ON COLLOCATIONS IN EFL TEXTBOOKS FOR B2 LEARNERS

Abstract: The aim of this study is to determine whether the vocabulary sections in the four chosen modern EFL upper – intermediate coursebooks reflect the achievements of contemporary findings on the role of collocations in SLA. The study seeks to establish if these textbooks include middle – strength collocations, which pose the most difficulty for L2 learners, and to determine which of the four textbooks contain most of them. The paper provides an overview of the definitions of a collocation including its distinguishable criteria. It further elaborates on the reasons why a lack of collocational awareness prevents even advanced users of English, from achieving native speaker mastery and discusses collocations that are the most challenging to acquire. For the purpose of the study, Benson, Benson and Ilson’s as well as Lewis’s collocations’ categorizations are applied.

Keywords: collocation, L2 acquisition, communicative competence, EFL textbooks, CEFR B2 level.


Słowa kluczowe: kolokacja, nauce języka obcego, kompetencje komunikacyjne, EFL textbooks, poziom B2.
Introduction

The New Oxford Dictionary of English defines *collocation* in its non-linguistic meaning as “the action of placing things side by side or in position: *the collocation of the two pieces*.1 In linguistics, however, it refers to “the habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words with a frequency greater than chance: *the words have a similar range of collocation*.2 Therefore, as opposed to “placing things side by side”, in linguistics the term refers to “particular words.” Furthermore, the “juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words” must be *habitual*, which means that the word pairings co-occur as a habit or constantly. Consequently, one-off instances of word combinations are not considered a *collocation*. In phraseology, the study of word combinations, the term *collocation* was conceived by Firth in 1957 when he said “You shall know a word by the company it keeps.”3 Firth claims that *habitual collocations* in which a word appears are part of a *word’s meaning*. It is worth noting here, Firth adds, that the *meaning* of a word is to be understood via Wittgenstein’s assertion that: “the meaning of words lies in their use.”4 Accordingly, Firth states that since *dark* typically collocates with *night* “one of the meanings of *night* is its collocability with *dark*.5 In other words, the meaning of the word *night* is defined by its collocate *dark*. Following Sinclair6 the word in the center of attention that is being studied, in this case *night* is called *node*, whereas the other lexical items accompanying the node are called *collocates*, in this case *dark, cold, November*. Furthermore, Firth uses the word *collocation* to refer to the relationship between words in the same context so that when one encounters a word one expects the occurrence of another. The notion of *mutual expectancy* has been frequently found in definitions of the term *collocation* proposed by other linguists. Hoey, for example, defines it as “the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual context).”8 That means that, words are collocates of each other if, in a given sample of language, they are found together more often than their individual frequencies would predict.9

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2 Ibid.
4 Ibid. 179.
7 Ibid. 196.
Words which stand in such a relationship can be said to predict one another because the presence of one makes the presence of the other more likely than it would otherwise be. Lewis encapsulates it by stating that “certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency.”

It cannot be denied that collocations are ubiquitous as they “are found in up to 70% of everything we say, hear, or write,” which draws our attention to the strong patterning existent in English and proves that one cannot satisfactorily establish the meaning of a text by decoding meanings of individual words. According to Nation, language competence equals collocational knowledge “because the stored sequences of words are the bases of learning, knowledge and use.” For this reason, collocational awareness, and an accurate use of collocations by second language learners appears to be crucial for successful L2 acquisition. Since “collocations are arbitrary and unpredictable” and therefore a source of difficulty for non-natives, educators should raise their learners’ awareness of these chunks of language thus aiding them in the learning process. Therefore, selecting appropriate teaching materials, including textbooks rich in high frequency collocations seems to be of utter importance.

The Criteria for Collocation

Manning & Schutze characterize collocation as having limited compositionality, which means that its meaning cannot be fully predicted from the meaning of its individual parts. Collocations are regarded as not fully compositional as “there is usually an element of meaning added to the combination.” They provide strong tea as an example and explain that strong in this combination has acquired the meaning rich in some active agent, which is closely related but slightly different from the basic sense having great physical strength and claim that idioms are the most extreme examples of non-
compositionality. Most collocations, however, display milder forms of it (i.e., the meaning of the whole expression is nearly the composition of the parts) in the view presented by these researchers. Another criterion they mention is non-modifiability, which means that “many collocations cannot be freely modified with additional lexical material or through grammatical transformations.”17 For example, the noun in to kick the bucket cannot be modified as to kick the [holey/plastic/water] bucket.

In addition, Cowie, who is considered a typical representative of the phraseological approach, defines collocations by delimiting them from other types of word combinations, most importantly from idioms on the one side and from what he sometimes calls free combinations on the other.18 He divides word combinations into two main categories, composites and formulae. Formulae being combinations with primarily pragmatic function such as How are you? or Good morning19 and collocations, a part of the group of composites, described as having a primarily syntactic function.

Within the group of composites to distinguish its elements, Cowie uses the criteria of semantic transparency, “which refers to whether the elements of the combination and the combination itself have a literal or a non-literal meaning” and commutability or alternatively named substitutability, “which refers to whether and to what degree the substitution of the elements of the combination is restricted.”20

Collocation as a Major Obstacle in L2 Mastery

According to Crystal, “collocations… provide a major difficulty in mastering foreign languages.”21 Halliday and Hasan explain that collocations tend to be language specific, hence, likely to be the cause of language mistakes and communication breakdowns.22 What’s more, as Lombard further highlights,23 collocations follow some constraints that are completely unmarked for L2 learners.

17 Ibid. 172.
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unless they are made aware of them. Wolter\textsuperscript{24} also adds that in SLL, learning collocations appears to be much more difficult than learning grammatical rules as even high-level learners seem to experience considerable difficulties in the accurate use of collocations. Howarth’s studies into the phraseology of non-native speaker’s writing further support this view.\textsuperscript{25} He claims that even advanced level learners make one particular type of error in writing, namely incorrect use of collocations, which according to the scholar, “can lead to a lack of precision and obscure the clarity required in academic communication.” \textsuperscript{26} In a different study, Waller\textsuperscript{27} asked native speakers of English to conduct a comparative analysis of texts written by near-native and native speakers. The evaluators assessed lexical sophistication, variation, and density. The results showed that collocational errors constituted the largest category of all identified lexical problems in near-natives written work. It was further concluded that collocational usage errors were only identified in texts written by near natives whereas other lexical and syntactic errors were found in both types of texts (i.e., written by near natives and native speakers). Consequently, collocational errors stood out as a typical feature of being a non-native i.e., “a foreign accent in writing.”\textsuperscript{28} In an earlier study conducted by Channell,\textsuperscript{29} L2 learners were asked to mark acceptable collocations in a collocational grid. The results showed that learners not only chose collocations that were inaccurate in English but also failed to select a considerable number of commonly used and acceptable collocations, even though individual lexical items used in the test were familiar to them. This shows that even though learners were familiar with the individual lexical items being tested, they were not able to make correct choices regarding their collocates. The question then arises which types of collocations pose the most difficulty for L2 learners. As found by Nesselhauf,\textsuperscript{30} these seem to be everyday expressions. Källkvist\textsuperscript{31} supports this view. In his opinion, even though high frequency verbs such as: get, make, take, put and have, are easy to understand in reading or listening comprehension


\textsuperscript{25} P. Howarth, Phraseology in English Academic Writing: Some Implications for Language Learning and Dictionary Making, (Tübingen, Germany, 1996), 140.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, ix.


\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. 276.


and are assumed to be successfully acquired at an elementary to intermediate stage of learning, they seem to be incompetently used by advanced learners who tend to overuse them. This seems to be the case since these verbs are highly polysemous and learners fail to recognize their usage restrictions.

**Collocations which Pose the Most Difficulty for L2 Learners**

In the overview of studies devoted to *collocation* and *second language use*, Leśniewska\(^{32}\) outlines after Howarth\(^{33}\) that collocations which are on the border between free and restricted combinations are the most difficult to acquire and use accurately by L2 learners. She claims that the difficulty might lie in the non-native user not being able to distinguish between restricted and free collocational options. It seems that *collocations* that are *partly restricted* or *middle strength* as categorized by Hill\(^{34}\) are not learnt as chunks in the way idioms or *more restricted collocations* are. It appears that the ability to manipulate such clusters is a sign of true native speaker competence and is a useful indicator of degrees of proficiency across the boundary between non-native and native competence.\(^{35}\)

In addition, Leśniewska\(^{36}\) claims that scholars and teachers of English mainly focus on “the two extremes of the collocational spectrum: the free, rule-governed combinations on the one hand, and fixed, stable multi-word units, such as idioms, on the other,”\(^{37}\) which is rather unfortunate as it is the “large and complex middle ground of restricted collocations”\(^{38}\) that should be given higher priority. Leśniewska also points out that collocations are said to be semantically transparent hence when learners come across them in foreign discourse for the first time, they will not attract their attention as L2 learners will not have difficulty understanding them. On the other hand, idioms are typically *opaque* and/or *figurative* and not only will they attract the attention of the learner but also, they may be more easily memorized as they cause more initial difficulty in decoding their meaning. All in all, *middle strength* collocations pose the most difficulty for L2 learners as they are neither completely “free” nor completely “fixed”. It is evident then that the complex nature of restrictedness is the largest stumbling block on the route to native speaker – like language use.

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34 Hill, 53.
35 Howarth, 38 quoted in Leśniewska, 98.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Howarth, 48 quoted in Leśniewska, 98.
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Collocational categorizations referred to in the study

Following Benson, Benson and Ilson’s\(^\text{39}\) categorization, typical lexical collocations are made up of two or more content words i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These word combinations are as outlined below:

1) verb + noun (kick the ball, make a sandwich)
2) adjective + noun (terrible mistake)
3) noun + verb (cars crash)
4) noun 1 + of + noun 2 (a school of fish)
5) adverb + adjective (closely related)
6) adjective + adverb (sound asleep)
7) verb + adverb (incredibly effective).

According to the grammar-oriented tradition, collocations are regarded as lexical and syntactic patterns which are in interrelated levels of structure. The supporters of this theory state that the focus of collocational study ought to be based on the syntactic and semantic aspects of collocations rather than on mere linear and syntagmatic co-occurrence of items. As Greenbaum\(^\text{40}\) notes, “a serious disadvantage of a purely item oriented approach to the study of collocations is that it obscures syntactic restrictions on collocations.”\(^\text{41}\) For example, *much* collocates with *like* in a negative sentence as in *I don’t like him much* but not in an affirmative sentence as *I like him much*. He further suggests that the collocability of words should be connected to syntax and claims that some collocations appear together only in certain syntactic relationships, as the above example shows. Representing the grammar-oriented notion, Michell\(^\text{42}\) criticized the Neo-Firthians for separating the lexical study from the grammatical one in their pursuit to discover the nature of collocation. In his opinion to succeed in this task, grammar and lexis should be examined as one entity and further maintained that meanings of collocations originate from both lexical and grammatical relations. He also maintains that “lexical particularities are considered to derive their meaning not only from contextual extension of a lexical kind but also from the generalized grammatical patterns within which they appear.”\(^\text{43}\) Finally, to further stress the significance of the grammar – driven tradition, Kejllmerconcludes that collocations


\(^{41}\) Ibid. 10.


\(^{43}\) Ibid.
are “lexically determined and grammatically restricted sequences of words.”

As in the case of commonly recognized lexical collocational patterns, Benson suggests the following grammatical groupings marked as G1 to G8, among which, G8 collocations contained nineteen English verb patterns. Examples of the combinations have been provided in brackets.

G1) noun + preposition
   (anger at)
G2) noun + to inf.
   (his offer to take us home)
G3) noun + that clause
   (He made a promise that he would…)
G4) preposition + noun
   (in conclusion, on balance)
G5) adjective + preposition
   (concerned about)
G6) predicate adjective + to inf.
   (It was careless of him to say that)
G7) adjective + that clause
   (He was confident that he would win)

G8) There are 19 patterns as listed below:
   a. SVO to O
      (He gave the rose to her)
   b. SVO to O (or) SVOO
      (She sent an email to her mum OR She sent her mum an email)
   c. SVO for O (or) SVOO
      (He bought the laptop for his wife. He bought her wife a laptop)
   d. SV prep. O (or) SVO prep. O
      (She travelled by bus. We took them to the museum)
   e. SV to inf.
      (He continued to write.)
   f. SV inf.
      (She had better rest.)
   g. SVV- ing
      (I don’t mind waiting.)
   h. SVO to inf.
      (They asked me to give a talk.)
   i. SVO inf.
      (He saw the boy fall.)
   j. SVOV- ing
      (He saw the boy crossing the street.)
   k. SV possessive V- ing
      (She imagines his wanting to stay forever.)
   l. SV (O) that – clause
      (He regretted that he hadn’t visited his cousins.)
   m. SVO to be C
      (He considers his tutor to be very knowledgeable.)
   n. SVOC
      (He had his bedroom re-painted.)
   o. SVOO
      (I owe you 50 quid.)

45 M. Benson, Preface, in M. Benson, E. Bensonand R. Ilson, Eds., The BBI dictionary of English word combinations, i-v.
Lewis proposed the following alternative groupings as presented below:

1) adjective + noun (a major crisis)
2) verb + noun (spill coffee)
3) noun + noun (coffee jar)
4) verb + adjective + noun (undertake a brave decision)
5) compound noun (traffic jam)
6) binominal (upside down)
7) trinominal (He’s tall, dark and handsome)
8) noun + verb (His injuries were serious and could only be properly treated in hospital.)

9) verb + adverb (drive carefully)
10) adverb + adjective (absolutely brilliant)
11) discourse marker (As I said, well, anyway)
12) multi-word prepositional phrase (throughout the thick forest)
13) phrasal verb (take in)
14) adjective + preposition (jealous of)
15) fixed phrase (for the time being)
16) incomplete fixed phrase (sort of / kind of)
17) fixed expression (to tell you the truth)
18) semi – fixed expression (See you later/ tomorrow/on Monday)
19) part of a proverb (Too many cooks…)
20) part of a quotation (To be or not to be…)

As illustrated above Lewis uses the term collocation to identify “many different kinds of item” in contrast to Benson’s categorization.

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47 Ibid. 133.
Fixed (or Restricted) and More Open (or Free) Collocations

As outlined above, collocations can be characterized using the criteria of non-compositionality, non-substitutability, non-modifiability and semantic transparency, on the basis of which Nesselhauf, after Cowie (1992) distinguishes the following four types of combinations, emphasizing, however, that these types are not clearly delimitable, but should rather be considered as forming a continuum:

Free combinations (e.g., drink tea):
– the restriction on substitution can be specified on semantic grounds;
– all elements of the word combination are used in a literal sense.

Restricted collocations (e.g., perform a task):
– some substitution is possible, but there are arbitrary limitations on substitution;
– at least one element has a non-literal meaning, and at least one element is used in its literal sense; the whole combination is transparent.

Figurative idioms (e.g., do a U-turn, in the sense of ‘completely change one’s policy or behaviour’):
– substitution of the elements is seldom possible;
– the combination has a figurative meaning, but preserves a current literal interpretation.

Pure idioms (e.g., blow the gaff):
– substitution of the elements is impossible;
– the combination has a figurative meaning and does not preserve a current literal interpretation.

According to this classification, collocations can be placed along a continuum with free combinations on one end of it and pure idioms on the other as illustrated below:

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48 Nesselhauf, 14-15.
Figure 1.
Own elaboration based on Cowie’s classification of collocations found in Nesselhauf.\(^{50}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free combinations</th>
<th>Restricted collocations</th>
<th>Figurative Idioms</th>
<th>Pure idioms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Lewis\(^{51}\) additionally distinguishes the following grouping criteria:

- **Strong** i.e., fixed or more restricted (drug addict), which tend to be treated as single words,
- **Weak** i.e. more open and less restricted (a nice / gloomy / great day), in which the **node** can appear with other words,
- **Frequent** and infrequent, based on their statistical co-occurrence in a corpus.

As Lewis highlights, collocations can be any combination of strong and frequent, strong and infrequent, weak and frequent or infrequent.\(^{52}\)

Hill\(^{53}\) proposes a very similar, however, a more comprehensive categorization than Lewis. In Hill’s view collocations tend to be:

- **Unique** or **fixed** e.g., *to foot the bill, to shrug one’s shoulders*; none if its parts can be substituted i.e., *bill* cannot be replaced with *invoice* or *receipt* whereas *shoulders* cannot be substituted with *arms* or *hands*.
- **Strong collocations** e.g., *trenchant criticism, nomadic tribe, rancid butter*; these collocations are not fixed as for instance *nomadic* can be substituted with other words. The choice of these words is limited, though.
- **Middle – strength collocations** represent the bulk of what is said and written e.g., *hold a meeting / conference, make a mistake / cake / an appointment, and catch a bus / cold*. Acquiring this type of collocations seems to be the most challenging for L2 learners since as Hill and Lewis argue learners know words like *make* and *mistake*. However, since they do not store *make a mistake* in their mental lexicon as a single lexical item, they cannot retrieve it from memory when required.\(^{54}\)
- **Weak collocations** collocate freely with a number of lexical items and can be easily predicted by L2 learners i.e. *long hair, cheap car, good boy*.

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\(^{50}\) Nesselhauf, 14-15.


\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Hill, 56-57.

\(^{54}\) Hill, 49-60.
Research method and results

I chose to examine textbooks at a B2 level as there is an extrinsic motivation for Polish high school students to attain B2 level competence in English by the time they reach their last year of high school. Firstly, final year high school students are required to take a foreign language exam. Up to and including year 2019, the exam was at a basic level B1+ (productive skills) / B2 (receptive skills) and B2+ (productive skills) / C1 (receptive skills) at an extended level. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the requirements were changed to A2+ (productive skills) / B1 (receptive skills) at a basic level and B1+ (productive skills) / B2 (receptive skills) at an extended level. Such requirements make B2 level competence a standard to aspire to. Secondly, students wishing to undertake courses offered in English at Polish Universities must provide proof of their English proficiency at a minimum of B2 level. Among accepted certificates listed at the University of Warsaw website, for example, is the Cambridge English First B2. This makes students interested in such courses motivated to reach this level by the time they apply to university. Furthermore, once students have been accepted on a chosen university course, if they wish to participate in the Erasmus program, they must also be in the possession of a recognized certificate at an at least B2 level. Finally, some students choose to work and study. Therefore, they may have to opt for part time weekend studies to work full time on weekdays. In many workplaces this day and age, a certificate of a language competence at a B2 level is often a prerequisite. For the above reasons, to conduct a comparative analysis of the types of collocations included in coursebooks for B2 learners, I chose to analyze four textbooks written by native speakers of English and published by four major publishers: Speak out Upper-intermediate by F. Eales, S. Oakes, (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2011), Face to Face Upper – intermediate by C. Redson, and G. Cunningham, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), First Expert by J. Bell and R. Gower, (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2014), Ready for First3rd Edition, by R. Norris, (London: Macmillan, 2014).

The first two mentioned coursebooks are classified as general English coursebooks whereas the remaining two are geared towards preparing learners to take *Cambridge First* – a Cambridge University language proficiency exam at a B2 level in the CEFR. The study was conducted using Benson (1986), Benson, Benson & Ilson’s (1997), Lewis’s (2000) and Hill’s (2000) classifications of collocations. The focus of the study was middle strength lexical collocations and grammatical collocations containing prepositions as they pose the most difficulty for Polish learners of English.\(^{60}\) The collocations were copied down from the source material unit by unit and added up. The results of the findings were included in the tables below. Each table with collocations presents a breakdown of the different patterns and their quantitative representation in a particular coursebook as shown below.

### Table 1. Collocational patterns in numbers and percentages present in *First Expert*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of collocation</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Adjective + noun</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Verb + noun</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Noun + preposition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Adjective + preposition</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Verb + preposition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Preposition + noun</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, *verb + noun* collocations form the largest group of collocations in *First Expert*. *Adjective + noun* combinations come second and are followed by *preposition + noun, verb + preposition, adjective + preposition* and *noun + preposition* partnerships.

### Table 2. Collocational patterns in numbers and percentages present in *Ready for First*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of collocation</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Adjective + noun</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Verb + noun</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Noun + preposition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Adjective + preposition</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Verb + preposition</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Preposition + noun</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Verb + adj + noun</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{60}\) See M. B. Paradowski, ‘Polish Learners’ Mistakes in English Prepositional Constructions and their Possible Causes: A Data-based Approach,’ [https://www.academia.edu/2400990/Polish_Learners_Mistakes_in_English_Prepositional_Constructions_and_their_Possible_Causes_A_Data_based_Approach?email_work_card=view-paper](https://www.academia.edu/2400990/Polish_Learners_Mistakes_in_English_Prepositional_Constructions_and_their_Possible_Causes_A_Data_based_Approach?email_work_card=view-paper)
In *Ready for First*, *adjective + noun* collocations by far outweigh other types of word combinations. *Verb + noun* collocations are the second largest group whereas *verb + preposition* pairs come third. *Verb + adjective + noun* and *preposition + noun* are the smallest groups. *Ready for First* is the only analyzed textbook, which contains *verb + adj + noun* collocations.

Table 3. Collocational patterns in numbers and percentages present in *Face 2 face*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of collocation</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h. Adjective + noun</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Verb + noun</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Noun + preposition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Adjective + preposition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Verb + preposition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Preposition + noun</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In *Face 2 Face*, just like in *First Expert*, *verb + noun* collocations form the largest group. Unlike in *Ready for First* or *First Expert*, *adjective + preposition* as well as *verb + preposition* constitute the second largest group whereas *adjective + noun* collocations have the least significant representation in this coursebook in contrast to the other titles.

Table 4. Collocational patterns in numbers and percentages present in *Speak out*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of collocation</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Adjective + noun</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Verb + noun</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Noun + preposition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Adjective + preposition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Verb + preposition</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Preposition + noun</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Verb + adverb</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Verb + adjective</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Adverb + adjective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, to *First Expert* and *Face 2 Face*, *Speak out* has the most *verb + noun* collocations – significantly more than any other word combinations. *Adjective + noun* collocations form the second largest group. However, they constitute a mere 19\% of the total number of collocations. *Verb + adverb* and *verb + adjective* have an even lesser presence of 12\% and 10\% respectively whereas *adverb + adjective* pairs are represented by only two examples, which is just over 1\%. 
Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the vocabulary content in each of the four examined textbooks seems to reflect the most current findings on the prominent role collocation plays in successful L2 mastery and the nature of difficulties learners have acquiring them. Each of the titles analyzed contains middle strength lexical and grammatical collocations with prepositions. Having said that, each title slightly varies in the collocation pattern representation and varies considerably in the quantitative representation of the collocation patterns each title shares. Furthermore, the data support the view that coursebooks aimed at preparing learners to take the Cambridge First exam at B2 level not only contain considerably more collocations than general English coursebooks, but they also include a wider scope of both lexical and grammatical middle strength collocations. On the other hand, the results also show that verb + noun collocations, which seem to pose the most difficulty for L2 learners as discussed above, constitute the largest group of collocations in First Expert - one of the exam books as well as the two chosen general English books: Face 2 FaceUpper – intermediate and Speak out Upper – intermediate. In addition, it can also be concluded that grammatical collocations such as noun / adjective / verb + preposition or preposition + noun are non – existent in Speak out Upper – intermediate and have far lower representation than the lexical ones in First Expert or Ready for First, which is surprising since these kinds of collocations also belong to a group which is harder to acquire for L2 learners. Finally, even though the data available support the view that the chosen coursebooks represent achievements of the contemporary research, it would be worth examining if the collocations included in these coursebooks are high frequency ones, whether they are represented in sufficient numbers in comparison to other lexical items included in the textbooks examined and whether collocations included in unit 1, for example, reappear in the units to follow.

Bibliography


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