Lennon	General use of collocations	2 advanced-level university students who had spent much time in England	Free writing task	The reason why the subjects' writing was so full of collocational blends was due to extra causal blend and intra-casual blends.
1990	Aghbar	Tested verb-noun collocations	27 faculty members teaching college level English courses, 44 native undergraduate and 97 advanced ESL students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Cloze filling gap test consisting of 50 items	ESL students' poor performance was not due to a lack of vocabulary acquisition, simply because the required verbs are simple: high frequency words such as *achieve, find,* and *win.* He attributed the reason for the poor ESL performance in the test to the "lack of acquisition of those language chunks.
1990	Fayez-Hussein	40 lexical collocations	200 Jordanian undergraduate students majoring in English	Multiple choice test	Unacceptable collocations were due to unfamiliarity with collocational and negative transfer.
1992	Biskup	Lexical collocations	34 advanced Polish and 28 German students of English	English translation test	Polish learners were more dependent on L1 for producing English, while German learners looked for more creative strategies. Polish learners tended to avoid unknown collocations, while German learners tried to use alternative ways.
1993	Bahns and Eldaw	15 verb-noun collocations	58 German advanced EFL students	Students translation and cloze test	German students had problems with collocations in writing and they particularly had difficulty in paraphrasing collocations. Learner's collocational knowledge did not develop in parallel with their general vocabulary knowledge.
1995	Farghal and Obidedat	22 common collocations	Undergraduate Arabic English majors and language teachers of English	Fill-in-the-blank test and translation test	Both subjects had a deficiency in collocations because of lexical simplification ,avoidance and transfer

1996	Harbest	General use of collocations	100 German students of English at two German universities and 58 English students at four English universities	Translation test, a cloze-test and a filling-the-blank test	German students' collocational knowledge was deficient.
1996	Lennon	General use of collocations	4 female German university students who had spent six months in England	Oral picture-story narrations	Lexical verb choice was vague and problematic for the 4 students. Subjects over-relyon their ideas of core meaning of polysemous verbs and translation equivalents in L1.
1997	Elyildirm.	Verb-noun, adjective noun collocations	121 Turkish tenth-grade students at upper secondary schools	Correct or incorrect test, translation test and fill-in-the-blank test	Learners tended to produce collocations by resorting to generalization, over-generalization and L1 transfer.
1998	Caroli	30 verb-noun collocations	73 Italian learners of English at upper secondary schools	Fill-in-the-blank test and multiple choice test	No close correlation was found between the general vocabulary knowledge and the collocational knowledge. Learners have a higher receptive knowledge of collocations than productive.
1998	Al-Zahrani	Verb + noun lexical collocations	81 Saudi university students (English majors)	Collocation test (fill-in-the-blank), writing test and TOEFL test	There was positive correlation between learners 'knowledge of collocations and their general language proficiency.
1998	Granger	Adverbial collocations	Native speakers of English and French learners of English	based on ICLE corpus study	The frequency of amplifiers which were direct translation equivalence in L1 was muchhigher than those of other amplifiers.
1998	Howarth	Verb-object collocations	Native and non-native speakers of English	Academic writing samples	Native speakers produced 38% of the verb-object collocations while in the non-native writing the percentage was 25%. Howarth's findings also revealed that there is not a strong relationship between the use of collocations and general L2 proficiency.

1999	Gitsaki	Different type of collocations	275 Greek learners of English: EFL	Free writing, translation test and fill-in-the-blank test	Whether collocations are acquired early or later is determined by some influential lfactors: maturation, language proficiency, instruction, saliency, L1-L2 differences, the complexity and arbitrariness of collocations.
1999	Liu	General collocations	Chinese college freshman learners of English	Not mentioned	Learners had difficulties in producing acceptable collocations due to L1 interference.
2000	Liu	General collocations	Chinese learners of English	Free writing essay	Learners used different strategies to cope with collocations.
2002	Liu	Verb-noun collocations	Taiwanese senior high school students	Free essay writing	Generally, learners' lexical choice of collocations was influenced by their L1
2001	Huang	Four types of combinations: free-combinations, restricted collocations, figurative collocations and pure idioms	60 EFL students from Taiwan	A self-designed Simple Completion Test	The results indicated that free combinations cause the least amount of difficulty, whereas pure idioms cause the most difficulties. Most subjects' errors could be contributed to negative transfer.
2001	Eker	Transparent and non-transparent collocations	Turkish EFL learners of English	Not mentioned	Learners produced more collocations which had direct equivalents in their native language. Also their production of transparent collocations was higher than non-transparent collocations.
2001	Bonk	General collocation	98 adult learners of English	Collocation test and English proficiency test	There was a lack of correlation between general English proficiency and collocation competence.
2001	Wang	English lexical collocations	4 academic levels at Fu-Jen University in Taiwan	Not mentioned	There was no correlation between proficiency and collocation competence.
2002	Bonci	General collocation	127 Italian at an advanced level of English	Three tests: -cloze filling gap (10 sentences) -translation test -essay writing task	Collocations are problematic aspects of vocabulary acquisition for advanced Italian learners of English.

2003	Nesselhauf	Noun collocations	German-speaking university students of English	Free writing task	The L1 influence on the production of collocations was rather strong. The highest rate of mistakes occurred in combinations with a medium degree of restriction because of the choice of verbs.
2004	Martynska	General collocations	35 intermediate Polish students	Matching task, completion task, and circling options	Generally, students had poor collocation knowledge.
2005	Mohmoud	General lexical combinations	40 EFL Arab learners of English	Writing essay task	Overall Arabic learners of English committed errors when produce lexical combinations in English, and they heavily relied on transfer from Arabic.
2005	Gyllstad	Verb +noun phrase collocations	Swedish university learners of English	Two test formats based on verb and noun phrase collocations	Generally, students developed very closely to the language of native speakers.
2005	Koya	General lexical collocations	Japanese learners of English	Corpus-based and empirical analysis	Positive relationship between learners' general knowledge of vocabulary and their knowledge of collocations. learners' receptive knowledge deeper than their productive knowledge. learners had some difficulties with adjective-noun collocations.
2006	Al-Amro	Lexical and grammatical collocations	51 Saudi advanced English learners of English at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	Multiple-choice test and essay writing task	There was a lack of collocational knowledge among subjects.
2006	Zang and Chen	Adjective-noun collocations	Chinese learners of English	Receptive test (60 collocations) and translation test(40 collocations)	Overall learners did not have a good command of English adjective-noun collocations.
2008	Masharwi	General lexical collocations	Palestinian male and female English language majors and journalism majors enrolled in the fourth level in the academic year 2007	Diagnosis consisted of two main parts: the first part was related to collocations used within English and included closed questions: matching, multiple choice, and crossing out the odd collocation. The second part consisted of three translation questions: translation from English into Arabic and vice versa	The English language and journalism majors made different types of collocation errors which manifested their low and deficient competence in using collocations within the English language and in dealing with such collocations across the Arabic and English languages.

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2008	Shehata	32 collocations adjective- noun collocations and verb-noun collocations	ESL/EFL Arabic learners of English	A self-reported questionnaire, two fill-in-the blank productive tests, receptive test and vocabulary acquisition test	Learners' L1 and their learning environment had a strong influence on the acquisition of L2 collocations. The findings also revealed that there was a moderate positive correlation between learners' knowledge of collocations and the amount of their exposure to the language.
2009	Brashi	Verb-noun collocations	20 Senior undergraduate Saudi students majoring in English	-Blank-filling test on English collocations - Multiple-choice test on English collocations	Roughly speaking, participants performed better at productive level than at receptive level.
2011	Naba'h	Free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative collocations and pure idioms	30 M.A. Graduate students at Hashemite University in Jordan	Completion test	Generally, learners had an insufficient knowledge of English collocations.

Table 2.8: A summary of collocational studies in the field of EFL/ESL

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and the research rationale pursued in this study. Firstly, it highlights the aims of the study (section 3.2) and presents the research questions (section 3.3). It also gives detailed information on the subjects who participated in the pilot study and main study as well as on the setting of study 3.4 (3.4.1, 3.4.2). Next, section 3.5 briefly introduces the different paradigms available in social sciences with the focus given to the positivist (quantitative) paradigm as it is the main one used in this study. Section 3.6 provides a discussion of the techniques used for data elicitation in this study: collocation test, translation task and questionnaire, and the justification for the choice of these research techniques. The next section (3.7) provides a discussion of the ethical issues involved in the data collection process. This was followed by outlining the processes of developing and validating the instrument used in the study (3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.8.3). Sections 3.9 and 3.10 describe the procedures of both the pilot study and main study and outline the process of data analysis including coding and scoring. This chapter concludes with a description of item analysis of both the collocation test and the translation task.

3.2 Research Questions

To address the issues listed in 3.2, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1- To what extent do Libyan students majoring in English have knowledge of English lexical collocation?

2- Is there a significant statistical difference between the participants' production and reception skills relating to lexical collocations in English?

3- What is the effect of Libyan EFL learners' L1 on their proficiency in producing lexical collocations in English?

4- Is there a significant statistical difference between participants' proficiency in producing

and recognizing lexical collocations in English and their amount of exposure to the English language?

5- Are all kinds of lexical collocations equally difficult for Libyan students?

And these three sub-questions:

6- Is there a significant statistical difference between the performance of 2nd and 3rd year Libyan students majoring in English in producing and recognizing lexical collocations in English?

7- Is there a significant statistical difference between the performance of males and females in producing and recognizing collocations in English?

8- Is there a significant statistical difference between the performance of students in producing and recognizing collocations in English in terms of Faculties?

3.3 Study Setting and Subjects

In order to answer the research questions mentioned above, a total of 245 second and third-year students participated in the present study: 60 students participated in the pilot testing, and 185 participants took the test in the subsequent main test administration. The participants were English major university students randomly drawn from four Faculties of Humanities at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University in Libya (it is one of the large universities in Libya located in the North West of the country). These Faculties were chosen only because they are close to the researcher's residence. However, it has to be mentioned here that the researcher was, formerly, one of the teaching staff in the Department of English at the Yefren Faculty of Art which, of course, facilitated access to the department, students and premises.

The participants have studied English, on average, for eight years at the rate of four hours per week in preparatory schools, twelve hours per week in secondary schools and eighteen hours per week in the university. Their level of proficiency is intermediate, and they are all speakers of Arabic as their L1 language and both sexes are represented although the number of females was more than the number of males.

3.3.1 The pilot study

60 students participated in the pilot study. They were second and third year English majors in the Yefren Faculty of Arts at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi. The group had 1.2: 1 female-male ratio.

3.3.2 The main study

A total of 185 second and third year English major students in the academic year 2009-2010 participated in the main study. The participants were randomly drawn from four Faculties at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University: 60 students from the Faculty of Arts, Yefern, 32 students from the Faculty of Arts, Kikla, 45 students from the Faculty of Arts, Al Asaabas Faculty of Arts, and 48 students from the Faculty of Arts, Gharian. They had already attended a number of compulsory subjects devoted to improving their general English proficiency. All the participants were Libyans who had been learning English as a foreign language for at least 9 years starting from preparatory school and continuing through high school and then to college. Their native language was Arabic, the candidates' ages ranged between 19-22 years, and both genders participated in this study. The group had a 2.3: 1 female to male ratio. It was originally intended to choose an equal number of male and female students; this was, however, not possible. Most of students who join English departments in Libyan universities are female students due to social and practical circumstances. Al-Najeh (2007) states that teaching is a socially acceptable profession in Libya for women and being able to work in the nearest school to the residence of the female teaching is almost guaranteed. This explains the unbalanced sample according to this factor. The average ages and the percentage of male and female participants are presented in Table 3.1

No	Gender				Age		
185	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
	35	19%	150	81%	19	22	20.65

Table 3.1 Average ages and the percentage of male and female participants

None of the participants had studied English in an English speaking country such as USA, Britain or Australia. All the participants of this study were homogenous in terms of their learning experience and learning environment. The number of the participants in the pilot study and in the main study is summarized in Table 3.2.

Pilot study						Main study				
Faculty	Year	Males	Females	Total		F	Y	Males	Females	Total
F1	3rd	6	23			F1	3rd	9	30	
	2nd	4	27	60		F1		6	15	60
F2	2nd	—	—	—		F2	2nd	—	32	32
F3	2nd	—	—	—		F3	2nd	10	35	45
F4	3rd	—	—	—		F4	3rd	10	38	48
				60						185

Table 3.2: Number of the participants in the Pilot study and in the Main study

Note: F1= Faculty of Arts, Yefren, F2= Faculty of Arts, Kikla, F3=Faulty of Arts Al-Asaaba and F4= Faculty of Art Gharian. In the pilot study, the collocation test, translation task and the questionnaire were not administered to the participants of F2, F3 and F4.

3.4 The Research Paradigm

Nunan (1992) states that"In developing one's own philosophy on research, it is important to determine how the notion of 'truth' relates to research. What is truth? (Even more basically, do we accept that there is such a thing as 'truth'?) What is evidence? Can we ever 'prove' anything? What evidence would compel us to accept the truth of an assertion or proposition?" (Nunan,1992:10)

The questions raised by Nunan in the above quotation depict the epistemological orientation of different paradigms. In other words, different phenomena may require the use of different methodologies and these different methodologies represent the different research paradigms,

and it is the researcher's perception of reality and status of knowledge that guides how to undertake a piece of research and the methodology to follow. These paradigms can be broadly categorised as (1) the scientific/positivist paradigm (where human behaviour is essentially viewed as rule-governed and is investigated by the method of natural science). More specifically, positivism predominates in science and assumes that science quantitatively measures independent facts about a single apprehensible reality (Healy and Perry, 2000); and (2) the naturalistic/ interpretive paradigm (where the central concern is the individual and the central goal is to understand the world of subjective experience). Both of these paradigms are frequently used in social science research. Generally, the quantitative research method characterises the scientific/positivist paradigm whereas qualitative research methods are often employed for the naturalistic/ interpretive paradigm.

In the light of the above discussion and because of the nature of the current study and its context, the researcher became more inclined to identify herself with the post positivism paradigm, which best serves her purpose.

3.5 Research Techniques

The descriptive data for this study were collected by using three research instruments, namely a multiple choice test, a translation task and a questionnaire. Both the collocation test and the translation task were mainly used to examine the learners' competence in the production and reception of lexical collocation knowledge as a main dependent variable of this study; whereas as the questionnaire was used to elicit some information on the independent variables such as age, how long the student had been learning English and time of exposure to English Language.

According to Leniewska (2006), one way of directly investigating the use of collocation by learners is the use of specific item tests. This can be in the form of closed tasks, multiple-choice tests, etc. This way is effective in eliciting the collocational decisions of learners on specific test items in which a preselected group of collocations is the focus of research. This makes it much easier to compare the results for various subjects and groups (e.g.Biskup 1992; Bhans and Eldaw 1993; Granger, 1998).

Jacobs and Chaes (1992) and Lowman (1984) assert that multiple-choice questions are suitable and appropriate for evaluating students' mastery of information and specific knowledge. Objectivity and ease of marking are well-known advantages of multiple-choice

tests in general. According to Jacobs (1991), objectivity or the extent to which equally competent scores obtain the same score is a factor affecting reliability. With objective tests, grading is easier and the scores are a more reliable measurement of what the examinee knows.

Translation tasks, on the other hand, have been widely used to assess L2 learners' knowledge of the use of collocations and to determine the effect of L1 on the performance of EFL learners in using collocations. Barfield and Gyllstad (2009) point out that most previous studies have involved an assessment of lexical collocations. One of the more popular ways of assessing the knowledge of lexical collocations has been L1–L2 translation (Biskup, 1992; Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Farghal and Obiedat, 1995; Laufer and Girsai, 2008), either through the translation of sentences, or of isolated items. Some researchers have used short, decontextualized prompts in a 'stimulus response' manner (Schmitt, 1998, 1999; Barfield, 2009). Other measures, including the assessment of either grammatical or lexical collocations, have involved L2 sentence cloze items (Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Farghal and Obiedat, 1995; Gitsaki, 1999; Bonk, 2000) and discrete receptive tasks of different kinds (Granger, 1998b; Bonk, 2000; Mochizuki, 2002; Gyllstad, 2007). According to Huang (2001), interference is one of the major factors that influence performance in collocations for EFL learners and this interference is greater when the learners undertake translation work.

There are some advantages to this form of measurement. Translation tests are relatively quick and easy to construct. They are also quick and easy to mark since, where words have a direct L1 equivalent, there is little room for subjectivity or judgement in recognising the correct answer and this should make the test reliable. But the drawbacks of these techniques are that they are not very productive. It can be argued, for example, that the translation of single words is rather an artificial task at some remove from the reality of communicative language use (Milton and Hopkins, 2006)

Questionnaires, as another form of research design, are probably the most commonly used method in general educational research (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Oppenheim, 1992) as well as in language learning research (Nunan, 1992). According to Nunan (1992:143) questionnaires enable a researcher to collect data in field settings and data are more amenable to quantification than discourse data such as free-form field notes. Many studies concerning the testing of L2 learners' use of collocations have used different forms of questionnaires

such as task-based structured and self-reporting questionnaires to elicit information about subjects, and the strategies that they use in producing collocations (e.g. Shehata, 2008)

3.6 Research Ethics

Dornyei (2007: 64-65) referred to the importance of ethical considerations when conducting research and presented some examples of the sensitive issues of research, such as the amount of shared information between the researchers and the participants, the relationship between them, and anonymity. Dockrell (1988) points out that educational researchers have ethical obligations towards their participants, customers, the scientific community and to the society that the researcher lives in. The first ethical issue is access and acceptance. "The initial stage of research project - that of access to the institution or organization where the research is to be conducted, and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking the task" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 53).

With this in mind, the consent of the target educational institutions has to be guaranteed in the initial stages of any study. In this study, four written letters of approval were obtained from the Yefren, Kikla, Al Assaba and Gharian English Departments.

After gaining access to the targeted students, the researcher explained the purpose of this study to the participants and she also described their role in this investigation. Participants were informed that all of the information collected would be confidential and that the information would only be used for the purposes of the research. In addition, participants also were assured that both tasks were for research purposes and that any incorrect answer or low marks would not have any negative effect on their final achievement and, to allay their fear, the researcher asked them to regard both tests as an exercise to check their lexical collocation competence. Moreover, all the participants were thanked for their cooperation in the research. Participation in the study was voluntary which meant that the participants had the right to accept or refuse to be involved in the study

Understanding what had been told them, all the students accepted participating in the study and offered their full cooperation to the researcher. They were happy to contribute to the study since, as they believed, such a contribution could benefit other students in the future. Finally, the researcher thanked all the English Department administrators including the Heads

of the Department. They were promised a citation in the acknowledgement section of the study.

3.7 Materials (Selection of Target Collocations)

In this study, the six types of lexical collocations: verb-noun, noun-verb, adjective-noun, verb-adverb, adverb-adjective collocations were targeted because they are most frequently used combinations, are regarded as key combinations in producing clauses and sentences, and they are the most often selected in the previous empirical research (Bahns and eldaw, 1993; Caroli, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2003, Shehata,2008).

In specifying the target collocations which were used in both the collocation test (receptive test) and the translation task (productive test), two collocation dictionaries, Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (2002), and the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (1996), as well as the English Collocation in Use (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005) were used. The reason these three sources were used in this analysis is that they were the most representative collocation sources, whether they were corpus-based or non corpus-based dictionaries. Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (2002) and English Collocation in Use (2005) are corpus-based sources with examples taken from the Bank of English, which shows high frequent word combinations used in the daily life of native speakers of English. The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (1996) is however, based on the native speakers' intuition, and is not corpus-based. Thus, these three sources were used in order to select well-balanced collocations based on both corpus and the intuition of native speakers of English

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

After reviewing the literature on collocation studies, three data collection instruments were designed in order to investigate the participants' lexical collocations knowledge. The following two tests and a questionnaire served as the measurement instruments.

* A 60-item multiple-choice lexical collocation test (test 1) which served as a receptive test (see Appendix 1)

*A 28-item translation test (test 2) which served as a productive test (See Appendix 2).

* A self- reporting questionnaire (See Appendix 4).

By means of the two tests and the questionnaire, the researcher attempted to explore the participants' lexical collocation knowledge and the relationship between their collocation knowledge and the amount of their exposure to English. All test instruments were administered in English. Each of the test instruments and the questionnaire are described below.

3.8.1 Multiple-Choice Test

The first instrument was a multiple-choice test (Appendix 1) which was used to assess the participants' performance in lexical collocation knowledge and, in particular, had the aim of measuring the participants' receptive knowledge of lexical collocation. Owing to the limited time available for conducting the survey, both the pilot test and the main test in the study were administered in the multiple-choice format to investigate the participants' receptive knowledge of collocation. The sentences were carefully screened before being chosen as the test items. This test included sixty targeted collocations where one of the constituents of the collocation in question was left out. Three choices were provided to the students, one being the correct response and the other two serving as distracters. For example, in the following sentence, students were asked to choose the right collocate to complete the following sentence: The jacket is the right size but its colour does not ………… me.

a. match; b. suit; c. fit

The process of test development was as follows.

3.8.1.1 Item selection

Initially, 85 preliminary collocation sentences were collected mainly from the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al., 1997) and the Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English which both provided typical examples of collocations. Moreover, English Collocation in Use (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005) and Natural English Collocations Vocabulary Work Book (Marks and Wooder, 2007) were also used as main sources because they offered useful examples used in the real world. In addition, there are some targeted collocations which were adopted from the previous studies which conducted in this area (e.g., Hussien, 1990, and Shokouhi, 2010). The researcher classified these sentences based on the categories of collocations proposed by Benson et al., because their categories gave careful consideration to the types of lexical collocation. However, the seven types of lexical

collocations suggested by the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al. 1997) were modified for this study. Only the first six of them were included in this study as mentioned in Table 3.3 below because these types were considered to be the most frequent collocations. For the purpose of this study, the researcher extended the noun +noun and the noun+ verb collocation types to include subtypes suggested by other scholars (e.g., Hill 2000; Lewis, 2000; McCarthy and O' Dell, 2005) where the noun +noun , and the noun+ verb collocation types are not only restricted to indicate the unit which associated with a noun in the first type (noun+ noun), and the verb names an action characteristics of the person or thing designated by the noun as in the second type (noun +verb) as proposed by Benson

et al., (1997) . See examples in Table 3.3 Below.

Type	Pattern	Example
L1	Verb-noun	make an impression, break a code, submit a report, take a decision, etc.
L2	Adjective-noun	Strong tea, heavy rain, bright colour, etc.
L3	noun + verb	bees buzz, bomb explodes (as proposed by Benson et al.,1997) The blame lies with, the calm settled, the economy boomed.etc.
L4	Noun+ noun	a bouquet of flowers, a pack of dogs, a colony of bees (as proposed by Benson et al.,1997) Radio station, water pollution, air strike, etc.
L5	Adverb+ Adjective	strictly accurate , sound asleep, etc.
L6	Verb adverb	Argue heatedly

Table 3.3: Subtypes of lexical collocations used in the study

As mentioned before, the test format was a multiple-choice test with the missing main node to be provided by the participants. The test items were constructed as multiple-choice items with three options or answer choices for each item and most of the distracters were near synonyms.

To increase the validity of the test, the multiple-choice collocation test was scrutinised by specialists in the field of language teaching. The test was approved by three native speakers of English and seven EFL specialists. Three were UK-based English native-speaker academics, and the other seven were EFL lecturers in the English Department at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University from different backgrounds (two Libyans, one Egyptian, one Iraqi and three Indians). The aim of consulting the EFL lectures was to judge the difficulty level of the items and to ensure their suitability for the subjects in the main study. Based on the judgments of both the native speakers and the EFL specialists, 68 items on the six types of

target lexical collocation were drawn up for the pilot study. Table 3.4 summarizes the distribution of the number of the lexical collocations in the multiple-choice test.

Type	Pattern	Number of items
L1	Adjective + noun	12
L2	Verb + noun	12
L3	Noun + Noun	12
L4	Noun + verb	12
L5	Adverb +adjective	8
L6	Verb+ adverb	12
Total		68

Table 3.4 Distribution of the number of lexical collocations used in collocation test (receptive test)

3.8.1.2 The Translation Task

For the translation task, initially 35 Arabic sentences, which included selected lexical collocations, were constructed. Knowing that translation is a demanding activity, the researcher tried to keep the Arabic sentence unambiguous and as simple as possible both semantically and structurally, hoping that the students would not feel linguistic pressure and thus focus more on how to render the problematic part in each sentence. Consequently, the participants were asked to translate only the underlined phrases from their mother tongue (i.e. Arabic) into English where the target lexical collocation had to be supplied. The remaining parts of the sentences were translated from Arabic into English to make sure that the questions would not lead participants to give answers involving aspects of grammar, e.g. tenses, preposition, articles and word such as determinates other than collocations. For example, in the following sentence, students were only asked to translate the underlined phrase (target collocation) from Arabic into English: هل تعتقد أن هذا اللون يناسبني؟ *

* Do you think this ....me? And the expected collocation will be:

* Do you think this **colour suits** me?

The aim of this test was to assess the participants' production knowledge of lexical collocations and to elicit any influence of the participants' L1 on their lexical collocation performance. The selected sentences included only the six patterns of lexical collocations mentioned above. The 35 different sentences of the translation task were given to three

Arabic specialists and two professional translators to judge the accuracy and difficulty level. In addition, the researcher gave the translated version (see Appendix 3) to the same three native speakers who validated the multiple-choice test in order to ensure that all the required translated phrases had accurate lexical collocations. Both the professional translators and the academic native speakers suggested that some sentences were a bit long and should be changed. Based on these judgments some changes were made and only 30 items were drawn up for the pilot study. Table 3.5 summarizes the distribution of the number of lexical collocations in the translation task.

Type	Pattern	Number of items
L1	Verb + noun	7
L2	Adjective + noun	6
L3	Adverb + adjective	5
L4	Noun + Noun	4
L5	Noun + verb	4
L6	Verb + adverb	4
Total		30

Table: 3.5 Distribution of number of lexical collocation used in translation task (Productive test)

3.8.3 Questionnaire

The third instrument was a self- reporting questionnaire (see Appendix 4) and was designed partly along the lines followed Shehata (2008). The main aim of the questionnaire was to help create a complete picture of the participants' profile, and to elicit some information about the participants' learning background, as well as to examining whether students had had exposure to learn English from any source other than that of the classroom. The questionnaire items were specifically focused and used Likert because these are highly appreciated by methodologists. The questionnaire contained 10 items and was translated by the researcher into Arabic (the participants' mother tongue see Appendix 5) for fear that some students would not understand the questions if they were given in English and thus could not give proper answers.

In the first section, the participants provided some demographic information which included major, age, gender, etc. In the second part of the questionnaire, the participants responded to

five questions on a 4-point Likert scale to report on their length of exposure to English on a daily basis. The participants were asked to respond to these questions by selecting the point on the 4-point Likert scale that best reflected their self-perceived amount of exposure. Participants had already been briefly informed about the purpose of the questionnaire and were encouraged by a short message (located at the top of the first page) to complete all its items. To assure the validity of the questionnaire, all of the questions were first validated and revised by an adviser and four EFL specialists in the English department in Yefren Faculty of Arts at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University. All the test materials including the multiple-choice test and the translation task as well as the questionnaire forms were distributed in the presence of the researcher and this helped achieve many goals:

- All questions regarding difficult words or ambiguous instructions were answered by the researcher as the aim of the two tests was to investigate the participants' lexical collocation knowledge and not their vocabulary knowledge.
- The researcher checked all completed test forms and questionnaires when they were handed into her to minimize missing data.
- The presence of the researcher encouraged the participants to complete the questions in the test items and questionnaire as she explained the importance of this study was to help Libyan learners in the future be aware of lexical collocations and avoid committing such errors in future.

The work was achieved via the sincere cooperation of the Heads and the staff of the four English Departments that the researcher visited.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

Firstly, the researcher contacted the Head of the English Department at Yefren Faculty of Arts, where the researcher was working as a staff member, and obtained approval to conduct the pilot study and a part of the main study. The researcher met some of the Faculty members and discussed the study with them in detail as well as discussing the necessary steps to be taken to conduct the research. Then the researcher visited other three Faculties at the same university and introduced herself as a doctoral student at Bangor University in the United Kingdom who was conducting research to fulfil the requirements of a Doctoral degree in the field of linguistics and language teaching. After obtaining permission from professors in the four Faculties of Arts at AL-Jabal Al-Gharbi University, the collocation test, the translation task and the questionnaire were administered at the most convenient time for these

professors' classes. The schedule of administering the collocation test, the translation task and the questionnaire for both the pilot and the main study is shown in Table 3.6.

Faculty name	Date	Faculty	Class	Date
F1 (Yefern) F2 (Kikla) F3 (Lasaba) F4 (Garian)	7/11/2010 —	F1 (Yefren)	4	5/12/2010
		F2 (Kikla)	1	25/11/2010
		F3 (AL-Asaba)	2	26/11/2010
	—	F4 (Garian)	1	30/11/2010
	—			

Table 3.6: Schedule of administering the collocation test, translation task and questionnaire

3.9.1 Pilot study

3.9.1.1 Piloting the Tests (the Collocation Test and the Translation Task)

The revised versions of both tests were piloted twice in November 2010 with 60 Libyan students at Yefren Faculty of Arts, one of the Faculties where the main study was going to take place. The main purpose was to find out how long it would take to answer the 68 items of the multiple choice collocation tests and the 30 items of the translation task. The pilot test was also aimed at ensuring that the language and the layout of both tests were appropriate for the target group. More specifically, it aimed to determine the suitability of the test and improve its validity and reliability for the main study. As a preliminary step, a pilot test was conducted one month before the main test at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year 2010/2011 and the data required for the main study was collected at a time convenient for the participants.

In one session, after a brief introduction (where the researcher put forward the aims of her study and explained that the students' answers were being used for research purposes only)

the students were asked to answer the multiple-choice test first and then after that the translation task was introduced. The students were also encouraged to express any doubts or questions they had.

As expected, it took about 55 minutes for the multiple choice collocation tests to be completed and 45 minutes for the translation task. During this time, the researcher sat behind the students so as to make them feel comfortable and not to interfere with them. The researcher also took notes on the difficulties students came across and the items they did not understand in order to modify the latter for the main study.

Based on the researcher's observation and the responses obtained from the pilot study, the items of two of the tests were carefully reviewed and some changes were undertaken. It was noted that some items were too wordy causing students to spend a longer time reading the sentences containing the test items; therefore, the researcher rephrased the long sentences making sure that clarity and brevity were maintained. For example, the wording of item 3 in the multiple-choice test was changed in the following manner.

3. (Original) When a person wants to start a business, he/she applies to get a loan and a banker interviews him/her. In order for a person to qualify for a loan from the bank, he/she has to ...... three conditions: character, capacity and collateral.

a. meet, b. pass, c. have

21. (Revised). In order for you to qualify for a loan from the bank, you must ....three conditions: character, capacity and collateral.

a. meet, b. pass, c. have

It was also noted that some items contained collocations that were either too difficult or not clear enough for the students. Consequently, such items were either eliminated or changed. For example, item 26, in the multiple-choice test was answered incorrectly by all groups in the pilot study and, therefore, had to be omitted.

26. An elderly person, especially one who is retired, is called a .... citizen.

a. senior, b. top, c. superior

Similarly, in the translation task, item 23 was not answered by any student in the pilot study and therefore it was omitted too.

23. I can use this credit card everywhere because it is <u>widely accepted</u>.

23 ـ استطيع استعمال بطاقة الائتمان هذه فى اى مكان لانها تحظى <u>بقبول واسع</u>

Such changes, therefore, resulted in discarding 8 items from the multiple-choice test and two items were discarded from the translation task. Subsequently, the final version of the multiple- choice test comprised only 60 multiple-choice items and the translation task comprised only 28 items to be administered to the participants in the main study. The distribution of the number of lexical collocations used in collocation test and in the translation task for the main study is shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8.

Type	Pattern	Example	Number of Items
L1	Adjective + noun	Heavy drinker	12
L2	Verb + noun	Take tablets	12
L3	Noun + Noun	Death toll	12
L4	Noun + verb	The album comes out	8
L5	Adverb + adjective	Strictly forbidden	8
L6	Verb + adverb	Disagree strongly	8
Total			60

Table 3.7: Distribution of the number of lexical collocations used in the collocation test for the main study

Type	Pattern	Example	Number of items
L1	Verb + noun	Make attempts	7
L2	Adjective + noun	Critical condition	6
L3	Adverb + adjective	Fully aware	5
L4	Noun + Noun	Ceasefire agreement	4
L5	Noun + verb	The car broke down	3
L6	Verb + adverb	Rain heavily	3
Total			28

Table: 3.8: Distribution of the number of lexical collocations used in the translation task (productive test)

3.9.1.2. Piloting the Questionnaire

Before the main administration of the questionnaire, a pilot questionnaire was conducted to determine the suitability of the statements and to detect any confusing wording. In addition, the pilot questionnaire aimed to find out how long it would take to fill it in and whether the layout was appropriate. The questionnaire was administered to 60 students majoring in English in the Yefren Faculty of Arts and it was translated by the researcher into the students' native language (i.e. Arabic). The students were asked to complete the questionnaire and to

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comment on any items they found difficult to understand and to add any remarks they considered relevant to the layout. During the administration, the time required for completing the questionnaire was observed. The questionnaire took an average of 15 minutes.

In the pilot study, the students pointed out some words which were confusing. Item number 1 was considered by 10 students to be vague and therefore recommended to be reworded. In addition, 15 students mentioned that the size of the print (10 point) used in the questionnaire was too small. On the basis of this feedback, the wording of the statement was modified and the size of the print was changed in the final version to be 13 point.

3.10 Main Study

3.10.1 Procedures and Scoring

After conducting the pilot test, the final version of the receptive collocation test was a 60 item multiple-choice test (see Appendix 1) and the translation task consisted of 28 sentences (see Appendix 2). Both tests were carried out in December 2010 and were administered during class time with the help of two faculty members. In general terms, the procedures followed in the main study were the same as those in the pilot study. Firstly, in each classroom, the researcher wrote on the board the title of the study with some examples of English collocations to ensure that the students understood the task. In addition, students were told that the main goal of these tasks was to investigate their knowledge of lexical collocations. After explaining the intended study to all the students, the researcher asked for voluntary participation, assuring them that confidentiality would be maintained. In addition, the students also were assured that the results obtained in both the multiple-choice test and the translation task would not have any influence on their final course remarks. What is more, they were told that their teachers would not see either the results of the multiple-choice test or the results of translation task so they could express themselves freely. Each volunteer was given an information sheet as well as a consent form to be filled out and signed. The instructions were written clearly on the front page of the test sheet. These instructions included:

- students' bio data to fill in: faculty, major, academic level, and gender.
- Further guidance clarifying the concept of collocations with examples in English and Arabic.

-illustrative examples at the beginning of every question to facilitate the process of answering the questions.

Additionally, participants were told to complete the tests to best of their abilities and were not allowed to use a dictionary or any other reference. The multiple-choice collocation test was administered first and then the translation task and both were in pencil-and-paper format.

In terms of administration and timing, each subject was allowed sufficient time to work individually on the test items. It took about 60 minutes for all the subjects to be finished in the multiple-choice test and 50 minutes to complete the translation task with a 15 minutes' break between the administration of the collocation test and the translation task. So fatigue was probably not a major factor in the subjects' scores. Both tests were administered in the same classroom and students were separated as much as possible to reduce any cheating to a minimum. Examinee names and other personal information were not evident at the scoring time. Once students finished taking the multiple-choice test, the researcher instructed them to leave the test materials behind on the desk and to take a 15 minutes' break before taking the second test (the translation task). After they left the room, the researcher collected the test materials and stored them by numbers. Next, all the students were given enough time to finish the translation task and after they had finished, the researcher collected the answering sheets and added them the previous test materials.

With regard to the questionnaire, the final version included 10 items and it was administered in the same environment and circumstances associated with the administration of both the collocation test and translation task. The administration of the questionnaire did not take a long time because all its items were clear as a consequence of running the pilot study. However, a few questions were raised by some students regarding how questions should be answered and the meaning of vocabulary. Since the items of the questionnaire did not gather information relating to any sensitive issues, the researcher asked the participants to write their names down. The participants were told to give accurate information and were reassured that confidentiality would be maintained. To make sure that the participants understood all the questions, the researcher went over each of them with the students giving any necessary explanation and translation in the students' mother tongue (i.e. Arabic see Appendix 5). In many cases, using L1 language saves time and confirms understanding. Once all the students had finished answering the questionnaire, all the questionnaires were collected after the class and coded for further analysis.

3.11 Data Analysis

3.11.1 Coding

The coding procedure was initiated at the beginning of the data collection. All the test materials were placed into folders with an identifying number on each. To maintain participants' anonymity and confidentiality, each participant's name was replaced by an identifying number that was used throughout for the subsequent procedures. After finishing the correction stage for both tests, the researcher copied the scores (of the multiple-choice test) of each student on a sheet of paper and matched them with each student's other test (the translation task) before entering them into a database. For instance, if Fatima's number was 77 and she had scored 40 in the multiple choice test (receptive test) and 23 in the translation task (productive test), her score would be entered in the database as follows: 77. 40. 23.

3.11.2 Scoring

3.11.2.1 Collocation Test and Translation task

After conducting the main test, the researcher collected the tests and the questionnaires and graded the tests by hand. Data gathered from the multiple-choice collocation tests were scored as correct or incorrect because all the items were restricted collocations that were put into well-fixed structures where only one possible answer was allowed. With regard to the translation task, each correct answer was assigned 1 point, totalling 28. The researcher scored the test and when there was a possible answer other than the required one (and which was not expected prior to giving the test or was not encountered during the piloting procedure) the researcher sought the help of the BBI Dictionary and Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English. Some of these instances are reported below under receptive source.

Like previous collocation studies, such as Nesselhauf's (2003) study, lexical choice was the focus of analysis, so morphological errors, which are errors in word formation, were not considered. Note the example below.

- He ...... several .... to help her.   لقد قام بمحاولات عديدة لكى يساعدها. -

In this case, answers such as *makes, make, making* and *attempts, attempt* were all counted as correct because the focus of the translation task was on the correct choice of collocates. The

response word *make* can collocate perfectly with *attempts* in this sentence, and thus the inflectional errors in verbs or numbers of nouns were ignored. In both the collocation test and the translation task items which were left blank were counted as incorrect.

- ## The use of the BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the BBI dictionary was used as a main reference guide throughout the design stages and in the analysis of the data. After the administration of the productive test of collocation (the translation task), it was found that some participants provided certain responses that were not anticipated prior to the designing of the test. For example, in items 5 and 6 below, some participants provided the verbs *take* and *make* as collocating with the noun decision, and *take* as collocating with the noun *look* respectively.

4- I do not want to .... the wrong decision and regret later.

17- We had a .... at the menu and went out.

When the BBI Dictionary was consulted, *take* and *make* were found to be possible collocates with the noun *decision* and *quick* with the noun *a look*, therefore such responses were considered valid.

- ## The use of the Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English

The Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English was also consulted throughout the stage of correction of the productive test. For instance, in items 20 and 28 below, some participants provided the adverbs *well* and *keenly* as collocating with the adjective *aware*, and *really* as collocating with the adjective *delicious*. When the Oxford Collocation Dictionary was consulted, it was found that these answers provided by some participants were correct and, therefore, they were also considered as valid.

20- I am .... aware that there are serious problems.

21- The meal was .... delicious.

3.11.2.2 The Self-reporting Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier, the self-reporting questionnaire was intended to examine whether students had had exposure to English from any source other than that of the classroom. It was divided into two parts: in the first part, students, for instance, were asked whether they had attended any private institution for English as a foreign language, and, if so, for how many hours. In the second part, students, for instance, were asked much time they spent in a day watching items in English such as TV news or movies. Students were required to choose one of the following answers: not at all, less than one hour, 1-3 hours, or more than 4 hours. These choices were later quantified for analysis purposes as follows:

Not at all = 0   Less than one hour =1

1-3 hours = 2   More than 4 hours = 3

3.11.3 Test Reliability

Reliability in quantitative analysis takes two forms, both of which are measures of internal consistency: the split-half technique and the alpha coefficient. Both calculate a coefficient of reliability that can be between 0 and 1. The alpha coefficient provides a coefficient of inter-item correlations, that is, the correlation of each item with the sum of the other items.

The reliability of both tests in this study was calculated using the Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (KR_{20}) based on the number of test items (k), the proportion of the responses to an item that are correct (p), the proportion of responses that are incorrect (q), and the variance (σ^2). The analysis yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.84 for test 1 (the multiple-choice test) and 0.70 for test 2. This indicates both tests are reliable. According to Scorepak's classification if the reliability coefficient is $\geq$ 0.80 then the range of test reliability is very good and it is acceptable. Table 3.9 summarizes the results for both tests.

	Number of cases	Reliability coefficient
Multiple-choice test	60	0.84
Translation task	28	0.70

Table3.9: Results of the reliability analysis for the multiple-choice test and translation task

3.11.4 Item Analysis

Item analysis is a process which examines student responses to individual test items (questions) in order to assess the quality of those items and of the test as a whole. According to Gronlund and Linn (1990: 255), item analysis is designed to ensure that the items function as they are intended. Item difficulty is simply the percentage of students taking the test who answered the item correctly. The larger the percentage getting an item right, the easier the item. The higher the difficulty index, the easier the item is understood to be (Wood, 1960).

3.11.4.1 Item Analysis Procedures

After the data collection, the researcher ran an item analysis utilizing SPSS version 15.0 in an attempt to obtain a general distribution of the test items as well as an estimate of the difficulty level of the collocations included in the multiple-choice test (the receptive test) and the translation task (the productive test). For computational purposes, each correct response was coded as 1 and the incorrect responses as 0.

3.11.4.1.1 Multiple-choice Test

For the multiple-choice test (the receptive test) the results revealed that the facility values of all items ranged from 59 to 38. Only two categories, according to the answer frequency of each item, can be classified as low and medium. Items that were answered correctly 50% or less were classified as low frequency items. Items that were answered correctly 51%- 90% were classified as medium-frequency. The following histogram (Figure 3.1) gives a visual presentation of the facility values of the test items.
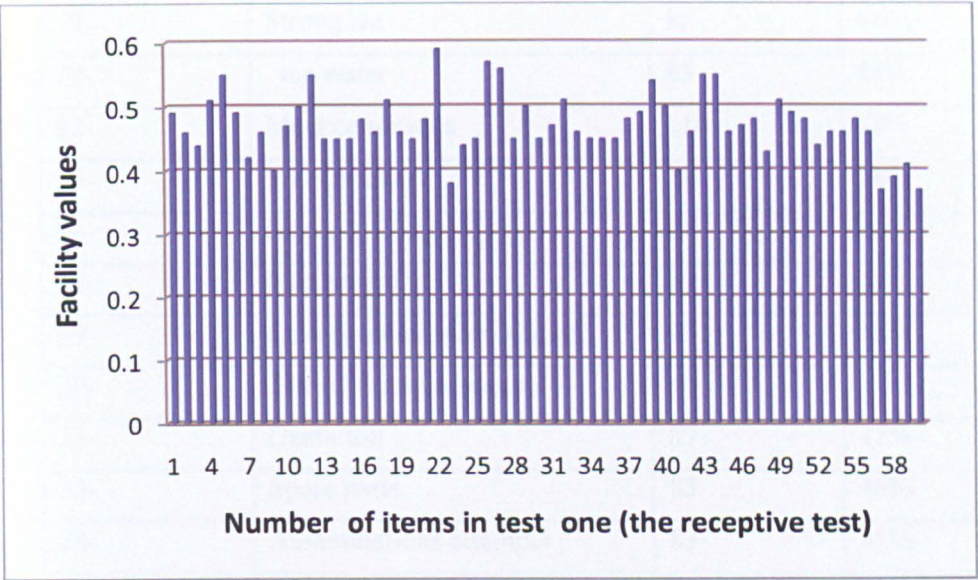
Figure3.1: Facility values of the multiple-choice test

As shown in Figure 3.1 the low-frequency collocations constituted the bulk of test items. Out of the 60 collocations in this test (the multiple-choice test), 49 items or 82% of the total number of collocations tested were low in frequency. Table 3.10 below shows the low-frequency collocations.

Test item no	Target collocation	Frequency of C /A	Percentages
1-	Distinctly remember	91	49%
2-	Tough meat	86	46%
3-	Flip quickly	81	44%
6-	Absolutely delicious	91	49%
7-	Badly hurt	78	42%
8-	Tell the truth	86	46%
9-	The volcano erupted	74	40%
10-	Start car	85	47%
11-	Tennis court	92	50%
13-	Stop sign	83	45%
14-	Second thoughts	83	45%
15-	Heavily populated	83	45%
16-	Bread crumbs	88	48%

19-	Strong tea	86	46%
20-	tap water	83	45%
22-	Meet conditions	110	48%
23-	Fully booked	70	38%
24-	Strongly disagree	82	44%
28-	Paid attention	83	45%
29-	Luxurious accommodation	92	50%
30-	The regulations require	84	45%
31-	Death toll	87	47%
33-	Spare parts	85	46%
34-	Assassinations attempts	83	45%
35-	Safety alarm	83	45%
36-	Fine Arts	84	45%
37-	Weather forecast	88	48%
40-	Generation gap	93	50%
41-	Calm settled	75	40%
45-	Frying pan	86	46%
46-	Detached house	87	47%
47-	Run a business	89	48%
48-	Barely see	79	43%
49-	Common sense prevail	94	51%
50-	Sentimental value	91	49%
51-	Pay dearly	90	48%
52-	Equal opportunity	82	44%
53-	Correctly addressed	86	46%
54-	Run tests	85	46%
55-	Break the rules	88	48%
56-	Smiled proudly	86	46%
57-	Fully insured	68	37%
58-	Health spa	72	39%
59-	Completely forgot	75	41%
60-	Brisk business	68	37%

Note: percentage = 82% of the total number of collocations tested.

Table 3.10: Target lexical collocations according to their low-frequency and percentages in the multiple-choice test

The medium-frequency collocations constituted the 11 items or 18% of the total number of collocations tested as shown in Table 3.11.

Item test number	Target collocation	Frequency of correct answers	Percentage
4-	Place her key gently	94	51%
5-	The meeting was held	102	55%
12-	Colour runs	101	55%
17-	Take a bath	86	51%
18-	Submit an application	94	56%
21-	Made mistakes	88	59%
25-	Surf the internet	84	57%
26-	Keep an eye	106	56%
27-	This colour suits	104	56%
32-	Heavy drinker	94	51%
38-	Rains heavily	90	54%
39-	Breakdown in communication	99	54%
42-	Very sleepy	101	55%
43-	Take tablets	101	55%
44-	Mock air-raid	101	55%

Note: percentage = 18% of the total number of collocations tested

Table 3.11: Target lexical collocations according to their medium-frequency and percentages in the multiple-choice test

3.11.4.1.2 The Translation Task (the Productive Test)

The results revealed that the facility values of items overall ranged from 57 to 29 for the translation task. The following histogram (Figure3.2) gives a visual presentation of the facility values for the test items.
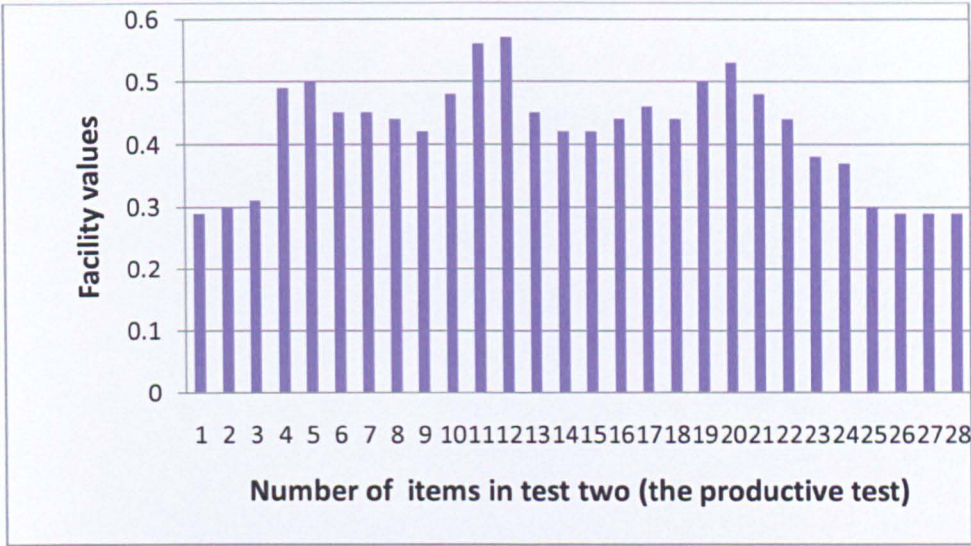
Figure 3.2: Facility values of the translation task.

As shown in Figure 3.2, only 3 items (11, 12 and 20) or 11% of the total number of collocations tested constituted the medium-frequency collocations. Table 3.12 shows the medium-frequency collocations.

Test item number	Target collocation	Frequency	Percentages
11-	Know exactly	104	56%
12-	Completely absorbed	106	57%
20-	Fully aware	98	53%
Total 3			

Percentage = 11% of the total number of collocations tested.

Table 3.12: Target lexical collocations according to their medium-frequency and percentages in the translation task

The low-frequency collocations according to the students' answers in this test constituted the bulk of the test items. Out of the 28 collocations, 25 items or 89% were low in frequency. Table 3.13 below shows the low frequency collocations.

Item number	Target collocation	Frequency of correct answers	Percentage
1-	Say his prayers	55	29%
2-	Dye hair	56	30%

3-	Critical condition	57	31%
4-	Does cooking	90	49%
5-	Make a decision	92	50%
6-	Made attempts	84	45%
7-	Rate of inflation	83	45%
8-	International disputes	81	44%
9-	Tap water	77	42%
10-	Behaved badly	88	48%
13-	The law forbids/prohibits	84	45%
14-	The plane was hijacked	78	42%
15-	Rise sharply	78	42%
16-	Nearly finished	81	44%
17-	Fast food	85	46%
18-	Ceasefire agreement	81	44%
19-	Limited knowledge	93	50%
21-	absolutely delicious	89	48%
22-	Blank tapes	71	44%
23-	The car broken down	70	38%
24-	Made her bed	68	37%
25-	Bitterly cold	56	30%
26-	Heavy rains	54	29%
27-	Maiden voyage	53	29%
28-	File a complaint	53	29%
Total 25			

Note: percentage = 89% total number of collocations tested

Table 3.13: Target lexical collocations according to their low-frequency and percentages in the translation task

Generally, the distribution of the test items by answer frequency revealed that the frequency of correct responses seemed to reflect the type of collocation in each category. For example those in the low level frequency tend to occur in formal discourse as the following examples in the translation task show, *file a complaint, ceasefire agreement, rise sharply*, etc, and as

also shown by some others in the multiple-choice test (e.g., *strictly forbidden, generation gap, assassinations attempts. etc*). On the other hand, those in the medium level frequency, where collocations were used correctly more frequently are common in usage and mostly used in everyday communication such as the following examples from the translation task, *know exactly, fully aware*.etc, and some others also appeared in the multiple-choice test such as *surf the internet, take a bath, keep an eye*, etc.

3.12 Summary

This chapter is concerned with the practical aspects of the study. It started by defining the problem of the research and presented the methodology used to collect its data. Only a quantitative data collection method was used in collecting the data needed for this study. The participants of the study were identified in terms of their number, age, gender and year of study. This was followed by explaining the procedure used to choose the items for both the multiple-choice test (the receptive test) and the translation task (the productive test).

Finally, validity, reliability and item analysis procedures were discussed with reference to the research paradigm and the research techniques. Many ethical issues were carefully considered throughout the research stages. Instruments were described and procedures outlined. Finally, the item analysis procedures were discussed. The study will proceed in the next chapter to a detailed examination of the results of the present study in order to answer the above mentioned questions. The results will be analysed statistically by means of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using the same Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which has been mentioned before. The following statistical analyses will include:

* Percentages to determine the overall level of performance of the subjects on the target lexical collocations in both the multiple-choice test and the translation task. Also to determine the collocation errors made by Libyan EFL learners due to the interference of their mother tongue (Arabic).

* A t-test to examine whether there is a significant statistical difference between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of English lexical collocations.

* Repeated measures to determine whether there are differences in performances between males and females, second year and third year students and between Faculties. These will be used to determine whether all kinds of collocations cause equal difficulties to Libyan EFL students.

* The Kruskal-Wallis test to check if there are any significant differences between a participant's proficiency in producing and recognizing collocations and their amount of exposure to the English language.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

In the previous chapter the research problem and questions were stated. This was followed by an explanation of the research design used for the collection of the data. The quantitative research method adopted in this work was presented including procedures for administrating the two tests as well as applying the self-reporting questionnaire. Reliability and validity in relation to the measuring instruments and the procedures were also discussed and, finally, the ethical issues were discussed in relation to the research method used and the data collection procedures.

In this chapter the raw data collected from the multiple-choice test (the receptive test), the translation task (the productive test) and the questionnaire are presented and analysed in relation to the research questions, using the SPSS for Windows (Version 15.0).The results will be shown following the order of the research questions.

4.1 The statistical analysis for the main four questions of the study

4.1.1 To what extent do Libyan students majoring in English have knowledge of English lexical collocations?

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Libyan university English language majors can use English lexical collocations properly. To gain data about the informants' ability in English lexical collocations, two tests of lexical collocations were administered based on the six patterns of Benson et al. (1986). A multiple-choice test, consisting of 60 items, was intended to elicit the learners' receptive competence in recognizing correct English lexical collocations. Test two was a translation task consisting of 28 items and was intended to explore the learners' production proficiency in this linguistic phenomenon. Both tasks were viewed as complementary indicators of the learners' overall competence in English lexical collocations.

To answer the first question, the percentage of correct answers of the participants in each test was calculated. Table 4.1 shows the results, presented as the number and percentage of correct answers of the participants in each test.

	Receptive test (MCQ) =60		Productive test (Translation task)=28	
Number	185		185	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Correct answers	5225	47%	2175	41%
Incorrect answers	5875	53%	3005	58%
Total	11100		5180	

Table 4.1 Number and percentage of correct answers of the participants in each test

Data analysis reveals that the overall level of performance of the subjects in the target lexical collocations is lower than would be expected considering the fact that the subjects were majoring in English and not in other subjects and 58% of them were third year students.

As indicated in Table 4.1 only 47% of the total attempts of all the subjects in the receptive test (the multiple-choice test) were correct, the results in the productive test (the translation task) were even lower where only 41% of the subjects' total attempts were correct.

4.1.2 Is there a difference between the participants' production and reception skills related to lexical collocation in English?

The second research question investigated the difference between the performance of participants in their receptive and productive lexical collocation knowledge. A t-test was used to examine whether there was a significant statistical difference between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of English lexical collocations. Table 4.2 shows the means, standard deviations, the minimum and the maximum percentage of correct scores of the whole group to obtain a picture of the general distribution of the data.

Table 4.2 shows that the average of the performance of the students in the receptive task was higher than their average performance in the productive task. The average score in test one (the receptive test) was 47% and the average score in test two (the productive test) was 42%; this would indicate that the students' performances in the test were moderate to poor. The average difference in scores is 5% (95% CI 2.7%-7.4%) as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Type of test	Total number of students	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Test1 (receptive)	185	15.00	86.67	47.0721	15.50676
Test 2 (productive)	185	17.86	78.57	41.9884	16.15758

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics of the percentage of correct scores in the two tests

In a univariate t-test this difference in percentage correct scores between the two tests is statistically significant (t=4.281, df =184, p<0.001). The mean score in test one (the receptive test) is 47 and the mean score in test two (the productive test) is 42. The t-test assesses whether the difference in the mean scores is statistically significantly different from zero; the p-value of <0.001 is less than 0.05 which indicates that the difference in mean scores is statistically significantly different from zero. Therefore, one can conclude that there is a difference in mean score between the two tests. Figures 3, 4 and 5 below show the distribution of scores in both tests and the distribution of the difference in score between the two tests.
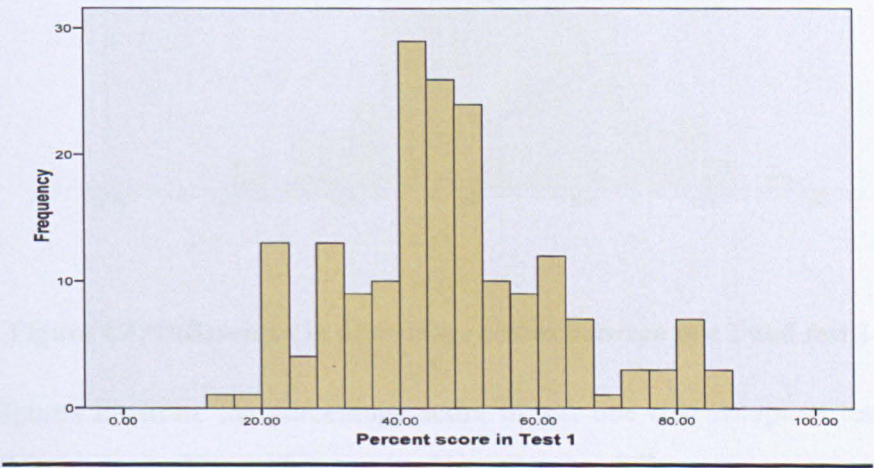
Figure 4.1: The distribution of scores in test one (the receptive test)
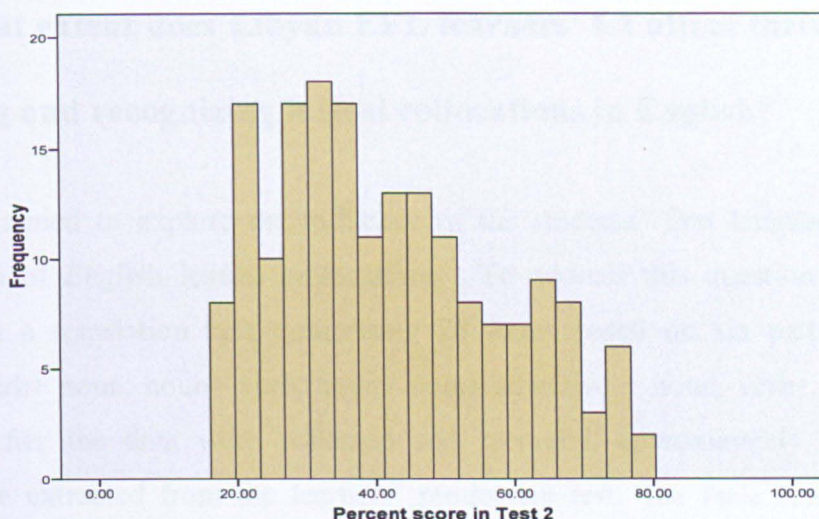
Figure 4.2: The distribution of scores in test two (the productive test)
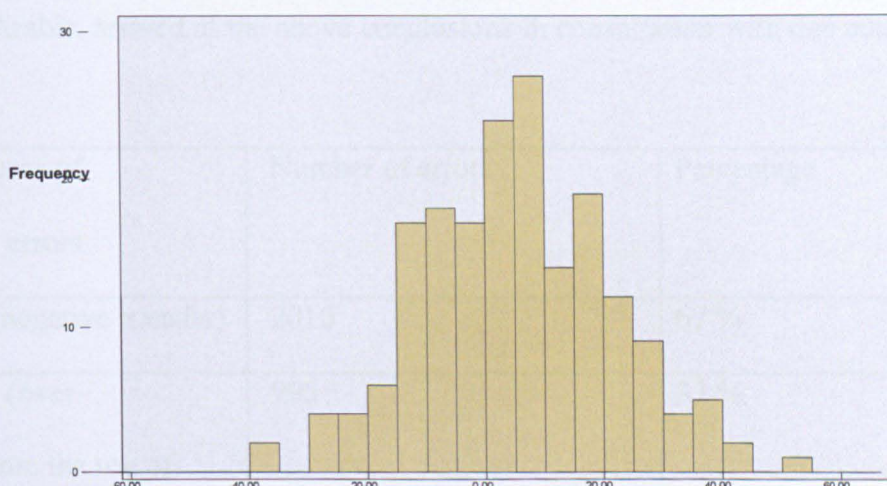
Figure 4.3: Differences in percentage scores between test 1 and test 2

The above Figures illustrate the percentage score in test one (the receptive test) and in test two (the productive test). These histograms show that the difference in percentage scores is normally distributed and it is safe to assume that the percentage of test one (the receptive test) is normally distributed and also reasonable to assume that the percentage of test two (the productive test) is normally distributed too. Therefore, it is appropriate to use t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyse these data.

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4.1.3 To what extent does Libyan EFL learners' L1 affect their proficiency in producing and recognizing lexical collocations in English?

This question aimed to explore the influence of the students' first language (Arabic) on theirproduction of English lexical collocations. To address this question the data were collected from a translation task comprising 28 items based on six patterns of lexical collocation (verb+ noun, noun+ verb, noun+ noun, adjective + noun, verb+ adverb, adverb +adjective). After the data were collected and recorded, approximately 3005 incorrect responses were extracted from the learners' productive test. The Table below (Table 4.3) shows that interlingual errors are the most common types of errors made by Libyan EFL students. They constituted 67% of the total number of errors, whereas intralingual errors constituted only 33%. Based on these results, it was concluded that first language interference in the production of lexical collocation was rather great. The researcher, who is a native speaker of Arabic, arrived at the above conclusions in consultation with one educated Arabic scholar.

Possible source of collocation errors	Number of errors	Percentage
Interlingal (negative transfer)	2010	67 %
Intralingual (over-generalization, the use of improper synonyms, ignorance of rule restrictions, simplification, etc.)	995	33 %

Table 4.3: The distribution of collocation errors among Libyan EFL learners in test 2 (the translation task).

This result showed that the impact of L1 on the use of lexical collocations seemed to be highly significant. In this case, the subjects manipulated the source language to produce the target language collocations when they failed to produce the appropriate equivalent forms of

collocations. For example *murder was done* instead of *murder was committed, arranged her bed* instead of *made her bed,* etc.

4.1.4 Is there a statistical difference between participants' proficiency in producing and recognizing collocations and their amount of exposure to the English language?

To examine the fourth question that explored whether the participants' self-reported amount of exposure to the English language was linked to the participants' performance on both receptive and productive collocation tests, the number and percentage of respondents in each category of questions (5-10) and the mean percentage correct score achieved for the students in each category is shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test for a significant difference in mean percentage of correct answers between the groups. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in scores according to how much time respondents spent listening to English radio programmes, English songs, English television, browsing English websites, reading English books and chatting online in English. Those who spent longer engaging in these activities tended to achieve higher scores in the tests. However, there were very few respondents in the higher categories for most of the variables.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage	Mean score	Chi-sq	p-value
Radio	Not at all	163	88	44.2		
	< 1hour	17	9	67.4	37.8	<0.001
	1-3 hours	2	1	81.7		
	>4 hours	2	1	77.5		
Songs	Not at all	109	59	38.2		
	< 1hour	61	33	55.2	102.7	<0.001
	1-3 hours	12	2	77.6		
	>4 hours	3	6	80.5		
Television	Not at all	134	73	40.8		
	< 1hour	37	20	58.5	86.0	<0.001
	1-3 hours	10	5	77.8		

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	>4 hours	4	2	75.4		
Websites	Not at all	136	73.5	41.5		
	< 1hour	34	18.4	56.2	74.2	<0.001
	1-3 hours	14	7.6	77.3		
	>4 hours	1	0.5	73.3		
Books	Not at all	120	65	42.0		
	< 1hour	55	30	53.9	41.9	<0.001
	1-3 hours	8	4	69.6		
	>4 hours	2	1	76.7		
Chat	Not at all	183	99	46.7		
	< 1hour	2	1	79.2	5.0	0.027
	1-3 hours	0	0	-		
	>4 hours	0	0	-		

Table 4.4: Categorical responses (Q5-Q10): Test 1 – percentage correct

Variable		Frequency	Percentage	Mean score	Chi-sq	p-value
Radio	Not at all	163	88	40.3		
	< 1hour	17	9	54.0	13.7	<0.001
	1-3 hours	2	1	44.6		
	>4 hours	2	1	64.3		
Songs	Not at all	109	59	37.4		
	< 1hour	61	33	46.5	25.3	<0.001
	1-3 hours	12	2	55.1		
	>4 hours	3	6	64.3		
Television	Not at all	134	73	38.2		
	< 1hour	37	20	49.4	25.1	<0.001
	1-3 hours	10	5	59.6		
	>4 hours	4	2	56.3		
Websites	Not at all	136	73.5	38.7		
	< 1hour	34	18.4	48.3	20.6	<0.0001
	1-3 hours	14	7.6	58.2		
	>4 hours	1	0.5	53.6		

Books	Not at all	120	65	39.3		
	< 1hour	55	30	46.0	9.7	0.021
	1-3 hours	8	4	50.9		
	>4 hours	2	1	55.4		
Chat	Not at all	183	99	42.1		
	< 1hour	2	1	33.9	0.5	0.501
	1-3 hours	0	0	-		
	>4 hours	0	0	-		

Table 4.5: Categorical responses (Q5- Q10): Test 2 – percentage correct

4.1.5 Are all patterns of lexical collocations equally difficult for Libyan EFL students?

To answer this question, repeated measures ANOVA was used to test whether there was a statistically significant within subjects' difference in the mean percentage scores in each lexical collocation pattern. The results from the within subjects ANOVA shows that the difference in average scores, shown in Figure 4.4, is statistically significant for both tests (test 1 F=12.697, p<0.001 and test 2: F=4.965, p=0.001), i.e. students find some types of lexical collocations more difficult than others in both tests. The mean percentage score in each lexical collocation for test 1 and test 2 is shown in Figure 4.4.
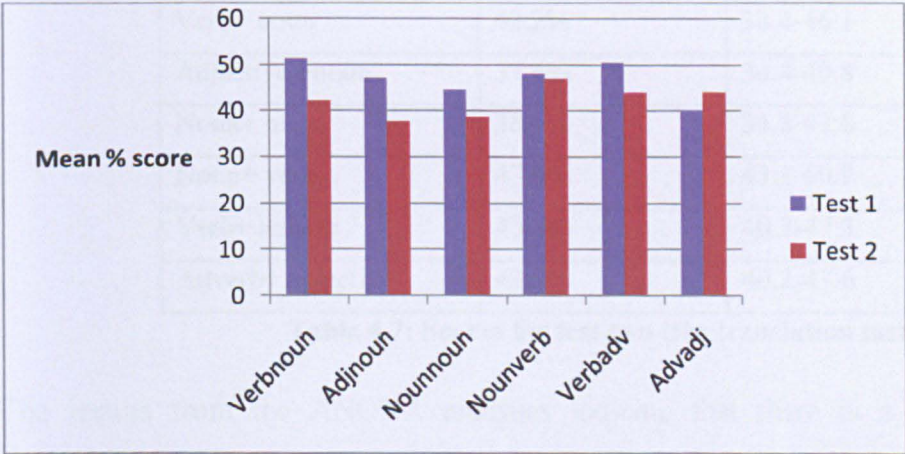
Figure 4.4: The mean percentage score for each lexical collocation for test 1 and test 2

The average percentage score achieved for each of the lexical collocations in each test is shown in the Tables below. As indicated in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, in test one (the multiple-

choice test) the highest score was for verb+noun and the lowest score was for adverb +adjective collocations. In test two (the translation task) the highest score was for noun+verb collocations and the lowest score was for adjective+noun. Within each test, lexical collocations whose 95% confidence intervals do not overlap can be considered significantly different from each other.

Lexical collocation	Mean score	95% Confidence Interval
Verb+ noun	51.4%	48.5-54.2
Adjective+ noun	47.1%	44.1-50.1
Noun+ noun	44.5%	41.6-47.4
Noun+ verb	48.0%	44.8-51.3
Verb+ adverb	50.5%	47.1-53.8
Adverb+ adjective	40.1%	36.9-43.3

Table 4.6: Scores for test one (the multiple-choice test)

Lexical collocation	Mean score	95% Confidence Interval
Verb+ noun	42.2%	38.4-46.1
Adjective +noun	37.6%	34.4-40.8
Noun+ noun	38.6%	34.3-42.8
Noun+ verb	47.0%	43.1-50.9
Verb+ adverb	43.8%	40.3-47.3
Adverb+ adjective	43.9%	40.2-47.6

Table 4.7: Scores for test two (the translation task)

The results from the ANOVA analyses indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean percentage score according to the lexical collocations for test one (the receptive test) and test two (the productive test) since both p-values are less than 0.05. In test 1 adverb +adjective collocations pose the most difficulty as they score lowest and in test 2 adjective+ noun collocations pose the most difficulty as they are the collocations that the students scored lowest in (the average score was 37.6% correct).

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4.2. The statistical analysis for the three sub questions

6- Is there a significant statistical difference between the performance of second and third year Libyan students majoring in English in producing and recognizing lexical collocations in English?

7- Is there a significant statistical difference between the performance of males and females in producing and recognizing collocations in English?

8-Is there a significant statistical difference between the performances of the four Faculties (Yefren Faculty, Gharian Faculty, Alasaba Faculty and Kikla Faculty)?

From the statistical point of view, these three questions (Q6, Q7 andQ8) should be subjected to the same statistical analysis at the same time in order to adjust for the potential effects of confounding. Confounding occurs when the measure of the effect of a factor on an outcome is distorted because of the association of the factor with other factors that may also be associated with the outcome. In this example, all three factors, gender, faculty and year may be associated with the outcome. If one just analysed each one separately, one would be unable to adjust the statistical analyses for the potential confounding effects of the other factors. By including two factors in each analysis one is able to get a measure of the effect of each factor on the outcome having adjusted for the potentially confounding effects of the other factor.

To this end, repeated measures ANOVA (also called a within-subject ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were differences in performances between males and females, second year and third year students and between Faculties. However, due to the fact that all year 2 students were in Faculties 2 and 3 and all year 3 students were in Faculties 1 and 4 (see Table 4.8 below),it was impossible to include all three factors (gender, year and faculty) in a single ANOVA. Therefore, two separate mixed ANOVA analyses were carried out using the variable 'test' as the within subjects variable and with(a) gender and year as between subjects' factors, and (b) gender and Faculty as the between subjects.

F	Y	Males	Females	Total
F1	3rd	9	30	
F1	2nd	6	15	60
F2	2nd	—	32	32
F3	2nd	10	35	45
F4	3rd	10	38	48

Table 4.8: Thedistribution of the subjects in the four Faculties according to number, gender and academic year

The results from the between subjects' analysis in the first mixed ANOVA, as shown in Table 4.9, indicate that there is no difference in the test results according to gender (F=0.003, p=0.960) but there is a significant difference in the test results according to year (F=7.612, p=0.006). Scores in year 3 are significantly greater than scores in year 2 (mean difference 5.6%). This means that the students in year three have done significantly better than the students in year two.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	422195.660	1	422195.660	1173.499	.000
Sex	.920	1	.920	.003	.960
Year	2738.530	1	2738.530	7.612	.006
Error	65479.035	182	359.775		

Table 4.9: Tests of between-subjects' effects (Measure1: results for gender and year)

The results from the within subjects' analysis shown in Table 4.10 indicate that there is a significant difference in the test scores within subjects (F=8.307, p=0.004) and this within subjects' difference in test scores does not differ significantly by gender (F=0.441, p=0.50 or year (F=0.032, p=0.857)

Measure: MEASURE_1

Source	Test	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Test	Linear	1092.509	1	1092.509	8.307	.004
Test * sex	Linear	57.956	1	57.956	.441	.508
Test * Year	Linear	4.258	1	4.258	.032	.857
Error(test)	Linear	23936.583	182	131.520		

Table 4.10: Tests of within-subject contrasts (Measure 1: results for sex and year)

Thus the results from the first ANOVA model show that there is no difference in tests' results according to gender (F= 0.003, P=0.960) but there is a significant difference in tests results according to year (F=7.612, P=0.006). Scores in year three are significantly greater than scores in year two (mean difference 5.6%). This means that students in year three have performed significantly better than students in year two.

The between subjects' results from the second mixed ANOVA as shown in Table 4.11 below indicates that there is no difference in the test results according to gender (F=0.024, p=0.878) and that the difference in test results according to Faculty is of borderline significance (F=2.626, p=0.052).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	403004.709	1	403004.709	1109.907	.000
Sex	8.534	1	8.534	.024	.878
Faculty	2859.978	3	953.326	2.626	.052
Error	65357.587	180	363.098		

Table: 4.11 Tests of between-subjects' effects (Measure1: results for gender and Faculty)

The results from the within subjects' analysis shown in Table 4.12 indicates that there is a significant difference in the test scores within subjects (F=6.949, p=0.009) and this within subjects difference in test scores does not differ significantly by gender (F=0.580, p=0.447) or faculty (F=0.389, p=0.761).

Measure: MEASURE_1

Source	Test	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Test	Linear	918.268	1	918.268	6.949	.009
Test * Sex	Linear	76.649	1	76.649	.580	.447
Test * Faculty	Linear	154.320	3	51.440	.389	.761
Error(test)	Linear	23786.520	180	132.147		

Table 4.12 Tests of within-subjects contrasts (Measure1: results for gender and Faculty)

These results support the previous findings, that there is a significant statistical difference in student scores between the two tests. This analysis also shows that the difference between the scores does not differ according to gender or year.

After the results of the mixed-ANOVA were obtained, a post hoc multiple comparison test was performed using the least significant difference test in an attempt to determine which Faculty mean was significantly different from others. These results are shown in Table 4.13.

Faculty (I)	Faculty (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	P-value	95% Confidence interval for the mean difference
1	2	4.6	0.121	-0.12,10.42
	3	6.3	0.018	1.09,11.58
	4	0.9	0.973	-5.06,5.24
2	1	-4.6	0.121	-10.42,1.22
	3	1.7	0.577	-4.41,7.89
	4	-4.5	0.144	-10.56,1.56
3	1	-6.3	0.018	-11.58,-1.10
	2	-1.7	0.577	-7.89,4.41

	4	-6.3	0.027	-11.77,-0.74
4	1	-0.9	0.973	-5.24,5.06
	2	4.5	0.144	-1.56,10.58
	3	6.3	0.027	0.74,11.77

Table 4.13: Results of the post hoc tests for Faculties

Post hoc tests indicate that the scores in Faculty 1 are significantly greater than the scores in Faculty 3 and the scores in Faculty 4 are significantly greater than the scores in Faculty 3 since the p-value for the least significant difference tests are less than 0.05 (0.018 and 0.027 respectively). The mean difference between the scores in Faculty 1 compared to Faculty 3 is 6.34 and the mean difference between the scores in Faculty 4 and faculty 3 is 6.25. This means that students in Faculties 1 and 4 have performed significantly better than the students in Faculty 3.

To sum up, the analysis shows that the test scores are significantly higher in students in year three compared to students in year two and the test scores are significantly higher in students from Faculty 1 (Yefren Faculty) and Faculty 4 (Gharian Faculty) compared to the students from Faculty 3 and 2 (Al-Saaba Faculty and Kikla Faculty). There is no difference in the scores according to gender. However, as the difference in scores (within subject difference) is not significantly different according to gender, year or Faculty, this means that, although there is a significant difference in scores between test one and test two, the magnitude of the different scores between test one and test two does not differ according to gender, year or Faculty.

4.3 Summary

This chapter introduced the statistical procedures and the results of the study presented in Chapter 3, as the researcher of the current study sought responses to the thesis questions. Descriptive statistics that presented the means and standard deviations of all the variables were calculated in order to determine the extent to which Libyan university English language majors can use English lexical collocations properly. An independent sample t-test, paired-sample t-test, and repeated measure ANOVA, along with the post-hoc test, were also used to discover the differences in participants' performance in the productive and receptive collocation tests according to gender, year and Faculty. In the ANOVA analysis there were two separate ANOVA analyses (gender, year and faculty) and each analysis were carried out in order to explore two aspects of the data: (1) between subjects' differences in test scores and (2) within subjects' differences in test scores.

Overall, the results of the analysis showed that the English lexical collocational knowledge of the Libyan EFL students was relatively low and that their performance was different in two dimensions (reception and production).The results also showed that the performance of Libyan EFL students in the productive test was influenced by their L1 (Arabic), and the relationship between the participants' self-reported amount of exposure to the English language and their collocational knowledge was statistically significant. In addition, it was found that the adverb+ adjective lexical collocation was the most difficult pattern for EFL learners in the receptive test, whereas the adjective+ noun lexical collocations caused the most difficulties for them in their productive test.

The results also showed that there was a significant statistical difference in mean test scores (test 1 and 2) according to year (p= 0.006) and a borderline significant statistical difference in mean tests' scores according to Faculty(p=0.052) from the between subjects' analysis, but these results were not significant in the within subjects' analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Study Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the study reported in Chapter Four. It begins with interpretations of the findings of the study with reference to other important investigations carried out in this area. Each research question and its results will be provided, followed by a comparison to previous studies. The four main questions of the study are presented first, and then the three sub- questions of the study come next.

5.2 Discussion of the main four questions of the study

5.2.1 Discussion of the first question of the study related to the general collocation competence of EFL Libyan university students

The investigation of the general lexical collocation knowledge of EFL Libyan learners is the first aspect of the current study. To conduct this investigation, the researcher used a multiple choice collocation test and a translation task to test the participants' general lexical collocation competence. A cursory look at the quantitative results presented in chapter four indicates that the EFL Libyan learners' knowledge of English lexical collocation was lower than would be expected. As indicated in table 4.1 in chapter four, only 47% of the total attempts of all the subjects on the recognition task (multiple-choice test) were correct. The results on the production translation task were even lower and only 41% of the subjects' answers were correct. This is quite disappointing since these learners have been studying English for at least eight years and they are majoring in an English language department.

Overall, the findings obtained from the first research question of this study are in line with other studies such as Bahns and Eldaw (1993), Farghl and Obiedat (1995), Hussein (1998), Howarth (1998), Bonk (2000), Cooper (2000), Zaghoul and Abdul Fathah (2003), Mohmoud (2005), and El-Masharawi (2008) which reported low levels of collocational knowledge of EFL learners. For instance, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) state that learners' knowledge of collocation does not develop in parallel with their knowledge of vocabulary and this may be in part due to the fact that learners do not therefore, pay any attention to learning them.

An explanation for the low level of English lexical collocational knowledge of EFL Libyan university students could be attributed to the following factors. It is the researcher's belief

that the interaction between all the factors discussed below was the ultimate reason for the weak results obtained in this study.

- Students' insufficient reading experience is assumed to restrict their knowledge of lexical collocations. EFL Libyan students seem to be not autonomous learners. They just depend on and take in what the teacher gives to them. In other words, they depend heavily on their textbooks and do not try to expose themselves to extra reading materials such as books, short stories, magazines, newspapers, etc. It is known that there is a direct relationship between the amount of reading done by students and their knowledge of vocabulary (El-Masharawi, 2008). In addition, students' lack of exposure to other various sources of English language, particularly, to a stock of native speakers' conventional collocations such as may be encountered on radio, TV, web sites, etc is assumed to be another influential factor in their low proficiency in English lexical collocations. For instances, collocations such as 'death toll', 'sentimental value', 'barely see' and 'mock air-raid' may be required through reading and listening to radio and TV, and do not usually feature in their text books.

- One other probable reason for their relatively low achievement may the method of teaching which is still dominant in Libyan classrooms. Libyan EFL teachers seem to overemphasize the grammar in both teaching and testing at expense of the lexicon. They do not pay attention to teaching of collocations, and to make the matter worse, they do not encourage their students even to use a dictionary of English collocations. As a result, learners acquire L2 words individually or in isolation, without attention given to the relations that words have with one other. Latiwish (2003) explained that learning English as a foreign language in Libya is viewed as a matter of mastering grammatical rules and vocabulary, and many English language curricula and accompanying course books are designed to promote this by memorisation.

- The adopted language learning materials in Libyan universities seem to have much influence on the issue of the students' low knowledge of English lexical collocation. It goes without saying, that the L2 learners, particularly in formal learning situations, are often exposed to text of rather restricted lexical content and very simplified structure.

Having a brief look at the reading, listening, speaking, writing and translation materials used in the departments of English language at Libyan universities, it can be noticed that much emphasis was only given to the specific aspects of language such as grammatical rules and individual words, whereas the area of collocation did not receive an adequate emphasis in the learners' learning materials as a crucial and vital area of language learning.

Thus, the results of this study accord with the voices calling for teaching lexical collocation such as McCarthy (1990), Lewis (1993), and Hill (2000). For instance, McCarthy (1990) mentioned that the learners from early stage need to focus on the acquisition of collocations to enrich their vocabulary and to help them produce natural sounding sentences.

Also, Lewis (1993) points out that raising awareness of collocation can be incorporated into the teaching and learning process to expand the learners' mental lexicon proficiency. Thus, it seems reasonable to claim that the knowledge of lexical collocation is central in building up students' confidence, therefore, collocations should be emphasised in second foreign language classrooms to enhance effective language learning.

Interestingly, this study corroborates with the research of Hussein (1990) and the results of Mahmoud (2005) and others by confirming the low collocational level of Arabic-speaking university students majoring in English in EFL contexts. While 51.9% of the collocations the participants used in Hussein's study and 64% in Mahmoud's study were wrong, in this study 58% of the collocations produced by the EFL participants (in the translation task) and 53% (inthe multiple-choice test) were erroneous. The difference in percentages between the results of the three studies are probably due to the differences in the nature of the tasks used; Hussein used only a multiple choice task, Mahmoud used a writing task and this study used two type of tests, the multiple-choice test and the translation task. One more reason for this difference may be related to the selection of the used items. Although the number of incorrect collocations was lower in Hussein's (1990) study than Mahmoud's (2005) study and the current study, Hussein's study was the only study of the three that did not describe how the test items were selected. However, all the aforementioned studies agreed with previous research on the poor collocational knowledge of Arabic-speaking learners of English majoring in English.

In summary, the findings of this study are in agreement with the findings of the majority of the studies mentioned in the literature review in chapter two which found that EFL learners

have insufficient knowledge of English collocations due to their lack of awareness of the existence of collocations, and also because they were probably not well trained on learning vocabulary.

5.2.2 Discussion of the results of the second question of the study related to the differences between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of English lexical collocations

The issue of the differences between the participants' receptive knowledge of lexical collocations and their productive knowledge of collocations is the second aspect in the current study. The second research question addressed in the this study asked whether there was a significant difference between Libyan EFL learners in regards to their receptive and productive knowledge of English lexical collocations. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the researcher used two instruments in order to achieve the objective of this question. A multiple-choice test (see Appendix 1) was the main instrument to assess the participants' receptive knowledge and the translation task (see Appendix 2) for the purpose of examining their productive knowledge of the same types of English lexical collocations (verb+ noun, noun+ verb, noun+ noun, adjective+ noun, verb+ adverb, adverb +adjective). One point which worth noting here is that, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the use of translation task as a technique to measure the foreign language learners' productive knowledge has drawbacks, on being that it is not very productive, because translating single words is a rather artificial task at some remove from the reality of communicative language use. But it still considered a technique which can yield insights (Milton, 2009).

Literature has various definitions of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. For example, Laufer et al. (2004) describe receptive knowledge as retrieval of the word form and productive knowledge as retrieval of the word meaning. Also, in his study, Webb (2008) define receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recognize the form of a word and to define or find a synonym for it, while productive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recall the form and meaning of a foreign language word. The common characteristics of these definitions on receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recognize the form and retrieve the meaning in listening and reading. Whereas productive vocabulary knowledge defined as the ability to retrieve and produce the appropriate spoken or written form of a word in the target language to express a meaning by speaking or writing (Nation,1990). In

this study, the receptive task required learners to look at the target English words and choose the right collocation while the productive task presented the target words in L1 and required learners to recall the English words.

From the results obtained in Chapter Four (see Table 4.2), there was a slight difference between the mean scores of the multiple-choice test and the translation task. Although collocational mismatches were frequent in the participants' answer, both productively and receptively, and neither of them reached 50%, a t-test of these two means confirmed that there is a slight difference between them (t=4.281, df =184, p < 0.001). In the light of these results, it is plausible to suggest that lexical collocations types are more difficult at the productive than at the receptive level and only one type of collocations shows contrary evidences (see section 5.4).

Such a finding was expected because evidence shows receptive knowledge typically precedes productive mastery. There is a general assumption that a learner's receptive vocabulary knowledge will be different from his/her productive vocabulary knowledge. The number of words that a learner can recognize in the context of speech or writing is likely to be different from the number of words the same learners can call in mind and use. However, Melka (1997:85-89) points out that boundary between receptive and productive knowledge are fuzzy according to adverse linguistic and pragmatic factors. He argues that receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge is a continuum and it reflects the notion that one has to perceive a word before he/she produces it.

In general, the findings of this study are in congruence with many other research findings such as Melka (1997), Caroli (1998), Nation (2000), Wang (2001), Taeko (2005), Shehatta (2008), Brashi (2009) and Alsakran (2011) which confirmed the common sense views that receptive knowledge of collocations was generally larger than the productive one and it comes before the productive knowledge at all stages of language learning, For instance, Caroli (1998) and Koya (2005) indicated that the participants in their studies were able to judge the correctness and incorrectness of the given collocations on the receptive test, but they encountered difficulties in producing the correct collocation on the productive test.

Nevertheless, in Al-Amro's (2006) study, the participants were more accurate in the productive test than in the receptive test. Although this finding is inconsistent with the

present study, Al-Amro reported that "it was due to the fact that the collocations included in the receptive test were of lower frequency than the other collocations in the productive test" (p. iv).

Based on the results obtained, the researchers have attributed the differences between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge to the following possible explanations.

* The format of the receptive test and the productive test might play a role in the results gained with regard to the differences between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of the target lexical collocations. Milton (2009) claimed that 'it seems reasonable to assume that the listener or reader of a text can often call on variety of contextual and other information to reach meaning. However, in production, when the learner is under pressure of time for communication, these clues will be missing and the learner will have to rely on the fewer words they have accessible in memory (p.117).

In other words, whilst it was easy for students to select the correct answer from a limited number of choices in the multiple-choice test (receptive test), it seems to be difficult for them to produce the target lexical collocation according to the sentences provided. For instance, in item number (6) in the receptive test (see Appendix 1), it seems relatively easy for students to choose *absolutely* from a list of three choices *(a. completely b. absolutely c. d. wholly)* as a target collocation *to* fill in the blank in the sentences provided: *You should try this dessert. It tastes .... delicious.* One the other hand, it seemed to be difficult for some of the participants to produce the same type of this lexical collocation (adjective +noun) in item number 21 in the productive test (see Appendix 2) where students were asked to translate the following Arabic sentence:

كانت الوجبة لذيذة تماما . / *kant alwaӡba lazeda tmman/*

The meal was .... delicious.

*Another reason may be traced to the challenging task of the translation process that inevitably involves two languages and two cultural traditions. Farghal and Shannaq (1999:122) claim that each language appears to have its own collocation patterns which reflect the speakers' mentality, knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, habits and other things . There are a lot of examples that illustrate how if the cultural settings of the source and target languages are significantly different, use of collocations will be unlikely

and will not be used by the target learner. One example, *bread* collocates with *butter* in English but in Arabic, /Xubz/ 'bread' collocates with /melh/ 'salt'. Another example, English collocation *deliver a baby* has /yuwallidu imra'atan/ as an Arabic equivalent. It seems that in the process of childbirth, English prefers to focus on the baby, whereas Arabic focuses on the woman. Hence, it would be unacceptable, under normal circumstances, to speak of delivering a woman in modern English (Baker, 1992:61).

In short, Libyan EFL learners, it seems, will need to develop larger receptive collocation knowledge in order to develop their productive knowledge of lexical collocations that can lead to effective communication in writing and speech.

5.2.3 Discussion of the third research question of the study related to the influence of the learners' L1 (Arabic) on their productive knowledge of English lexical collocations

The influence of the L1 on the participants' knowledge of English lexical collocations was one of the main dimensions under investigation in the current study. From the literature, it is plausible to say that deviations resulting from interlingual transfer have been recorded at all linguistic levels,(e.g Gass and Selinker, 1983, Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Bahns, 1993; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Huang, 2001, Zughoul & Abdul-Fattah, 2001, 2003; Nesselhauf, Mohamed, 2005; Shehata 2008; Brashi 2009). The present study has shed light on the transfer of lexical collocations from Arabic into English, an area that has not received much attention so far. The present study used the translation task (productive test) as the main instrument to examine the influence of the participants' first language (Arabic) on their production of English lexical collocation. Zimmermann and Schneider (1987) pointed out that despite the well-known fact that translating is in many ways an artificial form of L2 communication, at least as compared to everyday conversation, it seems to be the safest source of information about processes of lexical search, more so than reproductive exercises: the original intended meaning is mostly given for the analyst (except for misinterpretations of the source text) therefore (some aspects of) learners' strategies can be pinned down with higher certainty (p.178). Furthermore, when learners perform translation tasks, the influence

of their mother tongue could be observed (Bahns, 1993; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Farghal and Obiedat, 1995).

Considering Arabic as the L1 of the participants in this study does not rule out the possibility of its influential role in either facilitating or hindering the parallel English lexical collocational that they choose or produce. According to the theory of contrastive analysis[12](e.g. James, 1988) the greater the difference between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected.

It is worth mentioning that, collocations in Arabic will not often have an equivalent in English. Crystal (1987) is of the opinion that collocations differ greatly between languages and provide a major difficulty in mastering foreign language. For instance, in Arabic the verb فاسد /fa:sid/ has a among its translation equivalents in English: *rotten, rancid, addled, sour* etc. but heir collocational patterns and restrictions are different. In Arabic, one can say/ labann fa:sid/ (i.e. sour milk), /ʒubnun fa:sidun / (i.e. rancid cheese) and / bajdun fas:sidun/ (i.e.addled eggs). In English there are restrictions on the use of *rancid* and *addled*: the former more habitually co-occur with *butter, cheese, bacon* etc. and the latter with *eggs, brains* etc

Roughly speaking, the results in Chapter Four indicated that most lexical collocations studied here challenged Libyan EFL learners in some way, and there was a considerable influence of learners' mother tongue on their production of lexical English collocations. About 67% of collocational errors made by Libyan EFL students were due to inter-lingual transfer (negative transfer). The negative transfer was responsible for the highest percentage (50%) of these errors. Intra-lingual factors such as overgeneralization, the use of synonyms, the over-use of some lexical items.etc appears to be other factors leading to learners' errors, and were responsible for about 33% of errors. Below is a detailed analysis of the learners' responses in order to identify the influence of their mother tongue –Arabic- and other factors on their production of English lexical collocations. The Table 5.1 shows the unacceptable collocations provided by the students in the productive test (translation task).

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[12] Contrastive Analysis was used extensively in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) in the 1960s and early 1970s, as a method of explaining why some features of a target language were more difficult to acquire than others

Item no	Target collocations	L1 language corresponding collocations	Students' answers
1-	Says his prayers	يؤدى صلواته /yuwadi salwath/	Makes/does/performs his prayers
2-	Dye their hair	يصبغون شعرهم /yasbeɣonʃ ʕrahm/	Darken/dye/colour their hair
3-	Critical condition	وضع حرج /wadaʕ ħaraʒ/	Bad/rough/difficult condition
4-	Does cooking	تقوم بأعمال الطهى /taqwm beaʕmaal altʕh ī/	Make cooking
5-	Take a decision	يتخد قرار /yataxed qarar/	Have/get a decision
6-	Make attempts	يعمل محاولات /yamel muʕwlat/	Do attempts
7-	Rate of inflation	معدل التضخم /muadel altadʕdxm/	Amount/grade /level of inflation
8-	International disputes	المنازعات الدولية /al munazʕt aldwlea/	World problems/ international problems
9-	Tap water	ماء الحنفية /maa al hanafya/	pipe/ tube water
10-	Behaved badly	تصرف بسوء /tasrafa be su/	Behaved in a wrong way/incorrectly/ not in the right way
11-	Know exactly	اعرف تماما /arʕeftma mn/	Know completely/ fully
12-	Completely absorbed	منغمسين بشكل تام /munɣamesen beʃkel tam/	Highly/greatly absorbed
13-	The law forbid	القانون يحرم /al qanwen juʕrem/	The law does not allow/ prevent
14-	The airplane was hijacked	الطائره اختطفت /al tʕera wxteteft/	The airplane was kidnapped/ lost
15-	Rise sharply	ارتفعت بشدة /ertfʕt beʃeda/	Rise strongly/ highly/harshly
16-	Nearly finished	تقريبا انهيت / taqrebn anhet/	About to finish/ nearly/ almost finished
17-	Fast food	الوجبات السريعة / al waʒbat alsarʕa/	Quick food
18-	Ceasefire agreement	وقف اطلاق النار /waqef etʕlaq alnar/	Fire stopping agreement/ no fire agreement
19-	Limited knowledge	معرفة محدودة /maʕrefa maʕduda/	Small amount of knowledge/ no so much knowledge
20-	Fully aware	مدرك تماما /mudrek tma man/	Completely aware
21-	Absolutely delicious	لذيذة تماما /lazeda tmamen/	The meal was very/ very much delicious
22-	Blank tapes	اشرطة فارغة /aʃretafareya/	Empty/unrecorded tapes
23-	His car broke down	تعطلت سيارته /tʕtʕalet syarth/	His car stopped working/ damaged
24-	Made her bed	رتبت سرير نومها /ratbat sarer nwmeha/	Arranged / tided up her bed
25-	Bitterly cold	جو قارص البرودة / alʒw qares alburwda/	Very cold

26-	Heavy rain	امطار غزيرة /amtˤar ɣazera/	Strong /hard rain
27-	Its maiden voyage	رحلتها الاولى/reʕltwha alwla/	Its first trip/round
28-	Filed a complaint	قدم شكوى /qdma ʃqwa/	Present/offer a complaint

The Table 5.1: Unacceptable collocations provided by Libyan learners in the productive test (translation task)

Through a look at the lexical collocations produced by Libyan learners in table 5.1, it is possible to say that there are many factors affected their production of lexical collocations. These are considered below.

5.2.3.1 Interlingual transfer factors

The analysis of the students' data revealed that the students transferred extensively from their first language since it is the source language in the second task. This transfer is both negative and positive. The students do exploit their knowledge of a first linguistic system as a source of knowledge; however, the degree of negative transfer is far greater than the positive transfer.

5.2.3.1.1 Negative transfer (inappropriate word-for-word translation)

A close analysis of the unacceptable collocations produced by Libyan EFL learners showed that the students have frequently applied word for word translation; which fostered negative transfer. In other words, the students did not produce these combinations as readymade collocations; they have translated each element as a separate item and combined them according to grammar rules.

As indicated by Huang (2001: 116) that L1 influence is most prevalent when the learners perform translation tasks. Because those learners do not have a sufficient knowledge in collocations, they rely heavily on the L1 as the only resource and thus do better in those collocations that have L1 equivalents than those that do not. McCarthy et al. (2010:34) also claim that 'if learners use collocations that are not typical, a possible explanation is that they are translating from their first language'. It is observed from learners' responses in translation task that Libyan EFL learners seemed to think and prepare their ideas in their native language and then translate them into English.

In the case of the current study (Libyan learners), there are two varieties of Arabic from which the participants can transfer: Modern standard Arabic and Non-Standard Arabic. The

following collocations are examples of the negative influence on the participants' first language, Arabic on their production of some lexical collocation: *make/do his prayers, empty tapes, darken /colour their hair, strong rain, his car damaged/ done, offer/present a complaint, sharply cold, tided up/arranged her bed, rise strongly/ highly, behaved in a wrong way, planes was kidnapped, fast food, pipe water, and no fire agreement.*

For example, in item number (1), the students have negatively transferred يؤدى صلواته /yuadi salawath / from Arabic translating it as *makes/ does his prayers* instead of *say his prayers*. In Arabic the verb /ysalli/ (to pray) and /yuwadi al salwat/ (to perform the prayer) are often used in this context. /yaqul salawath/ which is the literal translation of 'say his prayer' is not used in Arabic. Another possible reason for this deviation (*makes/ does his prayers*) is cultural interference (see 5.2.3.3).

Also, in item number (22), the students translated word for word the Arabic combination اشرطة فارغة / aʃretafareya / rendering *empty* as *blank* and translated *blank* into false cognate and combined these elements to produce the combination *empty tapes* with no awareness of the incompatibility of the items. Such use of '*empty*' instead of '*blank*' might be explained by the fact that '*empty*' and '*blank*' are expressed by the same lexical item in Arabic which /fareγ/.

In particular, Libyan students had a problem with certain collocations which did not have exact equivalents in Arabic. As a result, when students did not know a certain collocation, they relied on their first language. The collocations, *file a complaint, bitterly cold*, and *make her bed*, for instance, were the most problematic collocations in this task. In addition to the fact that such collocations do not have Arabic equivalents and thus pose a difficulty to students, some of them also differ from other collocations in that they enjoy a relatively highly degree of idiomaticity and thus it is semantically less transparent (e.g., *file a complaint*). As such, the difficulty students had with those collocations might be explained by either the nature of the collocation or negative transfer factors.

The other point that should be emphasized here is that many students were unaware of the distinctions between *make* and *do* and assume that they were similar, as a result they used *do* where they should use *make* as in the following examples: *do attempts /make most of the cooking.* It seems that they translated these two verbs into its core meaning in Arabic and as a result they produced combinations based on the semantic of individual items. In addition, the students wrongly equated the verb يقوم ب /yaqum bi/ with to *do* or to *make* because in Arabic,

the verb يقوم بى /yaqumbi/ enters in a variety of combinations meaning roughly to *perform*. Clear enough they used *to do/* to make as equivalents to the Arabic verb يقوم بى /yaqum bi /. In other words, they are unfamiliar or confused over the collocational behaviour of do and make. Balhouq (1982) claimed that due to the high frequency and generality of both *do* and *make*, the intermediate-advanced learners will certainly be acquainted with *do* and *make* on the levels both of reception and production.

This finding gives clear evidence of L1 influence on the use of collocations, which contradicts claims of the insignificance of the influence of an L1 on learners' use of L2 collocations (Lesniewska, 2006).

In brief, one can conclude that Libyan EFL students are unaware of the phenomenon of collocations and of the existence of collocational restrictions on word combinations. They have translated word for word, rendering the core meaning of each target item by its direct equivalent without consideration of the surrounding items.

5.2.3.1.2 Positive transfer
Like negative transfer, positive transfer seems to have an influential role on Libyan EFL learners' production of certain types of English lexical collocation. It was clear that in responding to certain test items, participants were aided by positive transfer from Arabic. Among these forms are (*take decision, know exactly, nearly finished, fully aware, completely absorbed)* which are considered to be very clear examples of positive transfer from Arabic. The translations provided by most students regarding these examples seem to be successful because the English and the Arabic collocations in these case sare congruent, i.e. they are semantically identical. For example, the majority of the students have used restricted collocations: *to make a decision, to take a decision* which semantically and structurally congruent with the Arabic combinations يتخذ قرارا /yataexd qararn /. This semantic and syntactic congruency makes the use and the translation easy.

In short, translations supplied by the students showed considerable influence from Arabic. It is possible that the nature of the test, i.e. translation, could have increased L1 influence. L1 interference has been also reported in past studies on collocations involving a translation test.

Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn from the overall collocation error types presented above is that Libyan EFL learners depended on interlingual transfers to facilitate learning. This result confirms the results found by (Elkhatib, 1984; Farghal and Obiedat, 1995; Bahans and Eldaw, 1993; Biskup ,1993; Nesselhauf, 2003; Mahmoud,2005, Brashi, 2009, Abu Naba'h, 2012) which attributed the collocation errors made by EFL/ESL to the intrelingual and intralingual transfer. Farghal and Obiedat (1995), for instance, found that Jordanian students performed well when targeted collocations had an Arabic equivalent. For example, students found items such as *hot food, striped shirt*, and *salty soup* easy. On the other hand, students had problems with collocations that no equivalents in Arabic. For example, students used *heavy tea* for the target collocation *strong tea.*

Abu Naba'h (2012) reached the same conclusion in which he found that Jordanian EFL learners had difficulty with items that had no corresponding patterns in the L1, such as *eat a bite* for *take a bite* and *red tea* for *black tea.* A Similar conclusion was reached by Bahans and Eldaw (1993), and Biskup (1993). They found that, in ESL, collocations that had equivalents in students' L1 were easier to acquire than those who did not have L1 equivalents. , and thus were more likely to be elicited than the ones having no equivalents in students' L1. In addition, Nesselhauf (2003) also noticed that negative transfer from L1 German to L2 English was significantly high, with 56% of all collocational errors in L2 written production attributable to L1 interference.

For this reason, Bahns and Eldaw (1993) and Biskup (1993) suggested that, since the number of collocations is too large to cover, learners' attention should be directed to collocations which have no direct translational equivalence in L1 to facilitate explicit learning. Furthermore, Lewis (2000) and Woolard (2000) recommend that teachers make use of positive transfer from L1 to facilitate learners' acquisition of collocations, and that explicit learning is needed to avoid negative transfer from L1 .

5.2.3.2 Intraligual factors

5.2.3.2.1The use of improper synonyms (overgeneralization)

Another point worth mentioning in regard to learners deviation in producing certain items of lexical collocation is their misuse of synonyms. Hussein (1990) indicates that the synonymy strategy means the use of a synonymous word of a certain collocant without heeding the

selectional restriction principle, inevitably results in the production of untypical collocations. In other words, when students cannot find a semantically corresponding collocation in English, they will use synonymous words that share certain semantic properties which lead to anomalous collocations. For example, in item numbers 13 and 27, the students use the collocations *first trip, water pipe/tube, quick food,* and *the plane was kidnapped* instead of *maiden voyage , tap water, fast food and the plan was hijacked* respectively. The use *of the plane was kidnapped* in item number 14, for instance, was unacceptable because its meaning is not restricted to 'illegal action against someone' but the context of utterances refers to 'illegal action against type of transport specifically plane'. The use of *trip/ journey* instead of *voyage* in 27 is also unacceptable because its meaning refers to a trip / journey of some distance without reference to the means of transport whereas the context of utterance refers to a journey by ship. Assuming synonyms for making collocations responses was confirmed in the study of Farghal and Obiedat (1995), Hussein (1998), and Zughoul's and Abdul Fattah's study (2005).

5.2.3.2.2 Overuse of some lexical terms

Another source of lexical errors reported by other studies on EFL/ESL learners (Zughoul 1991) and was confirmed in this study is the overuse of particular lexical items at the expense on others where more concise expressions are preferred. Channel (1981) maintains that the overuse of a few general items is a source of error in lexical choice and describes the production of the learner as characterized by "flat, uninteresting style", and a failure to express the variety of ideas he wants to communicate". According to the learners' responses in the translation task provided in table 5.1, it is obvious that Libyan learners tend to overuse some of these words such as *vey, bad, small, little.*etc to convey the meaning of some target collocations. For example the word 'very' was used repeatedly by Libyan learners mainly with adjectives such as 'delicious' and 'cold' in items 25 and 28 instead of the target collocations 'absolutely' and 'bitterly' respectively, yielding in untypical collocations. Similarly, they used 'bad 'and 'small' in items number 3 and 19 to substitute the meaning of critical condition and limited knowledge respectively. This may be produced as the result of learners application of L1- transfer and synonym strategies which Libyan students commonly adopted for lexical simplifications. It seems that such words (e.g., very, small, bad.etc.) are easily retrievable in Libyan learners' mind and for that they apply it in cases where more concise terms are usually required.

O'Dell and McCarthy (2008) reported similar examples from a learner corpus that confirms the overuse of such words resulting in some of untypical collocations such as *very delighted* instead of *really/absolutely/delighted* and *a little decrease* instead *of a slight decrease.*

From a pedagogical point of view the learners' lexical choice might have been the outcome of their method of learning vocabulary where they tended to memorize a word with many synonyms with knowing the usage of each word. This method or strategy of studying vocabulary may result in many collocation errors. Moreover, it can also be attributed to the lack of extensive reading of the English materials where the learners may build up the competence to use appropriately the lexicon of the target language

5.2.3.2.3 Paraphrasing

It is also noticed that, in some cases, Libyan students used paraphrasing to express the target collocations with which they are not familiar. For example in item 10, students provided phrases such as *does things in a wrong way/ behaved not in the right way to substitute the target collocation behave badly.* Similarly, in item 19, they used phrases such as small *amount of knowledge/ no so much knowledge* to convey the meaning of the target collocation *limited knowledge.*

5.2.3.3 Cultural interference factors

Interestingly enough, the differences between EFL learners' culture and the target language culture may lead learners to produce collocations which sound weird and unacceptable to the native speakers. According to Cowie (1998), 'cultural background refers to information that is most difficult to formalize, as it is connected with semantic in a very indirect and still unexplored way. We say that a word or a word-combination has 'cultural background' when it possesses a clearly discernible ideological aura associated a historical situation, a political movement, a fashionable trend, and so on' (p.61). One possible explanation of the use of the verb *darken* is that cultural background can be discerned in such a lexical collocation. In other words, the use of the verb *darken* was a result of cultural interference, since Libyan people usually do not see the women's hair as the women in Libya wear the 'hijab', and hence only the males' hair is seen in Libya, and most of Libyan men usually darken their hair, which is a less formal collocation than the target collocation *dye hair*, which involves

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changing hair colour as well indicating the possibility of different hues in the colour spectrum. The use of *makes/does* his prayers instead of *say his prayer* is another example of cultural interference. Muslim prayers involve physical actions in addition to reciting of Qur - 'anic texts. It is possible for this reason that learners rejected *say* on the assumption that it does not convey this meaning and adopted a strategy of overgeneralization in which *do* and *make* provided useful semantic approximation. These examples obvious show that Libyan EFL learners relied on their background knowledge in some particular subjects to produce this collocation.

To sum up, the results show a considerable influence of learners' mother tongue which induces them to translate literally from first language (L1) into second language (L2) on one or both elements in any given collocation. Generally, collocations that had no Arabic equivalents were problematic for students. As a result, when students did not know a certain collocation, they negatively transferred collocations from their L1.

5.2.4 Discussion of the fourth research question related to the relation between the participants' producing and recognizing English lexical collocation and the amount of exposure to English language.

The purpose of this question is to find out whether there was a statically difference between the participants' proficiency in producing and recognizing lexical collocation and their amount to exposure to English language through (TV, radio, internet, etc). To this end, a self-reporting questionnaire was used to elicit some information from participants associated with time of exposure to English language. The results presented in Table 4.6 in Chapter Four indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in participants' scores according to the amount of time they spent listening to English radio programmes, English songs, English TV, browsing English websites, reading English materials and chatting with friends on-line in English. In other words, the results showed that exposure to the language does help to improve the knowledge of EFL learners depending on the number of hours spent using the language. In other words, learners who spent longer engaging in these activities tend to achieve higher scores in their receptive and productive tests than others.

Durrant (2008) mentions the most likely reason for the collocation learning problems seems likely to be a lack of sufficient exposure to language. Needless to say the exposure to

language through these sources helps learners access to huge amount of authentic language materials. Such materials seem to offer a richer environment for exposure to collocations than in typical EFL textbooks where the input is modified.

Such materials, of course, are not accessible in their classroom environment as teaching and learning English in Libya has still been focusing on content based approach rather than skill based approach. As a consequence, learners' communicative competence in English is limited on their ability to produce formal discourse.

Research indicates that large amounts of comprehensible input are necessary for significant language acquisition and that extensive reading with graded readers can be an enjoyable, motivating source of such input, contributing to a general competence that supports both spoken and written performance. Krashen (1988), for example, maintains that the larger input of words learners perceive, the more their productive aspects are naturally acquired, which is perhaps true for the acquisition of collocation as well.

Although some researchers like Marton (1977 cited in Shehata, 2008) have claimed that it is not enough for L2 learners to be exposed to the language to acquire collocations, the findings of the present study show that exposure to the language does help in improving the collocational knowledge of the Libyan EFL learners depending on the number of hours participants spend using the language. In other words, the more hours learners exposed to language, the higher their scores on the collocation test are.

This finding of this study support Bahns and Sibiles's (1992) and Shehata's (2008) findings in which that the amount of exposure to practical opportunities, real life experience and situations related to the English language can positively help in the acquisition of L2 collocations.

5.2.5 Discussion of the sixth research question related to the most problematic pattern of lexical collocations for Libyan EFL students.

The current study also explores the differences between participants' receptive and productive scores on six patterns of English lexical collocations: adjective + noun, verb + noun, noun+ noun, noun + verb, adverb + adjective, and verb+ adverb. The purpose was to identify which collocation type is most problematic to acquire.

As mentioned before in Chapter Three, the test format of the first instrument used to measure Libyan EFL learners of English lexical collocation knowledge, in this study was a multiple-choice test. This test consisted of 60 items based on the above mentioned pattern of lexical collocations (12) adjective + noun,(12) verbs+ noun, (12) noun+ noun, (8) noun + verb,(8) adverb + adjective, and (8) verb+ adverb) with three options or answer choices for each item and most of the distracters were near synonyms. In this test, students had to provide the missing main node of the target collocation. In the second task, the students had to translate the underlined phrases (target collocations), in a 28 item into English. To achieve the purpose of this question, repeated measures ANOVA was performed to test whether there was a statistically significant within subjects difference in mean % score in each lexical collocation. Generally speaking, the repeated measures ANOVA indicated that for both tests the within subject difference in scores between lexical collocations was statistically significant (test 1: $F=12.697$, $p<0.001$) and (test 2: $F=4.965$, $p=0.001$). In other words, the students do not find all kinds of collocation equally difficult both p-value are less than 0.05.

According to the percentages of the correct answer per category of the target lexical collocations in both tests (multiple choice test and translation task) presented in Tables 4.2, 4.3 in Chapter Four: In test one (the multiple choice test), the verb+ noun collocations has the highest mean score, followed closely by the verb+ adverb collocations. The adverb +adjective collocations were noticeably lower in their mean scores than that of the other types. In test two (translation task), the highest scores was for noun+ verb collocations whereas the adjective + noun followed by the noun + noun collocations patterns had the lowest score compared with the patterns of other target collocations.

In sum, the adverb+ adjective collocations types posed the most difficulty for the learners as they scored worst at it. The average scores of the correct answer was 40.1%. Whereas the verb+ noun collocations were recorded to be the easiest type in this test as the average score of the correct answers was 51%. A potential explanation for the difficulties experienced with adverb +adjective collocations is that Libyans as other speakers of Arabic rarely use the adverb to modify adjectives. In Arabic, the adverbs *very* and *completely* play the role of modifying most adjectives. For instance, the participants chose *completely booked* instead of *fully booked, completely forbidden,* instead of *strictly forbidden, very populated,* instead of *heavily populated.* Granger (1998:152) also concluded that learner's under-use-native like collocation in combinations such as intensifying adverbs with adjectives.

In short, the knowledge of learners' first language was negatively transferred, as shown in these examples, misleading them to choose the wrong node of target collocation. Another reason could be attributed to the insufficient exposure to these certain types of collocation resulting from their lower occurrence in learners' textbooks. The more learners encounter a certain type of collocations, the more they can comprehend and use them.

In the translation task(test 2), the adjective+ noun collocation type seems to posed the most difficulty for Libyan EFL students as the scores recorded in this test were relatively low with an average of 37.6%

One possible explanation for this result is that the degree of L1-L2 difference influences the salience and consequently the acquisition of this type of lexical collocation. In other words, learners found this type of collocation (adjective+ noun) more difficult to translate because most of these target collocations had no equivalents in Arabic such as: *heavy rain* امطار غزيرة /amtᶜar ɣazera/, *blank tapes* اشرطة فارغة /aʃretafareya/, and *critical condition* وضع حرج /wadaʕ haraʒ/.

Interestingly and unexpectedly, the lexical collocation (adverb+ adjective) and (adverb+verb) respectively were easier for Libyan EFL learners in the productive level than in the receptive test. One possible explanation can be attributed to the features of the target collocations of these two types (adjective+ adverb) and the (adverb+ verb) in terms of their L1 equivalent, and semantic opacity, which means to what degrees the constituents of collocations are transparent. For instance, *absolutely delicious, nearly finished, fully aware* are transparent and have L1 equivalents, therefore they were easy for learners to produce. On the other hand, these examples from the multiple choice test: *pay dearly, heavily populated, strictly forbidden* are likely to cause more difficult for learners because they are not fully transparent, and do not have L1 equivalent.

Another possible explanation for these exceptions is the subjects' familiarity with these types of lexical collocation. In other words, the learners might be exposed to these types of lexical collocation before as both learners of second year and third year were studying a translation module during that term when the researcher carried out her study.

Tajalli (1994: 124) maintained that the exposure or lack of exposure to a certain type of collocation might influence the learning of that type of collocation. In other words, the collocations which are most frequent in everyday speech are easier to acquire than others. In other words, the more frequently students are exposed to a particular collocation type, the more likely they are to know it

The results of this study are in agreement with a number of previous studies (Bahans & Eldaw, 1993; Howarth, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2003; Li, 2005; Huang,2007, Hsu & Chiu, 2008) in that they all highlighted the learners' problem with the productive of collocations. But the types which cause problem for learners in this study slightly differ from those of other studies. For instance, in Zarei's (2010) study, the noun + verb type of lexical collocation was the most difficult type for upper-intermediate Iranian learners of English, whereas this study suggests that the 'adjective noun' and the ' adverb+ adjective' types of collocation were the most problematic ones for Libyan EFL learners in productive and receptive levels respectively.

5.3 Discussion of the sub-questions of the study

5.3.1 Discussion of the results of the sixth research question of the study related to the differences in performances between 2nd and 3rd years students.

This research question asked if was a statically significant difference between the participants' lexical collocation knowledge with regard to their academic year of study. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the total number of the subjects participated in this study was 185 students from four different faculties. To this end, two repeated measures ANOVA were used in this stage. The results obtained from between subjects analysis in the first mixed ANOVA as shown in table 4.3, in Chapter Four indicated that there was a significant differences in test scores according to the academic level of study (F= 7.612, P=0.006) . The mean differences between second and third year was 5.6% which means that students in year three have done significantly better than students in year two. Based on these results, students seem to increase their collocation competence as they move towards later years of study. As

might be expect third year students should posses a better knowledge of lexical collocation due to the fact that they have had more exposure to English. Students in year three deal with more different types of texts and vocabulary exercises more than second year students.

This result corresponded with Al-Zahrani's (1998) study in which he found that the knowledge of lexical collocations increased with the subjects' academic years. Besides, he reported that there was a strong correlation between the subjects' knowledge of collocations and their overall language proficiency. By the same token, the findings' El-Masharwi (2008) indicated that higher level of academic achievement is, the less collocation errors are made and vice versa

However, this study's findings were somewhat different from Ganji's (2011) study. The results of his study showed that the freshmen had the highest performance, followed by juniors and sophomores. Ganji attributed this surprising result to the fact that most of these students had been to English institutions before coming to University. Also, the other reason may have been that when students move forward they get less exposure to English reading courses because all the focus is on translation different types of texts and less attention is paid to the source language vocabulary as they are used to relying on their bilingual dictionary for their translation.

5.3.2 Discussion of the results of the seventh research question of the study related to the differences in performances between participants due to faculties (Yefren Faculty, Gharian Faculty, Al-saaba Faculty and Kikla Faculty).

This research question aims to find out whether there was a statically significant difference between participants according to their faculties. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the participants of this study came from four faculties at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University (Yefren Faculty(1), Kikla Faculty(2) , Al-saaba Faculty(3), and Gharian Faculty(4). As mention earlier, the number of participants was 185 students, and they were unequally distributed to these four faculties (see Table 3.2) in Chapter Three. The reason for such differences in distribution was due to the population density of each reign where the four faculties located.

The between subjects results obtained from the second mixed ANOVA as shown in table 4.5 in Chapter Four indicated that the differences in test results according to faculty reaches bordline significance (F=2.626, p=0.052). According to the results obtained from the Post hoc multiple comparison test presented in table 4.7 in Chapter Four, the test scores of participants in faculty I (Yefren Faculty) and faculty 4 (Gharian Faculty) were significantly higher in from other two faculties (Kikla Faculty and Al-Saaba Faculty). One explanation for such differences might be due to the fact that, all the third year students were in faculties 1 (Yefren Faculty), and in faculty 4 (Gharian Faculty), whereas most second year students represent the other two faculties respectively (Kikla Faculty 2, and Al-Saaba Faculty 3). This result confirmed the result obtained in the previous research questions which show that third year students performed better than second year students as third year students had more exposure to English than second year students.

5.3.3 Discussion of the results of the seventh research question of the study related to the differences in performances between participants due to gender (males and females)

The aim of this research question was to find out whether there was a statically significant difference between males and females with regard to their lexical collocation knowledge. As mentioned in chapter three, only 35 male students from the four faculties participated in this study, and that was because most of students who join English department in Libyan universities are females due to social and practical circumstances in terms of teaching is a socially acceptable profession in Libya for woman and working in the nearest school to the residence of the female teaching is almost guaranteed (Alnajeh, 2007).

The results from the second mixed ANOVA as shown in tables 4.5, 4.6 presented in Chapter Four showed that there was no significant statistical difference between the performance of male and females in terms of their lexical collocation knowledge. Although the findings of this study cannot be generalized due to the small number of male participants in this study, the researcher attributed such findings to the similarities of linguistic background of all the subjects of the study. Such finding might be due to the similarities of the learning environment for both males and females, bearing in mind that all the participants have the same linguistic background, and they were from the same university (Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi

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University) which means that they were all exposed to the same learning circumstances in terms of teaching materials, learning facilities such as libraries, internet.etc.

Generally speaking, it is worth mentioning that in the context of second language proficiency testing, gender differences have been examined only to a limited degree with little differential performance by gender being found. It seems that the result of the present study is consistent with some previous findings. According to Ryan and Bachman (1992), the TOEFL does not demonstrate gender differences. Wainer and Lukhele (1997) also reported that the reading comprehension testlets of TOEFL showed essentially no differential functioning by gender. However, this result from this research question was not in congruence with EL-Masharwi (2008) who found that female students demonstrated a higher level of collocation competence than male students. EL-Masharwi attributed this result to the difference between males and females in their brain linguistic system. She supports her claim by giving various scientific evidences of how the brains of males and females function differently.EL- Masharwi pointed out that Brizendine (2003) demonstrates that females develop language skills earlier than males do; males develop visual and spatial skills earlier than females. So, males reinforce and strengthen their skills in technical fields, and females strengthen their skills in languages and arts (Ryan, 2005). She added that Baron-Cohen (2003) also supports this point by emphasizing that for males, language is most often placed just in the dominant hemisphere (usually the left side), but a larger number of females seem to be able to use both sides for language. This gives females a distinct advantage. If a female has a stroke in the left front side of the brain, she may still retain some language from the right front side, while a male who has the same left side damage is less likely to recover as fully (cited in El.Masharwi, 2008).

5.4 Chapter summary

The discussion in the previous section reveals that Libyan EFL learners' lexical collocation knowledge is rather low, and it is plausible to say that the students lacked awareness of the existence of collocations, and of the existence of collocational restrictions, and this may be in part due to the fact that collocations are not taught and that learners do not, therefore, pay any attention to learning them. Generally, most of the collocation deviations were attributed to negative transfer from their mother tongue. This claim is supported by the findings of the majority of the previous studies mentioned in the literature review which show that the knowledge of EFL learners is insufficient, as reflected by their performance on many tasks such as multiple-choice test, translation task, free writing, etc.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings, a discussion of some pedagogical implications, the limitations of this study, and offers suggestions for future research.

6.1 Research procedures and findings in brief

Although it is widely acknowledged that collocations play an important role in second language learning, especially at intermediate –advanced levels (Ellis, 2001; Fillmore, 1976; Lewis, 1993; Pawley and Syder, 1983). However, learners' difficulties with collocations have not been, relatively speaking, investigated in detail, especially in the Arabic context. This study aimed to examine the English lexical collocation knowledge of Libyan university students, and the effect of their L1 on their use of lexical collocations. The participants were 185 (150 females & 35 males) Libyan EFL students majoring in English Department and came from four faculties at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University which are: Faculty of Arts, Yefren, Faculty of Arts, Kikla, Faulty of Arts, Asaaba and Faculty of Art, Gharian.

With the purpose of providing answers to the research questions, the required data were gathered through two tests and a self- reporting questionnaire. The multiple choice test (test 1) consisted of 60 items (see Appendix 1) and was mainly designed to measure the learners' receptive collocational knowledge. The translation task (test 2) see Appendix (2) which consisted of 28 sentences, each of which contained a target collocation to be translated from Arabic into English, served as a productive test and was mainly used to examine the effect of learners' first language on their production of certain types of lexical collocations. Both tests focused on six types of English lexical collocation including (verb + noun, noun +verb, noun+ noun, adjective + noun, adverb+ verb and adjective+ adverb). The self-reporting questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was mainly designed to collect data about participants learning background, as well as to examine whether students had exposure to learn English from any source other than that of classroom.

Generally, statistical analysis showed that the level of Libyan EFL learners' lexical collocation knowledge was relatively low. It also showed that learners' receptive knowledge was better than their productive knowledge of the target lexical collocations. The analysis of test items also showed that most of the learners' collocation deviations could be attributed to negative transfer from their L1 and to ignorance of restriction rules of collocations. The study

illustrated that when there is congruence between the English collocations and Arabic equivalents, the students produced the correct collocation such as *take a decision*, on the other hand, where there is a difference between the two languages, students faced difficulty with the items and they produce unacceptable collocations such as *made homework*. The results of this study also suggested that culture and background influenced the learners' production of some collocations such as *make his prayers* instead of *says his prayers*. In addition, the results revealed that the amount of exposure to the English language can positively help in the acquisition of L2 collocations.

To sum up, the findings of this study indicate that students encountered various kinds of problems in dealing with L2 collocations, which shows consistency with a great body of research conducted previously in this area.

These findings can have important implications for second language teachers, since collocation competence can influence EFL students' overall language ability, and have an effective role in their performance. The conscious knowledge of these collocations will help them in their struggle towards the acquisition and production of English as a foreign language. Taking into account the fact that the subjects of this study are English majors and after a few years will be in-service English language teachers holding a Bachelor degree, that of course, implies that the students should obtain reasonable control over lexical collocations. However, one should not assume that EFL learners are expected in use collocation in exactly the same way as native speakers do. Wray (2002) pointed out that collocational competence is closely related to the identity of the speakers and therefore an integral part of the native language. On the other hand, Cook (1999 cited in Fan, 2008) questioned the use of native norms as the goal of language learning and argued that L2 speakers can never or rarely achieve a performance identical to that of native speakers. However, helping learners to develop an awareness of lexical patterns such collocations, in the longer term, can develop their abilities to 'notice' patterns in language and so become more autonomous learners.

6.2 Pedagogical implications of the study

Based on the findings provided by the current study, many implications for teaching collocations in general can be suggested. These implications can be applied as a generic framework or a model for teaching all collocation categories. Recommendations are outlined

in a form of a proposed pedagogical framework in order to tackle the issue of collocation problems encountered by Libyan EFL learners and encourage collocations build up. The recommendations that will be mentioned in this section consist of two overlapping parts related to: (1) the concerns of English language teachers, and (2) the learning materials designers.

6.2.1 Recommendations for English language teachers

One of the teachers' responsibilities is to provide learners with effective opportunities that will enable them to learn more vocabulary items and retain them for a longer time. According to Schmitt (2010) 'after textbooks, the teacher is probably the next best resource in the classroom for introducing new vocabulary and providing important information on its meaning and use'. Accordingly, based on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, the following practicalities are necessary in teaching and learning lexical collocations for both EFL teachers and learners (some ideas based on suggestions of Taiwo, 2004; Tang, 2004 and EL-Masharwi, 2008).

6.2.1.1 Raising Students' Collocation Awareness

Based on the findings it is recommended that considering difficulty of the production in collocations, Libyan EFL learners are in need of more practice producing collocations. However pedagogical problems such as what collocations to teach, at what level, how to teach them, how to test them and many other questions are still under debate. In the meantime, therefore, as a first step, it is crucial to raise students' awareness of the phenomenon of collocation for effective L2 production; as it helps learners communicate ideas more effectively.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, raising students' awareness of collocations would involve explicitly directing learners' attention to these phrasal elements. Siyanova and Schmitt (2009) claims that the only way to develop good collocation intuition in our learners is to institute a fundamental change in our teaching pedagogies, moving from a focus on individual words towards a focus on phrasal elements. The following could be useful guidelines for stimulating the students' awareness of collocational knowledge and usage.

1- Teachers should introduce words in chunks, and draw their students' attention to the fact that words act less as individual units and more as part of lexical phrases in interconnected discourse (Schmitt 2000:78). In other words, students should be able to realize that knowing

a word means it would also be useful to know the words with which it occurs (Nation, 1990). For example, if a student asks the teacher the meaning of the word *crime*, the teacher should draw his/her learner's attention to other meanings of the word crime in accordance to words which co-occur with it such as *one commits a crime*, but not *do* or *make a crime*. In this case, as a first step, the teacher had better ask the student to say what words can be linked to to word *crime*. Then, the teacher writes the collocation on the board and gives the meaning of the whole sequence of words usin the word under discusion (i.e, crime) plus some other examples. Roughly speaking, there are a variety of exercises, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, teachers can use to raise students' awareness of collocations. These exercises may include, for instance, word-building, gap-filling, matching words, odd one out, multiple choice, etc.

2- Teachers should encourage their students to be involved in an extensive reading of different genres, and not to be restricted only to the course books. According to Taiwo (2004:232) this will help learners to discover and acquire new collocations as such reading allows them to meet the language in its natural context and see how it works in extended discourse beyond the language met in textbooks. Thus, teachers should maximize the amount of the appropriate quality input available to the students by employing authentic texts in the teaching of collocations in an EFL course. To this end, teachers should prepare and design materials from various authentic resources, and these materials could be chosen by both the teacher and the learner to meet the students' interests and needs. The materials might include extracts from magazines, newspaper, TV programs, radio interviews, journal articles, reports advertisements and others. These materials can help students work on different practical authentic tasks that make them experience collocations. For instance, as proposed by El.Masharwi (2008), the teachers can prepare and design materials of handouts, worksheets, and transparencies based on various authentic resources such as mentioned above. After distributing the authentic material, a brief explanation can be pointed out to notice the occurrence of words that combine together. Generally, teachers can maximize the amount of reading time by asking students to read both in and out of a class.

Teachers should take into their consideration that there are multiple published materials with collocation exercises which can be adopted in teaching collocations. These may include published materials such as McCarthy and O'Dell's textbook, English *Collocations in Use* (2005). This book would be very helpful since it includes various collocations in different

fields: travel, lifestyle, work...etc. The teacher could rely on it to teach written expression by introducing some useful collocations that can be used in writing about each theme. Relying on such sources, or any other material that could be developed by the teacher, will help in one way or another in enhancing students' knowledge of collocations.

3- As indicated by Hsueh (2002) learners should be encouraged to develop good habits of checking collocation usage by consulting collocation dictionaries, and take notes systematically. Tang (2004) suggests that dictionaries such as The BBI Dictionary of word combinations, LTP Dictionary of selected collocations, Oxford Collocational Dictionary, and Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English, which are extensively based on naturally occurring data, are particularly good for the acquisition of the collocational properties of English lexical items. Such dictionaries can not only help learners develop better awareness of collocations but also enable them to understand usage and put this understanding to production use. Numerous exercises can be designed for encouraging frequent looking up collocations. Examples of these exercises were presented in the second chapter (p.73). Moreover, the teachers can guide their students to make use of some computerized tools such as corpora and concordances such as British National Corpus (BNC) and COBUILD which present collocations in their most typical forms in context and offer frequent formal and informal collocations used in spoken and written language.

4- As the findings of this study reveal that Libyan EFL learners' knowledge of English lexical collocations was influenced by their L1, in particular, where there is a difference between Arabic and English collocations. Thus adequate attention should be drawn to the differences in the collocational patterns between English and Arabic, with a particular emphasis on the deviations frequently occurring in their interlanguage. Students must be aware of the fact that the way words combine in the L1 differs from the way words combine in the L2. The verbs *do/make* and the equivalent يقوم ب / *yaqum bi/* are very good examples to explain such differences between Arabic and English. More importantly, EFL teachers should avoid literal translation, and spend extra time working on lexical collocations without direct translation. They should also remind their students that literal translation should be used with great caution. Moreover, EFL teachers should

In addition, more attention should be drawn to collocations in register. As indicated by Taiwo (2004), there is a tendency for ESL learners to see two items that belong to the same register as collocates. He reports the following as examples of learners' deviation in using collocations due to registers.

*Government should allow the farmers to _borrow loans_.

*I learnt from the head girl in the school how to _type_ the _keyboard_.

* If possible _post_ me a _mail_.

6.2.1.2 Promoting students' autonomous constant practice of collocations and tackling their collocational errors

A further equally important and closely related implication is that for raising learners' awareness and promoting their constant autonomous practice of collocation, teachers should check students' knowledge of collocation, track their progress, and tackle their errors in order to reinforce their collocational competence. Here are some suggestions that might help teachers to improve learning quality

1- In order to promote learners constant autonomous practice of collocation, Teachers should encourage their learners to make effective use of the internet by frequently surfing websites and browse some topics related to politics, education, and daily life situations, or any topic of their choice, finding pen-friends on the Internet, taking part in competitions, chat-clubs. In this regard, the students can access to a comprehensive web site that has a list of links to the most well-known international newspapers and magazines along with well-known TV and radio sites. Beside this gives students good opportunity to enrich the students' lexis and internalize appropriate collocational expressions. It also help learners to change their passive attitude to learning to a more active attitude, i.e. to become less dependent on the teacher and take charge of their own learning (Rivers, 1992). In addition, learners should be encouraged to use linguistic software as a tool to process the large amount of attested language data in various corpora (Lewis, 2000).

2- In order to help learners achieve native-like competence and fluency, learners should also be encouraged to access the native speaker corpora as a way to compare their L2 with the

native speakers' L1. In this regard, web-concordances are very useful, as they contain a huge source of authentic materials which can provide learners with multiple exposures to new items and collocations. This frequency of exposure is one of the key aspects of language learning, because the more frequent the word is, the more likely it is to be encountered in the input and subsequently used productively by the learners (Siyanova and Schmitt, 2008).

3- In order to enhance learners' collocation competence effectively, and in the longer term, learners should be encouraged to keep a vocabulary note book and write down a number of collocational expression noticed inside or outside the classroom. Chen (2002) proposed that language learners need to be collocation collectors and record collocations which they are learning systematically. For instance, when learners record the word like *keep*, they should write down a list of collocations such as ('*keep a diary, keep an eye one,.*etc'.) In addition, it is good to make a special section in such vocabulary notebook for confusing collocations such as *make a mistake NOT do a mistake.*

4- In order to move learners forward and promote students' understanding of collocations, teachers should provide consistent and frequent formative and corrective feedback on their learners' mis-collocations. In other words, providing feedback is essential to the assessment process, and to the improvement of students learning as it allows teachers to collect the evidence they need to immediately address their students' learning needs. Feedback would be most meaningful when it is based on solid data obtained while observing or interacting with the student. Teachers can use various techniques that engage all students in discussion and use revealed evidence of students understanding and correct usage of collocations. For instance, group projects can be a powerful way for engaging the students in different discussions and evaluating their linguistic development of collocations. For example, a group of students can work collaboratively on different projects such as conducting a role play exercise or a dramatization by using collocations that fit their topic. Teachers can also collect common collocation errors from the students' essays assignments and tests, and make a list of those errors called 'Errors Warning', and then discusses such errors with their students, and make comments about them. Such strategy makes the students more attentive, and promotes them to take care of the appropriate usage of collocations (EL-Masharwi, 2008). According to Dwyer (2007) providing feedback immediately after the students submit their assignments would be very effective because the sooner the assessment the better for teacher and student.

5- Teachers should also encourage their students to be involved in self and peer- assessment activities as they can help students reflect, learn skills, and become more autonomous. In a particular sense as indicated by EL-Masharawi (2008), such activities are useful for enabling students to think critically about their dealing with collocations in translation. To this end, the teacher, for example, prepares two passages of approximately the same difficulty and scope, and divides the class into an equal number of pairs and gives different passages to the students sitting next to each other. The teacher asks students to translate their passages into Arabic, and as soon as students have finished translating, the teacher collects the original English texts and asks students to exchange their translations in Arabic and translate the work back into English. After that, the original English texts with the Arabic translated forms are given to the students to compare and analyze their work. They need to make comments about their errors and their peers errors. In this sense, by judging the work of their peers, the students gain insight into their own work. In addition, such activities raise students awareness of their interference error in particular.

6.2.2 Suggestions for learning materials designers (Developing appropriate L2 material on collocations)

Materials are very necessary language teaching tools and they represent an instructional road map that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of having participated in the course (Tarey,1988). Nunan (1988: 98) emphasizes their importance as a crucial element in the curriculum which acts as a model for both the teacher and the learner. He claims that: 'materials are, in fact, an essential element within the curriculum, and do more than simply lubricate the wheels of learning'.

According to Channell (1981 cited in Lewis, 1997), most students' errors resulted from a lack of emphasis on vocabulary in syllabi. It is not surprising that most syllabi taught in Libyan schools and universities are organized to cover more grammar than vocabulary, which does not help students develop their collocational competence. The following are some suggestions to be taken into consideration on designing the language learning materials.

1- Teachers and curriculum designers at Departments of English language at Libyan universities should give more attention to the significance of collocations, and work together

to implement EFL syllabi in a way that allow collocations to be a part of a balanced course at each level of teaching English as a foreign language in Libyan schools, institutions and universities.

2- Language learning materials should be reconstructed to include a variety of collocations, and build more practice activities on collocations into relevant EFL course books at all proficiency according to learners' needs and interests. To achieve this goal, collocations should be introduced in teaching materials with reference to three main elements: providing authentic and non authentic language data; experiential information about collocations; practical opportunities for using collocations (EL-Masharwi, 2008). In other words, such materials should include various topics and activities (e.g., travel, lifestyle, work etc.) which support learning in each of language stages. The activities should be developed based on the difficulties that the learners had regarding the use of collocations, with more emphasis on collocations that do not have linguistic and cultural equivalents in Arabic. Mackin (1978 cited in Bahns, 1993) claimed that foreign language students need to be exposed to teaching materials that present a careful selection of collocations geared to the specific difficulties of learners with a particular L1.

3- The language teaching materials should be reconstructed in the way that offers explicit instructions on the way that teaching and learning should target language collocations. In other words, such materials should provide teachers with teaching ideas that help them implement the suitable techniques to further enhance their learners' lexical collocation knowledge.

Last but not least important is that, in the light of the study results, instructors in the English department at Aljabal Al-Gharbi University, need to take action in order to help Libyan learners develop their collocational knowledge, and maintain high-quality outcomes. Yet, the actual co-operation between English language instructors is something worth spending time on since it will certainly improve the collocational knowledge of our EFL students. As a first step, the instructors should start examining the current goals and methods of teaching English lexis in order to respond to the highlighted issues concerning collocations to respond to the current running of highlighting the issue of collocations because collocations run through the whole skills of English language: listening, reading, writing and speaking. To this end, running workshop sessions will be beneficial as they will help to discuses and exchange

ideas between staff in terms of finding out alternative approaches instruction, course materials for assessing plans of how teaching collocations should be applied in the curriculum.

More importantly, providing better training, and support for teachers is critical to improving the quality of their teaching which, of course, has a direct effect upon learners' level of attainment and their learning experiences. In this regard, (1) training courses for teachers of English should make provision for preparing competent classroom teachers who would be able to successfully teach realistically designed English language syllabuses.

(2) Training programs must be conceived of in such a way that prospective teachers receive training that enables them to meet the professional demands of the job.

(3) Serious efforts must be exerted to upgrade the level of English language teacher especially community college graduates

(4) Remedial courses should be conducted for those teachers in all language skills and special attention should be given to lexical choice and English grammar, and the phonetics of English.

(5) Study plans for English language teachers in the upgrading programs in Libyan universities should emphasize on language skills and the needs of those teachers in the classroom

In sum, to help EFL Libyan learners develop their collocational knowledge, curriculum should include a variety of collocations, with more emphasis on collocations that are linguistically and culturally distinct from those in Arabic. Textbooks should include collocations in natural manner similar to the way they occur in authentic texts. In addition, teachers should include a focus on collocations in their classroom activities to enhance their acquisition.

6.3 Contributions made by this study

The findings of the present study offered some contributions to the current body of research on lexical collocations. The first contribution of this study is the fact that it is an addition to the few collocational studies to be conducted on Arab EFL learners and the first to examine the knowledge of lexical collocations among Libyan EFL students.

The second contribution of this study lies in the quality, the quantity, and the design of the test of collocations used in this study, as well as the translation task. While some collocational tests of studies on EFL students' collocational knowledge used relatively few items to test knowledge of lexical collocations, the test of collocations in this study includes 60 items, and the translation task contains 28 items. Moreover, the two tests based on six types of lexical collocations which were selected from multiple sources including various dictionaries of collocations, published book on teaching collocations, and some item were adopted from previous research which sought to investigate the English collocational competence of EF/ESL learners.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The study has a number of limitations and discussion of these will point to areas where future research is needed. These limitations need to be addressed in future research in order to gain a clearer picture of learners' difficulties with lexical collocations. These limitations, which are discussed below include the subjects and instruments of date collection.

First, the main limitation with regard to this study was the lack of clear distinguish of the participants' level of proficiency. In other words, the researcher was unable to control the participants' level of proficiency effectively by using a standardised test such as TOFEL or IELTS due to the fact that administering such standardised tests would have been too expensive. As a result, the findings of this study could not be generalized as they pertain only to the year of instruction.

Second, the data of this study covered only 185 second and third year English majors in the 2009-2010 academic years from only four faculties at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University. This sampling posed some limitations in terms of size and gender. The results could not be generalized to all Libyan learners as it could not represent all teaching and learning situations in Libya.

The results might be different if the tests were conducted with English majors of other years or with other majors from other Libyan universities. A further limitation posed by the subjects in this study was gender, the number of males were few due to the nature of the institutions where the study was carried out. The group had a 2.3: 1 female to male ratio

Another limitation of this study is related to the instruments used to measure the learners' collocational knowledge. It seems that the use of tests only were not sufficient enough to gain a clear picture of learners' lexical collocational knowledge as they required learners to produce single collocates of particular words and thus the findings do not reflect the actual performance of EFL Libyan learners in L2 collocational use.

In conclusion, it is hoped that these limitations will inspire researchers to improve this study or develop better measurements in the future. To further this study and provide direction in this promising field, suggestions for future research are presented in the following section

6.5 Suggestions for further research

As stated earlier, collocations play a vital role in many aspects of language acquisition, comprehension and use. Yet collocation as an area of investigation is still in its infancy, especially in Arab world, and requires much more attention from EFL researchers and educators. Thus, more studies need to be conducted to delve into the nature of this phenomenon, such as L1 interference, collocational strategies, the acquisition of collocations, the effect of explicit and implicit approaches on the learning of collocations, and the development of collocational proficiency. Such studies, of course, will help to provide more insight for a more comprehensive understanding of collocational knowledge and how this understanding can help us better understand the nature of language

The present study has yielded some important findings, however, they are not conclusive. For the results to be generalized, a replication of this study with a larger and equally tested or evaluated population, more items, and a variety of collocation types is needed .For example, if such study were to be conducted on Libyan EFL learners, a sample could be randomly drawn from all Libyan universities.

Another suggestion is to broaden the scope of this study by increasing the number of male participants to see if there is a relationship between collocation competence and gender. It would also be interesting to assess learners' collocational knowledge at different language proficiency levels to analyze whether there are certain patterns of development of

collocational knowledge, and how it relates to the overall development of language proficiency.

Further studies could also consider using the corpus-based approach in order to help in the analysis of students' collocation production in both students' written and spoken texts. The use of learner corpora will be more effective to examine Libyan learners' acceptable use of lexical collocations because it will provide data which may be significantly different from specific elicitation tasks. For instance, the performance of different proficiency levels in essay writing, using the same topic for all proficiency levels could be carried out. In this way, any influences of the essay topic on the use of collocations would be equal for all levels (Gitsaki, 1999)

6.6 Conclusion

Previous research on collocations has reflected on L2 learners' inadequate proficiency of producing and recognizing collocations. Motivated by this, the study sought to investigate the English lexical collocation knowledge of the second and third year Libyan university students majoring in English at Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University. The study mainly focused on learners' receptive and productive collocational knowledge of English lexical collocations, the influence of learners' first language (Arabic) on their production of English lexical collocations, and the impact of exposure to language on their receptive and productive skills in producing lexical collocations. It also aimed to find out the most problematic type of lexical collocation Libyan students encounter in their learning.

Generally, the results of this study were consistent with the previous studies, and support claims that L2 learners have inadequate knowledge of producing and recognizing English lexical collocations (e.g., Bahns and Eldaw,1993; Farghl and Obiedat, 1995; Hussein 1998; Howarth, 1998a; Bonk 2000, Zaghoul and Abdul-Fathah, 2003; Mohmoud 2005, Mashharawi, 2008, and Abu Naba'h, 2011) . The results also highlighted the important role that learners' first language plays in the acquisition of L2 collocations, and therefore, were again in line with the claim that interference is the prime cause of L2 learners' errors (e.g Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Bahns, 1993; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Huang, 2001, Zughoul & Abdul-Fattah, 2001, 2003; Nesselhauf, Mohamed, 2005; El.Masharwi 2008; Brashi 2009). The study's results also confirmed the common sense view that receptive knowledge of

collocations was generally larger than the productive one and it absorbed before the productive knowledge at all stages of language learning(e.g., Nation 2000; Waring, 2002, Taeko 2005; Shehatta 2008; Brashi, 2009 and Alsakran 2011).

In summary, the results showed that collocations present a source of difficulty for English language learners. Therefore, collocations need more attention from L2 curriculum designers and teachers.

6.7 Concluding remarks

The insight offered by this study point to an important need for the development of Libyan learners' collocational competence through specific awareness-raising of the phenomenon of word combinations. Therefore, it would be very necessary to help the students built their collocational competence on solid grounds, by including teaching lexical collocations in their course books in a systematic way and preparing the students to use collocations effectively and appropriately in writing and speaking. Finally, in respect of this problem, indeed, a serious collaborative effort needs to be made here by all concerned, including teachers, learners, researchers and material writers alike.

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APPENDIX 1: TEST OF LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS

Circle the best answer from the choices (a, b, or c) to complete each of the following sentences:

1. I .... remember that we agreed to meet at the gym.
   - a. distinctly
   - b. strongly
   - c. rightly

2. Can you eat .... meat?
   - a. hard
   - b. tough
   - c. difficult

3. Our teacher asked us to flip .... through the pages of our books to find the map of Saudi Arabia.
   - a. quickly
   - b. hurriedly
   - c. lastly

4. I am .... sleepy. I am going to bed.
   - a. completely
   - b. totally
   - c. very

5. The meeting was .... to discuss the problem of unemployment.
   - a. done
   - b. held
   - c. carried out

6. You should try this dessert. It tastes .... delicious.
   - a. completely
   - b. wholly
   - c. absolutely

7. The vase fell on Sara's head and, unfortunately, she was .... hurt.
   - a. badly
   - b. greatly
   - c. highly

8. Fatima always ....the truth.
   - a. says
   - b. tells
   - c. pronounces

9. The volcano last .... in 1872, causing widespread panic and destruction of property.
   - a. went off
   - b. exploded
   - c. erupted

10. It was a cold morning and I could not ………….. my car.

    a. start   b. begin   c. commence

11. Oh look! The neighbours are having a garage sale right out there on the tennis

    ………….. .

    a. court   b. area   c. place

12. The traffic police raised his hand, giving us the stop …………….. .

    a. sign   b. mark   c. signal

13. This colour ………. so wash the shirt separately.

    a. extends   b. spreads   c. runs

14. If somebody changes his mind about a matter, he is said to have second

    ……….

    a. thoughts   b. notions   c. ideas

15. The Tokyo area is ………….. populated.

    a. largely   b. heavily   c. fully

16. We used to feed our pigeons with bread …………….. .

    a. parts   b. crumbs   c. shreds

17. Her kids used to ………. a bath every day.

    a. make   b. have   c. do

18. You must ………… your application in before the end of June

    a. submit   b. send   c. write

19. She likes to drink a lot of ……….. tea when she gets cold.

    a. hard   b. strong   c. heavy

20. After the current repairs of the city's water supply system ....
water will be drinkable.
    a. pipe   b. tap   c. tube

21. She .... many mistakes in the test.
    a. made   b. did   c. performed

22. In order for you to qualify for a loan from a bank, you must ....
three conditions: character, capacity and collateral.
    a. have   b. meet   c. pass

23. I phoned three hotels but they're fully .... for this weekend.
    b. busy   b. used   c. booked

24. I .... disagree with Helen's cost-cutting suggestions. .
    a. bitterly   b. strongly   c. deeply

25. Let's .... the internet to learn more about Safari Africa.
    a. surf   b. turn   c. flip

26. Can you .... an eye on my car while I go in the shop?
    a. hold   b. put   c. keep

27. The jacket is the right size but its colour does not .... me.
    a. match   b. fit.   c .suit

28. She .... attention to what I told her and started working harder.
    b. had   b. took   c. paid

29. The hotel has to ensure that there is ....accommodation for all
guests.
    a. whole   b. luxurious   c. complete

30. The regulations .... that all students must register for the course.
   a. need   b. require   c. want

31. By the weekend, the death .... Will have reached 95, and those injured were 106.
   a. list   b. toll   c. number

32. George drinks a lot, therefore, he is a .... drinker.
   a. heavy   b. bitter   c. strong

33. We can't fix the car because we do not have the .... parts.
   a. auxiliary   b. spare   c. extra

34. He has survived several assassinations ....
   a. ventures   b. trials   c. efforts

35. .... alarm bells can save people's lives in emergencies.
   a. . Protection   b. Safety   c. Saving

36. The visual arts such as painting, sculpture and architecture are called the .... arts
   a. nice   b. beautiful   c. fine

37. According to last night's weather ...., a snow storm may hit the area soon.
   a. imagination   b. forecast   c. prophecy

38. It is commonly agreed that it always rains .... in England.
   a. seriously   b. heavily   c. strongly

39. There seems to have been a .... in communication.
   a. breakdown   b. damage   c. spoil

40. I was aware of a real generation ………... between us.

    a. different   b. gap   c. distance

41. After the bomb, an uneasy calm ………….. on the city.

    a. settled   b. reposed   c. rested

42. She placed her keys ………… on the table and sat down.

    a. gently   b. smoothly   c. softly

43. She ……………...these tablets three times a day.

    a. eats   b. takes   c. has

44. The Civil Defense Authorities announced that there would be a …………... air-raid next week.

    a. false   b. wrong   c. mock

45. Put a little oil into the frying ……. to get well-cooked vegetables.

    a. bowl   b. pan   c. dish

46. On the seashore there is a new hotel with two pools, a health ………. and play ground.

    a. place   b. area   c. spa

47. have been ………….. this business for over thirty years. Do not tell me what to do!

    a. running   b. making   c. conducting

48. There is so much fog outside, I can ………. see the car in front of me.

    a. blindly   b. really   c. barely

49. I hope that common sense will ………….. .

    a. prevail   b. widespread   c. increase

50. She felt really sad when she realized that she had lost her watch. It wasn't expensive but it had sentimental ....

    a. price   b. value   c. cost

51. He committed so many crimes and I want him to pay. .... for everything he's done!

    a. extremely   b. dearly   c. entirely

52. The program is based on the principles of .... opportunities for all.

    a. identical   b. equal   c. same

53. Before you send your letter, check first that the envelope is .... addressed.

    a. correctly   b. mainly   c. basically

54. We are going to .... some tests on your mother to see if the accident has affected her brain.

    a. take   b. run   c. make

55. If you .... the rules, you will be arrested.

    a. damage   b. break   c. destroy

56. She smiled .... as she looked at the photos of her new grandson.

    a. proudly   b. carefully   c. greatly

57. If you travel to this country, make sure that you are .... insured.

    a. absolutely   b. fully   c. really

58. On the seashore there is a new hotel with two pools, a health ....and play ground.

    a. place   b. area   c. spa

59. I'm sorry. I .... have forgotten your birthday. Please forgive me.

    a. widely   b. deeply   c. completely

60. We have been doing .... business all morning.

    a. rapid   b. stiff   c. brisk

END OF TEST 1

APPENDIX 2: TRANSLATION TASK

Read the following sentences carefully, and then translate only the underlined phrases from Arabic into English. The rest of the translations of sentences are given for you.

1 - يؤدي ابى صلواته فى المسجد.
1. My father ...... his .... in the mosque.

2. يصبغ بعض الناس شعرهم لكى يبدو اصغر سنا .
2- Some people .... their ..... in order to look younger.

3 - كانت حزينة جدا لان امها كانت فى وضع حرج.
3. She was very sad because her mother was in ....

4. تقوم امى بمعظم اعمال الطهى فى منزلنا.
4. My mother .... most of the .... in our house.

5. لااريد ان اتخذ قرارا خاطئا واندم عليه فيما بعد.
5. I do not want to.......... a wrong .... and regret later.

6. لقد قام بمحاولات عديدة لكى يساعدها.
6. He .... several .... to help her.

7. ماذا تعرف عن معدل التضخم فى بلادك؟
7. What do you know about the .... in your country?

8. المفاوضات السلمية هى الطريق الامثل لحل النزاعات الدولية.
8. Peaceful negotiation is the ideal way to solve international ....

9. اصبحت مياه الحنفية فى مدرستنا صالحة للشرب.
9. The .... in our school has been drinkable.

10. لقد عوقبت لانها تصرفت بشكل سىئ مع اختها الكبرى.
10. She was punished because she .... with her oldest sister.

11. اعرف تماما ماذا تقصد.
11. I .... what she means.

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١٢. كان الاطفال منغمسون بشكل تام فى واجبهم المنزلى.

12. The children were......................... in their homework.

١٣. القانون الجديد يحرم استخدام الهواتف النقالة اثناء قيادة السيارة.

13. A new......................... the use of mobile phones while driving.

١٤. اختطفت احدى الطائرات واجبرت على تغيير اتجاهها.

14. One of the.......... was.................. and forced to change its destination.

١٥. ارتفعت اسعار المنازل بشدة فى الاشهر القليلة الماضية .

15. House prices have .... in the last few months.

١٦. لقد أنهيت تقريبا قراءة الكتاب الذى اعرتنى اياه .

16. I have.................. reading the book which you lent me.

١٧. هل تحب الوجبات السريعة؟

17. Do you like................ ?

١٨. دخل اتفاق وقف اطلاق النار حيز التنفيذ على تمام الحاديه عشر صباحا.

18. The .... came into effect at 11:00a.m.

١٩. لدى معرفة محدودة بالفرنسية.

19. I have .... of French.

٢٠. انا مدرك تماما بأنه يوجد مشاكل خطيرة.

20. I am ....that there are serious problems.

٢١. كانت الوجبة لذيذة تماما.

21. The meal was ....

٢٢. نحتاج الى اشرطة فارغة لتسجيل الافلام.

22. We need .... to record the films.

٢٣. تعطلت سيارته بالقرب من النهر.

23. His .... near the river.

٢٤. رتبت اختى سرير نومها.

24. My sister .... her ....

٢٥. كان الجو قارص البرودة ليلة البارحة.

25. It was.................... last night.

26. تم بالأمس إلغاء مئات الرحلات الجوية بسبب <u>الامطار الغزيرة</u>.

26. Hundred of flights were cancelled yesterday because of ....

27. غرقت السفينه التايتنك فى <u>رحلتها الاولى</u> .

27. The Titanic sank on its ....

28. <u>تقدم بشكوى</u> رسمية ضد الشركة بعد ان تم تسريحه من وظيفته.

28. After he was fired from his job, he .... a formal .... against the company.

End of Test 2

APPENDIX 3: TRANSLATION TASK (Guided version)

Read the following sentences carefully, and then translate only the underlined phrases from Arabic into English. The rest of the translations of sentences are given for you.

١. <u>يؤدي</u> ابى <u>صلواته</u> فى المسجد.

1. My father **says** his **prayers** in the mosque.

٢. <u>يصبغ</u> بعض <u>الناس شعرهم</u> لكى يبدو اصغرسنا .

2. Some people **dye** their **hair** in order to look younger.

٣. كانت حزينة جدا لان امها كانت فى <u>وضع حرج</u>.

3. She was very sad because her mother was in **critical condition**.

٤. <u>تقوم</u> امى بمعظم <u>اعمال الطهى</u> فى منزلنا.

4. My mother **does** most of the **cooking** in our house.

٥. لااريد ان <u>اتخد قرارا خاطئا</u> واندم عليه فيما بعد.

5. I do not want to **take** a wrong **decision** and regret later.

٦. لقد قام <u>بمحاولات</u> عديدة لكى يساعدها

6. He **made** several **attempts** to help her.

٧. ماذا تعرف عن <u>معدل التضخم</u> فى بلادك؟

7. What do you know about the **rate of inflation** in your country?

٨. المفاوضات السلمية هى الطريق الامثل <u>لحل النزاعات الدولية.</u>

8. Peaceful negotiation is the ideal way to solve **international disputes**.

٩. اصبحت <u>مياه الحنفية</u> فى مدرستنا صالحة للشرب.

9. The **tap water** in our school has been drinkable.

١٠. لقد عوقبت لانها <u>تصرفت بشكل سئ</u> مع اختها الكبرى.

10. She was punished because she **behaved badly** with her oldest sister.

١١.<u>أعرف تماما</u> ماذا تقصد.

11. I **know exactly** what she means.

١٢. كان الاطفال <u>منغمسون بشكل تام</u> فى واجبهم المنزلى.

12. The children were **completely absorbed** in their homework.

١٣. <u>القانون</u> الجديد <u>يحرم</u> استخدام الهواتف النقالة اثناء قيادة السيارة.

13. A new **law forbids** the use of mobile phones while driving.

14. اختطفت احدى الطائرات واجبرت عى تغيير اتجاهها.

14. One of the **airplanes** was **hijacked** and forced to change its destination.

15. ارتفعت اسعار المنازل بشدة فى الاشهر القليلة الماضية .

15. House prices have **risen sharply** in the last few months.

16. قد أنهيت تقريبا قراءة الكتاب الذى اعرتنى اياه .

16. I have **nearly finished** reading the book which you lent me.

17. هل تحب الوجبات السريعة؟

17. Do you like **fast food**?

18. د خل اتفاق وقف اطلاق النار حيز التنفيذ على تمام الحاديه عشر صباحا.

18. The **ceasefire agreement** came into effect at 11:00a.m.

19. لدى معرفة محدودة بالفرنسية.

19. I have **limited knowledge** of French.

20. انا مدرك تماما بأنه يوجد مشاكل خطيرة.

20. I am **fully aware** that there are serious problems.

21. كانت الوجبة لذيذة تماما.

21. The meal was **absolutely delicious**.

22. نحتاج الى اشرطة فارغة لتسجيل الافلام.

22. We need **plane tapes** to record the films.

23. تعطلت سيارته بالقرب من النهر.

23. His **car broke down** near the river.

24. رتبت اختى سرير نومها.

24. My sister **made** her **bed**.

25. كان الجو قارص البرودة ليلة البارحة.

25. It was **bitterly cold** last night.

26. تم بالأمس إلغاء مئات الرحلات الجوية بسبب الامطار الغزيرة.

26. Hundred of flights were cancelled yesterday because   of **heavy rain**.

27. غرفت السفينه التايتنك فى رحلتها الاولى .

27. The Titanic sank on its **maiden voyage**.

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28. <u>تقدم بشكوى</u> رسمية ضد الشركة بعد ان تم تسريحه من وظيفته.

28. After he was fired from his job, he **filed** a formal **complaint** against the

    a. Company.

<div align="center">End of test 2</div>

Appendix 4: Questionnaire (English version)

Gender: M ( )   F ( )

Age: _____

Period of time you have learnt English: _____

1. Have you been taught by native-English –speaking teachers?

    a. Yes ( )   b. No   ( )

(If yes) how long have you received instructions from native speaker teachers of English?

    a. less than one year (   )   b.1-2 years   ( )

    c. 2-3 years (   )   d. more than 3 years (   )

2. Have you ever travelled to English speaking countries?

    a. Yes (   )   b. No ( )

(If Yes where and for how long?) _____

3. Have you ever had native-English speaking friends?

    a. Yes (   )   b. No (   )

4. Have you ever taken any courses from English training institution in you country.

    a. Yes   (   )   b. No (   )

    (If Yes how much time and where) _____

5. How much time do you spend listening to English programs on the radio a day?

    a- Not at all (   )   b. Less than one hour (   )

c- 1-3 hours (   )   d. More than 4 hours (   )

6.   How much time do you spend listening to English songs a day?

     a. Not at all (   )   b. Less than one hour (   )

7. How much time do you spend watching programs in English such as TV news or movies a day?

     a. Not at all (   )   b. Less than one hour   (   )

     c.1-3 hours   (   )   d. More than 4 hours   (   )

8. How much time do you spend surfing English websites on the internet a day?

     a. Not at all   (   )   b. less than one hour   (   )

     c.1-3 hours   (   )   d. More than 4 hours   (   )

9. How much time do you spend reading English books a day?

     a. Not at all   (   )   b. Less than one hour   (   )

     c. 1-3 hours   (   )   d. More than 4 hours   (   )

10. How much time do you spend chatting with English friends online a day?

     a. Not at all   (   )   b. Less than one hour   (   )

     c. 1-3 hours   (   )   d. More than 4 hours   (   )

Thanks for your participation

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIR   (ARABIC VERSION)

الجنس: دكر ( )   انثى ( )

العمر: ....

المدة الزمنية التى امضيتها فى تعلم اللغة الانجليزية.

1- هل قام بتدريسك اساتدة ناطقين بالانجليزية(لغتهم الام هى اللغة الانجليزية)

نعم ( )   لا ( )

لو (الجواب نعم) كم من الوقت امضيت تحت اشراف هولاء الاساتدة الناطقين الاصليين للغة الانجليزية.

ا- اقل من سنة   ب- من2-1 سنوات

ج-2-3 سنوات   د- اكثر من3 سنوات

2- هل سافرت الى اى دولة من الدول الناطقة بالانجليزية؟

نعم ( )   لا ( )

لو الجواب (نعم) اين سافرت وكم قضيت من الوقت هناك

_____

3- هل كان لديك علاقة صداقة مع اشخاص لغنهم الاصلية هى اللغة الانجليزية؟

نعم ( )   لا ( )

4- هل اخدت اى دورات فى اللغة الانجليزية من مراكز متخصصة فى تعليم اللغة الانجليزية.

نعم ( )   لا ( )

لو كان الجواب (نعم) كم من الوقت واين _____

5- كم من الوقت تمضى يوميا للاستماع لبرامج اللغة الانجليزية فى محطة الاداعة المسموعة.

ا- لا استمع على الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعةواحدة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

6- كم من الوقت تمضى يوميا للاستماع الى الاغانى باللغة الانجليزية.

ا- لا استمع على الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

7- كم من الوقت تمضى يوميا لمشاهدة البرامج الانجليزية فى محط الاداعة المرئية.

ا- لاشاهد عى الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

- كم من الوقت تمضى يوميا فى تصفح الماقع الانجليزية على شبكة الانترنيت يوميا.

ا- لاتصفح على الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

9- كم من الوقت تمضى يوميا فى قراءة كتب باللغة الانجليزية.

ا- لااقرا على الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعة واحدة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

10-كم من الوقت يوميا تمضى فى الحديث مع اصدقاء ناطقين باللغة الانجليزية عبر الانترنيت.

ا- على الاطلاق   ب- اقل من ساعة واحدة

ج- من 3:1 ساعات   د- اكثر من اربع ساعات

شكرا على تعاونكم