

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIVERSITY – BISKRA
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



An Investigation into the Effects of Teaching Collocations on English as Foreign
Language Learners' Writing Proficiency: The Case of Master Students of English
at Biskra University

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Master Degree in Sciences of Language

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Academic year: 2021/2022

Declaration

I, Yousra **BELOUNAR**, do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that a list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed KHEIDER University of Biskra, Algeria.

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Dedication

To the memory of my beloved Cousin

We miss you beyond words. May Allah grant you ‘ Al Jannah’

To dad and mom

You taught me that hard work always pays off.

Thank you for your endless support and unconditional love. May Allah protect and bless your

souls

To my brothers

Thank you for the support you all have provided throughout this journey.

To my sister-in law, Thank you for your love, help and support.

To my little lovely nephew Haithem,

To my soul mates Oumnia, Nadia, and Imene. I simply could not imagine my life without you.

Thank you for your love, care and support.

To my friend Nadjette. Thank you for your help and support.

To everyone who helped me throughout this journey.

Acknowledgements

In the name of Allah, the most merciful and forgiving, peace be upon his prophet and messenger Mohammed. All praises be to Allah whose mercies gave me the strength to complete this work.

First and foremost, I am profoundly thankful to the supervisor of this work, Dr. Ahmed Chaouki **HOADJLI**. His constant guidance, patience, and endless support were remarkably significant and are greatly appreciated.

Second, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Board of Examiners: Dr. Tarek **ASSASSI** and Ms. Kenza **MERGHMI** for taking the time to correct and evaluate my work, and for their insightful comments.

I would also like to give thanks to the master one students who participated in this study. Special thanks go to Ms. Romaissa **HAMRIT**. I am deeply appreciative of her time, kindness and efforts.

Deepest gratitude goes to the teachers, who humbly agreed to sit for the interviews despite their busy schedules.

Lastly, I am indebted to Prof. Saliha **Chelli**, Dr. Ramdane **Mehiri**, Dr. Chahira **Nasri**, Ms. Meriem **Henouda** for constantly responding to my emails and for their kindness, assistance, and guidance throughout the research process.

Abstract

An important dimension of achieving proficiency in writing is to build a store of recurring word combinations that native speakers use such as collocations. Encouraging learners to use collocations in writing is thought to extend their vocabulary knowledge and foster their writing abilities. In this regard, this study aimed at investigating the effects of teaching collocations on EFL learners' writing proficiency at Biskra University in addition to the role of collocations in fostering the writing quality in terms of accuracy, fluency and vocabulary complexity. To achieve those objectives, a qualitative research approach following a case study design was adopted with a conveniently and purposively chosen sample. Accordingly, a test was administered to a group of 16 masters' students. Also, an interview was conducted with 5 teachers from English Language Department. The results revealed that participants in this study had a writing deficiency. It was detected that one of the major factors causing such results was the inadequate collocational knowledge in writing. Furthermore, the findings also unraveled the usefulness of teaching collocations in improving participants writing proficiency. Thus, the current study showed the positive effects of teaching collocations on writing proficiency. The results of this work offer pedagogical implications for developing a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus in that it provides learners with the frequent used collocations and how to use them effectively to be more accurate and fluent in writing prominently.

Key words: Collocations, Collocation based-instruction, Collocational knowledge, writing skill.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CI: Collocation-based instruction

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign Learners

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

M1: Master one

vs: Versus

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General introduction

1. Background of the Study

Each English Foreign Language Learner seeks to reach an adequate level of academic proficiency. Arguably, and to achieve the latter, EFL learners need to be competent enough in both receptive and productive skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Chiefly, the productive skills as speaking and writing are widely used as means of communication. That is, the transmission of information that a language user produces is either in spoken or written form. Due to the importance of productive skills in English language teaching and learning, different methods, approaches, and techniques are invented to make the teaching and learning process of these skills easier for both teachers and learners.

It is argued that writing is the most complex English language skill since it requires several components such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and capitalisation. In other words, the writer should have the competence to fill in the criteria of a good writing that includes content, organisation, vocabulary in use, grammar in use, spelling, and punctuation.

However, writing is deemed a challenge, especially for FL learners because of several factors. The main one is the lack of vocabulary knowledge. Developing sufficient vocabulary is necessary for language proficiency mainly, language production. Vocabulary knowledge implies not only the identification of words and their meanings but also the way words occur and function in a particular context. In addition, the English vocabulary is rich in word combinations, such as collocations. Collocations are combinations of words that collocate better when they occur together. "A heavy sleeper" or "an early riser" represents good examples of these combinations.

Furthermore, collocational competence provides learners with a decent device in writing. In this respect, many scholars have advocated for the importance of teaching collocations in EFL writing classrooms. One of these scholars is Michael Lewis, the founder of the lexical approach

(1993, 1997, 2000). In contrast to the grammatical approach, proponents of the lexical approach (e.g., Lewis, 1997; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Nation, 2001) believed that developing a strong background in both productive and receptive skills is determined by appropriate knowledge of vocabulary. In this context, Lewis (2000) claimed that collocations make up a larger part of written discourse. Thus, the role of collocations in writing is irrefutable.

According to Lewis (1997), “fluency is achievable in case the acquisition of a substantial store of fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated items is accomplished” (p. 15). Accordingly, it implies that fluency in a foreign language would not be accomplished without a direct focus on collocations. They, therefore, must be taught and given much importance since they constitute an essential category of vocabulary and a crucial element in writing proficiency.

2. Statement of the Problem

As a productive skill, writing is key in language teaching and learning because most university studies require good writing abilities importantly at advanced levels. Hence, it has to be improved since it demonstrates the learner's performance in a foreign language. The mastery of this skill demands from the students to be skillful in using both stylistic and linguistic aspects. In other words, the success of the writing process underlies the smooth use of both grammar and vocabulary.

However, in EFL teaching context, grammar is considered as a separate module; whereas, vocabulary is generally neglected. Unfortunately, this has led to the decrease of students' scores in academic writing modules particularly: for Master students of Applied Linguistics at Biskra University. In that sense, it is vital for the learner to be equipped with a rich vocabulary repertoire, which is a focal element in the mastery of any given language.

To better acquire a word, learners need to know its spelling, pronunciation, and association with other words. Without knowing what words are to be used together which is known as

collocations, learners are not considered to have acquired full knowledge of a certain vocabulary. Furthermore, we noticed that master students tend to use long expressions instead of the appropriate combinations of words in their assignments, tests, and examinations. Consequently, it entails that students, at this level, are still unaware of collocation in use. Hill (2000) illustrated this problem with the following example in which students say, "His disability will continue until he dies" rather than "He has a permanent disability." (p. 49). Hence, students should understand that words have their collocational fields.

Lexical-based instruction such as teaching collocations can be an effective method to improve EFL learners' writing abilities especially those related to vocabulary. In the context of writing, the appropriate use of chunks of vocabulary or words (collocations) will make learners' writings sound more natural, accurate, and native-like. Thus, teaching those combinations may foster students' writing abilities. In short, having good collocational knowledge may help Master learners achieving proficiency in writing.

3. The Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the current level of master one students' in writing?

RQ2: Do master students employ collocations in their writings'?

RQ3: What are the possible reasons impeding students' from employing the appropriate collocations in their written products?

RQ4: What are the attitudes and views of teachers towards the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms?

4. The Research Aims

The general aim of this study is to investigate the role of teaching collocations and its impact on EFL learners' writing proficiency.

More specifically, this research work aims to:

- Examine students' level in both writing and their capacities in using collocations;
- Highlight the role of collocations in fostering the writing quality;
- Explore the possible reasons impeding students' from employing the appropriate collocations in their written products;
- Describe teachers' attitudes and views towards the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms; and
- Raise student's awareness of the importance of collocations.

5. Rationale and Study Description

The following represents the intended steps to be realised for implementing the study, gathering the necessary data, and eliminating potential confounding variables.

5.1 The Test

The data will be gathered first through the test. A test will be administered to assess learners writing level, along with their collocational competence. The test will include a writing task to test students' writing abilities and their prior knowledge of collocations.

5.2 Teachers' interview

A semi-structured interview will be conducted with five teachers of English at the Department of English Language and Literature in Biskra University for the aim of exploring their attitudes towards the implementation of collocations into a writing course and its effects on writing proficiency.

6. The Research Methodology for this Study

For this research project, the researcher will adopt a qualitative research approach due to the nature of the study. First, the researcher attempts to examine the current level of students in writing along with their potential level of collocation in use. Second, she explores the possible reasons impeding students' from using the appropriate collocations in their written products. Finally, she describes teachers' perceptions and views towards the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms. Taking into consideration the above points, the use of the qualitative approach seems to be the most appropriate.

As for the research design, the study will adopt a case study design. Significantly, we intend to measure the students' level in both writing and collocational knowledge through a test. Additionally, a semi-structured interview will be designed to collect qualitative data about the teachers' views towards implementing a collocation-based instruction inside writing classrooms of Biskra University. Thus, the use of a qualitative approach will contribute to drawing logical conclusions.

7. Population and sampling technique

Master One EFL learners specialised in Applied Linguistics for the academic year 2021/2022 at Biskra University as well as the written expression teachers at the English department compose the population of this study. In the present study, the non-probability convenience and purposeful sampling techniques were used. Consequently, 16 students were chosen based on their convenience and availability to take part in the study. Besides the fact that they tackled the theme of collocations as a theoretical knowledge in Mastery of the language module. Henceforth, they are expected to possess, to some extent, knowledge about such lexical phenomena as master's degree holders. Moreover, five teachers in charge of the written expression module were interviewed for further insights.

The present study is based on a combination of convenient sampling for master one EFL learners and purposive sampling for EFL written expression teachers.

8. Significance of the Study

This study serves to gain more insights into the relationship between writing proficiency and collocation in use learning and teaching. Additionally, this study seeks to shed light on the importance of teaching English collocations. Collocation-based instruction has been neglected in our EFL Context in Algeria. Hence, advanced writing course designers and instructors should recognise the great importance of collocations and try to develop more lessons on those beneficial chunks. The findings of this study will create opportunities for students in writing courses, especially at advanced levels, to become familiar with those word combinations which are more relevant to their target situations.

9. The Referencing Style for this Dissertation

Owing to the fact that this work belongs to the social science and humanities discipline, it follows the American Psychological Association (APA) citing and referencing style, 7th edition.

10. Structure of the Dissertation

The following is the structure of this dissertation:

Chapter One serves as an overview of the writing skill. It tackles its definition, characteristics and parts of the paragraph as well as its importance in language teaching and learning. Moreover, it lists the different approaches which were proposed for teaching writing. In addition, it states the major writing difficulties that EFL learners encounter

Chapter Two introduces the concept of collocations as a crucial element of vocabulary knowledge and as a method in the lexical approach. It also defines collocations in relation to several approaches. Furthermore, It emphasises the importance of collocations especially in writing.

Chapter Three involves the methodological aspects of the current study along with the fieldwork and data analysis and major findings of this research work.

11. Demystifying Terminology/Glossary

A number of terms require some elucidation to determine how and in which sense the researcher uses them.

Collocation. is the way words combine in a language to produce natural-sounding speech and writing.

Collocational Competence. is the ability to apply collocations adequately in a defined context.

Collocation- Based instruction: an outline whereby teaching collocations is the focus of the classroom.

Miscollocation: refers to faulty arrangement of a collocation (wrong collocations).

Chapter One: The Writing Skill: An Overview

Introduction

1.1 Definition of writing

1.2 Paragraph Writing

1.3 Parts of paragraph

1.3.1 The topic

1.3.2 The topic sentence

1.3.3 The supporting sentences

1.3.4 The concluding sentence

1.4 Characteristics of Writing

1.4.1 Permanence

1.4.2 Production Time

1.4.3 Distance

1.4.4 Orthograhpy

1.4.5 Complexity

1.4.6 Vocabulary

1.4.7 Formality

1.5 Importance of teaching writing

1.6 Approaches to teaching writing

1.6.1 The process approach

1.6.2 The product approach

1.6.3 The genre approach

1.7 English Foreign languages Students' writing difficulties

Conclusion

Introduction

The present chapter aims to give a general overview on the writing skill. That is, it introduces scholars' views on the concept of writing. It identifies parts of the paragraph and characteristics of writing. Also, this chapter attempts to highlight the importance of teaching writing and the approaches that facilitate such a process. The last part of this chapter is devoted to unveiling the obstacles that students encounter in writing.

1.1 Writing: Definition(s)

The writing skill is the key to academic success because it allows learners to produce written texts with communicative purposes. Writing is crucial in language learning and teaching since it demonstrates learners' capacities in using the target language. Therefore, different researchers have approached writing from different perspectives.

Nunan (2003) defined writing as a mental process. It indicates inventing and arranging ideas into coherent statements or paragraphs. As a result, learners must master this skill as it facilitates the occurrence of utterances and ideas. Similarly, White and Arndt (1991) claimed that “Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time” (p.3). In this respect, producing a written text is a complex process that requires both effort and time. However, the writing skill is beyond the arrangement of words in a written text. It mainly targets the cognitive abilities of individuals, which involves brainstorming, organising, planning, and selecting ideas. It means that writers should consider multiple stages while writing. For Foreign Language Learners, the writing process demands a lot of effort and time. Unlike native speakers, the writing process is natural and effortless.

However, Brookes and Grundy (1990, as cited in Basonggo et al., 2016) explained, “purposes of writing for each person are different. The first answer may be to get information to someone. The second answer may be to solve the problem of volume, of having to store more than the human brain can remember. The third reason for writing may be to filter and shape our experience” (p.2). Accordingly, any piece of writing has a purpose either to convey a message, solve a problem or narrate an experience.

From the above definitions, we can define writing as a systematic process. It permits writers to transfer their ideas and thoughts into lucid language. It also highlights that any written text has to fulfill a communicative purpose.

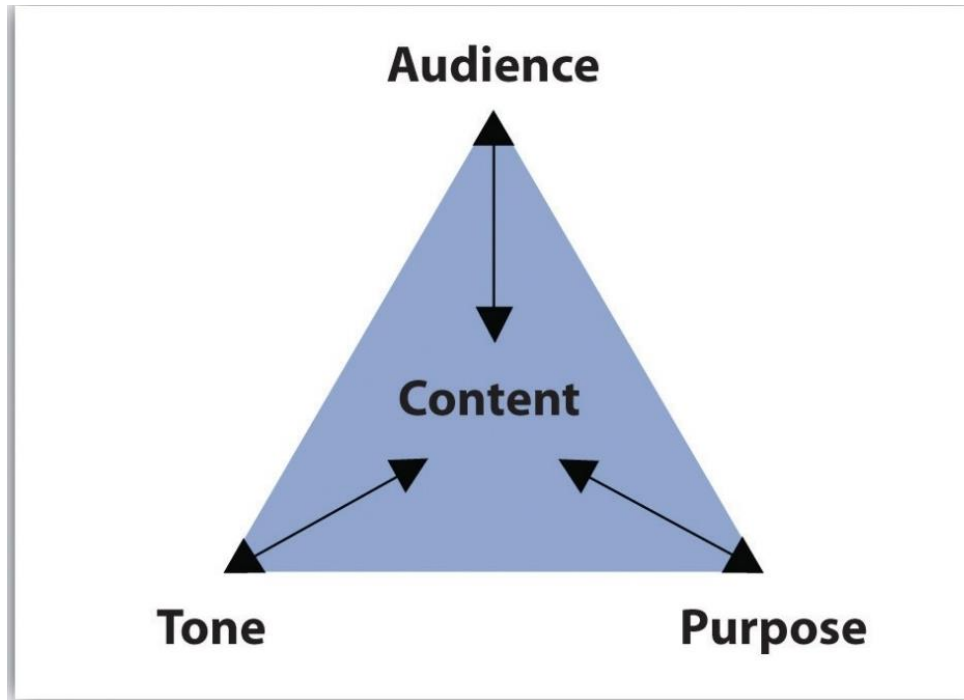
1.2Paragraph Writing

In any piece of writing, the paragraph is a pivotal point. Writing success is tiely related to how well a paragraph is carried out. Bram (1995 as cited in Basonggo et al., 2016) defined the paragraph as a group of sentences discussing one main topic. Chiefly, a paragraph compromises three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. A clear academic paragraph requires these parts.

According to McLean (2012), each paragraph elucidates an argument or idea. The writer supports his claims and notions using connected speech. Writers, usually, group paragraphs to create longer sequences to uncover broader views.

Figure 1.1

Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content



Note. Retrieved from "*Successful Writing*", by McLean, S.(2012). p. 296.

<https://2012books.lardbucket.org/pdfs/successful-writing.pdf>. CC BY

The triangle in the figure 1 represents three key components that shape the content of each paragraph. First, the purpose constitutes the reason behind the paragraph. Second, the tone identifies the view of the writer towards the subject matter. Third, the audience compromise the committee to whom the subject is dedicated (McLean, 2012).

1.3 Parts of The Paragraph

1.3.1 The Topic Sentence

The topic sentence comes at the beginning of a paragraph. It shapes the main idea of the paragraph (Nordquist, 2020). The topic sentence is valuable for two reasons. First, it paves the way for the reader to understand what the paragraph will be about. Second, it supports the supporting sentences. It unifies the sentences of the paragraph and backs up the claims made in the supporting sentences (Oshima et al.,1996). To conclude, the topic sentence helps make the main idea of a paragraph clearer and gives the paragraph a sense of coherence.

The topic sentence identifies two major components: the subject and the controlling idea. The subject narrows the scope of the topic from general to specific. On the other hand, the controlling idea indicates the writer's opinion, feeling, or point of view towards the subject matter. Determining the subject and the controlling idea facilitates writing the paragraph (Oshima et al.,1996).

1.3.2 The Supporting Sentences

The second part of the paragraph is the supporting sentences. They back up the topic sentence by giving specific details through examples, definitions, and explanations. In short, supporting sentences prove why the topic sentence is valid (Oshima et al.,1996).

1.3.3 The Concluding Sentence

The concluding sentence is the last part of the paragraph. It is the reforming of the topic sentence using different words. The writer may also add a concluding comment that states the writer's final thought about the subject of the paragraph. The latter aims to remind readers of the topic (Oshima et al.,1996).

1.4 Characteristics of Writing

Brown (2001) distinguished writing from the other four skills by introducing a set of characteristics. Permanence, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, vocabulary, and formality are some characteristics of the written language.

1.4.1 Permanence

Brown (2001) revealed that learners usually classify writing as intimidating operation because once their written products are delivered to a certain reader or audience, the writer has no longer the authority to correct, classify or pull out his ultimate piece of writing. As a result, the teacher's role as a facilitator and guide is highly significant in this case. Before the submission of the final product, teachers should help learners in proofreading their drafts.

1.4.2 Production Time

Writing is an intricate process that demands both time and efforts. Yet, time limitations have both positive and negative effects on the writers' final product. When providing writers with good amount of time, they will achieve better outcomes. Whereas, limiting their time to one hour or less will, unfortunately, affect their final results. Consequently, in the EAP context, learners should be trained on how to divide their time wisely into equal opportunities for the writing tasks.

1.4.3 Distance

Any piece of writing is devoted to a specific range of audiences. Therefore, the writer needs to put himself into the reader's shoes. Furthermore, the writer has to predict his/her audience's cultural background and prior knowledge of the subject matter. Such predictions will help the writer in arranging ideas and words in order to appeal to their emotions, thoughts and rational (Brown, 2001).

1.4.4 Orthography

Mastering the English language underlies mastering language mechanisms. Transcription skills (handwriting and spelling) constrain written production at learning to write. Brown (2001) recommended non- literature learners to read and write more in the native language. Conversely, for literature learners, they should focus more on learning the phonemes and graphemes systems. Notably, the writer can transmit multiple messages through language symbols and words.

1.4.5 Complexity

Brown (2001) stated that writers must be competent at different language levels. First, writers should use the appropriate chunks of lexis. The simple, the better. Second, writers should know how to combine sentences in terms of meaning and structures. The appropriate use of combinations will render the text fluid and consistent. Finally, writers need to avoid duplication because it misleads readers. In short, writers must be precise, systematic, and clear.

1.4.6 Vocabulary

Writing demands a richer vocabulary repertoire than speaking. Writers who have an extensive repertoire of words produce better writing. On the contrary, insufficient vocabulary hinders the quality of written productions (Brown, 2001). In the same vein, Corona et al. (1998) concurred: "At any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident" (p.26). Simply put, effective writing hinges upon having an adequate vocabulary knowledge.

1.4.7 Formality

In academic writing, each form of writing has its particular convention. Hence, learners should adhere to writing conventions. However, many ESL learners face challenges in learning those conventions because they involve rules for describing, explaining, comparing, and illustrating (Brown, 2001).

1.5 Teaching Writing

Achieving good composition is a complex and difficult task especially for non-native speakers of English. A good written composition requires precision and form. Hence, teaching writing is an essential step towards the mastery of any language (Brown, 2001).

1.6 Importance of Teaching Writing

Writing is a productive skill which entails a communicative purpose. Florian (1999) defined the writing system as: “a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system.”(p.560).In other words, writing is a communication tool. It records messages into words and transmits them to the audience. Thus, integrating writing skills is significant in teaching and learning a second or foreign language.In this context, Harmer (2004) introduced some of the main reasons why writing should be taught.

1.6.1 Writing for Learning

Mastering the ability to write effectively is seen as the ultimate goal for English language learners. The role of writing differs from one curriculum to another. Mainly, writing is used as an instrument for learning i.e. learners write to boost their grammar and vocabulary competencies. Unlike speaking, learners have more time to think and brainstorm ideas when writing. Writing, therefore, provokes language development and enhances their language accuracy. To illustrate, teachers sometimes may ask their students to write a paragraph, a story or a description of someone for the purpose of practicing a particular language aspect. Henceforth, Writing creates an opportunity for learners to become better learners.

1.6.2 Writing as a Preparation Activity

Writing can be introduced as an integral part for another activity. It can be used on activities where the focus is on language practice, acting out, or speaking. To illustrate, teachers may ask students to write a dialogue to practice a particular functional aspect of language. In addition, writing can be used in questionnaire activities as a tool to collect students' ideas and views towards an area or topic. To sum up, writing is significant in different activities.

1.6.3 Writing for Writing

Although it is important to teach grammatical and lexical structures, focusing on writing as a separate skill is much more important. Writing is more than learning the language mechanics. Indeed, it is about developing students' communicative skills in written texts. Writing for writing includes activities such as writing stories or poems, journals, or creating dramatic scenarios. Writing is crucial in learning and teaching a second language. Hence, learners need to practice writing more and ask for guidance from their teachers (Harmer, 2004).

From the explanations above, we can conclude that writing is fundamental in second language teaching and learning. These imply that writing as a skill enables writers to communicate information or ideas to the reader in written forms. In addition, it gives an opportunity for learners to practice language aspects, such as vocabulary and grammar. Learners who are skillful in writing are more willing to solve classroom activities. Although writing is highly important in learning and teaching, it is still a complex process for learners to digest.

1.7 Approaches to Teaching Writing

Good writing skills are passing cards to enter any modern workplace. Respectively, it is vital for ESL teachers to design a systematic plan for each lesson conducted to engage learners and to achieve successful learning. Due to the complex nature of writing, some approaches came to simplify and ease the teaching of writing. Richard and Rodgers (1986) defined approach "as a set of correlative

assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning which is the subject matter need to be taught.” (p. 204). In short, writing approaches are rules and theoretical views applied in teaching writing.

Over the last twenty years, product-based approaches and process-based approaches have dominated the teaching of writing. It is, perhaps, until the last ten years, genre-based approaches have emerged (Badger & White, 2000).

1.7.1 The Product-Based Approach

A product approach is a traditional approach where learners supposed to imitate text models to produce parallel texts (Gabrielatos, 2002). Furthermore, Pincas (1982) acknowledged that learning linguistic aspects, lexis, syntax, and cohesive devices is fundamental in writing because they represent the core focus of the product-based approach (as cited in Badger & White, 2000).

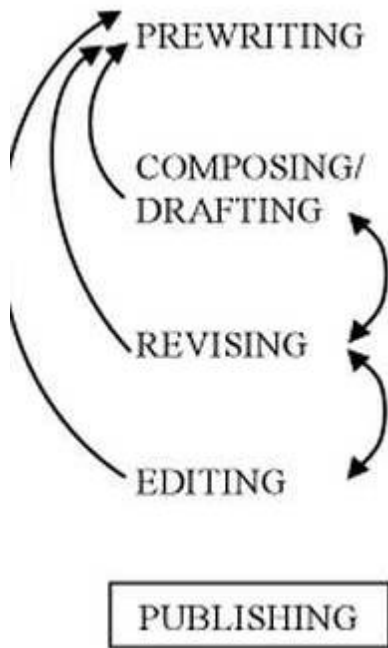
In this approach, learning to write comprises four stages: familiarisation, controlled, and free writing. At the familiarization stage, learners are exposed to language features of a particular genre. Then, in controlled and guided writing, learners practice these skills. They may produce simple sentences or restricted texts based on a picture in mind. Finally, at the stage of freewriting, learners yield a well-structured written text which can be a letter, story, or essay (Pincas, 1982, as cited in Badger & White, 2000). We can conclude that the teacher's role inside the classroom is to provide learners with various text forms. Learners imitate teacher's input to produce a suitable output.

According to Pincas (1982, as cited in Badger & White, 2000), the product-oriented approach encourages learners to attain a similar outcome to that provided by the instructor. The interest in this approach is providing language learners with some linguistic roots through teaching grammar structures, vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices.

1.7.2 The Process Based Approach

The process approach emerged with a different focus than the product approach. Tribble (1996 as cited in Badger & White, 2000) stated, "an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models." (p.143). In other words, process-writing approach shifts the focus from imitating the structures of a particular text, provided by the teacher, to the steps writers go through in order to produce a written work. Moreover, writing in the process approach emphasises linguistic skills rather than linguistic knowledge. In contrast with the product-based approach, the process-based approach encourages students to write more without worrying about mistakes. Thus, the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy (Namoushi, 2014).

Process approach has received much criticism for many reasons. First, it does not provide learners with adequate input. Second, it disregards the type of text being produced. In addition, the process-based approach opponents did not support the fact that all writings follow the same set of processes. Despite these critics, this approach contributes to the development of writing as it highlights various linguistic skills (Refnaldi, 2013). However, Tribble (1996) identified four stages: prewriting; composing/drafting; revising and editing, which represents the stages writers go through in producing a piece of writing (as cited in Badger & White, 2000).

Figure 1.2*Recursive model*

Note: Reterived from *The Writing Approaches and Process Writing* by E. Cil, 2014. Berlin University, p. 7.

Figure 2 above elaborates three main stages: Prewriting, Composing/Drafting, and Revising/Editing. As Raimes (1985, as cited in Çil, 2014) pointed, the writing process is recursive. It refers to the probability for writers to go back and forth between the stages at any time during the writing process. For instance, the writer can move from the prewriting stage to the editing and vice versa whenever needed.

1.7.2.1 Prewriting

Pre-writing is the first step of the writing process. The writer seeks to generate ideas to begin his composition with. Techniques such as brainstorming and freewriting are used in the process of generating ideas. At this phase, the teacher's role as a facilitator is required. To say it

clearly, learners sometimes may not be motivated to write; as a result, teachers should initiate discussions or debates or provide a text about a specific topic to encourage learners to write. Also, forming an outline can be beneficial in the visualization of ideas (Çil, 2014).

Concerning the activities and techniques that may be involved in this step, Raimes (1983) listed some of the well-known: brainstorming, discussion, reading, debate, and listing. Furthermore, Hyland (2003) added other techniques displayed in Figure 3. He suggested to use listing and freewriting at the beginning of the pre-writing sessions. In addition, since the other activities such as clustering, cubing, and questioning may require more careful planning, collaborative working may promote learners in accomplishing these task.

Figure 1.3

Hyland's (2003) pre-writing invention techniques

Listing	List details for an essay topic (people, place, actions, feelings, objects, etc.)
Freewriting	Rapid “stream of consciousness” writing ignoring grammar, punctuation, spelling
Looping	Expanding a freewriting idea through reflection and further freewriting – limited time
Clustering	Pattern of circled ideas joined by lines showing connections between them (see Figure 1.5)
Cubing	6 way exploration – description, comparison, association, analysis, application, argument
Questioning	Ideas for writing generated by who, what, where, when, how, why questions

Note: Retrieved from "Second Language Writing", by K. Hyland, 2003, p.130.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667251>

1.7.2.2 Composing/Drafting

Galko (2002) demonstrated the stage of drafting as follows:

Drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper. It is a time to really focus on the main ideas you want to get across your paper. When drafting, you might skip sections or make notes to yourself to come back and add more examples in certain spots or to check your facts later. As you draft, you do not need to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. You will have to refine these mechanical parts of your paper at a later stage. (p. 49).

To put it another way, after collecting and brainstorming ideas, learners need to outline their ideas on paper. The process of transforming conceptions into words is considered a first draft. When writing the first draft, learners should focus only on the content of their work and disregard the language and the mechanical aspects such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

1.7.2.3 Revising/Editing

Hedge's (1988) as cited in Çil,(2014) distinguished between revising and editing stages. She quoted "getting the content right first", which is revising and "leaving details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar", which is editing. Revising and editing are the last stages in writing. The former gives the writer's an opportunity to correct any errors and to revise the different aspects of language while the latter is about streamlining the piece of writing (Smith, 2003).Tribble (1996)as cited in Çil,(2014, p.13) listed some of the fundamental questions that may facilitate the process of editing:

- "Check that your writing makes sense"
- "Is it correctly organized on the page?"

- "Is the information presented in a clear, logical order?"
- "Have you put in all the information your reader needs?"
- "Have you put in unnecessary information?"

According to Kim (2006), in revising and editing stages, peers and teachers may provide feedback or comments to the writer since it helps them modify and revise their final draft.

To summarise, the linguistic skills are the central aspect of product approach. The former refers to the prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing stages which the writer goes through to produce any piece of writing.

1.7.3 The Genre-based Approach

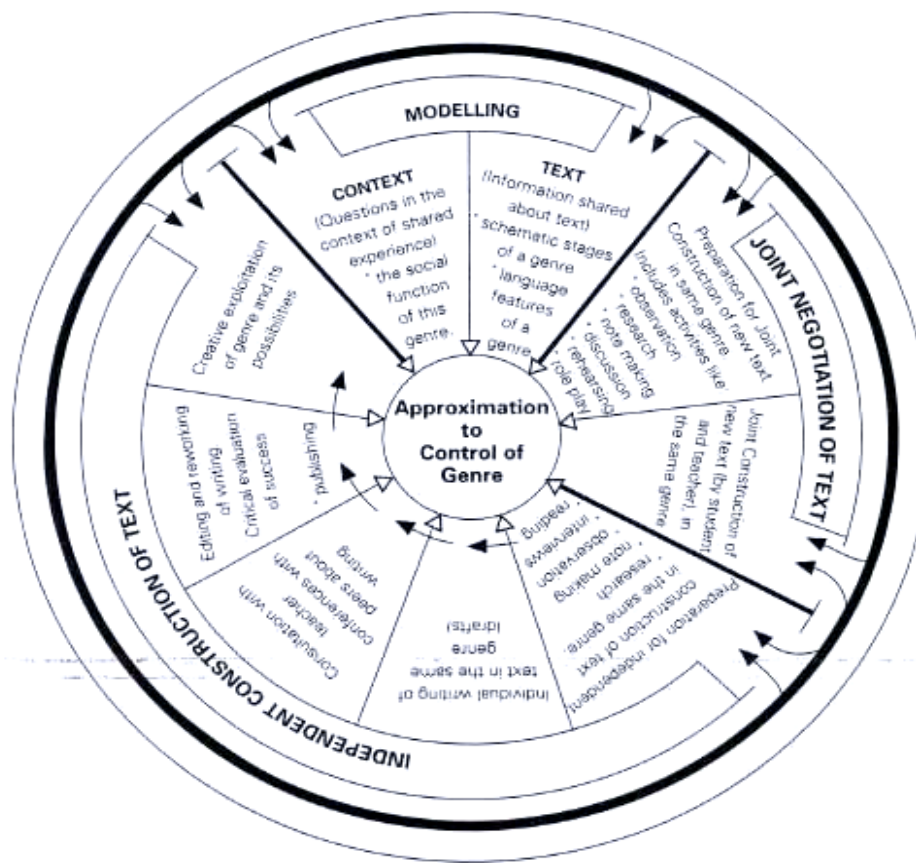
The genre approach is regarded as supplementary to the product approach. A genre is new to language teaching. It acknowledges that writing takes place in a social context that decides the purpose of a text. Besides, it highly emphasises the overall structure. However, the genre is determined by other features, such as the subject matter, the organizational patterns, or the audience/writer relationship (Badger & White, 2000). Furthermore, Swales' (1990, as cited in Kim, 2006) introduced genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p.34). It can be inferred that genre is a written form that intends to convey a purpose.

As an explanation of the genre approaches into writing, Cope and Kalantzis (1993) presented a genre literacy wheel model, where they identified three phases: First, it is the modeling phase, teachers usually expose their learners to a genre model. Learners are expected to imitate the input of the sample to produce a similar one to it. Second, it is Joint Negotiation of Text. Teachers and learners collaborate to construct texts. Learners discuss the topic with their teachers

and take notes about it to write a new text. Finally, the Independent Construction of text, learners now work independently to produce the final written product (As cited in AL Hinai, 2018).

Figure 1.4

Martin's Wheel (1993) model of genre literacy pedagogy



Note. Retrieved from *A Genre-Based Approach to Developing Learning and Teaching Academic Writing Skills With Relation to the Omani Technical Context*, by AL Hinai, I., 2018. p.

461.<https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2018.10.001>

1.8 Writing Difficulties

Writing is the most permanent way to pass knowledge on one generation after another. Regardless of its importance in language teaching and learning, writing is commonly categorised as a daunting task in language learning. Learners may encounter various problems which hinder their achievement in writing. On the one hand, learners point out that the teaching methods and the environment are the reasons of their weaknesses in writing. It is either related to the lack of students' motivation, or the teachers' interest. In fact, methods of teaching English involves medium of instruction, the frequent use of Arabic inside English classes, and lack of writing practice in educational institutions (Al-Khsawneh, 2010). On the other hand, Rabab'ah (2003) demonstrated that learners are incapable of producing their thoughts freely due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge. This has led them to repeat the same words which hinders creativity. In a broader view, Brynne (1988) divided those problems into three categories:

1.8.1 Psychological Problems

In speaking, speech is the natural mean of communication in which the speaker and listener are physically interacting. Besides, errors are immediately corrected. Meanwhile, writing is considered an independent task. That is, the writer is the sole source of information. It indicates no interaction or collaboration between the writer and the reader. Hence, the absence of feedback can create a dilemma (Brynne,1988). Likewise, self-confidence is another psychological factor that may affect students' written products. To strengthen this point, Neman (1995) declared, that writing strongly requires, “the self-confidence to exercise this knowledge (p. 05). Self- confidence and the background knowledge are complementary components that contribute to a successful final product.

1.8.2 Linguistic Problems

Language represents the core channel in communication. In speech, incomplete sentences, to some extent, are not given that much importance. On the other hand, the meaning of utterances in writing are expressed through distinct structures. The sentence is an effective device for transmitting the message to the reader. Indeed, the choice of the appropriate grammatical structures is pivotal in writing. The sequence and coherence of sentences guarantee the smooth flow of ideas. Otherwise, incomplete sentences are unvalued in writing (Brynne, 1988).

1.8.3 Cognitive Problems

Brynne(1988) distinguished between writing and speaking. In his view, speaking is an unconscious process. Learners usually produce utterances spontaneously and in a natural manner, i.e. the speaker is not restricted to particular conventions. Whereas, writing is depicted as a systematic process. Learners are restricted to language structures and forms. To master the written form, learners should follow some sequencing and grammatical rules (Brynne, 1988).

To sum up, writing may sometimes be an imposed task where learners, in some cases, are unmotivated to write. Inside classrooms, learners face difficulties in writing that can be linguistic, psychological, or cognitive. These problems may eliminate students' achievement and performance. However, teachers ' roles as guidance, facilitator, and advisor must take place in such cases.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed at gaining insights into writing as a productive skill from different prescriptive. It introduced the paragraph as an integral part of writing. It also distinguished its parts. Besides, it identified the characteristics of writing. Moreover, it emphasised its importance and why it should be integrated into second language classrooms. Henceforth, approaches to teaching the latter are provided. Finally, it stressed the challenges and problems that students, usually, endure when writing.

In the next chapter, the researcher will shed light on the concept of collocations, in general, and the teaching of those lexical chunks, in particular.

Chapter Two: Collocations: An Overview

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2.2 The Lexical Approach to Language Teaching

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2.9 Explicit VS Implicit Teaching

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Conclusion

Introduction

Vocabulary teaching and learning have been a concern in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA) research for some time now. Thus, this chapter intends to get insights into collocations as being one of the most significant foundations of vocabulary knowledge. It also highlights the Lexical Approach and its famous types of chunks, more importantly, collocations. Furthermore, the researcher provides different definitions and types of collocations. Supplementary to that, it emphasises its importance on language proficiency. Moreover, this chapter discusses the explicit instruction of collocations along with the challenges that teachers face in teaching these chunks. Finally, some techniques and activities are provided.

2.1 Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge represents an essential foundation in language literacy. It indicates a person's quality and depth of vocabulary. That is to say; it demonstrates how students or speakers understand and interpret a word. It also measures learners' level of proficiency in both receptive and productive skills (Pulido & Hambrick, 2008). Due to its importance in language learning and teaching, many researchers have approached its identification differently. Vocabulary knowledge underlies mainly the knowledge of both spoken and written forms of a particular word. Besides that, it involves other components of knowledge such as, morphological, semantic, grammatical, collocational, connotative, associational, and social knowledge (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004).

Although, vocabulary is an intricate process. Many researchers have highlighted its beneficial contribution to language learning and teaching. Karakoç and Köse (2017) claimed that vocabulary knowledge paves the process of language learning, which is determined by having the necessary competencies in a language. Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge plays an essential role in writing. It permits the use of language in an active, understandable, and meaningful manner. In

addition, learners who are more exposed to a large number of vocabularies, are more likely to succeed in the target language, particularly in language production (Karakoç & Köse, 2017).

In a similar vein, Kamil and Hiebert (2005) introduced vocabulary as the meaning of words. These words are either in a written or spoken form. The latter involves a set of words used in listening and speaking. The former includes words used in writing and reading. Otherwise, word knowledge is divided as well into receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is significantly larger than productive vocabulary. The latter include a set of words that an individual use when writing or speaking. The former involves words in which an individual can come across when listening or reading. We read or listen to words that have already been used in context; our purpose is just to extract meaning from them. In fact, we are not required to acquire a word fully in order to understand its meaning or use it in speaking or writing (Kamil & Hiebert, 2005).

In a broader perspective, Nation (2001) acknowledged that vocabulary knowledge is a combination of form (pronunciation, spelling), meaning (semantic), and use (syntax, collocation, social constraints). Moreover, he presented the different components of vocabulary knowledge. Thus, these descriptions may serve as a guideline in teaching vocabulary. Nation's perspective is displayed in table 1 below. It is worth mentioning that R stands for receptive knowledge while P stands for productive knowledge (as cited in Maskor & Baharudin, 2016).

Table 2.1

What is involved in knowing a word (Nation 2001)

Form	Spoken	R What does the word sound like? P How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R What does the word look like? P How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	R What parts are recognisable in this word? P What words parts are needed to express meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R What meaning does this word form signal? What word form can be used to express this P meaning?
	Concepts and referents	R What is included in the concept? P What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R What others words does this word make us think of? P What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	R In what patterns does the word occur? P In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R What words or types of word occur with this one? What words or types of words must we use with this P one? Where, when and how often would we meet this
	Constraints on use	R word? P Where, when and how often can we use this word?

Note. Retrieved from *Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge or Productive Vocabulary Knowledge in Writing Skill, Which One Important?*, by Z. M. Maskor, H. Baharudin, 2016, p. 263.

doi:[10.6007/IJARBS/v6-i11/2395](https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v6-i11/2395)

As can be seen in figure 1, true mastery of a word involves knowing a variety of aspects such as knowing the word's form, meaning and use. If we are exposed to more than one aspect of word knowledge, we are more likely to be able to understand and use words in their right contexts.

To conclude, vocabulary knowledge dominates a student's performance in both receptive and productive skills. The richer student's repertoire, the better his performance will be in the target language, especially in writing.

2.2 The Lexical Approach to Language Teaching

Lewis (1993) in *The Lexical Approach* stated "The basis of language is lexis. It has been, and remains, the central misunderstanding of language teaching to assume that grammar is the basis of language and that mastery of the grammatical system is a prerequisite for effective communication"(as cited in Grove, 1994, p.828). Accordingly, lexis is misunderstood in language teaching. Teachers who are proponents of the grammatical approach assume that grammatical structures are the core of language mastery and that they contribute to an effective communication (as cited Grove, 1994, p. 828). Instead, the Lexical Approach emphasised that the focus should be upon lexis.

However, language embodies different types of chunks. They are usually combined to identify a well-organised text (Lewis, 1997). According to Lewis (1997), chunks compromise four basic types. One of these consists of single words while all chunks are multi-word items.

2.2.1 Words

This category is the largest of the four categories in the lexicon. Lexical items are words that can stand alone as independent lexis. "Open, Certainly!" are words that serve as new meanings depending upon the context in which they occur. Words are the largest and most well-known category in lexis, but the other multi-word categories provide new insights into pedagogy. Simply put, the lexical approach focuses more on the multi-word categories rather than single words (Lewis, 1997, p.8).

2. 2.2 Collocations

Collocation is one of the central linguistic concepts which the lexical approach accentuated. Collocation is an observable phenomenon that entails the occurrence of certain words together. These associations range from fully fixed such; as "a broken home" and "to catch a cold" to totally novel. Nevertheless, collocations are not completely fixed; instead, a limited number of partner words can be added. The lexical approach highlighted the importance of teaching these chunks in the classroom. Furthermore, it emphasised teaching words associations that are highly likely to occur together. By doing that, learners may be more cautious of slightly larger chunks.

2.2.3 Fixed Expressions

Fixed expressions are another category of lexical items. These expressions are divided into fully fixed and semi-fixed. Some of the fixed expressions illustrated below are the most used in teaching materials.

a. Social greetings:

Good morning; It's a lovely morning, isn't it?; Happy New Year.

b. Politeness phrases:

No thank you, I 'm fine; I'll have to be going.

c. 'Phrase Book' language:

Can you tell me the way to ? please?

I 'd like a twin room fornights, please.

d. Idioms - especially of the more picturesque kind:

Hang on, you 're putting the cart before the horse there.

You're making a mountain out of a molehill. (p.10)

Only the first three categories are introduced to native learners inside classrooms.

Otherwise, the last category is an addition to learners who can already say what they mean.

2.2.4 Semi- fixed Expressions

Semi-fixed expressions are frequently used in both speaking and writing. Unlike, the fixed ones, they are usually large and hard to imply in everyday situations. Many semi-fixed expressions deserve recognition, for example:

- Almost Fixed Expressions, which permit minimal variation: *It's / That's not my fault.*
- Spoken sentences with a simple slot: *Could you pass..... please?*
- Expressions with a slot which must be filled with a particular kind of slot filler:
Hello. Nice to see you. I haven't seen you + time expression with for or since.
- Sentence heads, which can be completed in many ways: *What was really interesting / surprising / annoying was* (p.11)

2.3 Collocations: Definitions

In the light of making benefits of the term “collocation” in many linguistic areas, researchers define it in a myriad of ways. Lewis (1997) defined collocation as “the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency.” (p.8). Simply put, collocations are two or more words that occur naturally together in spoken or written language.

More specifically, collocation was approached from a semantic and non-semantic view. The term "collocation" was first introduced by Firth to describe meaning. He declared that collocation needs to be regarded as a lexicon study (as cited in Soleimani et al., 2013). In Firth's view, the meaning of a collocation is identified through the company it keeps and its relationship

with other words. (as cited in Bright-Ajouku & Mbata, 2020). Reciprocally, Sinclair (1996) explained that meaning is not attached to words in a clear and detailed manner, “It is anticipated that meanings also arise from the loose and varying co-occurrences of several words, not necessarily next to each other” (as cited in, Danilevičienė&Vaznonienė, 2018, p.22). This indicates that we can often distinguish between different meanings of words through the meaning of combined lexemes. Yet, they display certain restrictions regarded grammar (Logar et al., 2014). Likewise, other researchers view collocations from a non-semantic perspective. McCarthy (1988) stated that collocations are a type of cohesive device which occurs together as lexical items but in a non-semantic manner (as cited in Soleimani et al., 2013). The views of these researchers interline with the supporters of the structural approach. Accordingly, grammar and lexis are inseparable components (Martyńska, 2004).

Gablasova et al. (2017) defined collocation from other two different approaches: frequency-based and phraseology. These two approaches are the most common ones. The latter deals with the semantic dimension of a word. Whereas the former measures the association strength inside a collocation using statistical clues. In other words, frequency-based approach investigates the difference between the observed frequency (OF) of a word pair and its expected frequency (EF) by using hypothesis testing measures or mutual information measures (Schmitt, 2010). Nevertheless, the phrasological approach hinges upon L2 learners’ use of word pairs and the difficulties they pose. Phrasological approach identifies the word pairs under study through natives' intuition of recurring word combinations. Hence, phrasological approach is more pedagogically-oriented than frequency -based (Sonder, 2019).

we can conclude from the above definitions that collocations are the forefront aspect of vocabulary knowledge which by has been used and understood in myriad of ways.

2.4 Types of Collocations

The English language is rich in prefabricated chunks and unlimited number of collocations. Writers mostly refer to two types of collocations: grammatical and lexical collocations.

2.4.1 Grammatical Collocations

Grammatical collocations embody a noun, or an adjective or a verb, plus a particle. A particle can be a preposition, an adverb or a grammatical structure. For example, "account for", "advantage over", "to be afraid that" (Bahns, 1993, p. 57).

Table 2.2*Types of Grammatical Collocations*

Collocation	Example
Noun + preposition	Exception to
Noun + to-infinitive	A decision to do it
Noun + that-clause	He made a promise that he would do his best
Preposition + noun	By chance
Adjective + preposition	Keen on movie
Adjective + to-infinitive	It's essential to type the letter
Adjective + that-clause	It was necessary that all of us attend
Verb + to-infinitive	They started to work

Note. Adapted from *Iranian EFL learners collocational errors in speaking*, by Shamsudin et al., 2013. p. 2.

2.4.2 Lexical Collocations

Lexical collocations encompass of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. These type of collocations do not involve prepositions, infinitive, or clauses (Bahns, 1993). Furthermore, Benson et al. (1997) identified six types of lexical collocations namely, verb plus noun or adverb, noun plus verb or noun, adverb plus adjective and adjective plus noun (as cited in Shamsudin et al., 2013). The table below illustrated these types.

Table 2.3*Types of lexical collocations*

Collocation	Example
Verb + noun	To launch a rally
Verb + adverb	Recommend highly
Noun + verb	Bee stings
Noun + noun	Income per capita
Adverb + adjective	Drastically changed
Adjective + noun	Thick fog

Note. Adapted from Iranian EFL learners collocational errors in speaking, by Shamsudin et al., 2013. p. 2.

From the tables above, it can be observed that the dominant part of the grammatical collocations is the prepositions. Conversely, there is no preposition in the second table. It is, therefore, the prepositions that distinguish both types of collocations.

2.5 The Importance of the Proper Use of Collocations

Collocations as a linguistic phenomenon have been a concern in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA) research for some time now due to its crucial role. "Collocation is not only a necessary element of language but also an outstanding feature that makes language specific and correct. Therefore, to learn English well, learners should attach much importance to collocation"(Duan & Qin, 2012, p. 2). In this context, Men (2017) emphasised the role of collocations and summarised its significance in two crucial points: native-like productions and efficient comprehension.

2.5.1 Collocations are important for native-like productions

Fox (1988 as cited in men, 2017) claimed that:

When even very good learners of the language speak or write English, the effect is often slightly odd. There is nothing that is obviously wrong, but somehow native speakers know that they would not express themselves in quite that way. ... The problem is often one of collocation. (p.12)

Accordingly, the misuse of word combinations affects the way learners speak or write. Thus, what distinguishes natives and non-natives is no longer the grammatical rules or functions but rather the selection of words' combinations. As an example, non-natives would, in some cases, assign the word "car" to "blonde". Whereas, natives would never combine those two words. Furthermore, Cowie (1992) argued that to achieve a native-like level in writing or speech requires knowledge of an appropriate range of multi-word units. There have been several studies which supported this position. Duong and Nguyen (2021) in a study of Van Lang University English-major juniors' found that collocations help students' in the improvement of their language fluency and accuracy in writing. On the top of that, students who implement suitable range of word combinations, their writings will be more professional, appealing and natural.

2.5.2 Collocations are beneficial for efficient comprehension

As it is mentioned earlier, possessing a high command of lexical chunks provokes not only a native-like productions, but also contributes to efficient comprehension on the part of learners. This knowledge of collocational patterns can help learners understand the meanings of speech and text without checking every single word separately. At a micro-level, knowledge of co-occurring word combinations contributes to a better understanding of the semantics of

utterances particularly in reading. As for listening skills, learners can construct meaning just from listening to words combinations (Hunston & Francis, 2000, as cited in Men, 2017).

Another reason why collocations are important is that they increase learners' vocabulary knowledge. Respectively, in any written exam, it will be beneficial to avoid words as "very" or "nice" or "beautiful" and replace it with a word combination that has a more precise meaning. By doing so, examiners will have a good impression besides that learners will receive a good mark. At advanced levels, good marks are often specifically awarded for those who use collocations appropriately. Skilled users of the language particularly poets, journalists and advertisers tend to vary in the use of collocations' patterns with the aim of either startling or amusing their audience (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2017).

To sum up, collocations as prefabricated units are significant in language teaching and learning. It promotes native-like productions and allows writers to be precise and concise in written texts, examinations. Also, at advanced levels, good marks are often specifically awarded for the appropriate use of collocations. Hence, instructors should not neglect including them in English language syllabi.

2.6 Teaching Collocations

Collocations play a vital role in expanding learners' vocabulary repertoire. Consequently, teaching collocations promotes EFL learners' levels in reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. However, Lewis (2000) highlighted the fact that collocations need to be recognised and given much importance like other aspects of language. In this respect, Lewis (2000) stated "in order to teach collocation we have to give it the same kind of status in our methodology as other aspects of language such as pronunciation, intonation, stress, and grammar"(p.59). Further, collocation has an outstanding role in language production. Nesselhauf (2005) claimed that

"prefabricated units are essential for fluency in both spoken and written language... it has been known that whether or not L2 production is fluent crucially depends on the learners' control over a large repertoire of prefabricated units" (p.2). Nevertheless, formulaic sequences such as "collocations" are hard to teach and learn. It is, therefore, substantial to understand the why's to design an effective way of teaching them (Wray, 2000).

2.7 Challenges to Teaching Collocations

According to Schmitt (2000), the challenge that a language instructor may encounter is the fact that there is no absolute effective way of teaching collocations, i.e. instructors cannot decide whether collocations should be taught explicitly or implicitly. In a clearer statement, Schmitt mentioned, "Collocation is an advanced type of vocabulary knowledge that is difficult to know how to teach" (p. 89). Remarkably, among non-native learners, formulaic expressions are an intricate area of language to master (Wray, 2000). In this respect, Wray believed that the main reason behind such difficulty is the insufficient exposure to language. As a result, learners tend to transform equivalent words from their first language L1 to their second (L2) or Foreign language (Henriskon, 2013). This practice leads to inaccuracy in English and eventually causes a burden of understanding (Unver, 2018). Conversely, Ozaki (2011) recommended in his study to teach collocations with the aid of L1. He revealed that implementing L1 to teach collocations contributes to the enhancement of accuracy, and clarifies students' understanding. Henceforth, teachers should explicitly introduce the differences between the L1 collocations and their L2 counterparts to learners through their L1.

However, collocations have been given less importance in learning a foreign language. Hashemi et al. (2012) in his study concluded that EFL college students (English majors and non-English majors), high school students and professors lack collocational knowledge because collocation is ignored in EFL classrooms and syllabi. Wherefore, learners need to be aware of the

significance of collocations in language comprehension and production (Farrokh, 2012). Yet, “language exposure” along with “conscious raising” are pillar dimensions in teaching and learning collocations (Lewis, 2000; Thornbury, 2002). As Lewis mentioned in his books, teaching collocations should be incorporated into language materials (Lewis, 1997; Lewis, 2000).

2.8 Explicit Teaching of Collocations

Explicit teaching in the area of collocations has been the center of attention in research. Studies such as Rahimia and Momenni (2012) and Boers et al. (2006) advocated for the effectiveness of teaching formulaic expressions, collocations in particular, in improving language aspects and skills. Rosenshine (1987) described explicit instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students.”(as cited in Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 1). In Archer and Hughes words, it was mentioned that:

Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved (p.1).

Accordingly, many educational researchers elicit a set of elements that could help in achieving an effective classroom instruction. They are illustrated in more details in the figure 1 below.

Figure 2.1

Sixteen elements of explicit instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011)

1. **Focus instruction on critical content.** Teach skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future and match the students' instructional needs.
2. **Sequence skills logically.** Consider several curricular variables, such as teaching easier skills before harder skills, teaching high-frequency skills before skills that are less frequent in usage, ensuring mastery of prerequisites to a skill before teaching the skill itself, and separating skills and strategies that are similar and thus may be confusing to students.
3. **Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units.** Teach in small steps. Segmenting complex skills into smaller instructional units of new material addresses concerns about cognitive overloading, processing demands, and the capacity of students' working memory. Once mastered, units are **synthesized** (i.e., practiced as a whole).
4. **Design organized and focused lessons.** Make sure lessons are organized and focused, in order to make optimal use of instructional time. Organized lessons are on topic, well sequenced, and contain no irrelevant digressions.
5. **Begin lessons with a clear statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations.** Tell learners clearly what is to be learned and why it is important. Students achieve better if they understand the instructional goals and outcomes expected, as well as how the information or skills presented will help them.
6. **Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction.** Provide a review of relevant information. Verify that students have the prerequisite skills and knowledge to learn the skill being taught in the lesson. This element also provides an opportunity to link the new skill with other related skills.
7. **Provide step-by-step demonstrations.** Model the skill and clarify the decision-making processes needed to complete a task or procedure by thinking aloud as you perform the skill. Clearly demonstrate the target skill or strategy, in order to show the students a model of proficient performance.
8. **Use clear and concise language.** Use consistent, unambiguous wording and terminology. The complexity of your speech (e.g., vocabulary, sentence structure) should depend on students' receptive vocabulary, to reduce possible confusion.
9. **Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples.** In order to establish the boundaries of when and when not to apply a skill, strategy, concept, or rule, provide a wide range of examples and non-examples. A wide range of examples illustrating situations when the skill will be used or applied is necessary so that students do not underuse it. Conversely, presenting a wide range of non-examples reduces the possibility that students will use the skill inappropriately.
10. **Provide guided and supported practice.** In order to promote initial success and build confidence, regulate the difficulty of practice opportunities during the lesson, and provide students with guidance in skill performance. When students demonstrate success, you can gradually increase task difficulty as you decrease the level of guidance.

(cont.)

- 11. Require frequent responses.** Plan for a high level of student–teacher interaction via the use of questioning. Having the students respond frequently (i.e., oral responses, written responses, or action responses) helps them focus on the lesson content, provides opportunities for student elaboration, assists you in checking understanding, and keeps students active and attentive.
- 12. Monitor student performance closely.** Carefully watch and listen to students’ responses, so that you can verify student mastery as well as make timely adjustments in instruction if students are making errors. Close monitoring also allows you to provide feedback to students about how well they are doing.
- 13. Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback.** Follow up on students’ responses as quickly as you can. Immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their responses helps ensure high rates of success and reduces the likelihood of practicing errors.
- 14. Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace.** Deliver instruction at an appropriate pace to optimize instructional time, the amount of content that can be presented, and on-task behavior. Use a rate of presentation that is brisk but includes a reasonable amount of time for students’ thinking/processing, especially when they are learning new material. The desired pace is neither so slow that students get bored nor so quick that they can’t keep up.
- 15. Help students organize knowledge.** Because many students have difficulty seeing how some skills and concepts fit together, it is important to use teaching techniques that make these connections more apparent or explicit. Well-organized and connected information makes it easier for students to retrieve information and facilitate its integration with new material.
- 16. Provide distributed and cumulative practice.** **Distributed** (vs. massed) **practice** refers to multiple opportunities to practice a skill over time. **Cumulative practice** is a method for providing distributed practice by including practice opportunities that address both previously and newly acquired skills. Provide students with multiple practice attempts, in order to address issues of retention as well as automaticity.

Note: Retrieved from “Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching” by Anita L.

Archer & Charles A. Hughes, 2011, p. 2. The Guilford Press

<https://explicitinstruction.org/download/sample-chapter.pdf>

2.9 Explicit vs Implicit Teaching

Some specialists assume that L2 learners can implicitly extend their knowledge of collocations through sufficient exposure to language input, whereas; explicit instruction supporters believe that language learners can achieve better outcomes when their attention is directed to a particular language aspect or skill (as cited in Mahvelati, 2019). Furthermore, implicit instruction proponents such as Nagy and Herman (1987), Nation (2001) and Gass (1999) argued that language exposure does not necessarily draw learners’ attention to the target features. They

suggested to consider some techniques, such as input enhancement and dictogloss as compensation for the omission of explicit instructional intervention (as cited in Mahvelati, 2019).

Table 2.5

Implicit and explicit instruction

Implicit FFI	Explicit FFI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>attracts</i> attention to target form • is delivered <i>spontaneously</i> (e.g. in an otherwise communication-oriented activity) • is unobtrusive (minimal interruption of communication of meaning) • presents target forms in context • makes no use of metalanguage • encourages free use of target form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>directs</i> attention to target form • is <i>predetermined</i> and <i>planned</i> (e.g. as the main focus and goal of a teaching activity) • is obtrusive (interruption of communication of meaning) • presents target forms in isolation • uses metalinguistic terminology (e.g. rule explanation) • involves controlled practice of target form

Note: Retrieved from "Investigating Instructed Second Language Acquisition" by A.

Housen & M. Pierrard, 2005, p.10

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313007356_Instructed_second_language_ac

2.10 Techniques and Activities for Teaching Collocations

There has always been a conflict between scholars on how to teach collocations, and this because of the diversity of collocational patterns (grammatical and lexical forms). Researchers and teachers tried to establish some techniques and methods to ease the teaching process of those lexical chunks. Certainly, teachers have to consider the type of collocation as well as learners' needs and proficiency levels when selecting activities (Dickenson, 2008).

2.10.1 Teaching Collocations through Raising-awareness

Recently, collocations are emerging as a critical component of lexical patterning. Hill (2000) asserted that when teaching collocations, teachers have to raise students' awareness of collocations. Students need to know that learning English collocations is of great importance. As a monitoring factor in language learning, Schmidt (1994) indicated that consciousness compromise four main dimensions: intention, attention, awareness and control (as cited in Abdaoui, 2010). Scholars like Dave and Willis correspondingly encouraged teachers to use Consciousness-raising (CR) activities rather than traditional practices. They further claimed that implementing (CR) activities will raise awareness and sensitivity to language aspects (as cited in Lewis, 1997). Ramirez (2012) claimed that students who have been taught the common collocations of words, since the first stages, use them far more naturally and become fluent speakers and writers. Thus, Ramirez proposed to teach collocations through consciousness raising activities. To conclude, researchers advocated for making collocations a widely established unit in the teaching materials and courses. Raising-awareness activities are then used to direct learners' attention to collocations.

2.10.2 Teaching Collocations through Context

Hoey (as cited in Lewis, 2000) pointed out that: "learning items in context may be easier than learning them out of context." (p.230). Students are supposed to be aware of using new words in context, particularly in their collocational fields (Hill, 2000). To add emphasis to the last words, Nation (2004) quoted "when giving the reasons for studying words in collocation, words which are naturally associated in context are learnt more easily than those not so associated; vocabulary is best learned in context; context alone is insufficient without deliberate association...."

(as cited in Duan & Qin, 2012, p.2). In short, teachers have to consider teaching collocations or any other lexis in their appropriate context. They also have to direct students'

attention towards the importance of collocation in context rather than teaching them in isolation, far from any social or situational restrictions. Knowing which words collocate together and which do not help in achieving fluency and accuracy in language. The following examples may serve to illustrate this point.

(1) Be careful. That snake is poisonous.

(2) *Be careful. That snake is toxic. (Conzett, 2000, p. 73)

The two sentences are grammatically correct. Conzett (2000) commented that in the second sentence, the word "*toxic*" is not used to describe snakes like the word "*poisonous*" can be. This example shows that words combine in restricted ways and that they have their collocational fields.

2.10.3 Teaching Collocations through the Lexical Approach

According to Lewis (1997), most syllabi tend to focus more on grammar than vocabulary which resulted in students' errors mainly on writing and speech. In the 90s, Lewis (2000) proposed the *Lexical Approach* as a way to teach vocabulary with an emphasis on collocations. This approach entails teaching words already in their chunks. Implementing this approach in different activities encourages learners to notice chunks more often and serves as an effective model for teachers. For this reason, Lewis suggests for language instructors to allocate some time to show students "how words are actually used and collocates rather than explaining what they mean" (p.14). For example, "*stab wound*" not "*stab injury*", and "*internal injuries*" not "*internal wounds*". It is the collocational fields that indicates the difference of meaning between words (Lewis, 2000, p.13).

2.11 Collocational Competence and Writing

Collocations as an aspect of language raise a major issue for most FL learners, especially in writing. That is to say, learners encounter many difficulties when they write due to the lack of competencies in different areas of language, more specifically in the collocation area. Hill highlighted that collocational competence needs to be added to our existing competencies, for the reason that lack of competence in this area prevents learners from using the appropriate word combinations. Instead, they use long expressions which prevent them from saying what they mean (Hill, 2000). To elaborate on the concept of collocational competence, Heikkila (2005) stated: “collocational competence is the ability to accurately combine chunks of language thus enabling the production of fluent, accurate, and stylistically appropriate speech” (as cited in Abdaoui 2010, p. 1).

Recently, many researchers shed light on the significant role of possessing a collocational competence in promoting writing and speaking skills. Furthermore, Harouche and Laraba (2019) conducted a study to uncover the main problems Algerian students encounter while writing. Among these problems, they found that a large number of students appeared to have limited knowledge of collocations as well as their poor abilities to produce well-formed and accurate collocations to express their ideas in writing.

To sum up, the most common source of errors in writing generally underlies a lack of competence in using collocations. In this sense, instructors must direct their attention to teaching collocations to overcome the problem of mis-collocation in writing and to expand learners' collocations repertoire.

Conclusion

This chapter offered general insights into collocations as a fundamental lexical phenomenon. It provided a closer look at its definition, types, and importance in language teaching and learning. The focus of this chapter was on how collocations can be taught. It tackled some techniques that are used for teaching collocations and highlighted explicit instruction as an effective method of teaching. It also established some of the possible challenges that language instructors face in teaching those lexical chunks.

The next chapter will be on providing the methodological choices for our study. In addition, it will display and describe the obtained data. Finally, it will summarise and synthesise the findings.

Chapter Three: The Fieldwork and Data Analysis

Introduction

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Introduction

The previous two theoretical chapters showed that one of the fundamental components of the writing proficiency is sufficient vocabulary knowledge, particularly appropriate use of collocations. Since we are highlighting the significance of collocations to language proficiency, we explicitly contend that learners' proficient use of word sequences helps in possessing native-like competence and writing proficiency. Therefore, teaching collocations is of great importance.

The aims of this chapter are threefold. First, it introduces the main research components, namely: the research paradigm, approach, design, sampling techniques, data collection methods and procedures. Further, it explains and justifies the reasons behind each choice in relation to the present study. Lastly, it displays and interprets the results of the data gathered and concludes the chapter by discussing and summarising the major findings.

3.1 Research Methodology for this Study: Choices and Rationale

The following section clarifies the research methodology components of this study and provides a rationale for each choice. It mainly addresses research paradigms, approaches, designs, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and sampling techniques.

3.1.1 Research Paradigms

Research is a systematic process. That is, the researcher has to go through specific steps as identifying the problem, selecting methodology, and collecting data ... ect. On the basis of data, conclusions are drawn. However, research does not only rely on logical frameworks but also highlights the dire need to the philosophical assumptions. The word "paradigm" was introduced by Thomas Kuhn (1962) as " philosophical way of thinking" (as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.26). In educational research, a paradigm describes the researcher's worldview. This worldview involves beliefs, perspectives, and thoughts that facilitates the interpretation of data (Kivunja &

Kuyini, 2017; Schwandt, 2001 as cited in Kawulich, 2015). According to Abdul Rahman and Alharthi (2016), “A paradigm is a basic belief system and theoretical framework with assumptions about 1) ontology, 2) epistemology, 3) methodology and 4) methods” (p. 51). Each philosophical assumption reflects how the study is carried out. Therefore, it is important to understand those concepts.

Ontology is a theoretical assumption which addresses the "what" and “how" of a social phenomenon. It is the ontological assumptions that restrict the researcher's choices in terms of research topic, questions, and methodology. Simply put, ontology seeks to answer the question “what is the nature of reality?" Epistemology manifests knowledge importantly, how it is gained, assured and scoped (Crotty, 1988, as cited in Al-Ababneh, 2020). Keeves (1997) revealed that methodology embodies research design, methods, approaches and procedures. The former guides the researcher throughout his/her study (as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Generally, a research paradigm has been classified into three main categories: positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. Positivism is a branch of philosophy which relies on objectivity and empirical scientific evidence. Meanwhile, interpretivism strives to explain reality as contaminated by individuals' worldviews, concepts, and backgrounds (Abdul Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Differently put, the pragmatic paradigm supports applying mixed methods (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

3.1.1.1 Research Paradigm for this Study

Based upon the objectives and the nature of our study, the researcher adopted the interpretivism paradigm since it allows the researcher to deeply understand and explain the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, the knowledge collected and interpreted is based on descriptions of meaning, individual experiences, and behaviours.

3.1.2 Research Approaches

In research, our methodology serves as a guide throughout the research work. An approach lies as an integral part of methodology. According to Creswell, an approach incorporates theoretical assumptions that ground the research work. Also, it entails the methods and strategies used to study a particular phenomenon. There are three types of research approaches, which are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approach (Creswell, 2014). Receptively, the quantitative approach requires precise measurements to support or oppose the assumptions. It, therefore, produces reliable findings, whereas the qualitative approach is concerned with the opinions and attitudes of individuals towards a specific phenomenon. The data is obtained in its natural setting, typically through observations (Creswell, 2014). Mixed-methods research takes advantage of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Hence, it draws philosophical and logical results (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.2.1 Research Approach for this Study

Based on the arguments mentioned earlier and the nature of our questions, the present study serves to collect qualitative data. This research provides a profound understanding of the research problem. Specifically, it attempts to discover students' problems and behaviours towards writing and collocations as well as the teachers' attitudes regarding the effects of teaching collocations. On this basis, the most appropriate research approach for this study is the qualitative based-approach.

3.1.3 Research Design

In conducting any study and as a first step, researchers have to establish research paradigms, research designs, research approaches, research methods, and procedures. Creswell (2009) defined research design as "The plan or proposal to conduct research, involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods" (p.23). On that account, it

is the philosophical frameworks, strategies and methods that shape the designs of any type of research. In fact, the choice of the design intersects with the purpose and nature of the study. However, to select the appropriate design, the researcher needs first to answer three main questions: "Is it feasible?", "Is it suitable?", "Is it ethical?" (Hoadjli, 2019, p.37).

3.1.3.1 Research Design for this Study

Since our study is qualitative, the case study design is deemed the only suitable choice. According to Crowe et al. (2011), a case study design is: "a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context." (p. 1). In fact, case studies enable researchers to look closely at a complex reality. Moreover, they provide and foster new hypotheses (George & Bennett, 2005).

3.1.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is a pivotal phase in research. It strongly relies on data collection methods. The goal of collecting data is "to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed" (Kabir, 2016, p.202). As aforementioned, this study falls under a qualitative research approach. Thus, it follows qualitative collection methods. Accordingly, the researcher opted for a test with students and a semi-structured interview with EFL teachers of the written expression module.

3.1.4.1 The Test

Although tests are commonly used in experimental designs, they can be applied in descriptive designs, as well. To illustrate, a researcher can aim at assessing learners' knowledge in a particular skill or an aspect of language for the sole purpose of describing and displaying the results. In this study, the test opted for is categorised as a diagnostic test. A diagnostic test provides a detailed description of the strengths and weaknesses of students in a particular language area (Thorndike & Hagen, 1970 as cited in Bawa & Mandhyan, n.d). Diagnostic tests are recommended

to use since they locate specific learning deficiencies of numerous individuals at a particular stage of learning. If a deficiency is located, the teacher needs to reflect upon his method of teaching (Bawa & Mandhyan, n.d.).

3.4.1.1.1 Structure and Aim. The researcher designed a test targeting the writing skill. It aimed at:

- Eliciting the level of master one (M1) students in writing; and
- Assessing students' knowledge of collocations in use through extracting the frequent use of collocations.

The test comprised a writing task. Students were asked to write a composition in which they account for the importance of writing. This topic was chosen based on the fact that students have dealt with it in the classroom as an assignment and to ensure that the problem does not lie in the topic but in the ability to use collocations in writing.

To recruit participants, the writing test was scheduled three days before the actual date based on the participants' timetable and the free time available to them. On average, respondents took around 30 minutes to finish the writing task. Sixteen compositions have been collected, examined, and corrected. The analysis for the writing test was done in two phases:

In Phase 1, an experienced EL teacher from Biskra University assessed the participants' written compositions. The assessment was based upon an analytical composition scheme adopted by the researcher to meet his objectives (see appendix F).

In Phase 2, the researcher identified the number of correctly used collocations and mis-collocations in each composition, and the percentages for each case were calculated. Overall, the test attempted to answer the following research questions: "What is the current level of master's students in writing?", " Do master students employ collocations in their written products?"

3.1.4.1.2 Piloting and Validation. In undertaking any research, the researcher had to go through two focal phases: validating and piloting. They maintain reliability and validity. Furthermore, to ensure that the test used the appropriate instruction, and words; it was reviewed and revised by three teachers from our department, as well as our supervisor. Their responses were mostly positive. Yet, two teachers suggested that the following sentence, "Use the appropriate transition words and phrases" from the instruction need to be removed. They pointed that it may restrict students from writing freely. The researcher took those remarks into consideration. Consequently, it was removed from the instruction. In fact, feedback from these teachers helped us in removing some instructions, adding new ones, and modifying ambiguous wordings.

3.1.4.2 Teachers' Interview

The second instrument used in this research was the interview. Burns (1997) defined the interview as, "A verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person" (as cited in Kumar, 2011, p. 137). With the help of our supervisor, five face-to-face meetings were arranged to interview five teachers who are in charge of the written expression module. As teachers are knowledgeable of the aspects causing students' deficiencies, their views and opinions were considered as a reliable source of information.

3.1.4.2.1 Structure and Aim. A semi-structured interview was set with five teachers who taught or are currently teaching the written expression module. The interview attempted to answer the third and the fourth research questions. These questions are respectively: What are the possible reasons impeding students from employing collocations in their writings'? - What are the attitudes and views of teachers towards the effects of teaching collocations on EFL learners' writing proficiency? In addition, the interview was used with the aim of supplementing the test findings with teacher's attitudes and perceptions on their students 'collocational knowledge and

its importance in writing, and to recognize whether they believe that teaching collocations has a positive or negative effect on writing proficiency.

Substantially, as the interview was a semi-structured, it incorporated both open-ended and close-ended questions. The researcher used probes at times during the face-to-face interview. The interview was recorded with teachers' permission. They respectively signed the consent form and consented to take part in it. Table 1 elucidated the overall content and aims of the interview questions.

Table 3.1

The Interview Items and the Reasons for their Inclusion

<i>Questions</i>	<i>aim</i>
<i>1</i>	To gain some background knowledge about teachers' experiences.
<i>2-4</i>	To discover teachers' views about students' performances in writing along with the problems that most teachers notice in their written products, and the reasons behind writing deficiencies.
<i>5-6</i>	To grab teachers' attention towards students' collocational knowledge in writing and to understand the reasons impeding students' from using them in writing.
<i>7-9</i>	To explore teachers' attitudes towards teaching collocations in the course of writing and its effects on students' writing proficiency and the hurdles that may apprehend teachers from integrating a collocation-based instruction.

3.1.4.2.2 Piloting and Validation. Like the other tool, the interview was validated. It was sent to five teachers from other universities of Tlemcen, Oran, Constantine via email. The researcher asked for assistance to correct any inconsistencies or ambiguous questions. To facilitate the process of providing feedback concerning the interview. An opinionnaire was linked to the interview's questions (Appendix E). No major changes were reported. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and teachers' busy schedules, the interview could not be piloted. As a result, it was only validated and directly conducted.

3.1.5 Data Collection Procedures

Based on ethical considerations and research requirements, the participants of this study were informed of what the research entails. All of the participants had consented for taking part in this study. The students had orally agreed to sit for the test. Whereas, the teachers were handed a consent form before the interview took place. The consent form involved a brief description of the topic and the aims of the study. Further, the researcher assured for the participants that their data, identity, and responses would stay private.

With the help of our supervisor and a master student, a session was arranged with master one students of group three in their free time. 16 students out of 27 students sat for the test. The group had one hour to finish the test. Meanwhile, the teachers were contacted via email one week before the actual interview. Five teachers signed the consent form and approved being recorded. All teachers with no exception cooperated in the fulfillment of this study by providing incredible support and honest opinions. The process of collecting data took around one week and half.

3.1.6 Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting the raw data, the researcher should use a set of techniques to describe, classify and evaluate the data. In the current investigation, qualitative data were gathered and analysed using different descriptive data analysis techniques.

3.1.6.1 Data analysis procedures for the writing proficiency test

To analyse students' written copies, we opted for a content analysis. First, we attempted to turn qualitative data into quantitative evidence by determining the students' levels in writing based on different components. It is worth mentioning here that the teacher's correction was mainly considered a criterion to determine their levels, which helped the researcher to gain more credible results. Second, we categorised the use of collocations into correct, incorrect chunking. In addition, we presented the gathered data in tables and charts for better visualisation.

3.1.6.2 Data analysis procedures for the teachers' interview

To analyse the data gathered from teachers, we opted for a thematic analysis. The latter closely examines the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly.

3.1.7 Population / Sampling Technique

Based on the fact that Master one students of applied linguistics at Mohamed Kheider University in Biskra already dealt with collocations as a theoretical knowledge in the module of Language Mastery. On top of that, students at this level are more willing and motivated to write. Thus, master one students fit perfectly to this study. Furthermore, since our goal is not to generalise findings, group three (03) from the whole population was chosen as the sample for this study. The total number of participants were sixteen students, as well as five EFL written expression teachers since this study is concerned with writing skills. The written expression teachers are regarded as

valuable source of information and experienced practitioners in the field. Thus, the data they provide is rich and serves our purposes.

Our target sample was selected based on the non-probability convenience and purposive sampling techniques. They imply that participants were not chosen randomly but rather according to their availability and to the researcher's own judgment. That is to say, the researcher believes that the selected sample fits this study in terms of participants' availability and the purposes mentioned earlier. Consequently, selecting another population would have been of critical limitation to the present investigation.

3.2 Results and Data analysis

The present section focuses on displaying and analysing the results obtained from the test and the interview. Then, the data collected from these two instruments will be further discussed and interpreted.

3.2.1 Results of the Test

The test was analysed in two phases:

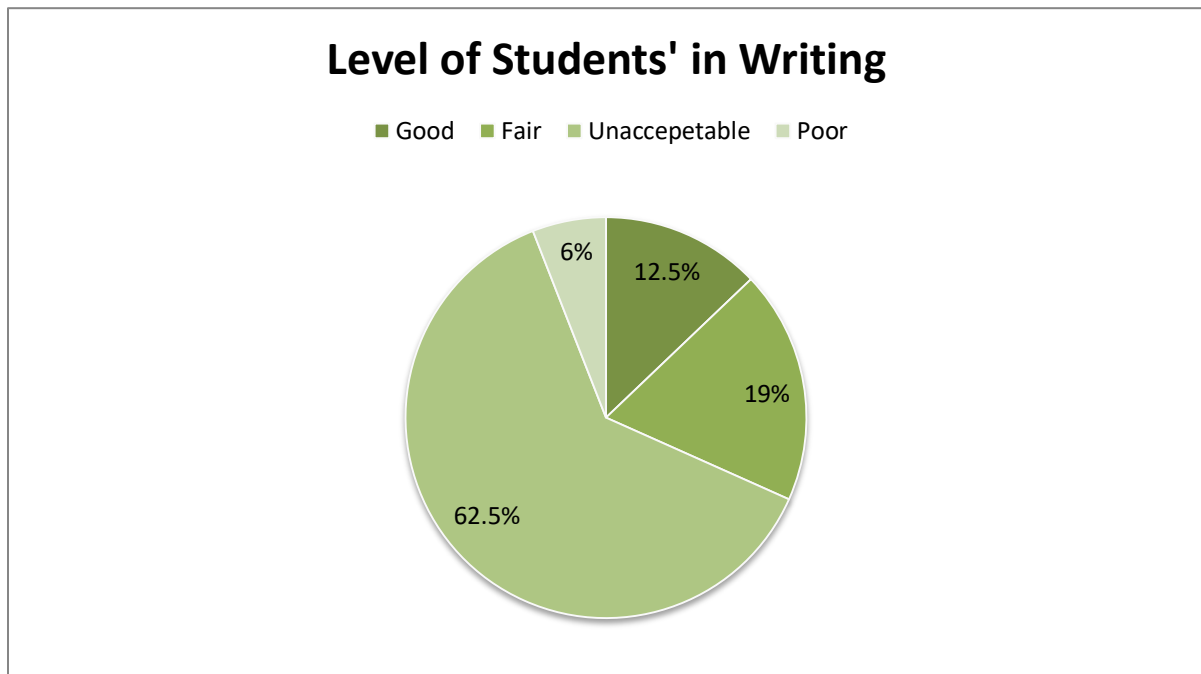
Phase 1: Assessing students' level in writing.

For the sake of gathering information about master one students' level in writing. Sixteen written composition produced by M1 students, group three, were collected and assessed. The assessment was based on four main components namely, organisation, content, vocabulary, and language mechanisms (See appendix F).

The following table aimed at illustrating the participants' performances in writing.

Table 3.2*The participants' level in writing*

Levels	Participants	Percentage
Good	2	12.5%
Fair	3	19%
Unacceptable	10	62.5%
Poor	1	6%
Total	16	100%

Figure 3.1*Distribution of students' level in writing*

The results demonstrated that there is a variety of levels in writing. The latter range from good to poor. Only two participants from the sample produced a well- written composition in terms of vocabulary knowledge, content, and language mechanics. As a result, their performance in writing was good. Likewise, three participants (19%) performed a fair to an adequate level in writing. It implies that students hold over an agreeable range of vocabulary, reasonable ideas, and limited grammatical errors. Consequently, these students have relatively similar levels in writing with limited amount of errors.

However, the data also revealed that participants whose performance was unacceptable outnumbered the rest. A total of 10 participants (62.5%) out of 16 are below the average. Their compositions include inadequate organisation, undeveloped ideas, poor vocabulary, and punctuation/ spelling errors. For the remaining (6%), it represents only one participant who was unable to generate ideas related to the topic. As a result, the participant's level was poor to a large extent(see appendix F).

From the analysis of participants' papers, it was noticed that the same type of mistakes/errors were repeated in some papers. The researcher summarised them into the following:

- **Spelling mistakes**

Any student can **provid** and improve **him selfe**.

- **Lack of vocabulary**

Everyone has a specific style to **describe** and **show** his/ her ideas

It is **very important** for students ...

Writing **give** us a background of vocabulary.

The above mentioned are concrete examples extracted from students' compositions. Different types of mistakes were analysed and reported. Some errors were repeated measurably, such as spelling mistakes and punctuation errors, but the most common errors were related to the lack of vocabulary. This stands as a sign that most participants are still struggling with writing. In particular, they suffer from problems associated with language usage, such as vocabulary. Expectedly, students at advanced levels (master levels) are required to be accurate in writing. Despite that, (68.5%) of the participants used non-academic vocabulary and redundancies. It can be due to insufficient exposure to authentic materials. Surprisingly, students had committed a limited number of grammatical errors compared to vocabulary errors.

To sum up, the majority of the participants in this study (68.5%) have an unacceptable to poor level in writing.

Phase 2: Examining the use of collocations in writing

In the second phase, the researcher intended to identify whether students at this level use collocations in their language productions; and to inspect the correct and wrong usage frequency of collocations. The analysis of their compositions revealed the following results, which are presented in tables and charts.

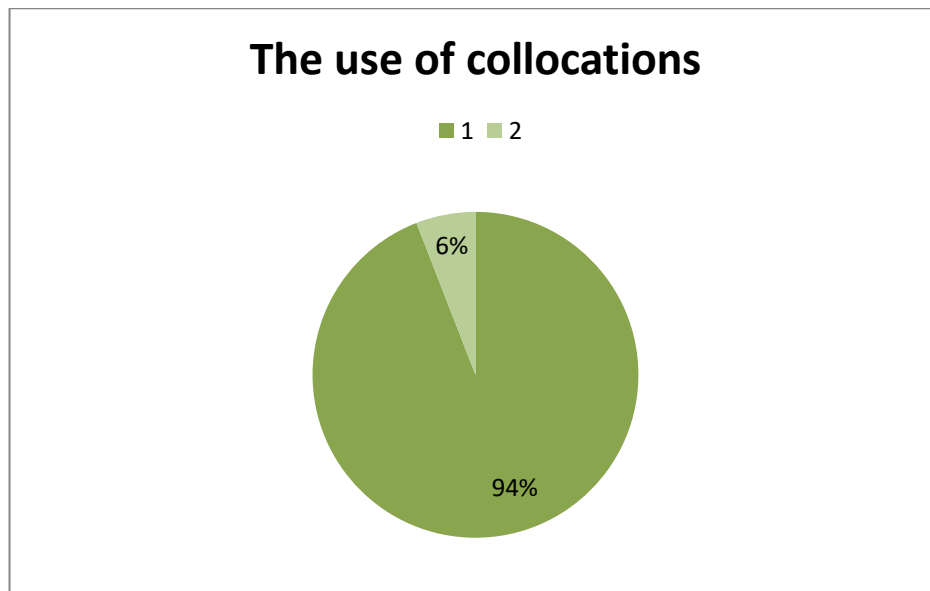
Table 3.3

The number of students that use collocations in their written products

Collocations	Participants	Percentage
Yes	15	94%
No	1	6%
Total	16	100%

Figure 3.2

Percentage of students' who used collocations in writing

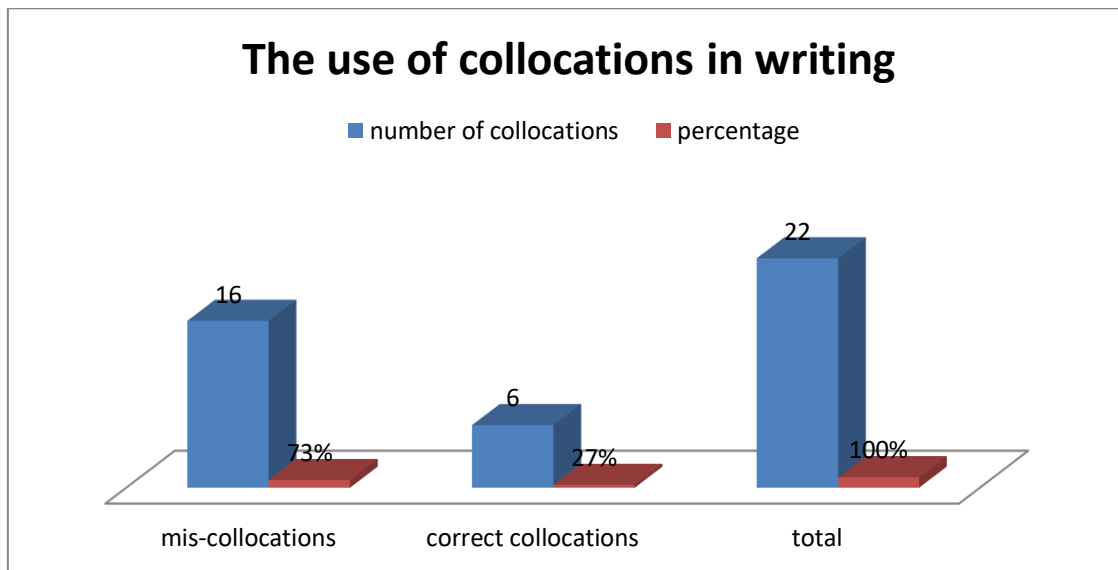


In agreement with literature, true mastery of a word involves knowing a variety of aspects. Hence, collocations represent one crucial element in vocabulary knowledge. Our intention behind inspecting the use of collocations is to know to what extent the participants take advantage of what they have studied in language mastery course. The results obtained from the analysis indicated that 15 participants out of 16 use collocations in their written products.

However, to gain more insights on the phenomenon of collocations. We intended to categorise participants' usage of collocations. The categorisation was made according to the phrasological approach. In relation to the literature, phrasological approach identifies the word pairs under study through natives' intuition of recurring word combinations. Hence, phrasological approach is more pedagogically-oriented since it focuses on learners' knowledge, use of word pairs and the difficulties they pose (Sonder, 2019). The results are summarised in the tables below:

Table 3.4*Frequency of correct and incorrect use of collocations in writing*

	Number of collocations	Percentage
Incorrect use of collocations	16	73%
Correct use of collocations	6	27%
Total	22	100%

Figure 3.3*Correct and incorrect use of collocations in writing*

As exhibited in table 3, a considerable number of wrong usage of collocations were detected in the compositions produced by the participants of this study. Sixteen miscollocations were found in students' compositions whereas only six correct usage of collocations were determined. Nevertheless, students with good level in writing used the appropriate word combinations and incorrect usage of collocations were found only in one copy, compared to the other students with unacceptable level in writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that master one students have, to some extent, insufficient collocational knowledge. In other words, students at this level do not know how to use collocations adequately in writing.

Table 3.5*Some examples of collocations found in students written compositions*

Participants	Correct usage of collocations	Miscollocations	The possible correction
C1	It equips students with communication skills	To increase motivation	To boost motivation
C2		To describe and show his ideas	To express his ideas
C3		They face a big problem	They face a major problem
C4		Writing increase by time	Writing improves by time
C5		It is a very good habit	It is a beneficial habit
C6		Gaining new words and terms	Acquiring new terms and words
C7		It makes students able to speak.	It enables students to speak...
C8		It lets students practice their knowledge.	It permits students apply their knowledge

C9	It is really very important skill	It is a crucial skill
C10	It speeds the process of learning	It eases the process of learning
C11	a very successful future career	a remarkable future career

From table 4, it can be observed that the frequently used patterns in students' written compositions are verb+ noun and adj + noun. Therefore, we can conclude that the most used pattern is the most problematic for students. Moreover, it is apparent that students' use of inaccurate expressions and informal language vocabulary such as "very" and "really" affected their performance in writing. In this regard, McCarthy and O'Dell (2017) indicated that collocations are important in writing as they expand learners' vocabulary knowledge. Respectively, in any written examination, it will be beneficial to avoid words such as "very" or "nice" or "beautiful" and replace them with a word combination that has a more precise meaning. By doing so, examiners will have a good impression besides learners will receive good marks (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2017). Thus, as collocational knowledge develops, it enables more accurate use of word combinations, which can be an indicator of achieving a higher level in writing.

3.2.2 Results of the Teachers' Interview

Q1. How long have you been teaching the written expression module at Biskra University?

Since we limited the scope of our study, we directed this interview to written expression module teachers only. The reason behind asking this question is to figure out whether teachers' profile affect their responses and views about the investigated topic or not.

Table 3.6

Teachers' period of teaching the written expression module

Teachers	Years of teaching the written expression module
A	2
B	7
C	5
D	3
E	7

As table 6 displayed, the teachers' experiences in teaching the written expression module range from two to seven years. It indicates that the interviewed teachers are not novice in teaching. In addition, two teachers reported that they are currently teaching the written expression module at license levels (3rd year) while the three other teachers are teaching master students. Thus, the interviewees are exposed to different students and levels. This variation helps in achieving reliable and rich data.

Q2. How do you consider students' performance in writing?

This question was asked to elicit students' level of writing in the view of their teachers. In other words, to determine whether students' performance in writing is acceptable or not. Besides, to deduce any difficulties in which students encounter while writing. The five teachers shared the same view. They answered with: "I cannot generalise because each class differs and varies."

Table 3.7*Students' performance in writing*

Teachers	Responses
A	We have heterogeneous classes. For Example we have high and low levels within the same class.
B	It differs throughout the years that I have taught but to be honest the last three years, the level somehow started to get more average in writing.
C	Usually, we have multi-level classes, some are good, others are poor
D	it is intermediate to certain level, it is not advanced, there are some students who are high achievers and I get very impressed by their writing, and other students who are still struggling with basic mistakes, grammatical mistakes.
E	In each class, there are few students who write excellently others who still struggle with sentence with sentence errors.

The answers generally confirmed that English language classes comprise a variety of students in terms of capacities. Correspondingly, few students are good achievers and writers while others are average writers. On the other hand, teachers E and D specified that there is a considerable number of students who are still struggling with basics such as grammatical mistakes. However, teacher B shared that throughout his last three years of teaching, students' level in writing has become more average. To sum up, teachers shared one common opinion, which underlies that students' level of writing is average.

Question 3: what are the most common writing problems/errors, you always notice in your students' written products (essays)?

Practically speaking, the teacher is responsible for assessing students' performances, providing feedback and correcting errors. In this regard, the present question sought to uncover the most common writing problems; precisely to determine the dominant factors for students' paragraph/essay writing difficulties.

The answers were summarised in the table below:

Table 3.8*Students' common writing problems/errors*

Teachers	Responses
A	Spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, generalized/superficial ideas, and lack of vocabulary, redundancies.
B	Grammatical errors, essay organisations, content development problems, lack of vocabulary.
C	Use of mother tongue words (L1 interference).
D	The problem of coherence, generating ideas, grammatical mistakes, punctuation and very long sentences.
E	Inability to generate ideas, grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, all type of mistakes related to language usage.

Table 8 illustrated examples of the most common writing problems.

Lack of vocabulary

Teachers A and B explicitly reported that the common issues are often related to the lack of vocabulary. Having limited vocabulary background may affect other aspects of the paragraph or essay. For example, teacher A said, " the problem of repetition is often related to the lack of vocabulary. Students tend to use the same word several times in their essays". In addition, teacher B mentioned," I found that students' vocabulary background is somehow poor". However, teacher C pointed out that students tend to transmit words from their first language (Arabic) and make use of them in their written products. In this context, sociolinguists often argued that the problem of first language interference is strongly related to the lack of vocabulary knowledge. To sum up, the lack of vocabulary arises as the primary cause of students' writing difficulties.

Inability to develop content

Other than the lack of vocabulary, students face a major difficulty in developing the content of the essay. As the first phase, generating ideas is a fundamental step in writing. Teacher E stated, " the first thing I notice, when checking students' drafts, is the inability to generate ideas; students spend time to generate adequate ideas to write something". He further continued " the common mistakes are related to language use. Then, I consider generating ideas in the second rank". Teacher D also highlighted the problem of generating ideas. and teacher A exemplified that some students use generalised or superficial ideas, which implies their inability to generate valid ones.

Moreover, problems related to grammar, punctuation, and spelling were also discussed. Unquestionably, language usage reflects students' performance in writing. That is to say, improper usage of vocabulary, grammar rules and punctuation affect students' achievement in writing.

Question 4: In your opinion, what are the possible reasons behind students' deficiencies in writing?

Table 3.9

The reasons behind Students' writing deficiencies

Teachers	Responses
A	Lack of reading
	Lack of practice
B	Lack of reading
	Lack of practice
C	Lack of reading
	Lack of out-class practice
D	Lack of motivation
	Overloaded schedule
E	Lack of out-class practice
	Lack of reading
	Inadequate instruction in writing

The answers provided by the interviewees fall into three main themes. The latter are the lack of practice, lack of reading, lack of motivation, and inadequate teaching of writing.

Lack of practice

lack of practice stands as the main reason behind students writing deficiencies. All teachers agreed upon the fact that practicing writing, inside and outside classrooms, contributes in better outcomes. Usually, students do not write unless they are obliged to. Teacher E affirmed " students do not often write as an extracurricular activity, many of them for example do not have the habit of writing diaries, or their reflection of thoughts." Teacher C also asserted " students are passive learners, they do not take initiatives to write. Therefore, I had to oblige them to write as a visa to enter my class".

Students can develop their writing skills through practice inside and outside the classroom. More clearly, they should devote more time to writing. They also need to be habituated to the idea of writing, i.e. they should write very often.

Lack of reading

Lack of reading habits is the second catalyst for writing problems. Teachers A, B, C and E emphasised the role of reading in developing written achievement.

While teacher A viewed reading as the chief reason behind students' writing problems, teacher E categorised it as the second reason. However, they both agreed on the benefits of reading in the development of writing achievement. Teacher A advocated, "reading enables students to come across different words, expressions, and styles." Teacher E added to the latter, "many students are not exposed to the authentic language being written, therefore, it will affect their writing". In other words, teacher C simply stated "the more you read, the more you write". For him, it is the basic rule for learning how to write.

Lack of motivation

Teacher D referred to writing as a responsibility and a challenging task to do. He observed that writing is avoided by students unlike speaking. To corroborate, he illustrated: " If I teach oral

expression, and I bring something like any topic, I feel like learners are more open to discuss this topic, but if I ask them to write an essay about the topic here I can see in their faces they are not motivated." He clearly stated that students are more motivated to speak than to write.

In fact, if students are made aware of the importance of writing in language learning, they would perhaps be more motivated to write.

Inadequate teaching and poor background of writing

Teacher E claimed that the writing skill is not being taught appropriately. That is why students do not possess an inadequate background in writing. He mentioned, "although, the focus in first years of license, is on sentence structures, paragraph writing. Students at advanced levels are still struggling with such concepts." He further mentioned that the writing syllabus focuses on more aspects of writing, such as generating ideas and writing body paragraphs or thesis statements. He stated that they neglect aspects like vocabulary and style which are more important to enhance writing skills.

Question 5: while correcting students writing productions, do you find their level of collocational knowledge to be sufficient?

This question intends to shed light on the concept of collocational knowledge. Usually, students are not aware of their level in collocation nor their use in writing. Since the interviewed teachers are knowledgeable in the field, it is more feasible to ask this question to them instead of students. One common ground among teachers is that they agreed upon student's collocational knowledge is not sufficient. Nevertheless, each teacher explained it differently.

Learning a language denotes a set of competencies grouped together. Collocational competence represents one of these competencies but usually is unfamiliar and ambiguous concept particularly among students.

Teacher D provided a brief definition: "collocations as prefabricated chunks are a sign of communicative competence, especially written communication." While teacher E defined it as "a kind of a natural combination of some language elements combined together in a meaningful sentence or sense". However, both teacher D, E affirmed that in the case of third year and master levels, the majority of students still have some difficulties with collocations, a part from grammatical mistakes or punctuation mistakes despite the fact that they have been exposed to this concept in the module of mastery of the language. Moreover, teacher D added "the idea of what a collocation is, is still ambiguous to them, how do I expect them to be competent in or having collocational competence?". Similarly, teacher C pointed "students do not have a clear idea on how to use collocations. I think learning how to use collocations demands a certain amount of language proficiency particularly written proficiency."

On the other hand, teacher A noticed that students use collocations unconsciously in speech. "But, they do not know the efficiency of using collocations in writing". Teacher B also had the same remark as teacher A. He acknowledged that students commonly use the appropriate collocations in speaking rather than writing because they spend more time watching talks shows where collocations are naturally used. He mentioned "the collocational knowledge students use is somehow spoken English rather than academic one". Therefore, teacher B hypothesised to expose students to authentic materials where collocations are used appropriately.

It can be concluded that the majority of students may not know how to use collocations in writing. Moreover, teachers elucidate that students use collocation unconsciously in speech, but when it comes to writing, they are not aware of the significance of using collocations.

Question 6: if not sufficient, what are the reasons impeding students from employing the appropriate collocations in their writings?

This question is related to the previous one. It sought to give a glimpse about the specific reasons impeding students from using the appropriate collocations in writing.

Table 3.10

Teachers' responses regarding the reasons impeding students' from using the appropriate collocations in writing.

Teacher	Responses
A	lack of awareness
	Lack of practice
B	Lack of exposure to frequent collocations
C	Lack of exposure to authentic materials
D	Exposure to language, at its minimum why we have problems with the use of collocations.
E	I think for master students, it's the insufficient time allocated to practice because the notion of collocation is introduced in their first semester programme, students take this as theoretical knowledge, Without implementing it in writing.

According to the interviewed teachers, the reasons impeding students from appropriate collocations in writing are as follows:

Lack of exposure to authentic materials

Most teachers associated students' difficulties in using the appropriate word combinations with limited exposure, on the part of students, to enough authentic materials. The latter contained academic articles and books. From their perspectives, the more a student is exposed to language in its natural context through reading, the more competent they will be in using collocations.

Lack of awareness

Teacher A shed light on the notion of raising awareness in collocations. She clearly stated: "students do not know that those chunks or words are collocations. For example, they understand and use the expression, *ladies and gentlemen*, but they are not aware that it is a collocation". She further said, "students are indifferent, so as teachers, we need to direct their attention to collocations and their importance in writing". If teachers based their instruction on teaching the common collocations, students will be motivated and more willing to use them in writing. In this regard, Dave and Willis encourage teachers to use Consciousness-raising (CR) activities rather than traditional practices. They further claimed that implementing CR activities will raise awareness and sensitivity to language aspects (as cited in Lewis, 1997).

Failure in applying theoretical knowledge into practice (Theory- practice gap)

Observably, students faced a hard time putting theory into practice. Teacher E highlighted this problem by saying:

Because there aren't enough sessions for practice, students take collocations as theoretical knowledge, without implementing it in their productions. For example, I'm a bit surprised with, the fact that students have this knowledge. I mean, they know that there is something called collocation and these collocations need to be used in their writing to have good English or good

production. But students keep committing the same mistakes, they keep writing with the same old way or the usual weather that they used to.

Accordingly, the insufficient time allocated to practice collocations manifested the inconsistencies found between what students learn inside the classroom and what they employ in their productions. In particular, it is one of the reasons why students still struggling with collocations in use.

Question 7: Do you think that using the appropriate word combinations (collocations) will improve student's level in writing?

We asked this question in an attempt to unravel teachers' standpoints about using collocations in written language. In the agreement with the literature, using the appropriate collocation improve students' written products. It enables them to sound more accurate and native-like. To confirm the latter, we asked this question. Teachers answers were affirmative. They all agreed that the proper use of collocations will improve students' written products. They further justified and exemplified their standpoints.

In relation to what have been mentioned in chapter two, the misuse of word combinations affects the way learners write while the appropriate use of collocation promotes native-like productions and allow writers to be precise and concise in writing. Teacher C supported that collocations foster language accuracy. He expressed, " collocations minimise the number of sentences. Joining two words together reduce the amount or the number of the sentence students use." Teacher D reiterated what he mentioned earlier, "collocation is a sign of written communication. As a result, the use of collocation is going to help academics seem more academic, and I think it will definitely help them sound native like." To sum up, teacher C and D

approximately gave the same themes related to the benefits of collocations we have mentioned so far in Chapter Two.

On the other hand, teacher B linked a successful writing career to the extent to which a student is acquainted with enough academic knowledge or requirements. He also stated " I usually encourage my students to read more academic articles in order to be more involved in how academic language is used especially with collocations. But I do not explicitly ask them to use these collocations in writing." What teacher C tried to convey is that collocations are learned implicitly through language exposure.

However, teacher E had an insightful remark, he suggested to introduce, in courses like grammar and writing, the notion of collocations at early stages: "these elements should be an integral part in their instruction, because the ultimate objective is to reach good writing. Good writing is not only a matter of vocabulary, it's also a matter of putting these vocabulary items in a natural combination."

Teacher's role as a guide is significant inside language classrooms. Teacher A stressed this by saying, "I think it is the teacher's responsibility to teach students' how to use collocations, or to highlight the importance of using collocations in different contexts."

Question 8: Do you agree or disagree with the usefulness of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms? Justify?

This question aimed at eliciting teachers views and attitudes towards the implementation of collocations and its effects on writing proficiency. The entire number of teachers (5) believed that teaching collocations would improve learners' written performance. The overall responses fall within a positive realm, all of the interviewed teachers have positive attitudes towards the usefulness of collocation-based instruction and its application inside writing classrooms. However, each teacher has a different point of view on how they should be taught and integrated.

Referring to the literature where Hill (2000) asserted that when teaching collocations, teachers have to raise students' awareness about its importance in language proficiency particularly, language production. Students need to know that learning English collocations is of great importance (as cited in Devici, 2004).

Teachers A and C's responses supported the last statement. They advocated for the importance of raising students' awareness of collocations' benefits in writing. In this respect, teacher C expressed " it's really useful to I mean, to make students aware about the different use of collocations." Then he justified his statement with: " So whenever students use, I mean, collocations, properly, his or her paragraph or essay will be more meaningful and more expressive." Teacher A had a similar view, she manifested the usefulness of teaching collocations; and highlighted its effectiveness on written productions in terms of accuracy and stronger vocabulary. She concluded with: "... me as a teacher, I'm advising my students to for example, to use such words in order to improve their writing's."

Teacher E agreed on that teaching collocations would improve students' writing proficiency. He elaborated " Collocations must be integrated must be introduced must be practiced. Students also must be given references on collocations. they should be also encouraged to use collocations in their writing." Moreover, teacher E, D listed some recommendations on how collocations should be introduced or learned. They both shared that reading more authentic materials and academic articles for instance, where collocations exist in their natural environment, should be encouraged among students especially at advanced levels.

Teacher E also addressed one major issue in the academic writing syllabus. In his perspective, academic writing syllabus focuses on the practical aspects of writing, which is generating ideas, writing body paragraphs or thesis statement. He stated " the missing element is the style. The style should be given more attention by teachers rather than the organization of the

product." He concluded by stating that it's high time for teachers to revise the academic writing syllabus. He advised teachers to direct students' attention to style rather than repeating the same information.

Teacher D also specified that unlike other prefabricated chunks, collocations are of great importance not only for providing information but also structuring information in academic writing. Therefore, he encouraged teachers to teach them. In addition, teacher B also agreed that designating an instruction dedicated to collocations will enhance students' written products. Yet, he asserted that it will be more practical, if we teach collocations to third year. He added "we need to teach how to use them. first, we need to give them the theoretical aspect and then the practical aspects. not only focusing on theory and forget about practice"

The results of this item showed that the teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching collocations in classrooms. Accordingly, the entire number of teachers (100%) agreed that teaching collocations inside writing classrooms would improve students' writing proficiency.

It can be deduced that all the teachers perceive the integration of collocation-based instruction positively. Furthermore, they see it as a beneficial and interesting method/ strategy to enhance students' written achievement.

Question 9: Do you think that integrating a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus will be feasible in our context? (in terms of materials, levels and time)

The researcher's intention behind asking this question was to delaminate any obstacles that may hurdle the integration of collocation based-instruction into a writing syllabus.

Teachers were optimistic and hopeful about implementing collocations into a writing syllabus. Teacher C suggested to allocate more time to the practical aspect in teaching collocations. Likewise, teacher D, E agreed on that it is feasible to integrate collocations only as a unit not as a module. Teacher D demonstrated: " to teach collocation in isolation as a module or

as a subject is difficult, but as an integrated part of any course is a must, I mean it can occur in academic writing..."

Based on the teacher E's experience, he managed to give a detailed response to this question. He pointed out that it is doable and possible to integrate CBI into the written expression module. Yet, he accounted that it is a combination of both efforts: students and teachers. From the teaching side, he explained that if we want to develop a good collocational competence: "teaching collocations should be graded I mean, starting from first year, where students need to be introduced to simple collocation patterns, and then the more they develop in or they progress in their instruction, the more difficult items or complicated items...." . Accordingly, CI should be introduced in form of sequences from first year till master two. Whereas for students, he highlighted the role of practicing such chunks outside the classrooms. He concluded "it is a complicated process, where many steps or a many procedure should be done in order to achieve the desired results."

It can be deduced that all the teachers perceived the integration of collocation-based instruction in writing syllabi positively and manifested its feasibility to be integrated. Furthermore, they see it as a beneficial and interesting method/ strategy in enhancing students' written achievement.

3.3 Discussion and Synthesis of the Results

This part is devoted to discuss and interpret the key findings of the study and to determine whether there is a relation between students' tests and teachers' interview outcomes. In brief, our study aimed mainly at investigating the effects of teaching collocations in enhancing students' writing proficiency. In precise terms, the focus was upon the role of collocations in fostering the writing quality.

First, we intended to examine students' writing levels to answer the first research question: What is the current level of master one students' in writing?

Accordingly, a test was used to elicit the participants' level in writing and to gain insights into the main problems that hurdle their performance. The test revealed that (62.5%) of the sample had an unacceptable level. The problems detected in their written compositions were encircled around vocabulary knowledge, spelling mistakes, punctuation, and generating ideas. Noticeably, participants' grammatical errors were remarkably limited compared to vocabulary-related issues, which were predominant. This calls teachers to give more attention to teaching vocabulary.

It was essential to analyse the writing test once again, but this time; the focus was directed to the use of collocations. At this phase, the researcher sought to answer the second question: Do master students employ collocations in their writings?

This question was designed to accomplish two main goals; to explore the extent of students' ability to use the appropriate collocations in writing. Also, we purposely examined both correct and incorrect usage of collocations, attempting to depict any common grounds between students' unacceptable levels in writing and the usage of collocations. The findings demonstrated that 15 out of 16 participant used collocations in their written compositions. However, 75% of these collocations were incorrect. These percentage displayed that students are encountering difficulties within the use of collocations in writing. It could be attributed to students' lack of awareness about the importance of collocations in writing. This, in return, indicates that lack of collocational knowledge is a major source of students' low achievement in writing. Hence, collocation is a focal element in the mastery of writing. There have been several studies which support this position. Duong and Nguyen (2021) in a study of Van Lang University English-major juniors, found that collocations help students' in the improvement of their language fluency and

accuracy in writing. On top of that, they asserted that students who implement a suitable range of word combinations, their writings will be more professional, appealing and natural.

To get more insights on the reasons that impeding students from using collocations, we consulted five teachers experienced in teaching the written expression module. The main objective of this interview was to answer the remaining two questions which were concerned with the reasons impeding students from using the appropriate collocations in writing and the teachers' views towards the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms. In addition, other diverse questions were addressed to the interviewees for the only purpose of achieving valuable and insightful results.

Question Three: What are the possible reasons impeding students from employing the appropriate collocations in their written products?

Teachers agreed on that the reasons restraining students from using collocations in writing encompass lack of exposure to authentic materials, lack of awareness about the importance of collocations in writing, and theory-practice gap. Following the results of the test, it can be deduced that collocations should be learnt within context, not in isolation since students are still facing difficulties within the use of collocations in context, this infers that their collocational knowledge is insufficient.

Furthermore, teachers acknowledged the importance of collocations in writing. They linked a successful writing career to the extent to which a student is acquainted with enough collocations. They also stressed that using the appropriate collocation improves students' written products. More precisely, they asserted that collocations enable students to sound more accurate and native-like in writing.

Question four: What are the attitudes and views of teachers towards the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms?

Meanwhile, the last research question attempted to unravel teachers' attitudes towards the effects of teaching collocations on writing proficiency. All teachers estimated positive attitudes towards teaching collocations and their functionality in writing. In addition, teachers acceded that integrating a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus is feasible in our context. Perhaps, they emphasised its necessity and recommended allocating more time to the practical side in teaching collocations.

Comparing the test results with the answers of the teacher's interview, It appears that participants of this study have significantly inadequate knowledge when it comes to applying collocations which in turn decreased their level of writing. Students who were competent in using their collocational knowledge performed well in the writing test. Thus, we get clear evidence about the connection between teaching collocations and writing proficiency. Nevertheless, the sessions allocated to collocations, as a theme in the mastery of language, were not sufficient to assist them on how to apply collocations in writing. Thus, more time should be devoted to teaching collocations, in general, and how to use them in writing, in particular, as an effective method to build students' vocabulary, attain accuracy or achieve native-like competency. Moreover, regarded the effects of teaching collocations in writing, teachers encouraged its integration as a unit of the writing syllabus and anticipated its implementation in the future.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the rational and methodology opted for in the current study. It offered a general overview of research paradigms, research approaches, and research designs in addition to the data collection tools, their structure and aim, the data collection procedures, the data analysis procedures sampling techniques. Finally, the results of each data collection tool were displayed, analysed, interpreted, summarised and discussed.

General Conclusion

As a productive skill, writing is dominant in English language teaching and learning since it demonstrates the learner's performance. However, it represents a daunting task for learners as it requires several competencies, such as collocational competence. The latter denotes the ability to use collocations (word chunks) appropriately in different speech and writing contexts. Having a rich collocational repository provides learners with a decent device in writing. Observably, master English students lack collocational knowledge. More precisely, they are not aware about how to combine some expressions. Thus, their words are associated inappropriately in writing. Therefore, teaching collocations patterns remain highly recommended.

Within the spectrum of this study, four research questions were addressed in an attempt to gain a deep understanding of the problem under investigation. Substantially, we first tried to elicit students' writing levels besides detecting the underlying source of writing problems. Second, we intended to examine students' knowledge of collocations within their written output (i.e. whether the students' proper chunking of words own signification in fostering writing proficiency). Third, we aimed to determine the reasons preventing students from using collocations in writing. Finally, we attempted to shed light on the effects of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms as a method to enhance writing skills.

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned questions with the necessary data, a qualitative research approach was implemented, as it serves the purpose of our investigation. Most essentially, our study is concerned with explaining the meaning behind words, attitudes, behaviours. A case study design seemed the most suitable choice. Within this context, two data collection tools were used namely, the writing proficiency test for students and the interview for teachers. To make this data collection instruments ready for application, the researcher opted for a validation phase to

ensure validity and reliability of the tools. Additionally, the gathered data was analysed using content and thematic analysis methods.

The test results further confirmed the unsatisfactory level of master one students in writing. It was detected that the source of their weaknesses was related to lack of collocational knowledge background. Outwardly, students used the inappropriate chunking words which led to inaccurate expressing of ideas in writing. The interview results aligned with the test findings, mainly indicating that students can be aware of collocations in theory but struggle in practice. Teachers listed the potential reasons impeding them from using appropriate collocations in writing.

The latter involved: the lack of exposure to authentic materials, the lack of awareness, failure in applying theory into practice. Moreover, using the appropriate collocations was further emphasised by teachers to achieve accuracy and fluency in writing. In addition, teachers agreed on that integrating a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus would yield positive outcomes and would enhance the writing skills of students.

In brief, this study concluded that master one students are not aware of the context in which words are used, i.e. the importance of collocations, which would affect their performance in writing. Moreover, we found that teaching collocations inside writing classrooms would enhance learners' writing proficiency in general and their collocational competence in particular. Teachers reflected positive attitudes and seemed interested in implementing collocations as a method of teaching. Thus, we recommend to teach collocations since their use seems imperative. Above all, the members of the teaching setting have to collaborate to integrate a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus by directing students' awareness towards its importance.

Implications and Recommendations

The results obtained from our study inspired us to consider some points and guidelines that should be supplied in the EFL context. The latter involves improving the state of writing and implying collocations in the teaching curriculum, specifically in writing syllabi.

- Vocabulary should be taught and given much importance right from the beginning years of learning English as a foreign language.

- Collocations should be given much attention in the EFL teaching context, most importantly, in the writing syllabus.

- Teaching collocations is one of the major roads to reaching proficiency in writing.
- Raise student's awareness about the importance of collocations.
- Learners need to be exposed to a range of authentic materials
- Collocations need to be taught in relation to context not as theoretical knowledge.
- Teachers need to bridge the theory-practice gap by allotting enough time to practice collocations.
- Teaching collocations right from the beginning would enhance students writing abilities, build their vocabulary /collocational knowledge, promote accuracy and fluency
- Instant feedback should take place in teaching collocations.
- More time assigned to teaching collocations is significant.
- Teachers should pay attention to students' miscollocations that frequently occur and try to repair them.
- Teachers need to provide opportunities to practice collocations in writing.
- Teachers need to direct students' attention towards the importance of using the appropriate collocations in writing.

- Language syllabi designers are required to implement new teaching approaches.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In conducting any research, comforting limitations and constraints are inevitable. These limitations may include issues of availability of participants, time constraints. Although the current investigation's objectives have been met, we have encountered some limitations such as:

The first issue, which the researcher had to deal with, is the availability of research sample. Out of 26 students only 16 agreed to sit for the written test. That is to say, the number of participants was too small. Thus, the results of the study could not be generalised. The second issue was related to time limitations, this study was initially intended to be a quasi-experimental study, yet due to time, it took another design. Therefore, it would be insightful to conduct this study on a large population at the department of English at the University of Biskra. Besides, since the variables are cause and effect oriented, it is recommended to opt for quasi-experimental study. Another recommendation for future researchers is to teach only one type of collocations (lexical collocations or grammatical collocations) and then investigate its impact on the other skills such as reading, speaking.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form for Teachers

Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Description of the study

Dear Teacher,
I am conducting a research entitled "An Investigation into the Effects of Teaching Collocations on English Foreign Language Learners' Writing Proficiency". You are kindly asked for an interview, which serves as a data collection tool for this study. Your contribution will help answer the formulated research questions regarding the teachers' attitudes towards collocational competence and towards integrating collocation- based instruction into a writing programme to promote learners' writing achievement. This research study seeks to get deeper insights into the difficulties that master students encounter in the writing skill and suggests the use of collocations as a solution. The responses and the data you provide will be anonymous. If you consent to partake in the face-to-face interview, please sign this consent form. Your help and collaboration are highly valued.

Yours sincerely,
Belounar Yousra

I agree to take part in this interview undertaken by Belounar Yousra.

Teacher's full
name

Date

Signature

Appendix B: Teachers' Interview Questions

Question One: For how long have you been teaching the written expression module at Biskra University?

Question Two: How do you consider students' performance in writing?

Question Three: In your opinion what are the possible reasons behind students deficiencies in writing?

Question Four: What are the most common writing problems you always notice in your students' written products (essays)?

Question Five: While correcting students' written productions, do you find their level of collocational knowledge to be sufficient?

Question Six: If not sufficient, what are the reasons impeding them from employing the appropriate collocations in their writings?

Question Seven: Do you think that using the appropriate word combinations (collocations) will improve students' level in writing?

Question Eight: Do you agree or disagree with the usefulness of teaching collocations inside writing classrooms? justify?

Question Nine: In your opinion, do you think that integrating a collocation-based instruction into a writing syllabus will be feasible in our context?

Appendix C: The Test**Duration:** 1 hour**Level:** Master one (sciences of language)**Group:** 03

Dear Master students, Thank you for agreeing to sit for this test; your time and efforts are highly appreciated. This test is just for research purposes. You are not being assessed. Your answers will serve as data for answering one of the formulated research questions in my Master dissertation. All your answers and data will remain anonymous.

Task: As reported by Caswell and Mahler (2004), "Writing is the vehicle for communication and a skill mandated in all aspects of life. " (p.03).

- Write a short composition accounting for the importance of the writing skill.

Note: Not more than ten lines are required. Please, be clear and precise.

The answer:

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Thank you for your time and efforts.

Appendix D: The Opinionnaire for the Test**The Opinionnaire**

Dear teacher,

The previous test aims at eliciting the level of first year master students in writing and their level in collocations in use. After reading the test, you are kindly asked to answer the following questions as they serve to clarify and correct any mistakes. I appreciate your willingness to help and your time!

1. Is the test of reasonable length?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, should it be:

Shorter ☐ longer ☐

2. Are the instructions clear enough or is there any ambiguity?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, does the task need reformulation? Please state them below.

.....
.....

If you have any additional comment or suggestion, please state it.

.....
.....

Thank very much for your time and cooperation.

Appendix E: The Opinionnaire for the Interview Questions

Dear teacher,

The current study is entitled “An Investigation into the Effects of Teaching Collocations on English as Foreign Language Learners' Writing Proficiency”. It seeks to answer the following research questions: What are the problems students face in writing ? - What are the attitudes and views of teachers toward integrating a collocation-based instruction into a writing program as a method to enhance students' writing achievement?

By answering this opinionnaire, you will be helping in the process of refining and validating one of the data collection tools which is the teachers' interview. Thank you very much for your time and considerations.

1. Is the number of questions acceptable?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, do they need to be:

Less ☐ More ☐

2. Are the questions asked comprehensive?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Are the questions clear and direct?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Are the response categories appropriate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Are there any redundant or unnecessary questions that need to be removed?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes please state them below.

.....
.....

6. Are there any questions that need reformulation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state them below.

.....
.....

7. If you have any additional remarks and or suggestions, please feel free to note them.

.....
.....
.....

Your time and collaboration are highly valued. Thank you.

Appendix F: Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Task

20-18		17-15	14-12	11-6	5-1
Excellent to good		Good to fair	Adequate to fair	Unacceptable	very poor
Organisation					
Introduction, Body, and Conclusion	knowledgeable, substantive, through development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic.	acceptable, but some evidence maybe lacking, some ideas aren't fully aren't fully developed;	scant introduction or conclusion; problem with the order of ideas in body; the generalizations may not be fully supported by the evidence given; problems of organization interfere	Shaky or minimally recognizable introduction; organization can barely be seen; severe problems with ordering of ideas; lack of supporting evidence; conclusion weak or illogical; inadequate effort at organization	Absence of introduction or conclusion; no apparent organization of body; severe lack of supporting evidence; writer has not made any effort to organize the composition (could not be outlined by reader)

Content and ideas development	The composition addresses the assigned topic; the ideas are concrete and thoroughly developed;	the issues are addressed but missed some points; ideas could be more fully developed;	Development of ideas not complete, some ideas are superficial	Ideas incomplete; composition does not reflect careful thinking or was hurriedly written;	composition is completely inadequate and does not reflect college-level work; no apparent effort
Vocabulary and style	Sophisticated range, effective range/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register	variety; good vocabulary; not wordy; register OK; style fairly concise	Some vocabulary misused; lacks awareness of register; may be too wordy	Poor expression of ideas; problems in vocabulary; lacks variety of structure	no concept of register or sentence variety,
Punctuation spelling, and mechanics	Correct use of English writing conventions; left and right margins, all needed capitals, paragraphs indented, punctuation and spelling: very neat	Some problems with writing conventions or punctuations; occasional spelling errors; paper is neat and legible	Uses general writing conventions but has errors; spelling problems distract reader; punctuations errors in	Serious problems with format of paper; part of essay not legible; errors in sentence punctuation; unacceptable to	Complete disregard for English writing convention; paper illegible; obvious capitals missing no margins, severe spelling problem

			interfere with ideas	educated readers	
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Reference: Adapted from:

Rosmawan, H. (2017). The Analysis of Student's Writing Beforeand After The Implementaion of Read-to-Write Approach. *Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics (CaLLs)*, 2(1), 1.

<https://doi.org/10.30872/calls.v2i1.700>

ملخص الدراسة

أحد الأبعاد المهمة لتحقيق الكفاءة في الكتابة هو بناء مخزون من مجموعات الكلمات المتكررة التي يستخدمها المتحدثون الأصليون مثل التجميعات. يُعتقد أن تشجيع المتعلمين على استخدام التجميعات في الكتابة يوسع معرفتهم بالمفردات ويعزز قدراتهم الكتابية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي أثر تدريس التجميعات على إتقان الكتابة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة بسكرة بالإضافة إلى دور التجميعات في تعزيز جودة الكتابة من حيث الدقة والطلاقة وتعقيد المفردات. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف ، تم اعتماد نهج البحث النوعي بعد تصميم دراسة الحالة مع عينة مختارة بشكل ملائم وهادف. وعليه ، تم إجراء اختبار لمجموعة مكونة من 16 طالب ما ستر. كما تم إجراء مقابلة مع 5 اساتذة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن المشاركين في هذه الدراسة يعانون نقص في الكتابة. تم الكشف عن أن أحد العوامل الرئيسية التي أدت إلى مثل هذه النتائج هو عدم كفاية المعرفة المهنية في الكتابة. علاوة على ذلك ، كشفت النتائج أيضًا عن فائدة تدريس التجميعات في تحسين إتقان الكتابة. وبالتالي ، أظهرت الدراسة الحالية الآثار الإيجابية عن فائدة تدريس التجميعات على إتقان الكتابة. تقدم نتائج هذا العمل آثارًا تربوية لتطوير تعليم قائم على التجميع في منهج كتابي من حيث أنه يوفر للمتعلمين عمليات التجميع المستخدمة بشكل متكرر وكيفية استخدامها بفعالية ليكونوا أكثر دقة وطلاقة في الكتابة بشكل بارز.