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**Exploring Students' Awareness and Use of Collocations in their
Writing: A Mixed Method Study of Third-year Students of English
at Biskra University**

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the degree of Masters in Sciences of the Language.

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Declaration

I, **RETIMA** Lynda, hereby declare that this work in this dissertation titled “Exploring Algerian English as a Foreign Language Students’ Awareness and Use of Collocations in Their Writing is my own work, conducted under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Amrate Moustafa. This dissertation was not previously presented for the award of any other degree. Also, the information extracted from the literature is provided with a list of references. This study was conducted and completed for the academic year 2023/2024, at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra; Algeria.

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Dedications

To my Dearest Mum,

Words can hardly capture the depth of my gratitude and love for you.

You've been my guiding light, my unwavering support, and my greatest inspiration. Your endless love, patience, and wisdom have shaped me into the successful person I am today. Every sacrifice you've made and every lesson you've taught have left an indelible mark on my heart.

For my beloved father, brothers, and sisters for being there for me when I need them, for their continuous support and care...

For my sister Zahira, who is my teacher, and supporter during my academic journey....

For my little nephews who are always proud of me being their beloved aunt ...

To everyone who helped me in this work

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Abstract

Collocations play a vital role in English language teaching and learning, serving as essential components of communicative competence. They refer to pairs of words that frequently occur together, enhancing the naturalness and fluency of language use. The current study explores the awareness and use of collocations among Algerian English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, aiming to assess their understanding and application of collocational knowledge in writing, in addition to the factors affecting their usage in writing. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research combines quantitative and qualitative data from 51 undergraduate students at Mohammed Khidher University of Biskra. The data were collected through a combination of a collocation awareness and use task, a collocation comprehension task, and a semi-structured questionnaire on learners' perceived awareness and use of collocations, as well as the factors affecting their usage. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic coding. Results revealed a notable lack of awareness and challenges in the accurate application of collocations, attributed to insufficient exposure and practice, despite a relatively sound understanding of collocational meanings. Key challenges included limited vocabulary knowledge, translation challenges from their native language, and difficulties in understanding collocational meanings. The findings contribute to pedagogical strategies by highlighting the importance of integrating collocations into EFL curricula to improve learners' writing competency and overall communicative competence. The study recommends that future researchers investigate collocational competence in spoken discourse.

Keywords: Collocations; Collocational competence; Collocation awareness; Collocation knowledge; Writing competency.

List of abbreviations/ acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L1 : first language

QUAL : qualitative

QUAN : quantitative

ESL: English as a Second Language

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

BCS: Bosnian/ Croatian/ Serbian

CIA: Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis

VAN: Verb-Adjective-Noun

BNC: British National Corpus

OOCD: Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary

ILCoWE: Israeli Learner Corpus of Written English

LOCNESS: Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays

SD: Standard Deviation

BA: Bachelor of Arts

CAQDA: computer-assisted qualitative data analysis

IEPs: Intensive English Programs

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General Introduction

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1. Background of the study

Collocation is one of the most crucial aspects of English language teaching and learning. They are considered one of the central elements of communicative competence in the English language. Collocations as a term originated from the verb 'collocare' which means to order or to arrange (Martyńska, 2004). On the other hand, collocations as a concept are that is not easily defined. Many researchers in linguistics and lexicography discussed them in contrast with free word combinations and idiomatic expressions (Mckeown & Radev, 1997).

According to Hill and Lewis (1997), “a collocation is at the very least a pair of words which occur together with a significant degree of probability”. This simply means that collocations impose a combination of words that end up going together, rather they are not like fixed grammar rules, they depend on probability and appropriateness—for example, taking medicine, doing research, and having a headache sound more natural and appropriate than drinking medicine, making research, and feeling a headache.

Collocations are considered essential for effective language use in real-world communication situations. They are commonly used by native speakers, distinguishing them from non-native speakers (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008). Lewis (2008) said, “The single most important kind of chunk is collocations” (p.8). They help the learners to understand and be understood in English better. Moreover, mastering collocations can significantly enhance learners’ writing as it allows them to produce fluent and natural-sounding writing. In this regard, Hill (2000) stated: “We are familiar with the concept of communicative competence, but we need to add the concept of collocational competence to our thinking” (p.49). Acquiring collocation knowledge and how to use it properly in communication is deemed crucial as it contributes to

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the improvement of collocational competence and writing skills, thus communicative competence in general.

Due to its significance as previously stated, some educational linguists have recommended the necessity of integrating collocations into English as a foreign language (EFL) education syllabuses' (Lewis, 2001; Lin, 2002; Fan, 2009; Motallebzadeh et al, 2011; and Mahvelati & Mukundan, 2012: 206). Hill (2000) underscores the importance of teachers selecting appropriate texts for their students and then guiding them to independently gather collocations from the language they encounter beyond the classroom setting. Language teachers should take into consideration the aspect of collocations when planning and choosing course materials, then drawing student's attention to recognize, understand and know their usage effectively. Since, in many Intensive English Programs (IEPs), writing and reading are often taught together; Conzett (2000) proposed the incorporation of reading techniques for reinforcing collocations in writing assignments. Teachers can review important collocations and expressions related to the topic with students before giving writing assignments based on readings. Additionally, teachers can ensure students use these expressions effectively through short writing and discussion tasks. These techniques may contribute in enhancing student's writing skills as well as reinforcing their usage of collocational expressions accurately. Moreover, Hill et al (2000) discussed some general strategies to direct EFL classroom towards a lexical approach to enhance learners' proficiency in utilizing new collocations and expanding their mental lexicons, as well as to heighten their recognition of collocation as an effective means of enhancing their writing precision and proficiency. One major strategy is brainstorming vocabulary for essays with prioritizing collocations to enhance lexical richness and diversity. Focusing on verb + noun collocations is vital as they are fundamental for

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conveying ideas effectively, and teachers can support learners in acquiring these through topic-related texts and targeted activities. This method is considered beneficial for EFL classrooms, as it helps the learners acquire the language in general and collocations in particular, in addition to improving their writing skills.

2. Statement of the problem

Many studies discussing the issue of EFL learners' knowledge and use of English collocations have been recently conducted by different researchers in the field of linguistics. Almost all the conducted studies highlighted its valuable role in improving collocational competence for achieving native-like fluency. One of these researches is the one carried out by Martyńska (2004), who conducted a study to present English language learners' knowledge of collocations. For this aim, the researcher submitted a test on collocation to a group of high school students to assess their level of collocational competence; in addition to a survey of different linguistic attitudes towards collocation and its categorization. The results showed that more than half of the students scored above the mean, indicating varying levels of collocational competence. Moreover; students who attended optional private lessons tended to have higher collocational competence, suggesting that additional instruction may contribute to a better understanding and use of collocations. Despite knowing the meanings of both elements of a collocation, students did not always succeed in correct matching, indicating the complexity of collocation as a vocabulary area. Another recent work done by Djiti and Aboubou (2019) investigated EFL students' awareness of the concept of collocations as well as exploring teachers' attitudes towards their teaching. Two questionnaires were administered to Algerian first-year EFL students and teachers at the Department of English, Batna 2

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University. The study results demonstrated students' unawareness of the concept of collocation. Despite its neglect in classroom courses, teachers recognize them as an important aspect of foreign language teaching and learning. In another research work, Hsu and Chiu (2008) examined Taiwanese EFL learners' knowledge and use of collocations and further explored the relationship between collocations and their speaking proficiency. The study was conducted on 56 junior English majors at a national university in southern Taiwan. They were assessed through three tests: lexical collocation, English speaking, and a PhonePass spoken English test. The tests measured their knowledge of lexical collocations, speaking proficiency, and combined oral skills. The study found a significant correlation between Taiwanese EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and their speaking proficiency, but no significant correlation was found between the subjects' use of lexical collocations and their speaking proficiency. On the other hand, Huang (2001) investigated Taiwanese EFL students' knowledge of collocations and the collocational errors they made. A self-designed Simple Completion Test was administered to a sample of 60 students from a college in Taiwan to measure students' knowledge of four types of lexical collocations. The study found that free combinations were the easiest, while pure idioms were the most challenging. The study concluded that EFL learners' errors in collocations can be attributed to negative L1 transfer.

The reviewed studies offer valuable insights into English language learners' knowledge and use of collocations, as well as acknowledge the importance of collocations in language teaching and learning. All the mentioned studies share a common focus on assessing EFL learners' knowledge and use of collocations. Data were collected from EFL learners in different educational settings, such as high school students, first-year university students, teachers of English, and college students. The researchers used quantitative research methods

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but they differ in the specific instruments employed. For example, Martyńska (2004) used a test and a survey to assess students' knowledge of collocations and their linguistic attitudes towards collocations, while Djiti and Aboubou (2019) administered questionnaires to explore students' awareness of collocations and teachers' attitudes. On the other hand, Hsu and Chiu (2008) conducted tests on lexical collocations, speaking proficiency, and combined oral skills, while Huang (2001) used another type of test which is a self-designed Simple Completion Test to measure students' knowledge of different types of collocations. Overall, the results highlight the challenges faced by EFL learners in acquiring collocational knowledge and the need for additional instruction and awareness. They also emphasize the correlation between collocational knowledge and speaking proficiency. However, the complexity of collocation as a vocabulary area needs to be studied with an inclusive approach that could be more effective in coming up with accurate data and research findings. Moreover, a quantitative perspective is no longer sufficient for conducting such topics related to collocations as almost all the existing studies employ quantitative methodology. Therefore, there is a lack of rich insights that the neglected mixed method approach could provide. In this regard, Dörnyei (2007) suggested that combining quantitative data trends with qualitative details can enhance our comprehension of complex phenomena.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that few studies have dealt with Algerian EFL learners (for example, Hsu and Chiu (2008) and Huang (2001) addressed Taiwanese EFL learners as their studies' sample). Algerian EFL learners are considered specific and unique as they come from a distinct linguistic and cultural background, thus this may influence how collocations are perceived and utilized by Algerian learners. Moreover, this former may have unique challenges and strengths in acquiring and using collocations, which could differ from learners

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in other contexts. In addition, the educational system in Algeria has its own curriculum and teaching methodologies, which could impact how collocations are taught and learned. Also, language proficiency levels, exposure to English in daily life, and the availability of resources for learning English collocations are all factors that may vary between different learner groups. Consequently, the lack of research on this specific context makes it challenging to understand the role of the mentioned variations in shaping students' awareness and use of collocations. As a result, this may limit the generalization of the previous studies' findings.

3. Aims of the Study

The current study aimed to explore Algerian EFL learners' awareness and use of collocations to assess their level of awareness and understanding of collocations, as well as to examine the application of collocational knowledge in their writing skills. Moreover, it sought to identify and explore the various factors that may influence the use of collocations by Algerian EFL students in their writing.

4. Research questions

To address this, the current study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are Algerian EFL students aware of and understand English collocations?

RQ2: To what extent do Algerian EFL students use collocations in their writing?

RQ3: What factors affect Algerian EFL students' use of collocations in their writing?

5. Methodology

To provide responses to the raised questions and reach the defined aims, the researcher conducted an exploratory study through a mixed method approach which includes quantitative and qualitative methods. The twofold nature of the investigation allowed the researcher first to conduct a quantitative investigation into students' awareness and use of collocations, then the study followed up with a qualitative exploration of the factors affecting students' use of collocations in their writing. Following the selected research design, the study employed a semi-structured questionnaire including a collocations test in the form of a task as a data collection method targeting a sample of 51 undergraduate EFL students in the Department of English Language, Mohammed Khidher University of Biskra. First, the collocations task involved two different activities. The first one required students to read and underline as many collocations as possible from a short paragraph, then use two of the derived collocations in their examples to test their real awareness and productivity of collocations. The second activity involved students identifying the meaning of seven (07) collocations in which they were asked to choose one out of four choices to test their knowledge and understanding of collocations. The chosen collocations were arranged from beginner to advanced level. On the other hand, the semi-structured questionnaire included closed-ended and open-ended questions that sought to gather reporting data on learners' perceptions, the extent to which they use collocations, in which contexts, and the reason behind their usage. The sample of this study was specifically 3rd year students as they are considered typical English language learners in Algeria; who have almost passed through the whole language curriculums. Generally, they have a significant improvement regarding the language as they have at least 10 years of

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experience as well as they are preparing for a degree and are supposed to be teachers from next year. Their age ranged from 19 to 31 years old with almost a low to intermediate level of the language as they passed the baccalaureate exam with an average of 11 at least. Moreover, the study relied on a convenience sampling approach due to the limited time of the study and to increase the chances of students taking part in the research investigation, thus it was helpful to have a larger sample and gather more data. All participants were tested under similar conditions to ensure a normal distribution of data and to minimize any external factors that may affect the process as much as possible.

For the data analysis approach, the study involved both quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools. Quantitative data analysis employed descriptive statistics including measures of frequency, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion through which they measured students' awareness and use of collocations. On the other hand, qualitative data analysis involved thematic coding of students' open-ended questions to identify the factors affecting Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations in writing and noticing when reading.

6. Contribution of the study

Collocations as a vocabulary aspect are crucial for Algerian EFL classrooms where teaching instruction is based more on the syntactic and grammatical rules; while teaching vocabulary and especially collocations, even though they deserve to be a central component similar to grammar conventions, are often overlooked in language teaching syllabuses. In this regard, McIntosh (1963) says: "An observance of the conventions of grammar is only half the battle; the proper use of language involves due observance of the equally important conventions of lexis." Therefore, the findings of this study will contribute to notifying curriculum designers,

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drawing attention to areas where more focus on collocations might be beneficial. Moreover, new insights into students' awareness and usage could lead to more efficient language teaching and learning methods and materials in the Algerian EFL context. In addition, the study will contribute to a better understanding of factors affecting students' use of collocations that could direct pedagogical strategies and methods tailored according to the particular needs of Algerian EFL learners.

7. Structure of the dissertation

This research work adheres to the following organizational structure:

Chapter One is dedicated to defining collocation in a linguistic context, outlining its different types, and explaining the concept of collocational competence. This foundational overview provides readers with a thorough understanding of the framework of collocation. The study then explores the importance of collocations from various perspectives, highlighting their role in general language use, second language acquisition, and specifically within the Algerian EFL context. These discussions emphasize the broader implications and contextual factors influencing the study of collocations.

Chapter Two provides a descriptive and critical review of existing literature on collocation awareness, comprehension, and use. It examines studies on learners' awareness of collocations, their understanding of collocational patterns, and their practical application in written language. Additionally, it explores negative factors that impede students' effective use and recognition of collocations, highlighting barriers to proficiency. Through this analysis, the chapter aims to identify research gaps and outline the specific objectives of investigating collocation awareness and usage in the writing of Algerian EFL students.

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Chapter three outlines the practical framework of the study, explaining the chosen methodology and the rationale behind each decision. It covers the research design, study context, participants, data collection instruments, and research procedures used for analyzing and discussing results. This detailed approach aims to address the research questions and thoroughly explore EFL learners' awareness, knowledge, and use of collocations, as well as identify factors that impede their effective use of collocations in writing.

Chapter four presents the study's findings on Algerian EFL students' awareness, comprehension, and use of English collocations, as well as factors influencing their use in writing and recognition while reading. It provides a detailed overview of their collocational skills, starting with an assessment of their awareness and understanding, including task performance and perceived familiarity. The chapter then examines their use of collocations in writing, both self-reported and actual usage. It also analyzes the contexts in which students frequently use collocations and explores factors affecting their collocation use, such as learning experiences, resources, and challenges. The aim is to provide insights into the students' strengths, weaknesses, and difficulties with collocations.

General Conclusion uncovers the main findings, in addition to theoretical, methodological, and practical implications drawn from the findings of the study. It also notes down some limitations encountered by the researcher in this study and pedagogical recommendations for further research.

Theoretical Part

Chapter 01: The concept of collocations

Introduction

The current part presents a dual exploration centered around the fundamental concept of collocation. Firstly, it seeks to define collocation in its linguistic context, delineating its various types and illuminating the notion of collocational competence. By unpacking these foundational elements, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the framework surrounding collocation. The significance of collocation is then examined through multiple lenses, considering its importance within general language use, its role in second language acquisition, and specifically, its relevance within the Algerian EFL context. These discussions serve to underscore the broader implications and contextual nuances that shape the study of collocation.

Moving forward, the second chapter descriptively and critically reviews existing literature concerning collocation awareness, comprehension, and utilization. It delves into studies exploring learners' awareness of collocations, their grasp of collocational patterns, and the practical application of collocations in language written production. Additionally, the chapter reviews the literature on the negative factors that hinder students' effective use and recognition of collocations, shedding light on barriers to collocational proficiency. Through this analysis, the chapter aims to identify the research gap and to delineate the aims and specific objectives of exploring collocation awareness and usage in Algerian EFL students' writing.

1.1 Defining the concept of collocation

It is crucial for EFL learners to understand that learning the language extends beyond memorizing isolated words or strictly adhering to fixed grammar rules. Mastering the language requires delving into how words convey meaning individually and in combination and understanding the relationships between the words in meaning and usage, specifically the study of collocations. In this regard, Firth (1957), widely considered the pioneer of collocation studies and a key figure in the development of lexical approaches in linguistics; stated that a word's meaning is influenced by the other words it tends to associate with (as cited in Rao, 2018). Therefore, Firth (1957) defined the concept of collocations as the recurrent combinations of words that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance and that correspond to arbitrary word combinations in different languages (as cited in Widdowson, 2007). This definition underscores the habitual nature of word combinations and their significance in conveying meaning within the context of language use. Similarly, Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain collocation as "cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur" (p. 284) (as cited in Cerban, 2010). They describe collocation as a form of cohesion in the language where certain words or lexical items regularly appear together. This means that certain words tend to co-occur frequently in natural language use, forming predictable combinations that contribute to the coherence and meaning of texts or spoken language. Moreover, Meyer (2002) contributes to this discussion by proposing that collocations consist of anticipated and partially fixed word combinations that constitute cohesive lexical units within a language context. It highlights that collocations involve word combinations that are both anticipated and partially fixed. This means that while certain word

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pairings are expected or predictable, they also exhibit some degree of flexibility or variation depending on the context.

These definitions collectively illuminate the main features of this lexical phenomenon in language. Firth's (1957) definition emphasizes the recurrent nature of word combinations that co-occur more frequently than random chance, highlighting their frequent usage and importance in conveying meaning across languages. Halliday and Hasan (1976) present collocation as a cohesive mechanism attained through the regular association of lexical items, contributing to the predictability and coherence of language use. They underline how certain words naturally combine in speech, forming predictable patterns that improve the comprehensibility of spoken and written language. Meyer's (2002) contribution expands on this understanding by claiming that collocations consist of anticipated and partially fixed word combinations, recognizing the balance between predictable patterns and contextual variations. Together, these perspectives highlight the complex interplay between predictability and flexibility within collocations, which play an important role in shaping language structure and communicative effectiveness across different linguistic contexts. In essence, they underscore the significance of collocations as cohesive units that facilitate effective communication and comprehension in natural language use.

1.2 Types of collocations

Acquiring knowledge about the different types of collocations contributes to a deeper understanding of how words interact and form meaningful units of expression. Collocations can be systematically classified into distinct categories based on the nature of the specific relationships and associations between the words involved, focusing on either grammatical structure or lexical meaning. This classification framework facilitates a comprehensive

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analysis of language structure and the principles governing word combinations in natural language usage. Collocations mostly can be grouped into two main groups: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations.

1.2.1 Grammatical collocations

According to Bahns (1993), grammatical collocations involve a combination of a content word (noun, adjective, or verb) with a preposition or grammatical structure like an infinitive or clause. For example: account for, advantage over, adjacent to, by accident, to be afraid that....

Benson, et al (1997) classify the grammatical collocations into eight major types labeled as G1, G2..., as follows:

Table 01:

Types of Grammatical Collocations

Type of Collocation	Description/Structure	Examples of Collocations
G1	noun + preposition	<i>blockade against, apathy towards</i>
G2	noun + <i>to</i> -infinitive	<i>He was a fool to do it.</i> <i>They felt a need to do it.</i>
G3	noun + <i>that</i> -clause	<i>We reached an agreement that she would represent us in court.</i> <i>He took an oath that he would do his duty.</i>
G4	preposition + noun	<i>by accident, in agony</i>
G5	adjective + preposition	<i>fond of children, hungry for news</i>

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G6	adjective + <i>to</i> -infinitive	<i>It was necessary to work.</i> <i>It's nice to be here.</i>
G7	adjective + <i>that</i> -clause	<i>She was afraid that she would fail.</i> <i>It was imperative that I be here.</i>
G8	verb + <i>to</i> -infinitive verb + bare infinitive (19 different verb patterns in English)	<i>They began to speak.</i> <i>We must work.</i>

Adapted from (Rao, 2018)

1.2.2 Lexical collocations

Lexical collocations, unlike grammatical collocations, generally do not involve prepositions, infinitives, or clauses. Typical lexical collocations are composed of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. An example of an adjective + noun collocation is warmest regards. Typical violations of lexical collocability are *I send hot regards and *I send hearty regards. (Benson, et al, 1997). The seven types of lexical collocations are explained in this table:

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Table 02:

Types of Lexical Collocations

Type of Collocation	Description/Structure	Examples of Collocations
L1	verb (which means creation/action) + noun/pronoun/prepositional phrase	<i>come to an agreement, launch a missile</i>
L2	verb (which means eradication /cancellation) + noun	<i>reject an appeal, crush resistance</i>
L3	adjective + noun, or noun used in an attributive way + noun	<i>strong tea, a crushing defeat, house arrest, land reform</i>
L4	noun + verb naming the activity which is performed by a designate of this noun	<i>bombs explode, bees sting</i>
L5	quantifier + noun	<i>a swarm of bees, a piece of advice</i>
L6	adverb + adjective	<i>hopelessly addicted, sound asleep</i>
L7	verb + adverb	<i>argue heatedly, apologize humbly</i>

Adapted from (Rao, 2018)

1.3 Collocational competence

Due to the significance of collocations in effective language learning, developing collocational competence is essential for proficient language use. Hill (2000) stated: “We are familiar with the concept of communicative competence, but we need to add the concept of collocational competence to our thinking” (p 49). According to Metwally and Hamad (2023), Collocational competence involves the skill to effectively identify and utilize collocations, which represent meaningful relationships between words. This ability encompasses the comprehension of both lexical collocations (related to vocabulary) and grammatical collocations (word combinations governed by grammar rules). In other words, developing collocational competence requires an understanding of both lexical and grammatical collocations. It involves the ability to identify and use these word combinations accurately and appropriately in different contexts.

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Collocational competence is a key aspect of language proficiency because it contributes to natural and idiomatic language use, enhancing communication skills and overall fluency in the language. Hua and Azmi (2021) asserted: “Collocational competence is, in fact, a reliable indicator of high language proficiency level”. This simply means that collocational competence serves as a dependable measure of advanced language proficiency. Understanding collocations involves more than knowing individual words; it requires grasping how words naturally combine to convey specific meanings, considering both lexical and grammatical relationships. Proficiency in collocational competence enhances fluency and natural expression, demonstrating advanced linguistic skill and comprehension of language nuances. The ability to use collocations accurately in different contexts indicates a deep understanding of language usage, essential for effective communication. Strong collocational competence often signifies higher language proficiency, reflecting an ability to use language in a sophisticated and nuanced manner beyond basic vocabulary knowledge.

1.4 The importance of collocation

Collocation, the natural pairing of words in language, holds profound significance in linguistic competence and effective communication. Therefore, understanding its importance is necessary for language learners and users alike, as it directly influences language proficiency and fluency. According to Hill (2000), understanding collocations is crucial from an educational perspective for at least nine important reasons:

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1.4.1 The lexicon is not arbitrary

The significance of collocation derives from language's structured nature, where words are combined predictably based on common usage and linguistic norms. When speakers select words, they adhere to expected combinations that align with listeners' linguistic expectations. For instance, verbs like "have" are commonly associated with specific objects such as tea, coffee, or juice when discussing "drinking", rather than unconventional substances like engine oil or shampoo. Similarly, less common verbs like "enhance" typically pair with specific nouns like "reputation" or "standing". Collocations embody the systematic and predictable aspect of language, influencing how words naturally combine to convey meaning effectively. They serve as foundational elements that enhance communication by providing precise and expected word combinations that listeners recognize and understand. Mastery of collocations enhances language fluency and clarity, leveraging their inherent predictability to enrich communication in both spoken and written contexts. In summary, collocations are essential linguistic tools that contribute to the effectiveness and richness of language use.

1.4.2 Predictability

The predictability of collocations highlighted in the previous paragraph underscores because collocation is a significant pedagogical concern. Similar to the usefulness of the present simple tense in classrooms due to its predictable use, collocations exhibit patterns that can facilitate learning. Certain parts of the vocabulary are structured and organized, making learning more accessible. Classrooms aim to optimize learning efficiency by emphasizing these predictable patterns, encouraging learners to recognize and utilize them effectively. Ultimately, collocations; valued for their predictable nature; hold a central role in language pedagogy. Organized vocabulary segments facilitate language acquisition by improving accessibility.

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Therefore, classrooms strategically emphasize collocation patterns to optimize language proficiency and efficient learning strategies.

1.4.3 The size of the phrasal mental lexicon

The importance of collocation lies in its extensive predictability. Combinations of two, three, four, and even five words form a significant part of naturally occurring language in spoken and written contexts. Although estimates vary, it is conceivable that up to 70% of our language usage—across speaking, listening, reading, and writing—involves some type of fixed expression. In summary, collocation is considered significant due to its pervasive and predictable presence in language, which is essential for effective communication. Multi-word combinations play a fundamental role in shaping language usage across spoken and written contexts. Comprehensive understanding and utilization of collocations are crucial for language comprehension and production, highlighting their critical role in facilitating fluent and meaningful communication.

1.4.4 The role of memory

Much like how children eagerly absorb and recite familiar rhymes and stories, adults also possess a substantial reservoir of memorized language, including poetry, idioms, proverbs, and catchphrases, acquired without conscious effort. This abundance of fixed expressions and collocations is inherent to native speakers. Language educators have often overlooked the significance of memory in language acquisition, given the limited research available on its influence. However, repeated exposure to lexical items in context is widely acknowledged as essential for acquisition, highlighting the importance of quality input in supporting effective language retrieval and usage. To conclude, stressing the importance of high-quality input is

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crucial for effective language recall and usage, underscoring the significance of comprehensive language exposure in educational environments.

1.4.5 Fluency

Collocation enables rapid thinking and efficient communication by leveraging a native speaker's extensive repository of pre-established language stored in their mental lexicon. Native speakers can communicate, listen, and read swiftly due to their effortless recognition of multi-word units, unlike non-native speakers who may face challenges with unfamiliar collocations. This ability to process and generate language quickly distinguishes native speakers from non-native speakers, reflecting their extensive exposure to English and familiarity with pre-established linguistic units. In summary, the ability to recognize and employ collocations facilitates fluent language processing and expression among native speakers. Non-native speakers can enhance language proficiency by actively acquiring and internalizing these pre-established linguistic patterns.

1.4.6 Complex ideas are often expressed lexically

Intermediate learners often struggle to convey ideas effectively due to limited vocabulary and slow delivery. Mastering complex concepts requires understanding lexical complexity, such as extended noun phrases. Exposure to quality language input and heightened lexical awareness enhance learners' ability to use longer linguistic units. Traditional teaching should prioritize language exposure and use over excessive practice at lower and intermediate levels. Therefore, developing an understanding of lexical complexity; including extended noun phrases; is essential for language proficiency. By prioritizing exposure to quality language input and

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enhancing lexical awareness, educators can support learners in utilizing longer linguistic units with confidence and precision.

1.4.7 Collocation Makes Thinking Easier

Collocation aids efficient thinking and fluent expression by allowing quick naming of complex ideas without excessive focus on word form. Using recognized verb + noun and noun + noun collocations enhances language efficiency. Collocation is crucial for achieving fluency, highlighting the significance of acquiring language chunks for immediate use, as emphasized by Stephen Krashen's insights on language input. Therefore, collocation plays a critical role in enabling efficient and fluent expression by facilitating the quick naming of complex ideas. Its importance lies in enhancing language efficiency through the use of established word combinations, contributing significantly to language fluency and immediate language retrieval.

1.4.8 Pronunciation is integral

For language learners, relying solely on individual words can complicate pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Similarly, many teachers enjoy Shakespeare's plays without grasping all the linguistic nuances. However, mastering numerous collocations and longer expressions benefits learners by improving stress and intonation through whole-phrase learning. Therefore, this underscores the value of comprehending language as holistic units rather than isolated words.

1.4.9 Recognizing chunks is essential for the acquisition

Understanding linguistic chunks is vital for language acquisition, impacting teaching methods directly. Teachers should read texts aloud in class to model correctly chunked language.

Minimizing unseen reading aloud and excessive silent reading helps students comprehend

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language by avoiding incorrect chunking. Properly identifying and storing lexical items supports effective language acquisition, ensuring comprehension and retrieval of language input. Mischunking can hinder learning, making accurate processing of language crucial for student success. In conclusion, the importance of linguistic chunking in language acquisition underscores the need for effective teaching methods that promote accurate language processing. Proper identification and comprehension of lexical items are essential for student success in language acquisition.

In the Algerian EFL education context, the importance of collocations cannot be overstated. The acquisition of collocational competence among learners plays a vital role in bridging the gap between classroom language instruction and real-world communicative proficiency. As highlighted by Debabi & Guerroudj (2018) in their research findings, explicitly teaching and focusing on collocations in the curriculum can significantly enhance learners' writing quality, making their expressions more concise, natural, and akin to native-like usage. This improvement not only contributes to effective communication within the L2 community but also enhances overall language proficiency. Given that collocations often differ between learners' native language (L1) and English, it becomes imperative for English departments in Algerian educational institutions to integrate collocation instruction systematically into their grammar and writing modules. By doing so, learners can develop a deeper understanding of the nuanced word combinations necessary for fluent and authentic language use, ultimately preparing them to engage confidently and competently in English-language contexts. Incorporating collocation-focused pedagogy within the EFL curriculum is key to nurturing language skills that align with global communication standards and promoting successful language acquisition and mastery among Algerian learners. Overall, the

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mastery of collocations is fundamental for students to strengthen their language skills and transition from classroom learning to practical communication scenarios. Therefore, focusing on collocations fosters language proficiency and prepares students for successful communication in real-world situations.

Chapter two: Collocations knowledge and use

Due to its importance, numerous studies have investigated the knowledge, understanding, use as well as factors affecting EFL use of collocations, particularly in the context of second and foreign language acquisition and learning. Starting with the work of Martyńska (2004), this study aims to assess the collocational competence of intermediate English learners from Wągrowiec and determine the extent of their knowledge of English collocations. The researcher administered a collocation test to high school students to evaluate and measure their collocational competence. Furthermore, a survey was carried out to collect diverse linguistic perspectives on collocations and their classification. The results revealed that over half of the students scored above the average, demonstrating diverse levels of collocational competence. Additionally, students who participated in optional private lessons generally exhibited higher collocational competence, implying that extra instruction could enhance their understanding and use of collocations. Despite being familiar with the meanings of the individual words within a collocation, students often struggled to pair them correctly, highlighting the complexity of collocational knowledge.

Similarly, Huang (2001) conducted a study to examine Taiwanese EFL students' knowledge of English collocations and the errors associated with their use. The research involved sixty college students from Taiwan, utilizing a Simple Completion Test to assess their understanding of four types of lexical collocations: free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative idioms, and pure idioms. The primary objective of Huang's study was to explore the challenges Taiwanese EFL learners face in mastering different types of English collocations. Additionally, the research aimed to analyze the errors made and uncover the strategies students employed to address collocational issues. The hypothesis was that free

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combinations would make the simplest and pure idioms the most challenging for the learners. The findings revealed that students found free combinations to be the easiest, while pure idioms posed the greatest difficulty. Their performance on restricted collocations and figurative idioms was comparable. In addition, most of the errors were attributed to negative transfer from the student's first language. Furthermore, it was observed that as students acquired more collocations, they relied less on paraphrases in their English writing. Overall, these findings provide valuable insights for teaching English collocations to EFL learners.

In the same context, another study was conducted by Hsu and Chiu (2008) to investigate the knowledge and use of lexical collocations among Taiwanese university EFL students at the National University of Science and Technology in southern Taiwan, and to explore the relationship between their collocational knowledge and their proficiency in speaking English. Data were collected from 56 junior English majors. Each student took part in three tests designed to evaluate different facets of their lexical collocation knowledge and speaking proficiency. First, the Lexical Collocation Test assessed the students' knowledge of lexical collocations, evaluating their ability to recognize and use common word combinations in English. Second, the English-speaking test measured the students' use of lexical collocations in spoken English and their overall speaking proficiency. It likely involved spoken tasks or conversations where their use of collocations could be observed and evaluated. Finally, the Phone Pass Spoken English Test, which is a standardized oral test, was combined with the speaking test to provide a comprehensive measure of the students' speaking proficiency. The Phone Pass test is an automated, computer-based test that assesses various aspects of spoken English, including pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary use, with an emphasis on collocations. By administering these three tests, the study aimed to evaluate the

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students' knowledge of lexical collocations, measure their speaking proficiency, and use of collocations in an interview-based speaking test; in addition to validating and supplementing the speaking test results with the standardized Phone Pass spoken English test. The combination of these assessments provided a detailed examination of the students' understanding and use of lexical collocations in spoken English. The study offers insights into how competence in lexical collocations might affect overall language performance. The study revealed several key findings regarding the relationship between Taiwanese EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and their speaking proficiency. First, the results showed a significant correlation between the learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and their speaking proficiency. This suggests that those who had a better understanding of lexical collocations tended to perform better in speaking tasks. Second, despite the significant link between collocational knowledge and speaking proficiency, the study found no significant correlation between the actual use of lexical collocations in speaking and the learners' speaking proficiency. This indicates that using collocations in speech did not necessarily translate to higher speaking proficiency. Additionally, the study found no statistically significant correlation between the learners' knowledge of lexical collocations and their ability to use these collocations in speaking. This suggests that knowing collocations did not directly correlate with the ability to use them effectively in spoken language. The study concluded that having knowledge of lexical collocations was a more reliable predictor of speaking proficiency than the ability to use collocations in speech. In other words, understanding collocations played a more crucial role in determining how well learners could speak English than their actual use of collocations during speaking activities. In conclusion, the study highlighted the importance of improving students' knowledge of lexical collocations to enhance their language skills. The findings suggested that incorporating collocations into

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language teaching practices could benefit students in improving their language-speaking proficiency.

In a different context, Kholili (n.d) investigated the knowledge and errors of students at the University of Islam Malang in Indonesia regarding English collocations. The main aim was to assess the students' familiarity with collocations and identify any mistakes made in word combinations within sentences. Data was collected through a brief survey utilizing an open-ended questionnaire, wherein students were asked to translate sentences from Indonesian to English, ensuring the correct use of word combinations. The findings revealed that students frequently made errors in word collocations, attributed to their limited familiarity and, in some cases, a lack of knowledge about collocations. The researcher conducted the study to raise awareness among students about the importance of collocations and to encourage them to learn more through resources such as the research paper and other materials related to collocation learning in English. Overall, the study underscored the significance of collocations in English writing and suggested that enhancing students' understanding of collocations could improve their writing skills. It serves as a call to action for students to pay closer attention to word combinations in sentences to achieve more natural and accurate English writing.

In a different setting, Nguyen and Webb (2017) investigated Vietnamese EFL learners' understanding of verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations at various word frequency levels. The study aimed to assess the participants' mastery of collocational knowledge and to identify factors that predict their receptive knowledge of collocations. The participants, who were English majors at a university in Danang, Vietnam, had proficiency levels ranging from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate. They completed a collocation test consisting of 180 items designed to evaluate their knowledge of collocations at the 1,000, 2,000, and 3,000 word

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frequency levels. Additionally, a Vocabulary Levels Test was administered to assess their knowledge of single-word items. The results indicated that the participants had a limited understanding of collocations, scoring below 50% on both verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations across all frequency levels. A significant positive correlation was found between knowledge of collocations and knowledge of single-word items. The frequency of node words was identified as the strongest predictor of receptive collocational knowledge. The research emphasized the importance of investigating L2 knowledge of collocations to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' vocabulary. It suggested that focusing on high-frequency collocations could be beneficial for language learning programs. The study provided valuable insights into teaching and learning practices related to collocations in the EFL context.

Jeensuk and Sukying (2021) conducted a study on assessing Thai high school EFL learners' knowledge of English collocations, focusing on both receptive and productive competencies. The primary objective was to evaluate the participants' understanding of lexical and grammatical collocations and to explore the relationship between their receptive and productive knowledge. The study sample comprised 314 Thai EFL high school students from grades ten to twelve, who had not previously been instructed in English collocations. Four distinct tests were employed to measure their receptive and productive knowledge: COLLEX and COLLMATCH for receptive knowledge, and Collocation Recall and CONTRIX for productive knowledge. These assessments targeted lexical collocations (adjective + noun, verb + adverb, verb + noun) and grammatical collocations (preposition + noun, noun + preposition, verb patterns). The results indicated that the participants exhibited relatively weak knowledge of English collocations, with higher performance in receptive tasks compared to productive

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ones. The study identified a specific sequence in the acquisition of collocational knowledge: receptive knowledge of grammatical collocations was acquired first, followed by receptive knowledge of lexical collocations, productive knowledge of lexical collocations, and lastly, productive knowledge of grammatical collocations. Additionally, correlational analysis revealed a positive relationship between the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of English collocations. Finally, the study concluded that systematic instruction in English collocations could significantly benefit EFL learners and recommended integrating collocations into vocabulary teaching within the Thai EFL context to enhance language proficiency. In summary, the research provided valuable insights into vocabulary acquisition and development concerning English collocations among Thai high school EFL learners, underscoring the importance of collocational knowledge for effective language use and communication.

In the Iranian context, Ganji and Beikian (2013) investigated the knowledge of lexical collocations among Iranian university EFL students. They aimed to explore whether there was a relationship between the students' understanding of collocations and their proficiency in speaking and writing English. The study involved 43 students from the English Department at Chabahar Maritime University in Iran. The participants underwent three tests. The first was a 50-item fill-in-the-blank test designed to assess their knowledge of lexical collocations. A week later, they participated in a speaking test, which consisted of an interview with an examiner. Additionally, over three consecutive weeks, the students were required to write three essays on different topics. The findings discovered that the students had a weak grasp of lexical collocations, correctly answering just over half of the collocation test questions. A significant positive correlation was found between the students' writing scores and their

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collocation test scores. However, no significant correlation was observed between the students' speaking scores and their collocation test results. Finally, the study concluded that enhancing students' knowledge of lexical collocations could improve their writing proficiency. It recommended that language teachers integrate collocations into their syllabuses and classroom activities to boost students' language performance. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of using textbooks, collocational dictionaries, and corpora to teach and learn collocations, thereby enhancing students' collocational knowledge.

In the same context, Torabian et al. (2014) in their study aimed to examine the relationship between collocational competence and vocabulary knowledge among Iranian EFL undergraduate learners. It specifically investigated the differences between receptive and productive collocational knowledge and their correlation with overall vocabulary knowledge. The participants comprised 110 Iranian undergraduate students majoring in English at the University of Qom. They were evaluated using a series of assessments, including a vocabulary test to measure their fundamental word knowledge, a productive collocational test, and a receptive collocational test to evaluate their collocational competence. The findings indicated a significant disparity between the participants' receptive and productive collocational knowledge, with higher performance on the receptive collocational test compared to the productive test. Additionally, there was a significant correlation between collocational knowledge and vocabulary knowledge among the learners. Finally, the study highlighted the importance of collocations in language learning and the necessity for explicit instruction in collocational competence. Moreover, it emphasized the role of collocations in vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency. The findings suggested that incorporating collocation teaching into the EFL curriculum could enhance learners' language skills and

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overall proficiency. In summary, the research provided insights into the relationship between collocational competence and vocabulary knowledge among Iranian undergraduate EFL learners, underscoring the significance of collocations in language learning and their potential impact on language proficiency.

Kamarudin et al. (2020) conducted a study focusing on evaluating the collocational knowledge of ESL learners, specifically among Malaysian students. The primary objective is to assess their overall understanding of collocations, with particular emphasis on their productive and receptive knowledge of both lexical and grammatical collocations. Furthermore, the study explores the learners' performance on three distinct types of collocations: verb-noun, adjective-noun, and verb-preposition collocations. The research seeks to determine whether significant differences exist between the learners' productive and receptive collocational knowledge and whether their performance varies across these different types of collocations. The methodology involves a sample of 21 students from a public university in Malaysia, all of whom are enrolled in a Diploma in Food Technology program. Two assessment instruments are employed: a Receptive Collocation Test and a Productive Collocation Test, each comprising 48 target collocations that encompass various types, including verb-noun and adjective-noun combinations. Data collection procedures are designed to prevent participants from guessing answers or using dictionaries during the tests. The data is then manually verified and analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics. The study uncovered a significant disparity between the participants' productive and receptive collocational knowledge. Although participants demonstrated a higher level of understanding in receptive knowledge, their ability to produce collocations was lacking, highlighting a gap between comprehension and practical usage. Moreover, the study found variations in the

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learners' performance across three types of collocations: verb-noun, adjective-noun, and verb-preposition collocations. Participants struggled more with verb-preposition collocations compared to the other types, with these collocations receiving the lowest average scores. In addition, the study revealed some difficulties in students' understanding and production of collocations. Specific collocational items that were challenging for learners to understand and produce were identified. In the receptive test, all items with mean scores below 0.90 were verb-preposition collocations, indicating difficulties in grasping idiomatic phrasal verbs. Similarly, in the productive test, a greater number of verb-preposition collocations had mean scores below 0.90, highlighting the learners' struggles with producing these collocations. Overall, the study's results indicate that Malaysian ESL learners possess better receptive knowledge of collocations but encounter significant challenges in producing them, particularly verb-preposition collocations. The findings underscore the need to address these issues in language education, focusing on enhancing learners' productive knowledge of collocations, especially grammatical ones like phrasal verbs. The study also concludes with pedagogical implications for teaching collocations and recommendations for enhancing collocational knowledge in language instruction.

In the context of the Arab world, El-Dakhs (2015) conducted a research study aimed at assessing the collocational competence of Arab undergraduate students studying English in a foreign language context. Specifically, it addressed four primary aspects: the overall level of collocational competence among Arab undergraduate students, the development of this competence with increased language exposure, the variation in collocational competence based on the word class of the collocates, and the types of collocational errors that learners produce. The study evaluated the collocational competence of 90 Arab undergraduate students

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across three academic levels at a private Saudi university using a specially designed test. This test focused on verb + noun and adjective + noun collocations, which are common patterns in English, and assessed the participants' productive knowledge of these collocations. The results indicated that the learners' collocational competence was generally unsatisfactory, despite English being the medium of instruction at the university. However, the study found that collocational competence improved with increased language exposure, albeit slowly. Additionally, learners demonstrated greater proficiency with verb + noun collocations compared to adjective + noun collocations. The study identified that most errors were intralingual, occurring within the target language, rather than interlingual errors influenced by the learners' native language. The research underscored the importance of collocational competence for overall language proficiency and highlighted the challenges Arab undergraduate students face in mastering English collocations. The findings provided insights into the learners' collocational knowledge and errors, emphasizing the need for targeted pedagogical interventions to support students in developing their collocational competence.

Similarly, Almakary (2017) investigated English collocations within the context of Tunisian EFL learners. The study was conducted at the Higher Institute of Applied Languages and Computer Sciences in Béja, Tunisia, involving 84 EFL students from the Department of English. The researcher aimed to explore four key areas related to English collocations among Tunisian EFL learners: familiarity with English expressions, specifically collocations, awareness of phraseology, deviations in collocation usage, the correlation between collocational competence and learners' performance in speaking and writing skills. To gather data, the study employed three instruments: A collocation test with multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-gap questions, and translation tasks to assess collocational competence, a focus-

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group discussion to collect qualitative data on participants' perceptions of English collocations and their learning strategies, document analysis of course descriptions, timetables, academic records, and student writings to supplement the data from the other instruments. The findings revealed that participants generally had inadequate collocational competence. Violations in collocation usage were attributed to limited collocational knowledge, interference from the first language (L1), influence from source texts, and overgeneralization. There was a positive correlation between collocational competence and both oral and written skills, underscoring the importance of collocations for overall English proficiency. Therefore, the study aimed to enhance understanding of English collocations in the Tunisian EFL context, considering the influence of the learners' L1 (Arabic) and L2 (French). The findings highlighted the necessity of improving collocation teaching and raising awareness among learners and teachers about the importance of collocations in language learning. Finally, the study concluded with recommendations for further research and emphasized the importance of addressing collocational competence in language education.

Djiti and Aboubou (2019) conducted a study to assess the awareness of English collocations among Algerian EFL students and to investigate teachers' attitudes toward teaching collocations in the EFL classroom. The research methodology involved distributing questionnaires to first-year EFL students and teachers at Batna 2 University. The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to evaluate the students' awareness of collocations and the teachers' perspectives on teaching them. The findings revealed that students were entirely unaware of the concept of collocations, as none of the participants demonstrated an understanding of what collocations were. Conversely, teachers acknowledged the importance of English collocations in language learning, with 80% considering them

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significant. However, despite recognizing their importance, none of the teachers incorporated the teaching of collocations into their instructional practices. Additionally, the study found that students faced difficulties in combining words correctly, leading to collocational errors in their spoken and written English. In summary, the study highlighted a significant gap in collocational knowledge among EFL students and a neglect of collocation teaching by teachers in the EFL classroom. The findings underscored the need for greater emphasis on teaching and learning English collocations to enhance students' language proficiency and communication skills.

Durrant and Schmitt (2009) conducted a study to investigate the use of collocations in the writing of native and non-native English speakers. The researchers analyzed both long and short texts authored by native and non-native speakers, employing a frequency-based approach to identify collocations—word pairs that co-occur more frequently than would be expected by chance. The objective was to compare the use of collocations across various text types, including research assignments, essays, and articles. The methodology involved identifying word combinations, calculating association measures of collocational strength (such as t-score and mutual information), and comparing group versus individual scores. The analysis focused on the frequency of low-frequency combinations and the prevalence of strong collocations within the texts. The results found that non-native writers utilized a higher proportion of high-frequency collocations compared to native writers. However, non-native writers exhibited an underuse of very strong collocations relative to native writers. This finding suggests that non-native writers might rely more on common collocations and tend to repeat preferred phrases, reflecting a conservative approach in their language use. In conclusion, the study offers

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insights into the differences in collocation use between native and non-native writers, highlighting variations in the types of collocations each group prefers.

Begagić (2014) in his study examined the productive and receptive knowledge of lexical collocations among English language students whose native language is Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), to investigate potential differences in collocational competence between first-year and fourth-year students, and to identify which types of collocations (verb + noun, adjective + noun, verb + adverb) posed the greatest difficulty for the participants. The sample consisted of 40 students from the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Zenica, divided into two groups: 20 first-year students and 20 fourth-year students. Data collection involved two components: three gap-filling tests to assess the participants' productive collocational knowledge, which included 20 verb + noun, 20 adjective + noun, and 20 verb + adverb collocations; and an appropriateness judgment test to evaluate their receptive collocational knowledge, which featured the 60 target collocations from the productive tests and 12 mismatched collocations as distractors. The results indicated that fourth-year students demonstrated significantly higher collocational competence than first-year students in both the productive and receptive tests. Participants performed better on the receptive test than on the productive test, suggesting that their receptive collocational knowledge was more developed. Furthermore, verb + adverb collocations were the most challenging to produce, whereas verb + noun collocations were the easiest. The study concluded that English language students in Bosnia and Herzegovina generally possess limited collocational knowledge. This deficiency could be attributed to a lack of emphasis on collocations in language instruction, negative transfer from their native

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language, and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of collocations in language acquisition.

Yahya and Khoja (2019) studied the use of English collocations in the writing of foundation-year students at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels at the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU). The objective was to conduct corpus-based research to identify and analyze the English collocations utilized by students at varying proficiency levels and to examine any errors related to collocations. Employing a triangulation methodology, the study integrated contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA), a frequency-based approach, and a cross-sectional approach. The research design involved extracting candidate verb-adjective-noun (VAN) combinations from learners' written texts, identifying these combinations using the LogDice measure, and consulting native-speaker informants to evaluate the acceptability of the collocations. Data collection involved random sampling, obtaining student consent, and analyzing a total of 16 written samples (8 from each proficiency level). The findings revealed that students were capable of producing acceptable collocations, with verb-noun and noun-verb types being the most frequent and successful. Although no significant difference was found in the number of acceptable collocations produced by the two proficiency levels, intermediate students generated more noun-noun collocations. The study also underscored the impact of external influences on learners' collocation production and suggested that language proficiency levels might correlate with the types of collocations produced. Overall, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of the influence of context and methodology on learners' production of collocations.

Arabet (2017) investigated the use of verb-noun lexical collocations by second-year undergraduate EFL students at the University of Frères Mentouri in Algeria. The primary

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objectives are to assess the extent to which these students master the use and comprehension of verb-noun collocations in their essay writing and to evaluate their ability to produce and understand verb-noun collocational language. The study hypothesizes that Algerian EFL second-year undergraduate students possess low proficiency in using and comprehending verb-noun collocations and that their essays lack appropriate verb-noun collocations. To identify correct and erroneous collocations in the students' exam essays, the study utilized three research tools: Collocation Checker, the Oxford Online Collocation Dictionary (O OCD), and the British National Corpus (BNC). The findings reveal that only 38.82% of the collocations used by the students were correct, indicating low competence in handling verb-noun collocations. The primary sources of collocational errors were identified as a negative transfer from the students' mother tongue (56.55%), synonymy (35.17%), and approximation (8.28%). Additionally, students predominantly relied on delexical verbs (72.83%) rather than appropriate non-delexical verbs, demonstrating poor lexical competence. The study concludes that raising students' awareness of the importance of collocations and incorporating collocational instruction into the curriculum are essential for improving the linguistic competence and writing quality of Algerian EFL learners.

For a similar objective, Laufer and Waldman (2011) carried out a study to examine the use of English verb-noun collocations by non-native speakers of Hebrew at basic, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels, comparing their usage with that of native English speakers. Utilizing the Israeli Learner Corpus of Written English (ILCoWE), which comprises approximately 300,000 words of essays written by Hebrew-speaking learners, and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS), which consists of essays written by young adult native English speakers, the researchers extracted the 220 most frequent nouns

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from the LOCNESS corpus. They subsequently created concordances for these nouns in both corpora to identify verb-noun collocations, verifying them against collocation dictionaries and categorizing them as either well-formed or deviant. The analysis revealed that learners at all proficiency levels produced significantly fewer collocations than native speakers, with an increase observed only at the advanced level, yet still not reaching native speaker levels. Additionally, learners produced a high number of deviant collocations, constituting approximately one-third of their attempts. The number of errors increased with proficiency, indicating that accuracy did not improve proportionally. Approximately half of the collocation errors were attributed to first language (L1) influence, a pattern consistent across proficiency levels. Furthermore, over one-third of the errors made by advanced learners were recurrent and predominantly L1-based. The study concluded that the development of collocation use is slow and uneven, with persistent L1-influenced errors even at advanced levels. It recommended explicit instruction and practice, including cross-linguistic comparisons, to enhance learners' collocation competence.

On the other hand, Gede et al. (2021) investigated lexical collocation errors in students' argumentative essays, focusing on the types and causes of these errors among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Sixteen university students from the English Education Department at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo participated, and data was collected through their writing samples and semi-structured interviews. The analysis identified 54 instances of lexical collocation errors, including verb + noun/pronoun, adjective + noun, adverb + adjective, noun + noun, and verb + adverb combinations. The most frequent errors were found in the verb + noun/pronoun category. Several factors contributing to these errors were identified, such as inadequate collocation competence, influence from the native

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language, the use of synonyms, overgeneralization, and approximation. The findings indicated that students' limited exposure to collocations, interference from their native language, and strategies such as using synonyms or overgeneralizing rules contributed to errors in collocation usage. The study underscored the importance of understanding and mastering lexical collocations in academic writing to enhance students' language proficiency. By emphasizing the significance of these collocations, the study highlighted the need for targeted instruction and practice to improve students' writing skills.

Arif (2020) examines the factors influencing the use of collocations by Iraqi EFL learners, specifically at Al-Iraqia University's College of Arts. The researcher aims to identify the barriers that Iraqi EFL learners encounter when using collocations in both written and spoken English. The research questions address the relationship between observational learning and collocation performance and the impact of exposure to English texts on collocation proficiency. Bandura's theory of planned behavior is employed to explore the impact of observational learning and the frequency of exposure to English on collocation performance. The research methodology includes a self-administered questionnaire divided into two sections: a demographic section and a section with 40 multiple-choice questions on English collocations. The participants consisted of 48 fourth-year students from the English Department. The findings indicate that learners who are more proficient in using English collocations typically have more extensive experience engaging with English texts through various media, such as the Internet and audio-visual materials. The study also examines the educational system in Iraq, emphasizing the significance of teaching materials, instructional methods, and the role of EFL teachers in developing learners' language skills. It identifies factors such as the lack of transnational equivalences, overgeneralization, and insufficient

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experience in the target language as major issues affecting collocation usage among Iraqi EFL learners. Overall, the study seeks to provide insights into improving EFL learning strategies, particularly regarding collocation usage. By understanding the factors that influence collocation application among Iraqi EFL learners, the study offers valuable recommendations for curriculum development and teaching practices in the academic field.

The reviewed studies provide important insights into English language learners' knowledge, understanding, and use of collocations, in addition to the factors affecting their use of collocations. Moreover, they emphasize the universal importance of collocations in language teaching and learning, collectively advocating for improved teaching practices, greater exposure to collocations, and targeted interventions to enhance learners' collocational knowledge and language proficiency. However, there are some differences and similarities in terms of their aims, participants, context, methodology, and results. First, the primary aim of the studies is to assess and evaluate the collocational competence of EFL learners in various contexts. The studies commonly seek to determine the extent of learners' knowledge and use of English collocations and explore the factors influencing their understanding and use of collocations. Second, the studies involve participants from different countries, such as Taiwan, Vietnam, Algeria, Malaysia, and Iraq... highlighting the global interest in collocational competence. Participants vary in proficiency levels, from high school students to university undergraduates, providing a diverse range of data on collocational knowledge. Methodologically, the studies differ in the instruments used as they employ a range of assessment tools, including collocation tests, surveys, interviews, corpus analysis, and questionnaires, reflecting the methodological diversity in studying collocations to measure learners' collocational knowledge and proficiency. They also often utilize quantitative and

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qualitative analyses to examine the relationship between collocational competence and language skills. Furthermore, some studies focused on specific types of collocations (e.g., verb-noun, adjective-noun) while others examined a broader range of collocational patterns. Finally, one common finding across the studies is that EFL/ESL learners generally exhibit limited competence in English collocations. Several studies reported that the participants struggled to correctly produce and comprehend different types of collocations, such as verb-noun, adjective-noun, and verb-preposition combinations. This suggests that collocational knowledge is a significant challenge for language learners, even at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The studies also revealed that learners' performance on receptive collocational tasks (e.g., recognition, selection) tends to be better than their performance on productive tasks (e.g., fill-in-the-blank, sentence completion). This disparity highlights the difficulty learners face in actively using collocations in their own language production, despite having a certain level of receptive knowledge. Regarding the types of collocations, the studies found that some combinations, such as verb-preposition and adjective-noun, were more challenging for learners than others, like verb-noun collocations. This suggests that the complexity and idiomatic nature of certain collocation types can hinder their acquisition and usage. Several studies also explored the factors that influence learners' collocational competence. These factors include language proficiency, exposure to English, instruction in collocations, and interference from the learners' first language. The findings indicate that increased language exposure and targeted instruction on collocations can enhance learners' understanding and use of these word combinations. Furthermore, the studies highlighted the relationship between collocational knowledge and overall language performance, particularly in speaking and writing. While some studies found a positive correlation between collocational competence and language proficiency, others noted that the ability to use

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collocations effectively in language production did not always translate to higher overall language performance. In summary, while each study contributes unique findings and insights into collocational competence among EFL learners, there is a common theme of the importance of collocations in language learning. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that developing collocational competence is a significant challenge for EFL/ESL learners. Furthermore, they reveal common challenges faced by EFL learners, such as errors attributed to negative transfer from the first language, limited exposure to collocations, and difficulties in productive use compared to receptive knowledge. Therefore, the presented studies demonstrate that explicit instruction and targeted practice are necessary to improve their understanding and use of collocations. The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating collocations into language teaching and learning, as they are crucial for achieving higher levels of linguistic proficiency and communicative ability.

However, the reviewed literature pertains to the limited research conducted on exploring students' actual awareness and understanding of collocations. This gap suggests that there is a lack of detailed studies that specifically investigate the extent to which students are aware of collocations, how well they understand them, and the challenges they face in using collocations effectively in their language production, as well as noticing collocations when reading. By not having sufficient research on students' actual awareness and understanding of collocations, there is a lack of insight into the specific competencies, difficulties, and misconceptions that learners may have in this area. Understanding students' awareness and understanding of collocations is crucial for designing targeted instructional approaches that can address their needs and enhance their collocational competence. Therefore, filling this gap through exploratory research that directly explores students' awareness, understanding, and

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use of collocations, in addition to the difficulties they face in using and noticing collocations can provide valuable information for educators and curriculum developers. It can help in developing more effective teaching strategies, materials, and interventions to support students in improving their collocational knowledge and language proficiency. Moreover, the Algerian EFL context presents another significant gap in research concerning students' awareness, understanding, and use of collocations. While existing research has investigated collocational competence and challenges in various EFL contexts and populations, there is a notable deficiency in research addressing Algerian EFL learners, specifically at Mohammed Khidher Biskra University. This lack of context-specific studies overlooks the unique linguistic and educational challenges faced by Algerian students, who might face distinct difficulties and possess specific competencies not adequately represented in broader research. The cultural and linguistic diversity in Algeria, with Arabic and French as prominent languages, may differently influence Algerian students' competencies and difficulties in acquiring English collocational competence. Additionally, the structure and priorities of the Algerian educational system may not emphasize collocations within the English curriculum, leading to an insufficient understanding of how collocations are taught and learned in Algerian EFL classrooms. Furthermore, the limited research conducted in this context fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' actual awareness and utilization of collocations in their writing. This gap impedes the development of targeted pedagogical interventions and instructional strategies tailored to the needs of Algerian EFL learners, potentially hindering their language proficiency and communication skills. Therefore, there is a critical need for more in-depth research to explore and address the specific challenges and requirements of collocational competence among Algerian EFL students. Such research can reveal the unique needs and characteristics of Algerian learners, informing the development of more effective,

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tailored language teaching strategies. This would ultimately enhance their overall proficiency and success in learning English. Additionally, most studies predominantly use quantitative methods to examine the complex phenomenon of collocations. Collocations, which involve specific word combinations, necessitate a more detailed and comprehensive understanding that quantitative methods alone may not provide. By focusing mainly on quantitative analyses, these studies may miss the qualitative aspects and deeper insights that a mixed-method approach can offer. A mixed-method approach, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, would enable researchers to explore the intricacies of collocations more thoroughly. Qualitative data can offer rich descriptions, explanations, and contextual insights that quantitative data might not capture. Using qualitative methods such as questionnaires with open-ended questions or content analysis alongside quantitative measures, researchers can achieve a more complete understanding of the difficulties students encounter in noticing or using collocations. This comprehensive approach can yield more robust findings and practical implications for language teaching and learning. Therefore, the gap is the need for studies to go beyond purely quantitative analyses and adopt a mixed-method approach to investigate the multifaceted nature of collocations, providing a more thorough understanding of this linguistic phenomenon in the context of language acquisition and learning.

Aims of the Study

Based on the identified gaps in the existing literature, the current research study aims to explore the awareness, understanding, and use of collocations among Algerian EFL learners at Mohammed Khidher Biskra University. Specifically, it will investigate the extent to which these students are aware of collocations and their ability to recognize and produce them correctly. The study will identify the specific challenges and difficulties these students face in

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effectively using collocations in their written language production and explore the difficulties they encounter in noticing and comprehending collocations when reading. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the collocational competence and challenges of Algerian EFL learners.

Research questions

To address the study objectives, the current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are Algerian EFL students aware of and understand English collocations?

RQ2: To what extent do Algerian EFL students use collocations in their writing?

RQ3: What factors affect Algerian EFL students' use of collocations in their writing?

Practical Part

Chapter 03: Methodology chapter

Introduction

The current research was intended to explore students' awareness, understanding, and use of collocations in their writing, in addition to the factors affecting their usage and noticing of collocations. While the initial chapters present the theoretical framework of the study, this chapter introduces the practical framework, detailing the methodological decisions opted for the study along with the rationale behind each choice. These decisions are generally determined by the objectives of the researcher and the characteristics of the study. Therefore, this chapter details the methodology used including the research design, the context and participants involved in the study, the data collection instruments utilized, and the research procedures followed to analyze and discuss the results. This comprehensive approach aims to address the research questions previously outlined and offer a thorough exploration of EFL learners' awareness, knowledge, and use of collocations, in addition to identifying the various factors that hinder their ability to use collocations effectively in their writing.

3.1 Study Design

Referring to the study objectives outlined earlier, the researcher conducted an exploratory study using a mixed-method approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Such a design has been adopted due to the twofold nature of the research. Firstly, it aimed to quantitatively investigate students' awareness, comprehension, and use of collocations in their writing. Secondly, it sought to qualitatively explore the factors negatively affecting their use and recognition of collocations when writing and reading in English. According to Dörnyei (2007), mixed methods inquiry provides a potentially more robust way to validate findings

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compared to using either qualitative (QUAL) or quantitative (QUAN) methods alone, as it enables researchers to evaluate information from both data types. Mixed methods inquiry offers a more thorough approach to validating research findings by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This dual approach allows researchers to gather and analyze both data types, providing a richer, more nuanced understanding of the research problem. Mixed methods enable a more comprehensive assessment by integrating qualitative insights, which offer depth and context, with quantitative data, which provide statistical strength and generalizability. This combination not only strengthens the legitimacy of the findings but also allows for cross-verification of results, ensuring a more reliable and holistic conclusion than either method could achieve on its own. Dörnyei's perspective on the mixed method approach supports the choice of this study as it enhances the depth, validity, and comprehensiveness of the findings. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher can provide a more nuanced and reliable understanding of students' awareness, comprehension, and use of collocations, as well as the factors influencing their performance in this area.

3.2 Context and Participants

The targeted population for this study consists of 51 third-year students from the Department of English Language at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra in Algeria, where English is taught as a foreign language during the academic year 2023-2024. Participants were recruited through a convenience sampling approach where the researcher contacted some teachers from the Department of English Language to work in their classrooms after their agreement. The researcher used this approach due to the limited time and to increase the chance of students taking part in the study. Therefore, it would be beneficial to have a larger sample and collect additional data. The sample of this work encompasses the two genders: male and female with

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a significant majority of female participants, 41 out of 51 individuals (80.39%), compared to 10 male participants (19.6%). Their age ranges from 19 to 31 years old. Moreover, all participants (100%) reported Arabic as their first language with almost a low to intermediate level of English language as they passed the baccalaureate exam with an average of 11 at least. Furthermore, they are currently preparing for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree after a language-learning experience of 10 years at least. The primary reason for selecting to work with third-year undergraduate students as the sample of the study is that they are considered representative of typical English language learners in Algeria. These students have almost finished the entire English language curriculum, which spans several years of comprehensive study. Throughout their education course, they have shown considerable progress in their English proficiency, with at least a decade of learning experience behind them. At this stage, they are actively working towards their degrees, and upon completion, they are anticipated to start their careers as teachers in the next academic year. This makes them an ideal group for examining their awareness, comprehension, and use of collocations. In addition to exploring the negative factors influencing their use and recognition of collocations.

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Table 03

Summary of participants' profile information

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	19.6%
	Female	41	80.39%
Age	21.1		
First language	Arabic	51	100%
University degree in preparation	BA	51	100%
Study year	L3	51	100%
language learning experience	10.41		

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Following the selected research design and based on the nature of the study which required both qualitative and quantitative data, the present study employed two data-gathering tools: a semi-structured questionnaire and a collocations test in the form of a task, targeting a sample of 51 undergraduate EFL students at the Department of English Language, Mohammed Khider University of Biskra.

3.3.1 Collocations task

Dörnyei (2007) believes that a test samples a respondent's behavior or knowledge to assess their broader underlying competencies, abilities, or skills. Essentially, a test evaluates how effectively someone can perform a specific task. Therefore, the collocations task serves as a

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practical test to measure students' ability to recognize, understand, and use collocations, providing insights into their overall competence in applying collocational knowledge. By engaging in these targeted activities, students' performance offers valuable data on their language skills and competency, aligning with the study's overarching aim to explore their awareness, understanding, and application of collocations in English. The collocations task is divided into two different activities designed to assess students' awareness, comprehension, and usage of collocations in English, and further answer the first two questions of this study. In the first activity, students were given a short paragraph to read and asked to underline as many collocations as they could identify to examine their actual awareness of collocations. Next, they were required to use two of the recognized collocations in sentences from their production to demonstrate their correct use of collocations in context. In the second activity, students were presented with a list of seven collocations and were required to identify the meanings of seven collocational expressions by selecting the correct option from four possible choices, to evaluate their knowledge and understanding of collocations. These collocations ranged in difficulty from beginner to advanced levels.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire devised for data collection in this study is a semi-structured instrument, allowing for the collection of both quantitative data through closed-ended questions and qualitative data through open-ended questions. According to Dörnyei (2007), questionnaires can measure three main types of data about respondents: Factual data, which is about certain demographical and personal facts. Behavioral data refers to participants' actions, experiences, and habits. Attitudinal data which covers their attitudes, opinions, and values. Therefore, the one of this research study encompasses two main sections aimed at eliciting comprehensive

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insights from participants. The first section, "Profile Information," serves to gather foundational demographic and educational background details, including gender, age, first language, language learning experience, current university degree pursuit, and study year. Following this, the second section which is the main questionnaire employs a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions to delve into participants' perceptions and experiences regarding collocations. Closed-ended questions comprise a mix of three Likert scale questions, two Multiple-choice questions, and one Dichotomous (Yes/no) question. Starting with Likert scale questions, participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree": "I am familiar with English collocations," "I often notice collocational expressions when I read in English," and "I often use collocational expressions when I write in English." This set of Likert scale questions aimed to assess participants' familiarity with, awareness of, and usage of English collocations. Moving to Multiple-choice questions, participants were required to select the preferred resources they use to learn and practice collocations, such as books, online resources, language apps, collocation dictionaries, or other specified resources. Moreover, they were asked to identify the context in which they use collocations the most, including academic conversations, professional conversations, or daily life communications, and explain why. These items are intended to further explore students' experiences regarding collocations. Furthermore, in a single Dichotomous question, participants indicated whether they have received any instruction or practice on collocations during their language studies. Participants' responses to these questions helped in answering partially the main questions of this work. Finally, open-ended questions required students to describe any challenges they face in identifying collocations while reading and any difficulties they encounter when using collocations in writing, in addition to providing their own definition of the term "collocations".

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These open-ended questions were designed to gather detailed information about participants' perceptions and experiences with collocations and further solve the last raised question in this study.

3.4 Data Analysis

For the process of data analysis, the data attained from participants' responses to the questionnaire, their performance scores in the collocation task; which were lately measured according to the correction model and grading scale developed by the researcher; and qualitative feedback were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative procedures.

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis will employ descriptive statistics including measures of frequency, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion through which they will measure students' awareness and use of collocations. Quantitative data, such as participants' performance scores on collocation awareness and comprehension activities, as well as their responses to Likert scale questions concerning their familiarity, noticing, and use of collocations in writing, were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The mean scores were calculated for each question to determine the average level of agreement or performance among the participants. Variance and standard deviation were also calculated to understand the spread of responses around the mean score. This helped in assessing the central tendency, consistency, and variability of responses. On the other hand, the data obtained from the multiple-choice questions and the dichotomous (Yes/No) question were analyzed by counting the frequency of each response. The researcher manually calculated the frequency of each selected option regarding the resources students use to learn and practice collocations, as well

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as the contexts in which they most frequently use collocations. Additionally, the researcher counted the number of students who answered "yes" or "no" to whether they had received any lessons or practice on collocations during their language studies. Afterward, these data were entered into an Excel (2016) spreadsheet for better visualization of the frequency of students' responses to the questions. Moreover, the results obtained from students' performance in their productive use of collocations were scored and categorized into three distinct levels of accuracy: 0, 1, and 2 according to their scores from 0 to 2 points. A score of "0" was assigned to students who did not succeed in using any collocational expressions, "1" for those who used one collocation correctly in context, and "2" for those who successfully used two correct collocations in context. The researcher then manually counted the frequency of each level and entered the data into an Excel (2016) spreadsheet to facilitate visualization through a graphical representation.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Completing the data analysis process with a qualitative approach, participants' answers to open-ended questions from the distributed questionnaire were analyzed using thematic coding. This method was employed to identify the factors influencing Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations in writing and awareness when reading. Furthermore, the researcher employed manual inductive content analysis due to the manageable volume of qualitative data, making manual analysis feasible, without the necessity to use any software or computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDA) tools. The analysis was grounded in the students' responses due to the lack of a pre-existing theoretical framework to guide the analysis. This means that themes, code categories, and insights emerge directly from the data rather than being imposed by existing theories or concepts. This allows for a more open-ended and exploratory

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examination of the data. Mackey and Susan (2015) explained that “Qualitative research is often process-oriented, or open-ended, with emergent categories. The research often follows an inductive path that begins with few preconceived notions, followed by a gradual fine-tuning and narrowing of focus” (p. 216). To ensure validity, the researcher validated the thematic coding by cross-referencing it with the thematic coding conducted by another trained researcher. This involved independently coding the same set of data and then comparing the results. Consequently, the validation process demonstrated an 89% agreement between the thematic coding conducted by the two researchers. This high level of concordance ensures the validity of the thematic coding performed by the original researcher.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Given the critical importance of validity and reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study to test the data collection instruments before initiating the main data collection process. The collocation task and the questionnaire were administered to two students from the target population to assess their feasibility and suitability to the sample. The piloting stage yielded positive feedback, as the students did not encounter any difficulties in answering the questions. Consequently, no adjustments were made to the data collection instruments. This stage was crucial to confirm that the tools aligned with the study objectives and to ensure that the questionnaires were designed to accurately collect the intended data from the sample. Additionally, the researcher was present during the data collection to address any questions from the students and provide further explanations as needed, ensuring the clarity and comprehensibility of the instruments for the participants. Moreover, all participants were tested under similar conditions to ensure a normal distribution of data and to minimize the impact of any external factors on the process as much as possible.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The current study adheres to several key ethical considerations, ensuring a responsible approach to participant involvement and securing teachers' agreement to access their classes. Informed consent is emphasized by clearly informing participants about the study's purpose, ensuring they understand the study's aims before agreeing to participate. Participation is requested voluntarily, respecting participants' autonomy and allowing them to choose freely whether to take part. It assures participants of confidentiality and anonymity, ensuring their information is secured, used solely for research purposes, and kept unlinked to personal identifiers. Additionally, data protection is emphasized, securing all collected information from unauthorized access and using it exclusively for the research objectives. Moreover, the study upholds ethical standards by obtaining teachers' consent to access their classrooms. This ethical consideration involves securing explicit permission from teachers before the researcher enters their classrooms and engages with their students. It respects the professional domain and authority of teachers, acknowledging the classroom as their controlled environment. By acquiring this consent, the study ensures that teachers are fully informed about the research activities, the objectives of these activities, and the methodologies employed. This consent process includes respecting the teachers' right to approve or decline the researcher's presence and the associated research activities, thus preserving their autonomy and governance over their classroom setting. Additionally, it ensures that research activities do not disrupt the regular teaching and learning processes, maintaining a respectful and considerate approach towards both teachers and students. This procedure of obtaining teachers' consent is crucial for fostering trust and collaboration between researchers and educators, ensuring the study is conducted in an ethically responsible and respectful manner.

Chapter 04: Results chapter

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study, focusing on Algerian EFL students' awareness, understanding, and use of English collocations, as well as the factors affecting their collocation use in writing and collocation noticing when reading. The chapter is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of the students' collocational competence, addressing multiple aspects of their performance. It begins by examining the participants' awareness and understanding of English collocations, analyzing their results in collocation awareness and comprehension tasks, as well as their perceived familiarity with and ability to notice collocational expressions. The chapter then delves into the students' use of collocations in their writing, exploring their perceived frequency of collocation usage and their actual performance in a collocation-use activity. Additionally, the contexts in which the students tend to employ collocations the most are examined. Furthermore, the chapter investigates the factors that affect Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations, including their collocation learning experience, the resources they utilize for collocation learning, and the challenges they face in noticing and using collocations. By presenting these comprehensive findings, the chapter aims to provide valuable insights into the collocational competence of Algerian EFL students, shedding light on their strengths and weaknesses and the difficulties that influenced their noticing and use of collocations.

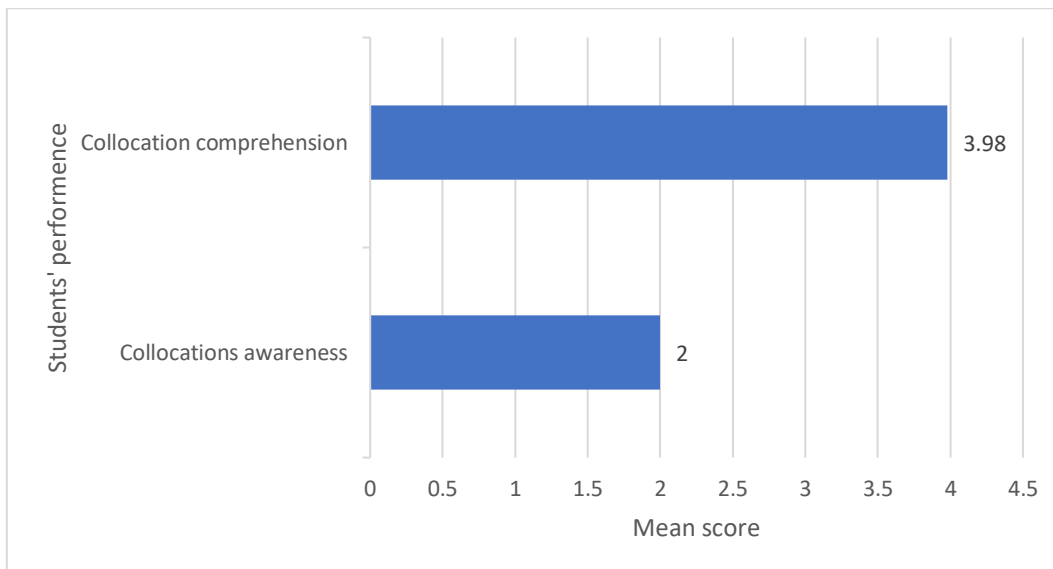
4.1 Algerian EFL students' awareness and understanding of English collocations

4.1.1 Algerian EFL students' performance in collocation awareness and understanding tasks

The presented figure below (**figure 01**) is a horizontal bar graph illustrating students' performance in collocation awareness and comprehension activities. The graph comprises two horizontal bars along the y-axis, demonstrating the summary of the two items in the collocation task. Meanwhile, the x-axis portrays the mean scores achieved by study participants in the respective activities. The first bar represents the mean of collocation comprehension after students answer the multiple-choice activity. On the other hand, the second bar represents students' awareness of detecting the collocations within the reading activity.

Figure 01

Students' performance in collocation awareness and comprehension tasks



Note. collocation comprehension task (7pts), collocation awareness task (11pts)

The findings corresponding with these two tasks reveal that the subjects had a counteractive performance in noticing and understanding English collocations. The mean score for students' understanding of collocation was slightly above average ($m=3.98$). This suggests that overall students' performance in comprehension activity is a somewhat satisfactory level of understanding collocation's meaning. However, their results in the collocation awareness activity yielded a below-average mean score of 2. Therefore, the observed scores reflect a collective struggle among the participants in recognizing and discerning collocational patterns within the context of the reading activity.

4.1.2 Algerian EFL students' perceived awareness and understanding of collocations

The table below (**table 04**) presents descriptive statistical data concerning Algerian EFL learners' perceived familiarity with and noticing collocations. The table delineates two primary categories: collocations familiarity and collocations noticing, each corresponding to distinct questionnaire items (Q1A and Q1B). Q1A: requires responses regarding the extent of students' familiarity with English collocations, utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). However, Q1B: addresses the extent to which students observe collocations during English reading activities, employing the same Likert scale from 1 to 5. Moreover, the table includes the number of students participating in this study ($n=51$), the mean, variance, and standard deviation (SD) for each question.

Table 04

Students' perceived awareness and understanding of collocations

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Variance	SD
Q1.A. I am familiar with English collocations	51	3.33	0.51	0.71
Q1.B I often notice collocational expressions when I read in English	51	3.63	0.52	0.72

Note. Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5.

Starting with the first statement (Q1.A) the mean score (3.33) indicates that overall study participants expressed neutrality regarding their familiarity with English collocations. Moving to their ability to notice collocational expressions when reading texts (Q1.B), the mean score above the midpoint of 3 indicates that students report even more agreement with the item (mean: 3.63). Generally, the consistent variances (0.51 for Q1.A and 0.52 for Q1.B) and standard deviation values indicate homogeneity and a relatively narrow spread of

responses around the mean scores. This suggests that participants' responses were fairly consistent and clustered closely around the mean.

4.2 Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations in Writing

4.2.1 Algerian EFL students' perceived use of collocations in writing

The following **Table 05** is structured to present statistical data regarding Algerian EFL learners' perceived use of collocations when writing in English, as indicated by their responses on a Likert scale question ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The table quantifies students' agreement to the following statement: "I often use collocational expressions when I write in English" (Q1.C) through various statistical measures. The mean score, serving as a measure of central tendency, reflects the average level of agreement expressed by the respondents. Additionally, dispersion measures such as variance and standard deviation are provided to indicate the degree of variability or spread of responses around the mean score. These statistical metrics offer insights into the distribution and consistency of perceptions regarding the use of collocations among Algerian EFL learners in their writing.

Table 05

Students' perceived use of collocations in writing

	<i>n</i>	Mean	Variance	SD
Q1.C. I often use collocational expressions when I write in English	51	3.31	0.70	0.84

Note. Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5.

The results show that out of 51 respondents, the average frequency score for using collocational expressions in English writing is 3.31. Overall students selected the neutral

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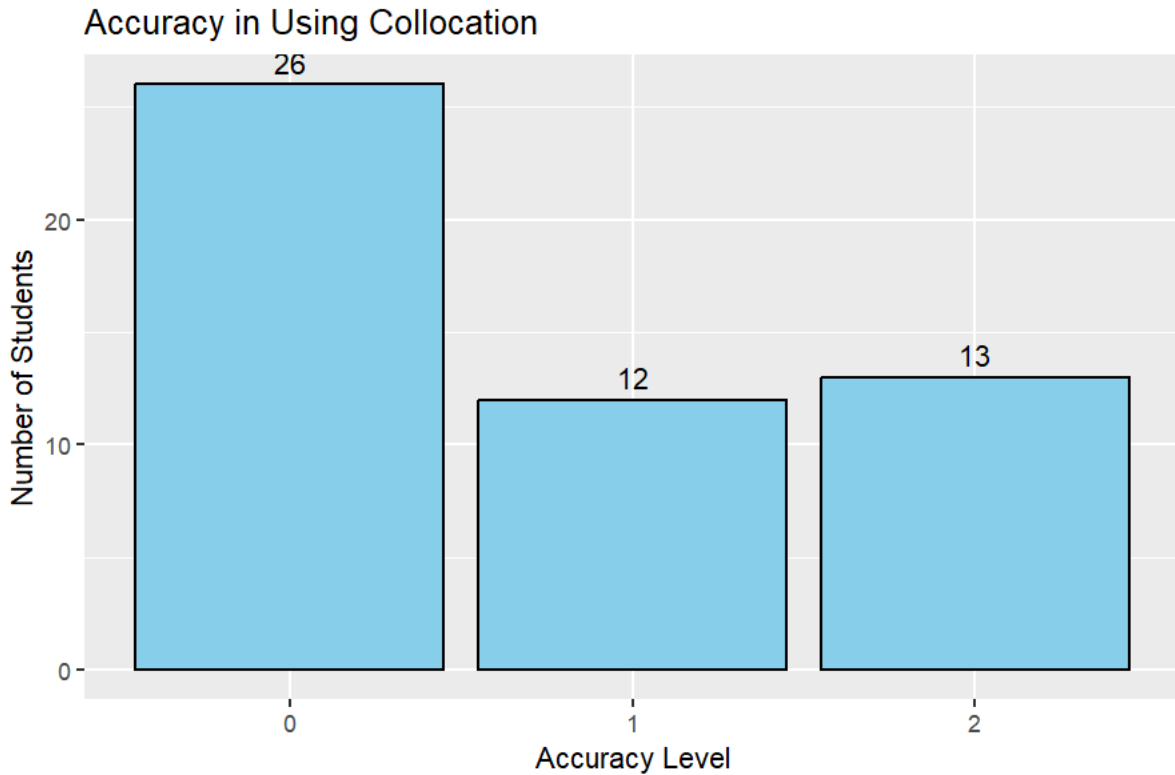
response (rating of 3), indicating neither agreement nor disagreement with the statement. This suggests a notable proportion of respondents expressed a neutral stance regarding their frequency of using collocations in written English. The variance of the responses is 0.70, suggesting some variability in the responses. However, the standard deviation is 0.84, which provides a sense of the average distance of the scores from the mean.

4.2.2 Algerian EFL students' use of collocation in their writing

The following bar graph (**figure 02**) provides a visual representation of the distribution of students across three accuracy levels after students' performance in collocations usage activity. The x-axis categorizes the accuracy levels as 0, 1, and 2 depending on their scores in the activity. While the y-axis shows the number of students, ranging from 0 to over 20. Each bar's height corresponds to the number of students at each accuracy level.

Figure 02

Students' use of collocation in their writing



Note. Collocations use activity (/2pts)

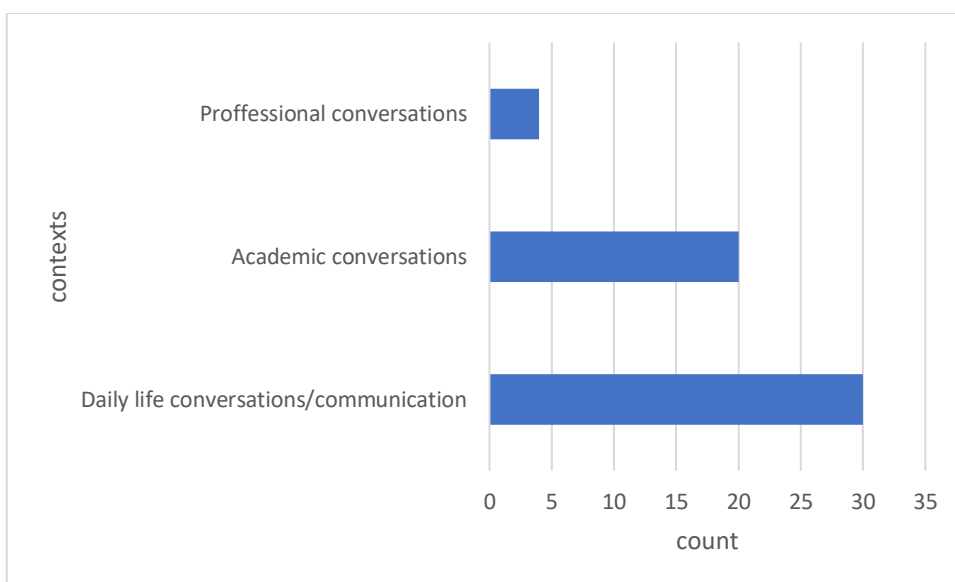
An analysis of students' use of collocations in their writing demonstrated three distinct levels of collocation accuracy. A significant number of students (n=13) achieved a perfect score (2/2) in effectively employing the right collocations within their writing, contrasting with the highest number of participants (n=26) who obtained lower marks (0/2), this group of students did not demonstrate accuracy in using collocations as long as they failed in using the right collocation in its right context. At the third level, a minority of students (n=12) attained an average proficiency level (1/2) after they successfully incorporated one correct collocation into their writing.

4.2.3 Contexts for students' use of collocations

The presented **Figure 03** is a horizontal bar graph that summarizes the results of participants' responses to the following questionnaire item: in what context do you use collocations the most? where the y-axis listed the three different categories of context: academic conversations, professional conversations, and daily life conversations/ communications. On the other hand, the x-axis refers to the number of learners using collocations in each category, ranging from 0 to 35.

Figure 03

Contexts for students' use of collocations



The findings concerning this item elucidate the frequency of collocation usage across various conversational contexts. Daily life conversations/communication has the longest bar, extending past 30 on the x-axis to be the predominant context. This indicates that students mostly use collocations in daily conversations or communications as this category reaches the highest frequency in the dataset. Secondly, the count for academic conversations is around 15,

indicating that collocations are used less frequently in this context than daily life conversations. Finally, the bar representing professional conversations registers a count of 4. This suggests that within the context of students' use of collocations, professional conversations occur the least frequently among the three categories.

4.3 Factors affecting Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations in writing

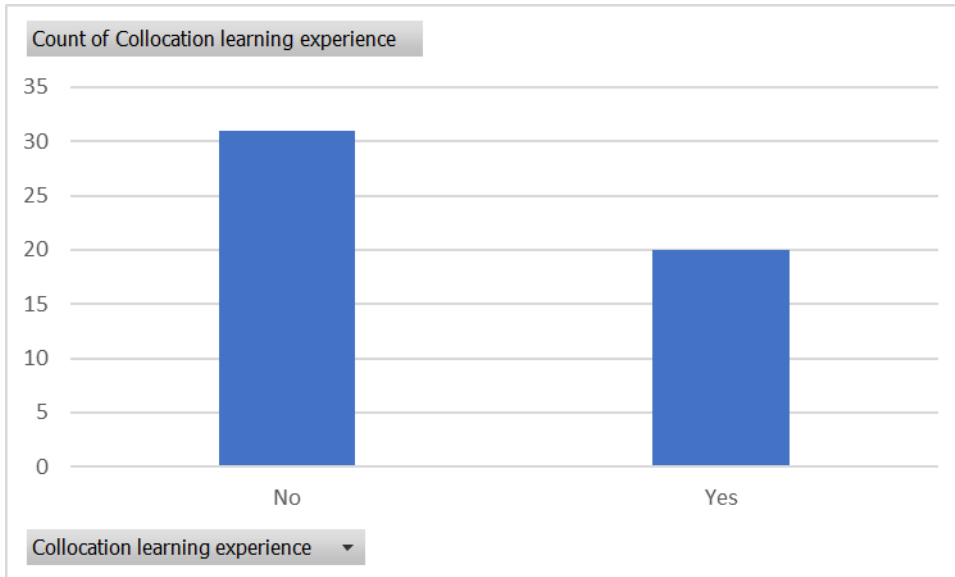
4.3.1 Collocation learning experience

The graphical representation depicted below (**Figure 04**) illustrates the distribution of responses obtained from participants regarding their exposure to lessons or practice on collocations during their language studies. The data were collected through responses to a dichotomous question: "Have you received any lessons or practice on collocations during your language studies?"

The x-axis of the graph specifies two discrete categories of responses: "No" and "Yes," denoting the absence and presence, respectively, of a collocation learning experience among the study participants. While the y-axis quantifies the frequency of collocation learning experience, ranging from 0 to 35. Each bar on the graph represents the frequency of responses corresponding to the participants' exposure to collocation lessons or practice.

Figure 04

Students' collocation learning experience



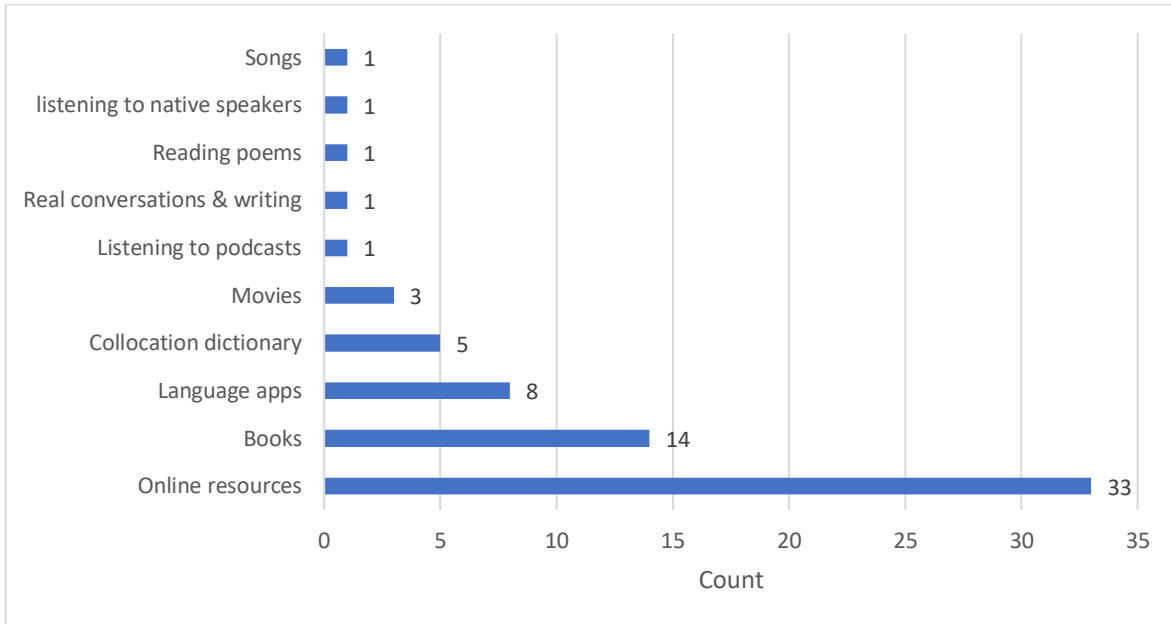
A comparative analysis of the results indicates that the bar corresponding to "No" is significantly higher than the "Yes" bar. The former reaches up to 32 on the y-axis. This indicates that a larger group (32 students) responded negatively, signifying their lack of prior engagement in collocation lessons or practices. On the other hand, the bar corresponding to "Yes" attains about 18 on the y-axis. This suggests that 18 individuals responded affirmatively, indicating their prior involvement in a collocation learning experience.

4.3.2 Collocation Learning Resources

The following bar graph (**figure 05**) illustrates the distribution of collocation learning resources based on their frequency and popularity among study participants. On the x-axis, each resource is quantified by its count, ranging from 0 to 35. The y-axis enumerates the specific collocation learning resources employed by the participants.

Figure 05

Students' collocation learning resources



The analysis indicates a distinct preference for online resources as the predominant and most favored method for learning collocations, represented by a substantial count of 33 among the options listed. In comparison, books emerge as the second most utilized resource, garnering a count of 14, followed by language apps with a count of 8. The use of a collocation dictionary is comparatively lower in 5 instances. Less frequently employed resources include movies (3 counts), while resources such as songs, listening to native speakers, reading poems, engaging in real conversations and writing, and listening to podcasts each exhibit the lowest count of 1, suggesting their limited adoption among respondents

4.3.3 Factors affecting EFL learners noticing collocations

Table 06

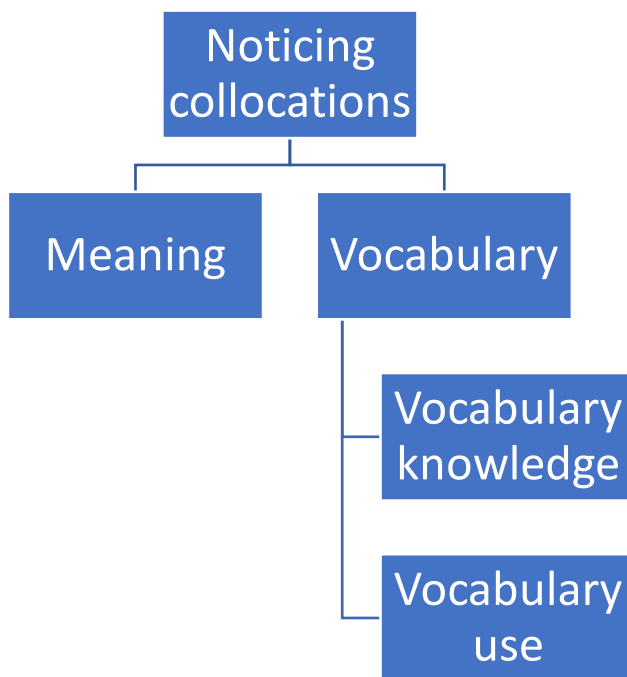
Factors affecting EFL learners' use of collocations

Theme	Code Category	Examples
Factors affecting noticing collocations	Meaning	Subject 12 "Understanding the meaning of collocations"
	Vocabulary knowledge	Subject 05 "Lack of knowledge about all the collocations"

The following hierarchical diagram (**Figure 07**) illustrates the thematic coding of students' responses regarding the difficulties they encounter in noticing collocations while reading. At the top level is the major theme, "Noticing Collocations". This theme branches into two primary categories: "Meaning" and "Vocabulary". The "Meaning" category stands alone without further subcategories. In contrast, the "Vocabulary" category branches further into two subcategories: "Vocabulary Knowledge" and "Vocabulary Use".

Figure 06

Factors affecting EFL learners noticing collocations



The analysis of the thematic coding of students' responses regarding the difficulties they face in noticing collocations reveals two distinct challenges. The first challenge pertains to meaning, indicating that students struggle with understanding the meanings of collocations. The second challenge relates to vocabulary, which further branches into two subcategories:

Vocabulary Knowledge: This subcategory encompasses the students' difficulties related to their overall knowledge of vocabulary, highlighting gaps in their lexical understanding.

Vocabulary Use: This subcategory addresses the challenges students encounter in effectively using vocabulary, focusing on their ability to apply vocabulary knowledge in appropriate

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contexts. These findings underscore the dual nature of the difficulties students face with collocations, emphasizing both semantic comprehension and lexical proficiency.

4.3.4 Factors affecting EFL learners' use of collocations

Table 07

Factors affecting EFL learners' use of collocations

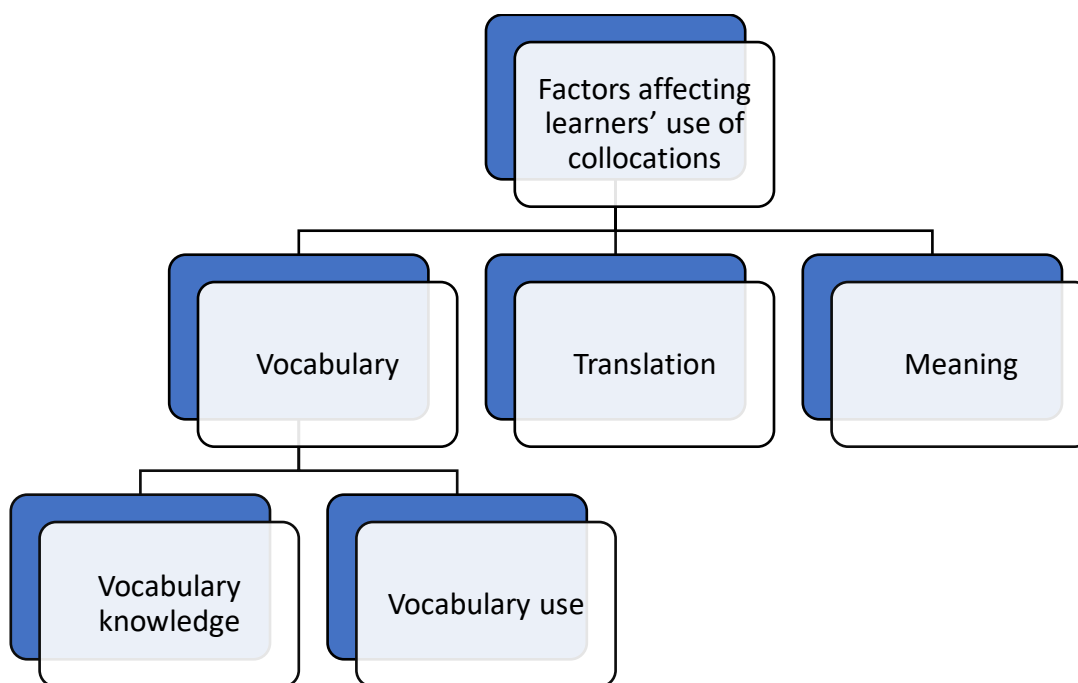
Theme	Category	Codes	Examples
Factors affecting learners' use of collocations	Vocabulary	Vocabulary knowledge	Subject 25 "Luck of vocabulary knowledge"
		Vocabulary use	Subject 05 "I don't know how to use them"
	Translation	Translation	Subject 16 "Translation Challenge"
	meaning	Meaning	Subject 26 "The similarity between the meaning of words"

The figure below (**Figure 07**) is a flowchart that visually represents the thematic coding of various factors influencing EFL learners' use of collocations in writing. At the top level, the main theme is "Factors affecting learners' use of collocations." This central theme branches into three primary categories: "Vocabulary", "Translation", and "Meaning". Vocabulary as the first category is further subdivided into two subcategories: Vocabulary Knowledge and vocabulary Use. Second, the translation category stands alone and does not branch into further

subcategories. Similarly to the translation category, the meaning category also stands alone without further subcategories.

Figure 07

Factors affecting EFL learners' use of collocations



According to **Figure 07**, students face significant difficulties in using collocations due to a fundamental lack of vocabulary knowledge and the complexity of word usage in different contexts, the influence of translation from their native languages, and issues with understanding the meanings of collocations. Starting with vocabulary knowledge, which refers to the extent of learners' familiarity with individual words and collocational patterns. Learners struggle with a lack of vocabulary knowledge, which hinders their ability to use collocations correctly in their context. Moving to vocabulary use, which pertains to how well learners can

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use their vocabulary knowledge correctly in context. Study participants admit that even if they know many words, they do not know how to use them together appropriately in different contexts, which is essential for correct collocation usage. Additionally, the translation category identifies the difficulties students face when translating from their native languages, such as Arabic or French. Learners face challenges in translating collocations which can result in errors or unnatural usage because direct translation does not always produce natural-sounding English collocations. Finally, the meaning category highlights the challenges related to understanding the meaning of collocations. Students may find it difficult to grasp the meanings of certain collocational phrases, which affects their ability to use them appropriately in their writing.

Chapter 05: Discussion chapter

Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings from the study on Algerian EFL students' awareness, understanding, and use of English collocations. The analysis presented in this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the participants' collocational competence, addressing the three research questions that guided the investigation. The first section delves into Algerian EFL students' awareness and understanding of English collocations, examining their performance in collocation recognition and comprehension tasks, as well as their self-reported perceptions. The subsequent section explores the students' use of collocations in their written work, revealing both their strengths and challenges in employing these linguistic elements. Finally, the chapter examines the factors that influence Algerian EFL learners' use of English collocations, drawing insights from the students' perspectives on the difficulties they face.

5.1 Algerian EFL Students' Awareness and Understanding of English Collocations

The first research question investigated the extent to which Algerian EFL students are aware of and understand English collocations. To address this question, the researcher employed a combination of two collocation tasks and a questionnaire. The collocation awareness task assessed the students' ability to recognize and distinguish collocations, while the collocation comprehension task evaluated their understanding of collocational meanings. Additionally, the questionnaire provided further insights into the students' perceptions, knowledge, and usage of collocations, in addition to the factors affecting their noticing of collocations. This multi-

faceted approach allowed the researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Algerian EFL learners' collocational competence.

5.1.1 Algerian EFL Students' Awareness of English Collocations

The current study's findings indicate that Algerian EFL students exhibit a low level of awareness in recognizing and distinguishing English collocations. The results show that these students scored a below-average mean score of 2 on the collocation awareness task, suggesting a collective struggle in identifying collocational patterns when reading. These findings align with those of Djiti and Aboubou (2019), which also revealed that Algerian EFL students were largely unaware of collocations as a concept. Both studies indicate that Algerian EFL learners have limited awareness and recognition of English collocations, suggesting that this is a persistent issue among these students. However, the questionnaire results provide further insights into Algerian EFL students' self-reported awareness of collocations. Regarding their familiarity, the mean score of 3.33 indicates that participants are generally neutral about their familiarity with English collocations. In contrast, the mean score for their perceived ability to notice collocations (3.63) shows that students tend to agree on their ability to identify collocational expressions when reading texts, reflecting a higher practical awareness. This suggests that while students may not feel familiar with the term "collocations," they can recognize these expressions in context. This self-reported awareness level is inconsistent with the findings from the collocation awareness task, where students demonstrated a low level of recognition and identification of English collocations. The discrepancy between students' perceived and actual awareness suggests a disconnect between their understanding of the concept of collocations and their ability to recognize them in practice. This contradiction can be explained by considering that self-reported measures subjectively rely on students'

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perceptions of their abilities, which can be influenced by factors such as overconfidence, misunderstanding of the concept, or social desirability bias (students wanting to present themselves in a better light). Performance-based assessments, on the other hand, often reveal a more accurate picture of students' abilities because they require the application of knowledge rather than self-assessment.

The similarities in findings between the current study and Djiti and Aboubou's (2019) research highlight the persistent challenge Algerian EFL students face in developing their collocation awareness.

Students' answers to the open-ended question on the difficulties they face in noticing collocations may interpret the previous results. The thematic analysis of the students' perspectives reveals two key challenges: challenges related to meaning, and challenges related to vocabulary. The first challenge, about meaning, indicates that the students struggle with understanding the meanings of collocations. This suggests that the meaning of the collocation as a whole is not always intuitive, even when the constituent words are known. The second challenge, related to vocabulary, can be further divided into two subcategories: Vocabulary Knowledge and Vocabulary Use. The former subcategory encompasses the students' difficulties stemming from gaps in their overall lexical knowledge. Whereas, vocabulary use subcategory addresses the challenges students encounter in effectively applying their vocabulary knowledge in appropriate contexts. This speaks to the nuanced and context-dependent nature of collocations, where simply knowing the individual words may not be sufficient for accurate usage.

5.1.2 Algerian EFL Students' Understanding of English Collocations

In contrast to their low awareness, the research indicates that Algerian EFL students highly understand English collocations. Specifically, the results from the comprehension task establish that the mean scores for these students' collocation comprehension were slightly above average at 3.98. The score indicates that Algerian EFL students understand English collocations satisfactorily. These results contradict the findings of other studies reviewed in this research. For instance, Nguyen and Webb (2017) found that Vietnamese EFL students had a limited understanding of collocations, scoring below average. However, the study by Ganji and Beikian (2013) confirms the study's findings in Iranian university EFL students. The study notes that these learners had a weak grasp of lexical collocations answering just over half of the test questions correctly.

The discrepancy between Algerian EFL students' high comprehension and low awareness of collocations suggests a complex relationship between these two aspects of collocational competence. One possible explanation for this unique pattern could be the nature of the comprehension task itself; which might favor students who are good at contextual guessing and inferencing. This could explain why they perform better on comprehension tasks compared to awareness tasks, which require more explicit knowledge of collocations

5.2 Algerian EFL Students' Use of English Collocations in Their Writing

The second research question investigated the extent to which Algerian EFL students use English collocations. Therefore, the researcher employed a combination of collocation production task and a questionnaire. The task assessed the students' ability to use collocations accurately in a context, while the questionnaire provided further insights into the students'

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perceived usage of collocations, collocation learning experience, and contexts for students' use of collocations. Using this multifaceted approach enabled the researchers to gain a thorough insight into the collocational competence of Algerian EFL learners.

The research presents a mixed picture regarding Algerian EFL students' use of collocations in their written work. The results of the collocation use task reveal that while a significant number of students (13 out of 51) effectively employed the right collocations in their writing, achieving a perfect score, the majority (26 out of 51) struggled to use collocations appropriately, failing to demonstrate accuracy in this aspect. This finding aligns with the studies conducted in other EFL contexts, Ganji and Beikian (2013) reported that EFL learners in Iran and Indonesia, respectively exhibited numerous collocation errors in their writing. Similarly, Gede et al.'s (2021) research on Indonesian EFL learners reported that the students struggled to use collocations effectively in their written work. This indicates a common challenge across different EFL contexts where students find it difficult to internalize and accurately use collocations.

On the other hand, the questionnaire results indicate a neutral stance with an average score of 3 among respondents regarding the frequency of using collocations in their written English. This suggests that a notable proportion of students neither feel they frequently use collocations nor infrequently use them in their writing. This neutrality might indicate uncertainty or lack of awareness among students about their use of collocations.

The conflict between the students' actual performance in the collocation task and their self-reported frequency of use suggests a potential gap in their self-awareness or understanding of collocations. Students may not be aware of collocations and their usage patterns, leading to neutral responses in the questionnaire despite their actual struggles in

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using collocations correctly. These results may be due to limited vocabulary, difficulties in understanding the meaning and usage of collocations, and a lack of exposure and practice. Students may not have had sufficient opportunities to encounter and practice using collocations in meaningful written contexts.

The study also explored the students' collocation learning experience and resources. The results reveal that a majority of the students (32 out of 51) reported not receiving any formal lessons or practice specifically focusing on collocations during their language studies, indicating a lack of explicit instruction in this area. Conversely, among those students who had prior engagement in collocation learning experiences (18 out of 51), there appeared to be a better understanding and usage of collocations in their writing. This observation is consistent with findings from previous studies, suggesting that students who receive explicit instruction or engage in collocation learning experiences tend to demonstrate improved understanding and usage of collocations. For example, Martyńska's (2004) study on intermediate English learners in Poland found that students who participated in optional private lessons generally exhibited higher collocational competence, indicating that additional instruction could enhance their proficiency in collocations.

Furthermore, the findings from the current study regarding Algerian EFL students' reported Collocation Learning Resources provide valuable insights into the strategies and tools they employ to learn and acquire English collocations. They indicate a clear preference among the students for online resources as the predominant and most favored method for learning collocations. This suggests that the participants are actively utilizing digital platforms and internet-based materials to supplement their collocation knowledge. The prominence of online resources as a learning tool aligns with the observations made in the study by Arif (2020),

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which highlighted the impact of exposure to various media, including the Internet, on improving Iraqi EFL learners' collocation proficiency. In addition to online resources, the students also reported using books as the second most utilized learning resource for collocations. This finding highlights the continued relevance of traditional print materials, such as textbooks and collocation dictionaries, in the students' collocation learning process. These findings align with the recommendations made in previous studies, such as the research by Ganji and Beikian (2013) and Torabian et al. (2014), which emphasized the importance of incorporating a variety of resources, including textbooks, collocational dictionaries, and corpora, to support the teaching and learning of collocations in the EFL context.

Additionally, the research findings reveal that Algerian EFL students primarily use collocations in daily life conversations (30 students), followed by academic contexts (20 students), and the least in professional settings (4 students). This pattern aligns with the broader literature, which suggests that EFL learners tend to be more comfortable and proficient in using collocations in informal, everyday communication compared to more formal, academic, or professional contexts. From students' responses to the following question why? One possible explanation for these results is that Academic and Professional contexts require a higher level of language proficiency and more specialized vocabulary, including appropriate collocational usage. The fact that fewer students use collocations in academic writing or discussions suggests they may struggle with applying their collocational knowledge in more structured and formal contexts.

5.3 Factors Influencing the Algerian EFL Students' Use of English Collocations in Writing

The third research question explored the factors influencing Algerian EFL Students' Use of English Collocations in Writing. The researcher included an open-ended question to gather students' perspectives concerning the difficulties they face in using collocations.

The research identifies several factors that influence Algerian EFL learners' use of collocations in their writing, including vocabulary knowledge, translation challenges, and meaning comprehension. These findings align with the existing literature on factors affecting EFL learners' collocational competence. Studies in various contexts, such as Huang (2001), Hsu and Chiu (2008), and Gede et al. (2021), have also highlighted learners' insufficient vocabulary knowledge, interference from their native language, and difficulties in understanding the semantic properties of collocations as key barriers to effective collocation usage. Insufficient exposure to diverse English vocabulary leads Algerian EFL learners to struggle with collocation usage due to limited vocabulary, hindering their ability to employ appropriate word combinations in their writing. Furthermore, learners' reliance on their native language (L1) can lead to direct translations that do not account for the idiomatic and collocational differences between languages, resulting in errors in collocation usage. This issue may stem from traditional teaching methods that prioritize memorization over contextual learning, thereby impeding students' ability to comprehend how words naturally collocate. As a result, learners may struggle to internalize the appropriate combinations of words in authentic language usage. Additionally, the abstract nature and semantic complexity of collocations, combined with limited contextual learning opportunities, further impede learners' comprehension and accurate application of collocations in English writing and

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communication. Overall, the similarities in the identified factors suggest that these challenges are not unique to Algerian EFL learners but are shared by EFL students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter offer valuable insights into the collocational competence of Algerian EFL students, shedding light on their awareness, understanding, and use of English collocations. The multifaceted approach employed in the study, involving both performance-based tasks and self-reported measures, has enabled a comprehensive examination of the participants' abilities and challenges in this crucial aspect of language proficiency.

General Conclusion

Introduction

The current study attempted to explore three crucial aspects related to Algerian EFL learners' collocational competency at the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University.

Firstly, this study explored the extent to which EFL learners are aware of and understand English collocations. Secondly, it investigated the extent to which learners use collocations in their writing. Finally, this study looked at the factors impacting students' use of collocations in their writing. This part of the study is considered the most crucial as it introduces the results linked to the research questions and aims. Consequently, the researcher formulated the following three questions:

RQ1: To what extent are Algerian EFL students aware of and understand English collocations?

RQ2: To what extent do Algerian EFL students use collocations in their writing?

RQ3: What factors affect Algerian EFL students' use of collocations in their writing?

1. Algerian EFL Students' Awareness and Understanding of English Collocation

This section examines the extent of Algerian EFL students' awareness and understanding of English collocations through a multi-dimensional methodology. The researcher employed three data collection instruments: a Collocation Awareness Task, a Collocation Comprehension Task, and a Questionnaire. The first evaluated students' ability to identify and use collocations, while the second assessed their understanding of collocational meanings. The third instrument provided insights into students' perceptions, knowledge, usage, and factors influencing their collocation awareness through both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Data analysis combined quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics and frequency counts, with

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qualitative methods, such as thematic coding of open-ended responses and the inductive approach. This comprehensive approach enabled the researchers to thoroughly understand the collocational competence of Algerian EFL learners. The results uncover Algerian EFL students' low level of awareness in recognizing and distinguishing collocations. This suggests that students struggle to identify collocational patterns in texts, possibly due to insufficient exposure and practice with collocations in their language learning environment. Despite reporting a neutral stance on their familiarity with collocations, students tended to agree that they could identify collocational expressions when reading texts. This discrepancy indicates a gap between students' perceived understanding of collocations and their actual ability to recognize them, highlighting a potential overestimation of their collocational competence. Moreover, students face meaning-related challenges (understanding the meaning of collocations) and vocabulary-related issues (gaps in lexical knowledge and contextual application). These challenges point to difficulties in comprehending the nuanced meanings of collocations and effectively using their vocabulary knowledge in appropriate contexts, which can hinder their overall collocational competence. On the other hand, students demonstrate a relatively high level of understanding of collocational meanings in the second activity. This indicates that students are able to infer the meanings of collocations from context, suggesting strong contextual inference skills that aid their comprehension.

2. Algerian EFL Students' Use of English Collocations in Their Writing

The second research question aimed to investigate the extent to which Algerian EFL students use English collocations in their written work. Addressing this, students were given a collocation use task to analyze the actual use of collocations in their writing. In addition to questionnaire items on their perceived use of collocations, their collocation learning

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experience, and contexts in which they use collocations. Afterward, the students' written productions were carefully examined by the researcher to identify the accuracy of collocation usage. Whereas, the questionnaire answers were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Then, the researcher compared and contrasted the results from the collocation use task (actual usage) and the questionnaire (self-reported usage) to gain a comprehensive understanding of Algerian EFL students' use of English collocations. The findings presented a mixed set of findings. The study uncovered a notable discrepancy between the students' actual performance in the collocation use task and their self-reported frequency of using collocations in their written English. The analysis of the students' written work revealed that most of them had difficulty using collocations correctly. However, the questionnaire results indicated that students had a neutral perception of their use of collocations. This suggests that there may be a disconnect between the students' actual collocation usage and their awareness or understanding of how well they use collocations. Moreover, a majority of the Algerian EFL students reported not receiving any formal lessons or practice specifically focused on collocations during their language studies. This lack of explicit instruction on collocations may have contributed to the students' difficulties in using these linguistic elements effectively in their written work. Regarding the contexts in which Algerian EFL students reportedly use collocations, there was a clear preference for daily life conversations. Students exhibit the highest proficiency in employing collocations in informal, everyday interactions, suggesting that they naturally gravitate toward familiar language patterns in casual settings. In academic contexts, there is a noticeable application of collocational knowledge, although it is less frequent than in informal communication. This indicates that while students do utilize collocations in educational settings, their use is not as deeply embedded as it is in everyday speech. The most significant challenge appears in professional settings, where the use of collocations is markedly limited.

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This suggests difficulties in transferring collocational knowledge from informal to formal, professional contexts, possibly due to differences in language register and the specific expectations of professional communication.

3. Factors Influencing the Algerian EFL Students' Use of English Collocations in Writing

To address the third research question regarding the factors influencing the use of English collocations in writing among Algerian EFL students, a comprehensive data collection and analysis methodology was employed. This approach involved the use of an open-ended question designed to gather in-depth insights from the students about the difficulties they face when using collocations in their writing. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to capture nuanced and varied perspectives directly from the students, giving voice to their personal experiences and struggles. Their responses were subjected to a thematic analysis. This later reveals three categories of difficulties including vocabulary knowledge, translation challenges, and meaning comprehension. Many students reported insufficient vocabulary knowledge as a major barrier. This lack of vocabulary hindered their ability to use collocations correctly and effectively in their writing. Moreover, students highlighted difficulties arising from translating directly from their native language (L1) to English. This often led to errors in collocation usage due to differences in idiomatic expressions and collocational patterns between the two languages. Additionally, understanding the semantic properties of collocations posed a significant challenge. Students struggled with grasping the holistic meaning of collocations, which affected their ability to use them accurately in context.

4. Theoretical implications of the study

This study enriches the literature by providing detailed and context-specific insights into the collocational competence of Algerian EFL students, highlighting their unique challenges. Assessing both the awareness and actual usage of collocations, offers a comprehensive picture of these students' collocational competence. The study also identifies specific difficulties they encounter in using collocations, offering a valuable understanding of how learners at this particular context perform compared to those in other regions.

5. Practical implications of the study

The practical implications of this study are significant for educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and learners in the Algerian EFL context. Due to the low level of students' awareness and use of collocations, this study highlights the urgent need for educators to incorporate explicit instruction on collocations and provide contextualized practice opportunities to enhance students' awareness and usage. It also notifies curriculum developers to design materials that integrate collocation instruction and create resources emphasizing contextual application. In addition, policymakers should adjust educational standards to include collocational competence and allocate resources for developing high-quality educational materials. Overall, the findings of this study can lead to improvements in teaching strategies, curriculum design, and educational policies, ultimately enhancing the collocational competence and language proficiency of Algerian EFL students.

6. Limitations of the study

Despite the strengths of this study, it's important to acknowledge some limitations. Addressing these limitations in future research could greatly improve our understanding of collocational

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competence and enhance educational interventions for Algerian EFL students. One limitation was time constraints, which limited our ability to conduct an experimental study to examine their awareness and understanding of collocations. It also prevented the researcher from gathering a sufficiently large random sample that could adequately represent the population or facilitate sophisticated statistical analyses. Additionally, some students were hesitant to fully participate, leading to incomplete and superficial responses. Another concern, the researcher also faced inconsistencies in their responses and a tendency for students to answer without careful consideration, making data interpretation challenging. Furthermore, self-reported data on students' perceived competence, while valuable, introduces the risk of bias as individuals may overestimate or underestimate their abilities. This could affect the findings related to perceived collocational competence, affecting the overall accuracy and reliability of the study's conclusions.

7. Recommendations for future research

This study gave significant insights into the collocational competence of Algerian EFL students, as well as the challenges they face in using collocations. It also offers opportunities for future research to explore this linguistic aspect in different groups. It could extend the investigation of collocational competence in writing to a different population of English language learners, such as Master students. Comparing collocational usage patterns and awareness across different learner levels could provide valuable insights into the generalizability of collocational acquisition processes. Moreover, Future research endeavors in the domain of collocational competence should tackle speaking competency to broaden the scope of inquiry, deepen our understanding of the practical application of collocations in spoken discourse, and enhance language pedagogy practices. This expansion would offer

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valuable insights into how collocational competence manifests in real-time communication and inform the development of targeted instructional strategies to improve learners' speaking proficiency. Furthermore, utilizing experimental studies to explore learners' awareness and utilization of collocations can provide a more nuanced understanding of their actual collocational competency. By employing controlled settings and systematic methodologies, researchers can closely observe how learners' collocational knowledge and usage patterns, offering valuable insights into the extent to which learners effectively integrate collocations into their writing. Furthermore, experimental studies allow for the manipulation of variables and conditions, facilitating a deeper exploration of the factors that influence learners' collocational competency.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Data collection instruments

Dear participant,

I am currently conducting a research study on exploring students' awareness and use of collocations in their writing. Therefore, you are kindly requested to take part in this study by responding to the given questionnaire to help us collect accurate data for the study. Your contribution is highly valued.

Please be assured that all the information gathered will be secured and used solely for research objectives, as well as your personal information, and the anonymity of your responses throughout this investigation will be guaranteed.

Section one: Profile information

Gender: Male Female

Age:

First language:

Language learning experience (number of years you have been studying English in school and university):

University degree in preparation:

Study year: L1 L2 L3 M1 M2 Other

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Section two: Collocations task

Activity one (01): Underline the collocational expressions in the following paragraph:

“My friend Abigail is desperately worried about her son at the moment. He wants to enrol on a course of some sort but just can’t make a decision about what to study. I gave Abigail a ring and we had a long chat about it last night. She said he’d like to study for a degree but is afraid he won’t meet the requirements for university entry. Abigail thinks he should do a course in Management because he’d like to set up his own business in the future. I agree that that would be a wise choice.” (Mccarthy & O’dell, n.d.).

-Use two from the underlined collocations in the previous paragraph in your examples:

1.

2.

Activity two (02): Tick (✓) the correct meaning for the following expressions:

1. A heavy smoker:	Someone who smokes because he's overweight	<input type="radio"/>
	Someone who smokes one cigarette after another	<input type="radio"/>
	Someone who doesn't smoke light cigarettes	<input type="radio"/>
	Someone who doesn't smoke	<input type="radio"/>

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2. Go crazy:	To lose the mind	<input type="radio"/>	
	To get angry	<input type="radio"/>	
	To feel happy	<input type="radio"/>	
	To get very excited	<input type="radio"/>	
3. Run the risk:	To avoid the risk	<input type="radio"/>	
	To eliminate the risk	<input type="radio"/>	
	To do something risky that could have a bad result	<input type="radio"/>	
	To reduce the risk	<input type="radio"/>	
4. Meet a need:	To need something necessary	<input type="radio"/>	
	To provide what is needed	<input type="radio"/>	
	To neglect a need	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be aware of a need	<input type="radio"/>	
5. To alleviate pain	Making others experience pain	<input type="radio"/>	
	The experience of being in pain	<input type="radio"/>	
	Making pain go away	<input type="radio"/>	

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	To increase pain	<input type="radio"/>	
6. Fighting chance:	Losing chance	<input type="radio"/>	
	Taking the chance	<input type="radio"/>	
	Having a chance of success after a hard struggle.	<input type="radio"/>	
	Having no chance	<input type="radio"/>	
7. Chair a meeting:	Being in charge of a meeting	<input type="radio"/>	
	Attending a meeting	<input type="radio"/>	
	Participating in a meeting	<input type="radio"/>	
	Missing a meeting	<input type="radio"/>	

Section three: Questionnaire

1- To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

A - I am familiar with English collocations.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

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B - I often notice collocational expressions when I read in English

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.1- What difficulties do you face in noticing collocations when reading?

.....

.....

.....

C- I often use collocational expressions when I write in English.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1.2- What difficulties do you face in using collocations in writing?

.....

.....

.....

2. How do you define the concept of “collocations”?

.....

.....

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3. Have you received any lessons or practice on collocations during your language studies?

Yes

No

4. What resources do you use to learn and practice collocations?

a) books

b) online resources

c) language apps

d) collocation dictionary (online or hard copies)

d) None of them

Others, specify.....

5. In what context do you use collocations the most?

a) Academic conversations

b) Professional conversations

c) Daily life conversations/ communications (Messaging, texting ...)

Why?.....
.....

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire.

Appendix B: Key answers to collocations' task

Activity one (01): Underline the collocational expressions in the following paragraph:(**1pt for each**)

“My friend Abigail is desperately worried about her son at the moment. He wants to enrol on a course of some sort but just can't make a decision about what to study. I gave Abigail a ring and we had a long chat about it last night. She said he'd like to study for a degree but is afraid he won't meet the requirements for university entry. Abigail thinks he should do a course in Management because he'd like to set up his own business in the future. I agree that that would be a wise choice.”

-Use two from the underlined collocations in the previous paragraph in your examples (**1pt for each example**)

Using the right collocation(0.5pt) + using the collocation appropriately in a context (0.5pt)

.....

Activity two (02): Tick (✓) the correct meaning for the following expressions: (**1 pt for each**)

1. A heavy smoker:	Someone who smokes because he's overweight	<input type="radio"/>
	Someone who smokes one cigarette after another	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

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	Someone who doesn't smoke light cigarettes	<input type="radio"/>
	Someone who doesn't smoke	<input type="radio"/>
2. Go crazy:	To lose the mind	<input type="radio"/>
	To get angry	<input type="radio"/>
	To feel happy	<input type="radio"/>
	To get very excited	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3. Run the risk:	To avoid the risk	<input type="radio"/>
	To eliminate the risk	<input type="radio"/>
	To do something risky that could have a bad result	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	To reduce the risk	<input type="radio"/>
4. Meet a need:	To need something necessary	<input type="radio"/>
	To provide what is needed	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	To neglect a need	<input type="radio"/>
	To be aware of a need	<input type="radio"/>
5. To alleviate pain	Making others experience pain	<input type="radio"/>

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	The experience of being in pain	<input type="radio"/>
	Making pain go away	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	To increase pain	<input type="radio"/>
6. Fighting chance:	Losing chance	<input type="radio"/>
	Taking the chance	<input type="radio"/>
	Having a chance of success after a hard struggle.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	Having no chance	<input type="radio"/>
7. Chair a meeting:	Being in charge of a meeting	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
	Attending a meeting	<input type="radio"/>
	Participating in a meeting	<input type="radio"/>
	Missing a meeting	<input type="radio"/>

المخلص

التراكيب الكلامية تلعب دورًا حيويًا في تعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث تُعتبر مكونات أساسية للكفاءة التواصلية. تشير إلى أزواج الكلمات التي تحدث معًا بشكل متكرر، مما يعزز الطبيعية والانسيابية في استخدام اللغة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف الوعي واستخدام التراكيب الكلامية بين الطلاب الجزائريين الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، بهدف تقييم فهمهم وتطبيقهم للمعرفة التراكيبية في الكتابة، بالإضافة إلى العوامل التي تؤثر على استخدامهم في الكتابة. باستخدام منهج مختلط، جمعت الدراسة البيانات الكمية والنوعية من 51 طالبًا جامعيًا في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. تم جمع البيانات من خلال مهام لوعي واستخدام التراكيب الكلامية، ومهمة فهم التراكيب الكلامية، واستبيان شبه منظم حول الوعي واستخدام الطلاب للتراكيب الكلامية، بالإضافة إلى العوامل التي تؤثر على استخدامهم. تم تحليل البيانات المحصلة باستخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية والتميز النمذجي. كشفت النتائج عن نقص واضح في الوعي والتحديات في التطبيق الدقيق للتراكيب الكلامية، ويرجع ذلك إلى قلة التعرض والممارسة، على الرغم من فهم نسبي لمعاني التراكيب الكلامية. الصعوبات الرئيسية تتضمن قلة معرفة المفردات وتحديات الترجمة من لغتهم الأم، وصعوبات في فهم معاني التراكيب الكلامية. تساهم النتائج في الاستراتيجيات التعليمية من خلال تسليط الضوء على أهمية دمج التراكيب الكلامية في المناهج الدراسية لتحسين كفاءة كتابة الطلاب والكفاءة التواصلية العامة. تقدم الدراسة توصيات إضافية للباحثين الآخرين الذين ينوون إجراء أبحاث مماثلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التراكيب الكلامية؛ الكفاءة التراكيبية؛ الوعي بالتراكيب؛ معرفة التراكيب؛ كفاءة الكتابة.