



**Sudan University of Science and  
Technology**



**College of Graduate Studies**

**Investigating University Students' Awareness of  
English Collocations in Oral and written Discourses**

**تقصي معرفة طلاب الجامعة بالمتلازمات اللفظية في الخطابين الشفهي  
والكتابي**

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for M.A Degree in  
English Language (Linguistics)**

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قال تعالى:

"... يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (١١)"

{سورة المجادلة}

"... Allah will raise up in ranks those who believed among you and those who have been given knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted with what you do" (11)

[Al- Mujaddalah]

# **Dedication**

To my lovely parents,

My uncle Dr. Yagoub,

My dear sisters and brothers.

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost, all my praises and thanks are due to the Almighty Allah, for granting me efforts to accomplish this research. I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. Nagla Taha Bashrie, for her guidance and assistance at all stages of this study. I would like to acknowledge that her constant guidance inspired me all through the study. Without her help and careful guidance, this research would not have been possible. At the same time I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to Dr. Hillary Marino, for providing me with invaluable guidance throughout this research. I am also very grateful to the students and honorable teachers for their cooperation. My heartfelt thanks go to all those people who assisted me in various ways to complete this research.

## **Abstract**

This study aims at investigating the EFL students' awareness of English collocations in oral and written discourses, for the purposes of measuring language fluency and accuracy. The study adopts the descriptive method, an oral and written collocation tests were used for data collection. The tests were designed and distributed to a number of (40) students from Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages. Then the data were analyzed by using SPSS. The findings show that, Sudanese EFL learners at Sudan University of Science and Technology are not capable of identifying grammatical collocations, they are unaware of using collocations in their written discourses. The results also point out that EFL students' speaking skill is not fluent and accurate due to the lack of collocation usage. Therefore, the researcher recommended that, English syllabus designers at University level must give a considerable attention to collocations and word combinations and focus on learning them in context for the purposes of acquiring a native like language. Finally, the researcher suggested that further studies are required to investigate the effective ways of teaching and learning formulaic language in general and collocations in particular to (EFL) learners. Moreover, experimental studies on the impact of English collocations on students' productive language skills and Contrastive studies on collocations is a good area of studies to eliminate the difficulties encountered by language learners.

# Abstract

## (Arabic Version)

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقصي معرفة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية بالمتلازمات اللفظية في الخطابين الشفهي والكتابي لأغراض قياس دقة وطلاقة اللغة المستخدمة. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي، استخدمت الدراسة الاختبار أداةً لجمع البيانات. جلس عدد (40) طالب من كلية اللغات بجامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا لاختبار شفهي وتحريري، تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام برنامج الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية. أظهرت الدراسة عدة نتائج أهمها عدم معرفة الطلاب بالمتلازمات اللفظية وعدم قدرتهم على التحدث بطلاقة التي نتجت عن ضعف معرفتهم للمتلازمات واستخدامها. أوصت الدراسة مصممي مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية بالجامعات بالاهتمام بالمتلازمات اللفظية والكلمات المركبة والتركيز على تعلمها في خلال صيغ مختلفة لأغراض اكتساب اللغة بطلاقة. وأخيراً اقترحت الدراسة إجراء دراسات في ذات السياق لتقصي الطرق الفعالة لتعليم وتعلم اللغة الصياغية بشكل عام والمتلازمات اللفظية على وجه الخصوص بالإضافة الي إجراء دراسات تجريبية عن أثر المتلازمات اللفظية على المهارات اللغوية المنتجة.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background of the Study

Vocabulary learning has attracted a lot of attention in teaching of second and foreign language pedagogies. Scholars have reiterated the fact that lexicon study is of great importance to and a central part of language learning, some scholars have even stressed that no matter how skilled students are at grammar, communication will cease without the words to convey meaning. Vocabulary is not an elective or insignificant component in language acquisition process in so much as words are the building blocks and without them there is no language.

Through 1970s and 1980s vocabulary and lexis were absent from main books on the syllabus and theory of language teaching. The main reason behind this neglect is a great emphasis on syntax and phonology over vocabulary under the assumption that vocabulary acquisition could take care of itself. Nonetheless, by the late 1970s and early 1980s many linguists criticize the view that vocabulary can be acquired naturally leading to an interest in vocabulary teaching and the recognition of the significant role of vocabulary during language acquisition.

Within the field of vocabulary, another point which can be regarded as a new theory is word combinations. Lexical combinations are very common in language discourse and differentiate the speech of native and non-native speakers. For instance Howarth,(1998) when looking at 238,000 words of academic writing claims that 31-40% was composed of collocations and idioms. Regarding all these studies we can conclude that word combinations form a large part of any discourse.

One of these word combinations which has attracted the researchers' interest in the field of EFL and ESL learning and teaching during the last few decades is collocation. Firth (1957) is considered to be the first to explicitly introduce the term collocation, in defining collocation, Firth argues that "*you shall know a word by the company it keeps*". He illustrates this by the English words *dark night* as illustration, he clarifies that one of meanings of the word *night* allows it collocability with *dark* and vice versa.

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2005 p: 293) defines collocations as "a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance".

This co-occurrence of words together will help learners to speak and write English in a more natural way. As collocation is an indispensable element of any English text and there is no piece of natural spoken or written language is totally free of collocations and EFL learners do not have many guidelines to follow considering the admissibility of collocation. Thus, collocations seem to be an insurmountable obstacle to attainment of native like fluency and is one of error generating areas in general English and especially in EFL.

It might be admitted that collocations have not yet been generally integrated into EFL teaching materials in Sudan and as a consequence not been given serious consideration in English classroom, teaching of collocations as well as the difficulties students have with collocations are not investigated well yet. Moreover studies exploring EFL learners' knowledge of collocations are scarce despite the long-standing interest and increased attention of the last two decades.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Regarding the role of familiarity with collocations in enhancing EFL learners' spoken and written discourse quality, in Sudan in general collocations seem to be neglected in classroom teaching. Very few teachers raise students' awareness of collocations or stress that English collocations exist and being able to use correct collocations greatly helps a learner to master a language. Previous studies indicated that EFL learners made many collocation errors in their writing as collocation is an area of difficulties for both EFL and ESL learners as well as non-native English teachers.

However the present study differs from the previous studies done in the collocation that it investigates the students' awareness of English collocations in both oral and written discourse (productive language skills).

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To find out how much the students know about collocations.
- 2- To determine whether the students are aware of using collocations in their oral and written discourses or not.

## **1.3 Questions of the Study**

The present study addresses the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent are EFL University learners aware of using English collocation in their oral and written discourse?
- 2- To what extent are EFL University learners capable of identifying types of English collocations?

## **1.4 Hypotheses of the Study**

The researcher assumes that Sudanese (EFL) learners at Sudan University are unaware of collocation, these assumptions are as follow:

- 1- EFL university learners are unaware of using English collocations in their written and oral discourse.
- 2- EFL university learners are not capable of identifying types of English collocation.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present study differs from the previous studies in the following:

In general few studies on collocation are conducted in EFL learning context, it evaluates awareness of collocation in both oral and written discourse, and this study will be beneficial to both university students and teachers of English language as well as syllabus designers.

The result of this study will be considered to promote students' performance, and competence to use collocation properly as well as to implement techniques for teaching collocation. Also will help learners to evaluate their knowledge of collocation and find out ways to improve their communicative competence.

## **1.6 Methodology of the Study**

For the validity and reliability of the research findings; the current study will use descriptive method. Two tests will be employed as tools for data collection which will be administered to the 4<sup>th</sup> year students of English language, college of languages, at Sudan University of Science and technology.

## **1.7 Limits of the Study**

The study examines and concentrates on the awareness of English collocations (all types of collocation) in oral and written discourses of EFL learners.

The subjects of the study are drawn from only one University, 4<sup>th</sup> year, department of English, College of Languages, academic year 2020-2021- Sudan University of Science and Technology.

# CHAPTER II

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part discusses the main related points to the research. It tackles a brief historical background about collocations, and definitions of collocations, approaches of collocation, a brief comparison between collocations, idioms and free combinations, also presents types of collocations, importance of collocation, collocation and EFL learners oral and written discourse. While the second part of this chapter aims at reviewing some previous studies related to collocations.

### Part One

#### 2.1 Background of Collocations

The origin of the word collocation is from the Latin word '*collocare*' which means to arrange \ to set in order. The earliest studies on collocation started 23000 years ago in Greece, the Greek linguists' related collocation to semantics and used the concept of collocation to study the meaning relationship between words. But the idea of collocation has been introduced in linguistic description since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Porzig 19349(cited in Palmer, 1976, p.233) referred to the phenomenon of collocation as the act of placing together of the lexical items and the combination of words. He argued for the recognition of the importance of syntagmatic relations between words such as: bite and teeth, dog and bark.

Perspectives on collocation were expressed by many linguists and lexicographers, but Firth (1957) is considered to be the first to explicitly introduce the term



collocation and brought the term in prominence as part of technical terminology of linguistics. Firth argues that “you shall know a word by the company it keeps”. He exemplifies this by using the English words dark night as an example of collocation. He clarifies that one of the meanings of the word night allows its collectability with dark and vice versa. He did not regard collocation of word as juxtaposition, but it is an order of mutual expectancy.

However, Palmer (1996) states that although collocations are very largely determined by meaning, they are sometimes fairly idiosyncratic and cannot easily be predicted as in the word *blond* with *hair*. For we should not talk about a blond door or a book even if the colors were exactly that of blond hair.

### **2.1.1 Definitions of Collocation**

Collocation is a language specific phenomenon and is of great importance in all kinds of discourse. In order to understand the concept of collocation it is important to know the definition of the term.

Firth (1957) defines the term as the company that a word keeps. Crystal (1987) in substantiating Firth's definition went further by saying that collocation should not be confused with the association of ideas and words that work together in a predictable way. Regarding this point Crystal contradicts with other linguists in that the way words work together have no relation with ideas.

Cruse (1986) makes the point that collocation refers to sequences of lexical items which co-occur, other linguists define collocation as two or more words that usually occur together. While Kharam & Abdel Fattah (1989) define collocation as lexical items which have a tendency to keep regular company with certain other items in utterances.

In terms of co-occurrence Wilkin (1972) states that collocation is items that tend to co-occur (always).

Baker (1992) defines collocation as semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the prepositional meaning of a word. According to Baker another way of looking at collocation is in terms of tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly in a given language. For example black coffee and white coffee not coffee with milk. High \tall are adjectives which means long, but we say tall boy, high building and a long journey. This confirms Palmer's (1996) idea that words which we might think of as synonyms will often have quite different sets of collocation.

Another attempt at defining collocation McCarthy&O'Dell (2005, p.5) describe collocation a pair or group of words that are often used together as a result of natural combination of words.

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines collocation as a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance.

BBI combinatory dictionary defines collocation as fixed, non-idiomatic and recurrent combination of words, according to Benson et al (1986) English as other languages has many fixed non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Such groups of words are called collocations.

In corpus linguistics, a collocation is a series of words or terms that co-occur more than would expected by chance. In phraseology a collocation is sub-type of phraseme. An example of a phraseological collocation as propounded by Halliday (1966) is the expression *strong tea*. While the same meaning could be conveyed by the equivalent *powerful tea*, this expression is considered excessive and awkward by

native speakers of English. Conversely, the corresponding expression in technology, *powerful computer*.

To sum up collocation according to above mentioned dictionaries and linguists is habitual, natural co-occurrence of words which forms fixed non-idiomatic and relative recurrent combinations.

### **2.1.2 Approaches of Collocations**

Throughout the literature review the phenomenon of collocation has been examined from different theoretical perspectives. However, three main approaches were the center of many studies that dealt with the concept of collocation. They are the semantic, the lexical and the structural approach. These approaches were an attempt by linguists to answer the question (whether collocation should be examined lexically, semantically or syntactically).

#### **2.1.2.1 The Lexical Approach**

The followers of the lexical approach claim that the meaning of a word is determined by the co-occurring word. Lexis is considered to be independent and separable from grammar. The interpretation of collocations by English linguist Firth (1957) became the most popular among other methods of syntagmatic analysis. He introduced the first formal definition of collocation that the meaning of a word is determined by the occurring words “*the company it keeps*” Firth calls this company “collocation” which is part of the meaning. Meaning by collocation is an abstraction of syntagmatic level. Thus, part of the meaning is the fact that it collocates with another word, but these combinations are strictly limited. After Firth, Halliday (1966) added some insights for the notion, his innovation was that he clearly separated lexical matters from the grammatical ones.

For Halliday collocations are examples of word combinations. He introduced the term “*Lexical set*” which means a set of lexemes that show the crucial role of collocations in the study of lexis.

However, Lyons (1977) argues that meaning of a lexeme is not only syntagmatically determined, he said that if a lexeme is frequently used in collocation with a restricted set of syntagmatically modifying lexemes or phrases, it may encapsulate their senses.

Sinclair (1996) in the early period of his investigations argues that collocation in its purest sense recognize only the lexical co-occurrence of words. Later on he slightly changed his attitude by dismissing the previous idea that lexis is separated from grammar. In his new approach both lexical and grammatical aspects of collocation are taken into consideration.

To the above mentioned linguists at this stage of collocation analysis collocation is the occurrence of independent lexemes and they should be analyzed at the preferably lexical level.

### **2.1.2.2 The Semantic Approach**

The advocate of this approach attempt to examine collocations from the semantic point of view, also separately from grammar. Their main goal is to find out why words collocate with certain other words.

Palmer (1976) argues that in any case it is often difficult even in principle to decide whether a collocation is or is not semantically determined because the meaning of one of the collocated terms seem to depend of upon the collocation. According to Palmer because it is difficult to decide which of the two words is the more basic. Another difficulty that arises from any attempt to separate collocation from semantic is the fact that a word will often collocate with a number of other words that have

something in common semantically. However, Sinclair (1996) in his research emphasized the role of semantic factor in collocations that there is no assumption that meaning attaches only to the word, not necessarily next to each other. He states that if there is no meaning between lexemes our lexicon becomes empty. Lexical semantics according to Sinclair is inseparable from grammar.

### **2.1.2.3 The Structural Approach**

According to this approach collocation is determined by structure and occurs in pattern. Therefore, the study of collocation should include grammar. Lexis and grammar cannot be separated and consequently, two categories are defined: lexical and grammatical collocations, which represent two distinctive but related aspects one phenomenon.

Among advocates of the structural approach Carter (1998). He defines collocation as a group of words that recently co-occur in a language. Carter distinguishes between grammatical collocations which result not only from grammatical relationship, but most of all from co-occurrence of lexical units in a specific company.

## **2.2 Syntagmatic Relations**

Wilkins (1992) claims that syntagmatic relations between lexical items are interesting because in every language there are items which co-occur with high frequency, others which occur as the need arises, and still others whose co-occurrence seem impossible. Where items tend to co-occur repeatedly a “collocation” is produced. Items are said to collocate with one another. To illustrate the difficulties presented to the learner by the probabilities of lexical co-occurrence. First, there are some combinations that will not simply occur “tall noise, fast noise, painted noise”. Learner’s knowledge of semantic individual words will enable them

to predict that they will not co-occur. Secondly, there are semantically compatible and may co-occur yet which are not associated habitually enough to be considered as collocation. From under the bonnet of one's car there may come new noises and old noises. Presumably, resulting, rumbling and clanging noises are also included. The broad line between co-occurrence of this sort and collocation will not be a hard and fast one. It is only because learners need to talk about loud noises more and old new noises, that they consider it a collocation (ibid).

Wilkins (1972) points out that the difficulties that language learners may face joining together semantically compatible parts does not produce an acceptable co-occurrence and the learner has no way of distinguishing the acceptable from unacceptable. Furthermore, he suggests that learners' exposure to language written by native speakers, especially language written in a variety of styles to for a variety of purposes will develop his\her sensitivity to collocations that native speakers prefer.

### **2.3 Collocations, Idioms, and Free combinations**

Collocation is a kind of syntagmatic relation, but not all syntagmatic relations are called collocation. A distinction is often made between free combinations, idioms and collocations. In order to be better in understanding collocations, we have to make a distinction on one hand between free combinations and collocation and on the other between idioms and collocation.

Dsaussur (2001) called free combination (colligation) "*relation based on linear character of languages or (combinations) based on sequentially*". Syntactic relations are specified as free combinations. In other words, free combinations refer to the temporarily-made phrases based on certain grammatical rules to express

certain ideas. For example *buy a book* where buy can be replaced by *sell*, select etc. and book by ticket, pen etc. is free combination. The combination is grammatically acceptable and semantically clear. The combination of buy and book is accidental, depending on the meaning the speaker wants to express. That means there is very weak or actually no obvious mutual restriction and mutual expectation between the two words.

The other distinction between collocation and idioms should be clarified. Idioms make confusion in certain senses whether these combinations are collocations or Idioms. Idioms are fixed expressions with frozen meanings.

Benson et al (1986) use combination with the noun murder to distinguish features of confusing collocation as follows:

The noun *murder* can be used with many verbs (to analyze, boast, condemn, discuss) and these verbs in turn combine freely with nouns.

Idioms in other hand are relatively frozen expressions whose meaning does not reflect the meaning of their component parts. For example: to screen blue murder means to complain very loudly.

Between idioms and free combinations are loosely fixed combinations or (collocations) with the type to commit murder.

To conclude the main characteristics of collocation are that their meaning reflect the meaning of their constituent parts in contrast to idioms and that they are used frequently, spring to mind readily and psychologically salient in contrast to free combinations. According to Curse (1986) collocations are transitional area between idioms and free combinations.

## 2.4 Types of Collocations

The structural approach of collocations introduces two types of collocations. Grammatical collocations and lexical collocations, in this part the two types were explained carefully.

### 2.4.1 Grammatical Collocations

Grammatical collocations consist of a noun, an adjective or a verb plus a particle, a preposition, an adverb or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive, a gerund, or a clause. The following are the examples: at night, extent to, fall for, to be afraid that. These examples are grammatical collocation which are lexicalized as single units whose meanings are formulaic and whose co-occurrences are highly likely. They are sometimes idiomatic because their meanings do not reflect the meanings of the elements, such as “run out of “which means to reach an end of stock or supplies.

However, their grammatical combinations which do not have such strong sense of belonging together are considered free combinations.

According to Benson, Benson&Ilson (1986) in their introduction to their BBI combinatory dictionary of English, grammatical collocations fall into the following combinations:

#### A. Noun+ preposition:

Examples: blockade against, apathy towards.

Not all noun + preposition combinations can be considered as collocations due to the highly predictable meaning of some such as of and by so noun +of/ by combinations are considered free combinations.

#### B. Noun +to + infinitive:



There are five syntactic patterns in which noun +to +infinitive construction is most frequently encountered.

It was a pleasure (a problem, a struggle) to do it.

They had the foresight (instruction, an obligation, a permission) to do it.

They made an attempt (an effort, a promise, and a vow) to do it.

They felt a compulsion (an impulse, a need) to do it.

He was a fool to do it.

#### C. Noun + that-clause

The noun +that-clause combinations that are considered collocations are those using subject pronouns. For example:

We reached an argument that she would represent us in court.

He took an oath that would do his duty.

However, when the “that-clause” can be replaced by “which-clause” as that in relative clauses such as noun +that clause, the restriction is not considered as a collocation. For example:

We reached in to an agreement that\which would go into effect in a month.

#### D. Preposition+ noun combinations

Any combination of preposition + noun can fall into this category, however the choice of preposition with certain noun is not at random. For example: in by accident, advance.

#### E. Adjective+ preposition combinations

Some adjectives are followed by a prepositional phrase, but the adjective + preposition combination that is considered collocation is the one that occurs in the

predicate (verb less clause). However, past participle adjective followed by preposition is not considered collocation because this construction is regular and predictable. For example:

They are angry at the children.

They are hungry for news.

The ship was abounded by its crew: is not a collocation

#### F. Predicate adjective +to+ infinitive

These adjectives occur in two basic constructions with infinitives.

G. Adjectives with dummy subject “it” such as: it was necessary to work; also possible it was necessary for him to work.

H. Adjectives with real and animate subject, such as she is ready to go; or with animate subject such as: It (the bomb) is designed to explode at certain temperature.

#### I. Adjective + that- clause

For example: she was afraid that she would fail in her examination.

#### Collocational verb patterns

J. English verb patterns have 19 types as follow:

1. Shift of an indirect object to a position before the direct object of transitive verbs is allowed. For example:

He sent the book to his brother

He sent his brother the book

He sent the book to him, he sent him the book.

2. Shift of an indirect object to a position before the direct object by deleting “to” is not allowed. For example:

They described the book to her; but not \* they described her the book.

3. Transitive verb+ for allows the deletion of “for”. For example:

She bought a shirt for her husband.

She bought her husband a shirt.

She bought him a shirt.

4. The verb forms a collocation with specific preposition and an object. For example:

They based their conclusions on the available facts. However, the following similar constructions are not collocations but free combinations of verb + preposition denoting (location, means, or instrument). For instance:

We walked in the park.

5. Verbs are followed by to infinitive. As example:

They began to speak, she continued to write.

6. However, verbs +to infinitive meaning “purpose” are not include as collocational combination. For example:

He was running in order to catch the bus.

7. Verbs are followed by infinitive without to.

These verbs except dare, help and need are called modals, the verbal phrases had better and would rather also fit this pattern. For instance: they must work, we had better go now.

8. Verbs are followed by second verb in –ing. For example:

They kept talking, we enjoyed watching television.

9. Transitive verbs are followed by an object and to infinitive. For example: they asked the students to participate in discussion.

10. Transitive verbs are followed by indirect object and an infinitive without to.  
E.g. we let them use the car.

11. Verbs are followed by an object and a verb+ing.

I caught him smoking in his bed room.

12. Verbs are followed by a noun or pronoun and gerund. For example: this fact justifies Bill's coming late.

13. Verbs are followed by a noun clause beginning with conjunction that. For instance: they admitted that they were wrong.

14. Transitive verb can be followed by a direct object, an infinitive to be and an adjective, past participle / pronoun. For example:

We considered her to be very capable.

15. Transitive verbs are followed by a direct object and adjective, past participle or noun\ pronoun: she dyed her hair red.

16. Transitive verbs are followed by two objects:

The teacher asked the students questions.

17. Intransitive/ reflexive/ transitive verbs must be followed by an adverbial/ prepositional phrase / noun phrase or clause:

He carried himself with dignity.

18. Verbs are followed by interrogative such as how, what:

He always wants what I want.

19. Dummy "it" is followed by transitive verbs (often express emotions) and by to infinitive or by that clause:

It surprised me to learn of her decision.

Small number of intransitive verbs are followed by a predicate noun\ adjective: she will make a good teacher.

### **2.4.2 Lexical Collocations**

In contrast to grammatical collocations lexical collocations do not contain grammatical elements. Benson et al (1986) list various combinations of lexical collocations. In lexical collocations too there are fixed and weak combinations especially in verb+ noun combinations, the combinations are fixed in which the choice of words that collocate each other is definite such as: commit a crime or break the law and these combinations: do a crime or damage the law are correct unlikely.

In comparison, in the weak collocations, they collocate freely such as: analyze, study, witness a crime, a murder or law. The meanings of these weak collocations can still be derived from their individual words.

The co-occurrence of two or more lexical collocation has two important features: Firstly, there may be a constant relationship between the two words that collocate although several words go in between them. For example: they collect foreign stamps.

Secondly, lexical collocation does not seem to depend on grammatical types, so collocation “strong argument” can be expressed for example: *he argued strongly or the strength of his argument*, McCarthy (1988).

The following are types of lexical collocations as categorized in Benson et al The BBI combinatory dictionary of English.

1. Verb (usually transitive) + noun, pronoun (or preposition phrase). Most of them consist of a verb denoting creation or activation. examples:

Come to an end \ argument. Set an alarm.

However not all verbs denoting creation and activation can be considered collacable to any noun. Such as build, cause, cook, because their meanings are predictable.

2. Verb (meaning eradication or nullification) + noun. For example:

Reject an appeal, withdraw an offer.

Some verbs denoting similar meaning and that can be used with large number of nouns are considered free combinations. For example, the verb destroy can combine with any noun denoting physical object.

3. Adjective + noun: strong\ weak tea, kind\ kindest\best regards.

4. Noun+ verb: the verb names an action characteristics of a person, things designated the noun. Examples: bees buzz, bombs explode.

Predictable combinations such as boxers box and dancers dance are considered free combinations.

5. Noun + noun: this type of collocation indicates the unit that is associated with a noun as follows:

A larger unit to which a single member belongs. For example:

A herd of cows, a bouquet of flowers, a pride of lions.

The specific, concrete, small unit of something larger or more general. For example: a bit of advice.

6. Adverb+ adjective

The meaning of most adverbs in this combination is “very”. For examples: deeply absorbed, hopelessly addicted, and closely acquainted.

Verb + adverb: appreciate sincerely, argue heatedly.

## **2.5 Collocations and General L2 and EFL Proficiency**

“Words are interconnected, not isolates.... Meaning is derived from context... And collocation is key”, Moon (2008).

Moon’s words appropriately collocations scaffolding role in language. There is almost consensus among language researchers, particular in the field of vocabulary that collocation pervasively used in all languages, (Ellis, 2005; Schmitt, 2010).

For this reason, the argument that being able to process collocations effectively and efficiently in language competence and performance is a defining aspect of language proficiency.

Although collocations are fundamental building blocks of a language, EFL learners are found to lack adequate knowledge of them. A large body of research has focused on collocation use in EFL writing, and it is found that EFL learners use fewer collocations when writing. It is a problematic area for them which is considered an error generating field by linguists and language teachers and which stands against acquiring a native like language (Howarth, 1996; Zhang, 1993).

Previous second and foreign language acquisition studies suggested a positive relationship between the amount of ESL or EFL collocation knowledge and the level of general proficiency (language fluency and accuracy) (Alzhrani, 1998; Hsu, 2007; Abdul Fattah, 2003).

High level learners usually perform better than low-level learners in well-designed collocational knowledge tests.

Hsu (2007) observed a clear developmental pattern of collocation production in sixty-two Chinese students’ writing, the quantity, accuracy and diversity of collocation is increased with the writers’ language proficiency.

However, it is hard to combine the results of aforementioned studies because of their inconsistent designs. Firstly, these studies focused on various collocation patterns which may differ widely in difficulty. Secondly these studies assessed collocational knowledge using different methods (some used receptive measuring (multi-choice, matching, error recognition and acceptability judgment) while others chose to elicit and evaluate constructed responses (e.g. translation and free writing). Testing methods according to some language researchers, may affect both the intended test constructs as well as the observed test performance. Abdul Fattah's (2003) study suggests that FL and L2 learners tend to perform better in receptive than productive collocation tasks indicating that the two types assess different aspects of collocational knowledge. Third, the participants of these studies were from different L1 backgrounds. For the linguistic distance between the target language and first language is a strong predictor for the difficulty in learning collocation. All these studies agree that English collocations are difficult to be learnt and acquired in the field of foreign language learning all around the world despite their importance of using them for the purposes of performing accurate and native-like language.

According to the researcher's point of view based on Sudanese previous researches in collocations many studies investigate collocational problems encountered by Sudanese EFL learners in writing. Unfortunately, they did not investigate collocational awareness in oral discourse as speaking is considered one of main and important skills in the process of acquiring communicative competence and performance in EFL and knowing collocations is the first step towards English proficiency. And this will be discussed further in previous studies section.



## **2.6 Collocations and Productive Language Skills (Oral and Written Discourse)**

This section reviews two of the widely recognized speech processing models in literature so as to construct a preconceived theory about the relationship between collocation and speaking. And the relationship collocation and writing.

Bygate (1987) in his model of speaking as a process states that the ability to use formulaic expressions is part of the facilitation skills at production stage (speaking and writing). He emphasizes their importance to cognitive economy and oral fluency. Our interest in these expressions is that they contribute to oral fluency.

Bygate's definition of formulaic expressions seems to embrace a large proportion of collocations, he describes the term "conventional, colloquial, or idiomatic expressions or phrases" or "set expressions which include not only idioms but also phrases which have more meanings and tend to go together" Bygate (1987).

The Skill Acquisition Theory claims that language learning is analogous to the learning of a wide variety of skills. DeKeyser (2007).

If we follow this logic then we link between and EFL and ESL oral proficiency, apparently from the basis that collocational ability as a kind of energy-saving skill that frees up mental resources during speaking.

EFL or ESL assessment makes inferences about the language's oral construct, which is usually deemed as a holistic concept based on samples of a speaker's overt speech product.

Some common analytic evaluation criteria for assessing the L2 oral construct include accuracy, fluency, speech intelligibility, content development, coherence, interaction and so forth.

Depending on the specific test purposes, different sets of criteria are chosen. However, it is almost a consensus that accuracy, fluency, and intelligibility are three fundamental criteria of oral language proficiency. Fulcher (2003)

The researcher argues that strong collocational performance in speaking contributes to all these three aspects. Using native-like collocation no doubt increases the accuracy of speech, collocations support a speaker's ideas in the most economically way.

There are few empirical studies that have been conducted to assess or investigate the development of collocations of language learners.

To investigate the relationship between collocation and speaking fluency; Sung (2003) recruited 96 subjects, 24 were native speakers and 74 non-native speakers of English. Sung (2003) is considered to be the first to investigate the relationship between collocations and speaking fluency. In her study she attempted to increase the cognition and use of lexical collocation in their relation to non-native speakers speaking proficiency and also examined and described the correlation between knowledge and usage of lexical collocations. She used two tests consisting of 50 sentences with an incomplete collocation in a blank-filling format, one for lexical collocations proficiency and the other for speaking, and a demographic questionnaire (background information). The aim was to assess the subjects' knowledge of lexical collocation and determine the subjects' use of lexical collocation, and at the same time measuring the subjects' speaking fluency.

The findings show that there were significant correlations between non-native speakers' lexical collocation knowledge and the usage of lexical collocation in their oral discourse.

Jing Xu (2015) conducted a study under the title: predicting ESL learners' oral proficiency by measuring the collocation in their spontaneous speech. Jing argues for the centrality of collocation to the communicative oriented L2 assessment. Jing investigated the empirical performance of collocation accuracy, complexity and fluency in spontaneous speaking with 2344 lexical collocation extracted from sixty adult ESL learners' oral assessment. The results show that the participants generally achieved higher collocation accuracy in the written exam than the oral exam, and suggests that learners' collocational performance in free speech deserve examiners close attention and that spoken collocation competence may contribute to the construct of the oral proficiency somewhat differently across speaking contexts.

As mentioned earlier the importance of collocation in communicative performance, especially in writing. Zhang (1992) states that collocational knowledge is a source of fluency in written communication among college freshmen and that quality of collocations in terms of variety and accuracy is indicative of the quality of students writing.

## Part Two

### 2.7 Previous Studies

The previous studies which have been investigated are relevant to this study, most of the studies endeavor to find out the nature of the problems and errors that were made by Sudanese university students of English as a foreign language when using collocations, so the researcher demonstrates the aims and the findings of each study as well as the recommendations and the researcher's point of view about each study.

#### -The first Study

Osman (2017) conducted a study under the title "*investigating university students' problems in using collocations in English language*". The participants were students of 3rd year, department of English, Alneelain University. He used a questionnaire as a tool for data collection, the questionnaire consists of 15 statements; it was distributed to 50 students who were chosen randomly, the data were analyzed by using (SPSS). The results show that university students were poor in using English collocation. He argues that the insufficient specialized collocation materials for practicing collocation at universities and the interference of mother tongue are the main causes of the problem. He recommended to focus on including collocations in English syllabus at universities, in addition to raise learners' awareness of using collocations.

The researcher agrees with Osman about the absence of specialized collocation materials for practicing at university, but the instrument he used is not suitable for measuring such problems.

#### The Second Study

A second study related to the study edited by Muiz (2014) under the title “investigating the ability of students of English to use collocations in writing” at Sudan university of science and technology. A test was used as a tool for data collection and the participant were 40 students who were chosen randomly for testing and the data were analyzed by using (SPSS). The results stated that students’ performance of English collocation was weak and that was due to lack of collocation.

Muiz recommended that collocations should be taught from levels, and language skills should be integrated with each other with the aim of building learners’ vocabulary, so both types of collocations should be taken into considerations in designing the syllabus.

The researcher agrees with him because the neglect of teaching collocations leads to such problems.

#### The third Study

Abdalla.E. M. (2014), conducted study under the title “investigating collocation knowledge among EFL learners”, college of languages, Sudan university of Science and Technology. The study aims to investigate aspects related to collocation teaching and their role in learning English, and to find out difficulties encountered by EFL learners and the causes. He used a test as a tool for data collection. He tested one hundred and thirty students at third and fourth level. The data were analyzed statistically by (SPSS) program. The results showed that there was unsatisfactory level of knowledge of collocation with overall weakness in lexical collocations. He argues that the reason behind the weakness is mother tongue interference, Interlingua, numerous synonymous of lexical collocations and similarity. In addition, he suggests the raising awareness of among teachers and learners thoroughly. The researcher

agrees with Abadallah that pedagogical solutions for collocation errors and problems should be implemented.

According to these previous studies students' collocational knowledge did not develop with their overall knowledge of vocabulary and did not expand with the general knowledge of vocabulary. Thus, the researchers concluded that collocations are important for mastery of communicative English, teachers should concentrate on highly frequent collocation and EFL learners' knowledge of collocation did not outstrip their vocabulary in general.

The fourth study

Mustafa. O. E (2011) investigated collocation knowledge of 150 of EFL students from three different levels. The aim of her study was to come out with constructive recommendations for both teachers and learners in order to improve the process of teaching and learning the language. She used collocation test of 50 items to collect data. The data were analyzed statistically. The findings of the study indicated that there is a significant difference in the students' knowledge of collocation between the levels. She recommended that teachers should enable students to be aware of collocations through making more emphasis on collocation while teaching.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter carried out a literature review on the background of collocation, the definitions, comparison between collocation idioms and free combinations, approaches collocation and the relationship between collocations and language proficiency.

The main points of the chapter are summarized below:

Firstly, collocations which fall into two common categories (lexical and grammatical), concerns habitual (rather than fixed) words co-occurrences and approaches of collocations showed that it is difficult to interpret collocations in

separable of grammar and semantics and that is to say collocations have syntagmatic relations. Secondly, a number of speech processing theories assume the importance's of formulaic language (including collocations) to first, second and foreign language learning. Thirdly, it is argued that collocations are the key to assessing L2 oral and written proficiency. Finally, collocations are an error generating area in the field of EFL learning.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology, it gives full description of the population and the sample of the study, research instrument for collecting data to achieve the objectives of the study in addition to that it shows the validity and reliability of the test.

### **3.1 Methods of the Study**

This study follows the descriptive methods. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to achieve the objectives of the study and to verify the hypotheses. The researcher used the following statistical methods:

1. Graphic formats. 2. Frequency distribution tables.
3. Reliability test for the test scale (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient).

For accurate results as possible, Statistical Package SPSS (version 23) (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) has been used.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The target population to conduct this study is Sudanese who major learners of English as a Foreign Language at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of languages. They are 150 students.



### **3.3 The Sample of the Study**

The sample was forty students for the oral and written test. Their age is between 21 and 23. They were randomly selected to respond to different items of collocations.

### **3.4 Instrument of Data Collection**

The data of this study are collected by using two tests for EFL undergraduate learners. A written and an oral test.

#### **Written Test:**

For measuring students' language accuracy and fluency a diagnostic written test was distributed to fourth year university students at the department of English. The students were given a two questions of collocations' test, each question consisted of ten sub –questions. The first question was for identifying types of collocations, and the students were asked to fill in the gaps from a given table which contains different types of collocations, by choosing the collocation which fits the meaning given between the parentheses. The second question was used to measure collocational knowledge of EFL students. The students were asked to choose the suitable word to collocate another word.

The questions of the test, the collocations, and their meaning were taken from McCarthy's book of English collocations in use, and Shayna Oliveira's book 1000 English Collocations in Ten Minutes a Day.

#### **Oral test:**

The oral test is for evaluating collocational awareness in oral discourse. It consists of 10 questions from different topics (food, childhood, memories, describing people, friendship, and love) to encourage students to speak. The students were interviewed individually and their interviews were recorded. They were given free time to speak

freely. An observation checklist was used to measure the collocations used by EFL students.

### **3.4 Procedure**

The written test was administered in a special session arranged by the researcher after their lectures inside the hall. The researcher assured that confidentiality would be maintained. Each student was given the diagnostic test and then allowed sufficient time to work individually on the test items. It took about 30 minutes for all the students to finish the test. Before the test started, the researcher had provided directions and encourage the students to answer each question.

For the oral test the students were interviewed by the researcher in different natural situations.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

#### **A. Validity**

The two tests contents were validated by a jury of three English language EFL specialists, who are university lecturers with long experience in the field of teaching English language as a foreign language. The jury was asked to validate the content of the tests with regard to the test instructions, its suitability to the research objectives, the number and the arrangement of questions and the suitability of time allocated to the tests.

The remarks of the validating team, their notes and suggestions were taken into consideration, and the researcher made the necessary modifications before administering the tests.

## **B. Reliability of the Written Test**

### **Statistical Reliability**

The reliability correlation coefficient of the written test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method. The result was found to be (0.64) which is considered to be suitable from statistical point of view as shown:

**Table (3.1): the scale reliability test statistics**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
0.644	16

Table (1) shows that the value of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient (64.4%) has exceeded its minimum limit (60%), therefore it is statistically significant and indicating a high evidence of correlation between the test statements, and this is considered sufficient to judge the consistency of the scale and it has a high stability that indicates the possibility of obtaining the same results if the distribution of the same tool was repeated in similar circumstances.

# CHAPTER IV

## DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, analysis and the results discussion will be divided into two sections. Section one is devoted to the analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the data. In section two, the results are discussed in the light of the hypotheses.

### 4.1 Data analysis of the Written and Oral Test

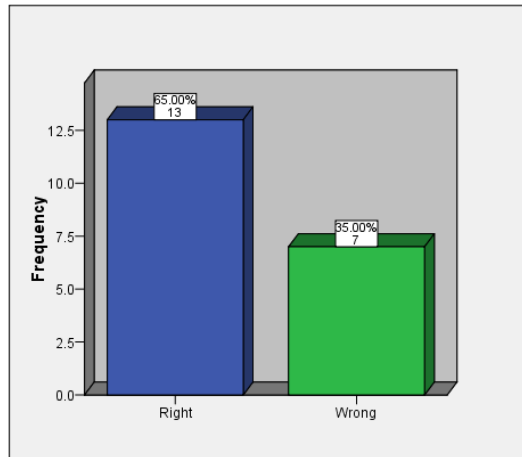
Descriptive statistics were employed to statistically treat the data collected by the researcher. The following tables and figures show these data.

#### A. Analysis of the Subjects' Written Test Results

**Question (1)** the students were asked to choose a suitable collocation from a given table, and their answers were presented in the following tables :

**Table (4.1)** Right and Wrong Answers on Test Q1 (Item 1)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	26	65%
Wrong	14	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>



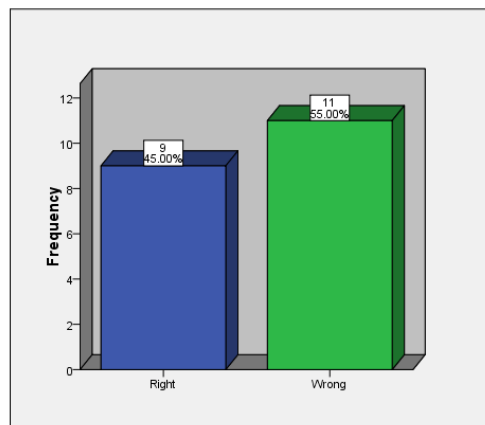
**Figure(4.1)** Right and Wrong Answers on Test Q1 (Item 1)

Table and figure (4.1) show the correct answer (broke out) which is a grammatical collocation (a phrasal verb which means suddenly started).

The above data display that 65% of the subjects identified the grammatical collocation (broke out).

**Table (4.2)** Right and wrong answers on Test Q1 (Item 2)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	18	45%
Wrong	22	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

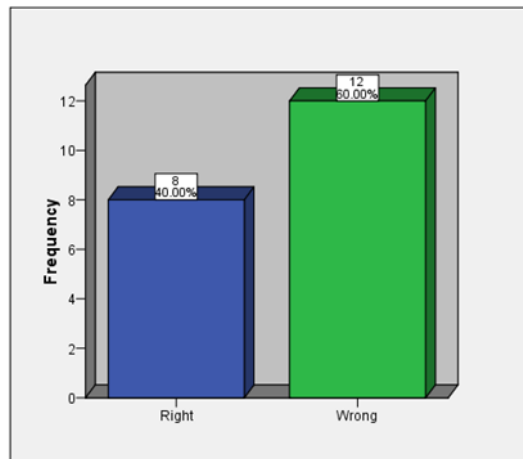


**Figure (4.2)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 2)

In the above table and figure (4.2.) show that (Went numb) which is the correct answer, 55% of the subject fail to identify this type lexical collocation (v+adjective).

**Table (4.3)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 3)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	16	40%
Wrong	24	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

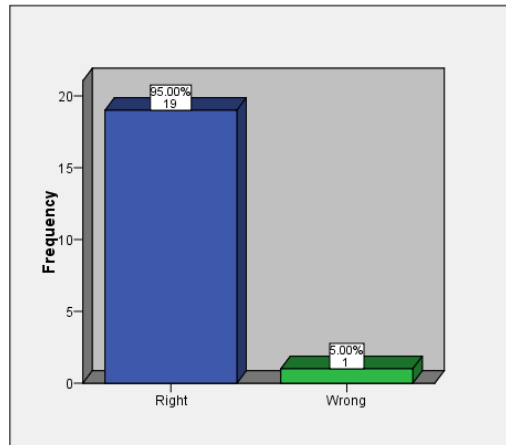


**Figure (4.3)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 3)

Table and figure (4.3) above clarify that 60% of the students fail to identify and collocate these two words (wafting -across) to mean (moving gently through the air ) according to Osman (2017) this is due to lack of proper knowledge of collocation because of insufficient materials for practicing and mother tongue interference.

**Table (4.4)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 4)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	38	95%
Wrong	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

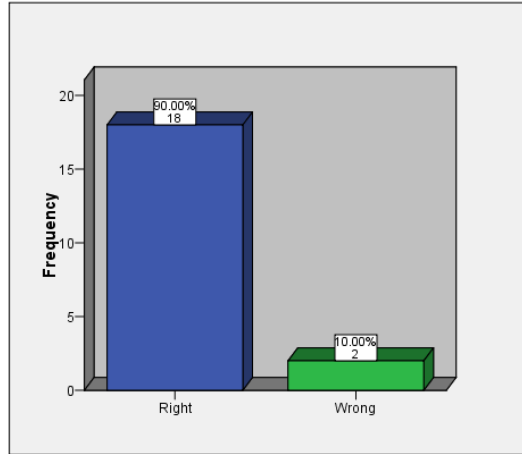


**Figure (4.4)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 4)

Table and figure (4.4) show that great majority 95% of the respondents have chosen the correct answer. That means the lexical collocation type (adjective+noun) *criminal record* is highly identified by the subjects.

**Table (4.5)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 5)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	36	90%
Wrong	4	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

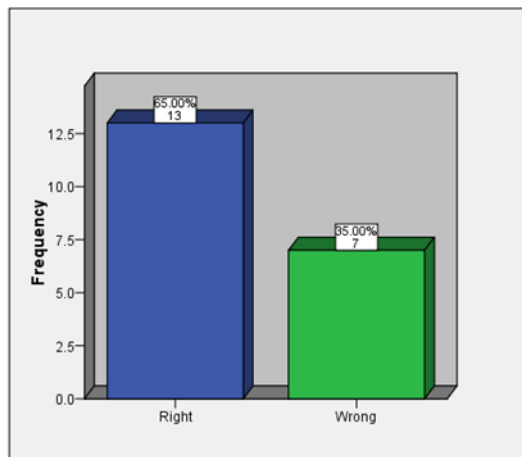


**Figure (4.5)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 5)

From table and figure (4.5) we note that the number of correct answers (36) this donates that 90% of the subjects used the lexical collocation type (adverb+adjective) blissfully happy correctly and according to the given meaning.

**Table (4.6)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 6)

	Frequency	Percent
Right	26	65%
Wrong	14	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>



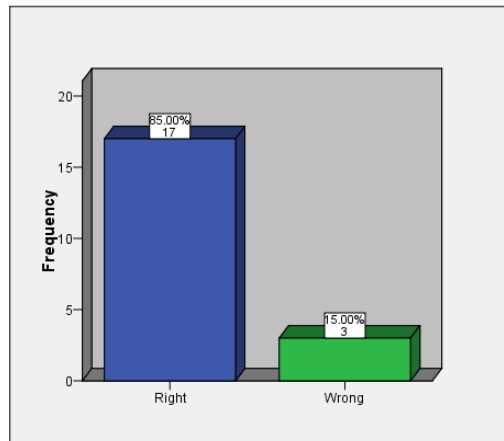
**Figure (4.6)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 6)



The data in the above table and figure (4.6) reveal that 65% of the subjects identified the lexical collocation (adjective+noun) *striking resemblance*. While 35% of them failed to identify it despite the meaning that was given to them.

**Table (4.7)** Right and wrong answers on Test Q1 (Item No 7)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	34	85%
Wrong	6	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

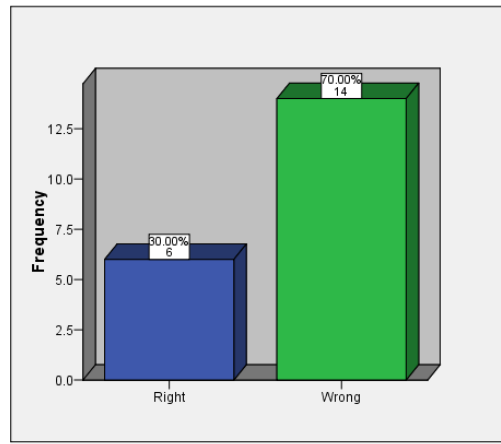


**Figure (4.7)** Right and wrong answers on Test Q1 (Item No 7)

Table and figure (4.7) show that 85% of the participants the majority have chosen the correct answer in using the lexical collocation (adjective +noun) *excruciating pain* according to the given meaning. This result indicates that majority of the students are familiar of this type of collocation.

**Table (4.8)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Item No 8)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	12	30%
Wrong	28	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

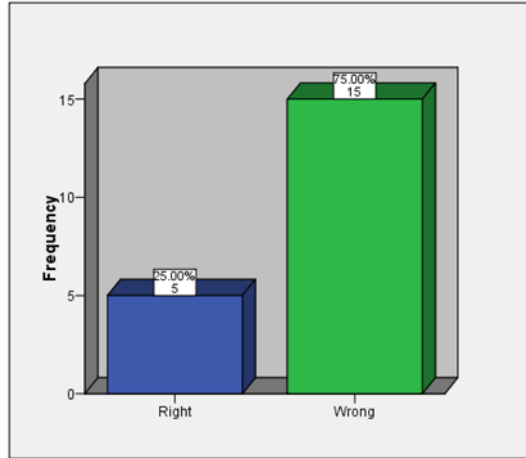


**Figure (4.8)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Item No 8)

Based on the data shown in the table and figure (4.8) above, 70 % of the subjects answered incorrectly. This result displays that the participants failed to use the lexical collocation (noun+noun) *fossil fuel* correctly according to the meaning given in the test.

**Table (4.9)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Item9)

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Right	10	25%
Wrong	30	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

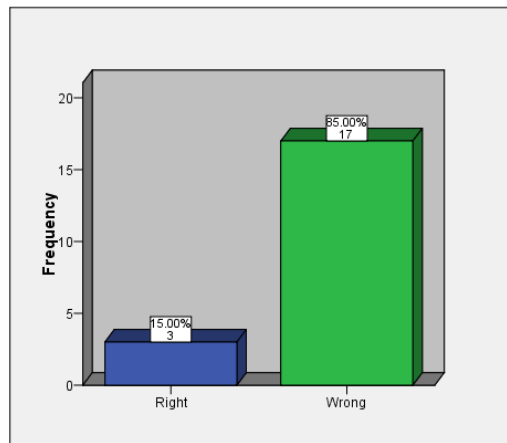


**Figure (4.9)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Item 9)

From the above table and figure (4.9) these data clarify that 85% of the students failed to identify the grammatical collocation (phrasal verb) *held back* and use it appropriately.

**Table (4.10)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 10)

	Frequency	Percent
Right	6	15%
Wrong	34	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

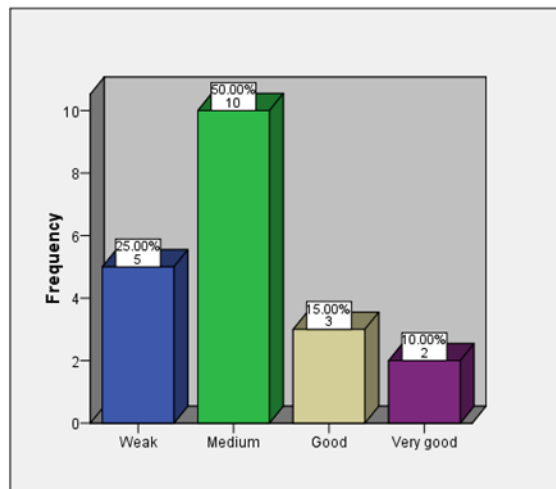


**Figure (4.10)** Right and wrong answers on test Q1 (Items No 10).

As shown in table and figure (4.10) above, 85% failed to use the grammatical collocation (phrasal verb) *go over* in its suitable position according to the given meaning.

**Table No (4.11)** frequencies and percentages distribution of respondents according to question one on the written test question one

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Weak	10	25%
Medium	20	50%
Good	6	15%
Very good	4	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure (4.11)** frequencies and percentages distribution of respondents according to question one on the written test question one

As shown in the table and figure (4.11) 50% of the students got medium scores at identifying specific and well known types of lexical collocations.

**Question 2:** the students were asked to choose suitable word to collocate another word.

**Table (4.12)** Right and Wrong answers on the Written Test Question Two.

<b>Question no</b>	<b>Frequency of correct answers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency of incorrect answers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Item 5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80%</b>

As shown in the table (4.12) above in Q1, only 10 students with percentage 25%, used the correct word (brief) to collocate (discussion) which is the correct answer and 30 with 75% used other words.

In Q2, 18 participants with percentage 45% used the correct word (richly) to collocate (decorated room). While 55% more than half of them miss collocate the word.

In Q3, 16 students with percentage 40% collocate the word (sense) with (pride) which is the correct answer and 24 of them with percentage 60% miss collocate this word.

In Q4, only 6 participants with percentage 15% succeeded to collocate the word (gave) with (idea). While 34 participants 75% failed to collocate the word correctly.

In Q5, the data show that 8 students out of 40 with percentage 20% used the word (expand) to collocate (branches) in the sentence (the company has expanded its branches) which is considered the correct answer. However 32 students with percentage 80% miss collocate this word.

The results of Q6 show that only 10 students 25% collocate the word (placed) with (gently) in the expression (she placed her phone gently on the table). While 30 students 75% fail to collocate it appropriately.

In Q7, 14 students with percentage 35% collocate the word (broke) with down in the sentence (the woman broke down when the police told her that her son had died) which is a grammatical collocation. In the other hand 26 students 65% failed to collocate these words correctly.

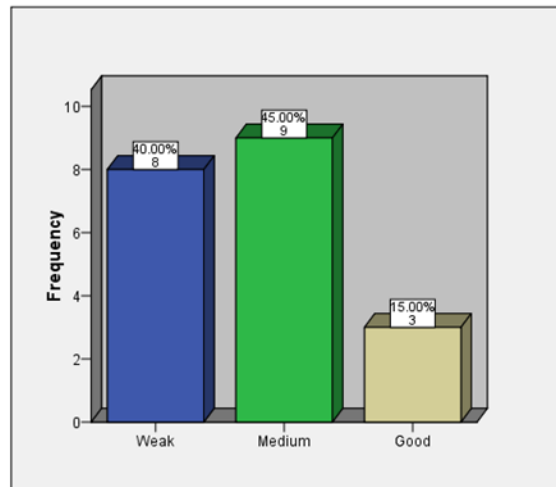
Regarding Q8, 34 of the participants 85% great majority of them succeed to use (infinitive+to) which is the suitable answer in the sentence. While only 6 with 30% did not use this form, this is due to the familiarity of this form.

In Q9, 12 students 40% of them have chosen the correct word (up) to collocate the word (cheer), and 28 students 60% of them failed to collocate this word.

When coming to Q10, we find that only 8 students 20% collocate the word (reached) with (argument). while 32 with 80% of them miss collocate these words.

**Table (4.13)** the frequency and percentage of the respondents' distribution according to question (2)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Weak</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>



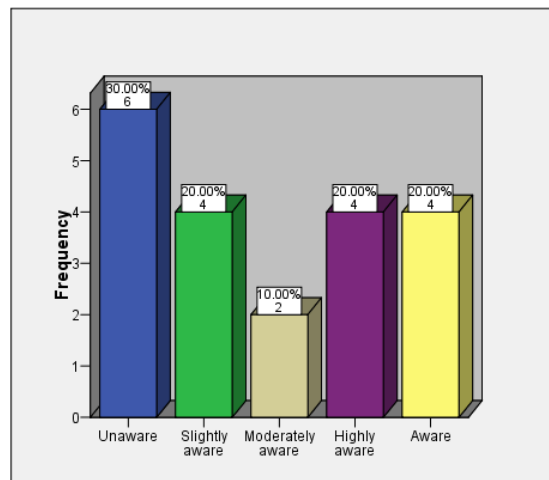
**Figure (4.13)** the frequency and percentage of the respondents' distribution according to question (2)

As the results show in the above table and figure (4.12) that 60% Of the students were weak at using collocation, while 55%of the students got medium scores. Moreover only 15% of them got good scores on test question two.

## B. The Analysis of the Oral Test

**Table (4.14)** Frequencies and Percentages of Subjects' awareness on the Oral Test

	<b>Frequenc y</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Unaware	20	50%
Slightly aware	8	20%
Moderately aware	4	10%
Aware	8	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure (4.14)** Frequencies and Percentages of Subjects' Scores on the Oral Test

In the oral test, the subjects were asked different questions from a variety of topics and their speeches were analyzed.

The table and figure (4.12) above reveal that 50% of the participants did not use any types of expected collocations that could be used in the given topics while speaking that means they were unaware of using collocation in their oral discourse.



## 4.2 Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

This section sheds lights on the results obtained from the subjects who involved in the present study and discuss them according to their performances in the two tests.

As shown in question no 1 in the written test, the results confirmed that Sudanese (EFL) learners at Sudan University of Science and Technology find some difficulties in identifying types of collocations in general and grammatical collocations in specific. This is obviously seen in the students' performance regarding the first question in the test. Where the frequency and percentage of the incorrect answers in the grammatical collocations is higher than other types. According previous studies grammatical collocations are difficult to acquire as grammar is an error generating area.

As far as the second question in the test was concerned, the results indicated that collocations are a complex issue, and that (EFL) students lack the knowledge of collocating words appropriately. On the other hand collocations are encountered in a wide range of spoken and written discourses. However it was demonstrated that 15% are aware of using collocations in written contexts and 45% showed medium awareness within specific academic topics , whereas 40% failed to collocate words correctly that means they were unaware of using collocations in the given written contexts. According to previous studies collocations are considered be a problematic area due their nature (difficult to acquire and to expect).

The results displayed in the oral diagnostic test demonstrated that Sudanese EFL learners at Sudan University are unaware of using collocations in spoken discourse. Just 8 participants 20% used different types of collocation according to the different topics that they had been asked to speak about. While 80% failed to do so. This can

be attributed to the lack of knowledge of collocations and their role in language accuracy and fluency. The rest of the participants showed slight awareness of collocations by using some well-known collocations like (do a homework).

In the light of previous studies (Abdulla (2014), Muize (2014)) state that, the main reasons behind committing collocation errors are Mother tongue interference, Interlingua, and lack of collocation knowledge. The researcher agrees with the above mentioned reasons and strongly believe that raising students' awareness could help in solving these problems and leads to linguistic accuracy and fluency, as knowledge of collocations helps to acquire native like language and lead to cognitive economy in the area of speaking and the choice of the suitable expressions .

### **4.3 Verification of the study's hypotheses**

In this section the researcher will verify the study's hypotheses with reference to the results obtained from the students' performance in the two tests in order to see to what extent are the assumptions substantiated or rejected. It is worthwhile to mention that this study is fundamentally based on two objectives, as well as two hypotheses which were discussed in this study.

#### **4.3.1 Hypothesis One**

It was hypothesized that Sudanese (EFL) learners are not capable of identifying types of collocations.

From the analysis of the study's instruments, it was found out that this assumption was confirmed by the students' performance in the first question in the written test.

#### **4.3.2Hypothesis Two**

It was speculated that Sudanese (EFL) are unaware of using collocations in their oral and written discourse.

The results obtained from the analysis of the second question of the written test and the oral test confirmed this assumption.

# **CHAPTER V**

## **SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

### **5.0 Summary of the Study**

This study is an attempt to explore students' awareness of English collocations in their productive language skills as collocations play a leading role in language fluency and accuracy. The researcher adopted the descriptive research methods in order to obtain the data. Two diagnostic tests were distributed to 40 EFL students and the data were analyzed by SPSS. The study shows that students face many problems in collocations.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Based on the results of the data analysis, the researcher reached the following findings:

- 1- Sudanese EFL learners were totally not capable of identifying collocations especially noun+preposition and verb+noun collocations which were the most often misused grammatical and lexical collocations in this study.
- 2- Sudanese EFL learners were unaware of using collocations in their written discourse.
- 3- Sudanese EFL students are not fluent and accurate in speaking due to the lack of collocations usage.
- 4- EFL students find difficulties in using collocations especially in social topics.

- 5- EFL learners frequently make unacceptable collocations in their written and oral discourse.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are postulated.

- 1- Formulaic language, more precisely collocations should be given a special care when teaching English vocabulary.
- 2- English syllabus designers at university level must give a considerable attention to collocations in the curriculum.
- 3- English collocations should be taught in context not in isolation, and teachers should encourage their students to use collocations while speaking for the purposes of acquiring a native like language.
- 4- Teachers should raise the students' awareness towards the vital role of collocations in language proficiency.
- 5- Language skills should be integrated with each other with aim of building learners' vocabulary.
- 6- Students should use special dictionaries for collocations and word combinations.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The researcher does not state exhaustiveness or thoroughness when conducted this study, thus she suggested more studies to be carried out in order to cover the whole aspects of this topic and in this regard, the researcher suggests the following:

- 1- More studies are needed to be conducted on the importance of collocations to (EFL) learners regarding their productive language skills (language performance).

- 2- Further studies are required to investigate the effective ways of teaching and learning formulaic language in general and collocations in particular to (EFL) learners.
- 3- Researchers can conduct experimental studies on the impact of English collocation on students' productive language skills.
- 4- Contrastive studies on collocation is a good area of studies to eliminate the difficulties encountered by language learners.

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**Appendix I**  
**Sudan University of Science and Technology**  
**College of Graduate Studies**  
**College of Languages, Department of English**

**Subject: Diagnostic Test**

**Time: One hour**

*Answer all the questions:*

**Question One**

Choose the suitable collocation from the box to fit the meaning between the parentheses

Broke out –excruciating pain – go over – went numb – wafting across - criminal record – blissfully happy – striking resemblance – fossil fuel –held back
--

1. When the war .....my grandfather joined the army (suddenly started).
2. I was so cold and I had no gloves on. My hands..... ..as I rode my bike (lost all feeling).
3. The smell of fresh coffee .....the square from the café is wonderful (moving gently through the air).
4. The judge said it was a vital that anyone with.....should not be able to get a job in a bank( a list with someone's previous crimes).
5. Have a great day; I know you will be .....together(very happy)

6. Our English teacher bears .....to a famous actor (looks extremely similar).
7. She felt an.....in her head after the accident (painful/ unpleasant pain).
8. Environmentalists would like to see.....replaced by renewable energy source for cleaner environment (gas, coal and oil).
9. Anna.....her tears at her grandfather's funeral (to hide an emotion).
10. Please .....your answers before you submit your test (review).

**Question Two:**

Underline the best word to complete each sentence

- 1- We had a *brief/short/full* discussion about the exams before going home.
- 2- We entered a *richly/ very /completely* decorated room.
- 3- Every parent show a *sense/ feel/ feeling* of pride when their child does or wins something.
- 4- He *gave/come /made* an idea for a new project so he got a promotion.
- 5- The company has *expanded /enlarged/ increased/* its branches because of its remarkable success.
- 6- She *located / placed / put* her phone gently on the table.
- 7- The woman broke *out/ down/ in* when the police told her that her son had died.
- 8- It is *unfair/ fairness/ fairs* to suggest that the teacher was responsible for all the failures.
- 9- I bought you some flowers to cheer you *off/ up/ down*.

10- We reached an *argue* / *argument* / *argumentative* that she would represent us in court.

# Appendix II

**Sudan University of Science and Technology**

**College of Graduate Studies**

**College of Languages**

**Oral Diagnostic Test**

This test is designed to measure students' awareness of English collocations in oral discourse.

## **Questions:**

- 1- Speak about yourself, please. Where do you live?
- 2- Where is your hometown? What is your hometown like?
- 3- Are there any special places in your hometown? If yes, why do you think so?
- 4- Did you enjoy your childhood? Tell me about your childhood memories.
- 5- Do you have a lot of friends when you were a child? If yes, do you remember them?
- 6- Who is your best friend? Could you describe him/her (speak about his physical appearance / personal qualities)? Since when you were friends?
- 7- What is your favorite food? What do you think of fast / processed foods?

8- Do you believe in love at first sight? If yes why? According to your point of view are there any other types of love? If yes explain.

9- What is your favorite hobby?

10- Do you play any sports? What kinds of sport do you play?

Questions\students	1e	2e	3ed	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	
	st	d		th	th	th	th	th	th	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
										t										
										h										
Speak about yourself please Where do you live?	A w	A w	Un	U n	a w	a w	a w	U n	A w	A w	A w	J n	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	A w	U n	A w
Where is your home town? What is your hometown like?	aw	A w	Aw	U n		U n	a w	U n	A w	A w	A w	J n	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	A w	U n	A w
Are there any special places in your home town? If yes why do you think so?	aw	a w	Aw	A w	A w	A w	a w	U n	A w	A w	A w	U n	U n	U n	A w	U n	U n	A w	A w	A w



<p>Did you enjoy your childhood? Tell me about your childhood memories</p>	A w	a w	Una w	U n	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	A w	U n	A w	
<p>Do you have a lot of friends when you were a child? If yes do you still remember them?</p>	A w	a w	Aw	A w	U n	A w	U n	A w	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	A w	A w	a w	
<p>Who is your best friend? Describe him or her, since when you were friends?</p>	A w	a w	Aw	A w	U n	A w	A w	A w	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	A w	

What is your favorite food? What do you think of fast/processed foods?	A w	a w	Una w	A w	U n	U n	U n	A w	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	A w	
Do you believe in love at first sight? If yes why? According to your point of view are there any other types of love? If yes explain	Un n	U n	Un awa re	A w	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	
What is your favorite hobby? Do you play any sports?	A w	a w	Au naw are	A w	U n	A w	A w	U n	A w	U n	A w	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	U n	a w	
Students awareness	8	8	4	6	0	6	6	3	7	2	9	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	2	9	

NOTE:

AW: Aware

UN: Unaware