check for
updates

JORDANIAN EFL STUDENTS' USE OF ENGLISH COLOR TERMS IN COLLOCATIONS

Sana' Ababneh

Associate Professor, Basic Sciences Department, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan.
Email: ababneh_sanaa@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The present study addresses a significant but neglected aspect of vocabulary teaching in general and teaching collocations, in particular, which is color term collocations. A significant number of idioms involve use color terms such as blue blood, black death, red tape, black sheep, and yellow press that are significant to study in the context of foreign language teaching. This study dealt with teaching color term collocations that are essence of language teaching/learning and translation. A multiple-choice test was used as the main instrument of this study. The sample of the study consisted of 94 Jordanian EFL students. Results obtained from the study showed that students' performance in the test was weak. Moreover, the statements that had the black color terms were the most successfully addressed ones while the least correctly tackled ones were those related to the yellow color term. The data also showed that neither the students' gender nor their academic degree level had significantly affected their performance in the test. The study also revealed that the teaching of this component of vocabulary teaching was much neglected, which could be due to students' insufficient knowledge regarding this respect in learning English as a foreign language.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies that have investigated the background knowledge of Jordanian EFL students in English collocational color terms. It showed that this area in needs more attention since it is vital not only in language teaching but also in translation studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Brown (2001) defines vocabulary as "building blocks of a language." Therefore, it is worthy of taking adequate class time to teach vocabulary as acquiring and mastering them is very crucial to create communicative and autonomous learners. Vocabulary teaching often shifts from asking students to learn lists of several words to introducing chunks or pieces of language such as collocational expressions. This shift leads to a more natural and more appropriate learning situation to create a more authentic context. Learning idioms, collocations, phrasal verbs, and proverbs play a significant role in mastering the target language and producing a colloquial tone that is more natural and reflects a native-like learner, which leads to a more effective verbal or written communication.

Paying attention to learning the idiomatic expressions in the target language is vital if one contemplates the figurative nature of idioms since their real meaning as a single entity is entirely different from their literal meanings when used as separate words. Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992) describe an idiom as "an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts." Idiomatic expressions are

problematic components for foreign learners because they are not aware of the difference between the figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions and the literal meaning of words separately. Therefore, introducing the idiomatic expressions such as idioms, collocations, and proverbs creates a more effective and useful learning environment. This goes in line with Bachman (1990), who claims that idioms embody cultural aspects whose proper use is essential to language learners for mastering a foreign language as it helps in apprehending the culture of a target language.

The importance of mastering idiomatic expressions was introduced by Detry (quoted in Cuadros (2014)) who states that there are four elements of learning that are supported by implementing the instruction, viz. the communicative, cultural, metaphorical-cognitive and psycho-affective elements. These elements focus on incorporating idioms in foreign language teaching instructions. Thus, the inclusion of idiomatic expressions in vocabulary instruction could foster the learners' comprehension of the target language. In the same vein, Cuadros (2014) claims that guiding learners to acquire and study the idiomatic expressions fosters and develops their intercultural communicative competency in the target language. It implies that not only learning the linguistic formation and meaning of the idioms is vital, but it is also crucial in understanding the culture. The knowledge of the culture is essential to the learner of a foreign language to master a native-like communication proficiency by producing authentic idiomatic expressions which are easily understood by native speakers of the target language.

Moreover, collocations, i.e., words that usually go together as one form of formulaic sequences, constitute an inherent problem for ESL/ EFL learners. Researchers have submitted that non-congruent collocations, i.e., collocations that do not have corresponding L1 equivalents, are especially tricky to be acquired by ESL/ EFL learners (Alharbi, 2017). It is also asserted that teachers should redirect their attention beyond the boundary of lexis to lexical chunks to help their learners become successful communicators and accurate language users (p.197).

A significant number of idioms involve the use of different color terms such as blue blood, black death, red tape, black sheep, and yellow press. Studying these idiomatic color expressions is something important in the context of foreign language teaching. Our present concern is the teaching of English to Arabic learners. Therefore, this study intends to shed some light on how the Arabic EFL learners excel in using such color terms. In other words, the researcher planned to conduct this study to cater the need to shed light on this issue as there was little research in this area in the Jordanian context. The study also aimed to explore the extent to which Jordanian EFL learners had mastered the color collocations in English and how further research could help in improving language and translation of English texts.

1.1. Significance of the Study

The present study tends to be significant since it addresses itself to study collocations, which are considered an essential part of teaching or learning any language and it sheds light on the collocational knowledge which is essential for learning and using any word in a native-like way. Moreover, collocations comprise "up to 70% of everything we say, hear, read, or write" (Hill, 2000).

Therefore, collocations are worth more attention in teaching/ learning a foreign language since they "make speech sound natural and alive" (Ababneh, 2008). Besides, teaching collocations allows learners to acquire chunks rather than individual words, which help them develop not only their linguistic lexicon but also the ability to communicate naturally and effortlessly (Habtoor & Al-Swaidan, 2019). Regardless of all these significant points, collocations are still neglected in EFL classrooms, and they need to be paid more attention. It is important to learn them in a natural atmosphere of communication since a large part of our language is made up of collocations. The present study aims to shed light on a specific objective of lexical collocations: the color terms in collocations. There are no studies in the Arab world that have investigated this kind of collocations. It is hoped that this work could add a brick to the literature regarding the incorporation of collocations in general and the color terms in specific as they create a more beautiful, colorful language and expressive language learner.

1.2. Questions of the Study

    1. To what extent do Jordanian EFL students master color collocations in English?

    2. Are there any significant differences between students' performance in the collocation test in terms of their gender?

    3. Are there any significant differences between students' performance in the collocation test in terms of their academic degree program (Diploma / BA)?

1.3. Limitations of the Study

    The findings of the present study cannot be generalized due to the following limitations: First, the study was confined to six colors only because they are the most used colors in English collocational terms. Second, the study is limited to Jordanian EFL students registered in a single course namely English 101 taught in one college. Choosing more courses and more than one institution could have provided more reliable results. Finally, it suffers from the small size of the sample. A larger sample would have yielded more representative and more reliable results.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

    Since vocabulary teaching and learning play a significant role in learning a language, many researchers tried to conduct research in contexts where English is taught as a second/foreign language like in the case of the present study. Janziz (1997) reviewed and analyzed the use of collocations in Shakespeare's work. His research focused on seven basic colors. The researcher tried to spot some light on the significance of colors in Shakespeare's work. He concluded that Shakespeare's use of color terms reflected his brilliant skill in creating depth to the meaning by manipulating the language of metaphor. The analysis showed that the most used colors in Shakespeare's work were black, white, green, and red.

    Chielens (2007) examined why a basic color term was used to express a meaning and which meanings can be expressed. He studied English color terms in detail and tried to explain why a color term was used, and which meanings could be expressed. He maintained that the meaning of many of the color expressions can be derived from the innate or cultural knowledge about colors and their associations. He concluded that encyclopedic knowledge was necessary with examples where the meaning expressed using a color term did not depend on intuitive knowledge or expertise of color in nature (p.116).

    Ababneh (2008) studied the types of English collocational errors committed by Jordanian college students and the strategies they tend to use regarding this issue. The researcher designed an instructional program that aimed at developing students' collocational knowledge in English. Results obtained from this study revealed that lexical collocations were the most problematic type, while the grammatical type was the least difficult. On the other hand, regarding the strategy use, students used retrieval strategy more than other strategies. More importantly, the instructional program developed students' proficiency in English collocations.

    Al-Shara'h and Abu Naba'h (2011) examined Jordanian graduate students' English collocational knowledge by analyzing quantitatively and qualitatively errors committed by thirty MA and TEFL graduate students at the Hashemite University, Jordan. The researchers used a completion test to measure students' knowledge of four types of lexical collocations: free combination, restricted collocations, figurative idioms, and pure idioms. Their study revealed that free combination was the least complicated type, while pure idioms were the most challenging. Moreover, students displayed unsatisfactory performance on restricted and figurative expressions. The study findings showed that wrong answers reflect students' insufficient knowledge of the English collocations and their errors can be attributed to interference from L1. Al-Adaileh (2012) investigates the connotative meanings of color terms, *black, white, yellow, red, green,* and *blue,* in Standard Arabic in general and in Jordanian Arabic, in particular. He generalized that, in Jordanian Arabic, all colors have either euphemistic or dysphemistic connotations: while *black, yellow, red,* and *blue* are found to be *predominantly* dysphemistic and associated with mainly negative connotations,

white is used euphemistically, and mostly has positive connotations. However, *green* is found to be having both euphemistic and dysphemistic connotations (p.14).

Sadighi and Sahragard (2013) studied the impact of varying levels of lexical collocational density on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. The sample of their study consisted of eighty sophomore students with different levels of proficiency studying at Zand Institute of Higher Education in Shiraz, Iran. Forty participants were randomly assigned to the control group, while the other forty made the experimental group. Their data was collected using a lexical collocation test. Results of their study indicated that texts with high lexical collocational density had positively influenced learners' comprehension and teaching those lexical collocations had a positive effect on Iranian learners' reading skills. Finally, the study concluded that the participants' proficiency level did not affect the learners' performance on lexical collocation tests.

Tran (2012) investigated Vietnamese students' proficiency in figurative idiomatic expressions. His study revealed that the respondents were not proficient in this figurative language as they reflected poor idiomatic competency. Moreover, the findings of this research shed light on the contradiction between students' desires in learning and their use of idiomatic expressions. He stated that figurative idioms should be taught without the exception of teaching negotiation skills. Besides, he emphasized upon acquanting learners with idiomatic expressions used in countries which are not traditionally English-speaking countries, to enrich their background knowledge of a variety of new and different idiomatic expressions.

In another context, Chuang (2013) studied the connection between the size of the vocabulary of EFL learners and their idiomatic proficiency in reading comprehension. The findings of this research showed that there was a positive relationship between the size of vocabulary the learners possess and their idiomatic competency.

In their study, Khan and Daskin (2014) stressed upon the use of teaching idioms through special instructional material that was well-prepared and which could facilitate the comprehension and the appropriate use of idioms. This was required since idioms have cultural and figurative elements which can make them difficult to be understood. Findings of their study revealed that not only that the Turkish teacher-trainees barely use the idiomatic expressions in their instructional materials, but also they do not use them appropriately, which consequently affects the learners' competency of those idiomatic expressions negatively. Moreover, it was concluded that teacher-trainees' inadequate past knowledge in idiom learning experience might influence their use of idioms in the materials negatively. However, the study shows that trainees have a positive attitude towards idiom instruction.

Hadi (2014) investigates Iraqi EFL learners' use of the English lexical collocations. Her study shows a low level of performance on the Iraqi EFL learners' part. She also concludes that learners employ literal transfer from their mother tongue, substitution, and generalization as communicative strategies to overcome their deficiency in using the English lexical collocations accurately (p. 566).

Phoocharoensil (2014) investigated Thai EFL learners' use of collocational terms. The data were elicited from essays written by two groups of participants with different L2 proficiency levels. The study showed that native language transfer seems to be the most important contributing factor to these collocation errors. The inter-lingual errors were found to pertain to preposition addition, preposition omission, incorrect word choice, and collocation redundancy. Moreover, it was found that high-proficiency learners heavily depend on collocational patterns from L1. In addition to L1 transfer, the participants also seem to rely on synonymy and overgeneralization, which causes erroneous collocations in English.

Shitu (2015) studied the nature of collocational errors committed by three hundred undergraduate learners of English as a second language in the Federal College of Education, Kano, northwest Nigeria. The objective of her study was to identify the errors, analyze their structural compositions to determine whether there were similarities between students' errors in this regard and to find out whether there were patterns to these kinds of errors which will help in understanding their sources and causes. Like descriptive research, the researcher sampled some nine hundred essays collected from, i.e., three essays per student. The findings from Shitu's study indicated that there

were similarities and repeated collocation errors that provided a pattern. Shitu concluded that students' collocation errors were attributed to poor teaching and learning, which resulted in the wrong generalization of rules.

Marin (2016) studied English color terms since they played a significant part in learning collocations. Marin focused on understanding "the symbolic connotations of colors as they are reflected in English" (p.230). The study introduced a list of English color terms as idiomatic expressions with their meanings to serve as teaching material for those who are interested in this respect.

Kalda and Uusküla (2019) conducted a study to investigate the translation of idiomatic color terms in both English and Estonian. They discussed some of the problem's translators may face because of linguistic and cultural variables. The researchers found out that color expressions were "culture specific" (691), and the context had a significant role in comprehending and translating those color expressions. Moreover, they concluded that the subjects who had been to English speaking countries suffered less in translating the color expressions correctly than their counterparts who never have lived-in English-speaking countries. They also found out that professional translators used different strategies in translating color expressions because both "translation education and experience" (p.703) made a difference in this respect.

In another context, Habtoor and Al-Swaidan (2019) examined Saudi EFL learners' familiarity with English collocations and their strategies when translating them into Arabic. The data of this study was collected from 40 female EFL learners of the English Department at Najran University. A translation test consisting of 48 collocations in both short texts and short sentences was used to determine the participants' familiarity with translation strategies used in translating English collocations into Arabic. Results reveal that the participants' knowledge of collocations was unsatisfactory, and it appeared that there was a positive relationship between the learners' familiarity with English collocations and their ability to translate them into Arabic using different translation strategies. Furthermore, based on the findings of their research, they suggested expanding the EFL learners' repertoire of collocations rather than focusing on teaching strategies for translating collocations.

In another context, Abu Khaled (2020) conducted a comparative study that focused mainly on comparing between Arabic and English lexical collocations. The researcher aimed to identify the Palestinian students' use and comprehension of collocational expressions. The findings proved that the subjects were poor achievers, and mainly resorted to "literal transfer from their mother tongue" (p. 60) in order to overcome their lack of knowledge regarding the correct use of English lexical collocations. The researcher recommended that teachers and educators should pay attention to include the collocational expressions as part of the teaching material as early as possible since "the key of mastering collocations is an intensive exposure to the target language by reading and listening." (p.68).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample of the Study

The participants of this study were selected purposely from all the students registered in English (Course Code-101), a course offered at the Department of Basic Sciences, Al-Huson University College, Jordan, in the First Semester of the academic year 2019/2020. The study sample consisted of 94 Jordanian students: 37 female students, and 57 male students, who were registered in two separate sections; one for bachelor students, the total number of the bachelor section was (53), and the other was for diploma students who were (41).

3.2. The Instrument of the Study

The main instrument of the investigation was a multiple-choice test designed by the researcher with the help of experts in TEFL. The test included twelve statements in English that the students were requested to complete by choosing the correct color word from a group of four choices. (See Appendix. 1).

3.2.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the test used in the present study, Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient was computed. The results from this test revealed that the reliability index of the test was (0.87), which indicates that it is reliable and appropriate for this study. For the validity of the test, all the twelve items were validated by a jury of experts in TEFL from Yarmouk University and Al-Huson University College.

3.3. Data Collection

The researcher herself taught two sections of English selected for this study. The researcher distributed the test and gave students enough time to answer the tests. The students were requested to state their accurate answers and were told that this would be part of their participation assessment. This was intended to encourage them to be more serious in finding what they thought was the correct answer. Furthermore, the researcher responded to all the students' queries about the test to ensure that they gave accurate responses.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study explored Jordanian EFL students' mastery of color terms in English. For this purpose, means and standard deviations of students' responses on the test were calculated. The analysis gave a clear picture of the students' background knowledge of English color terms and pinpointed their weak and strong points in this regard. Moreover, the researcher used a T-test to identify if the students' gender and academic degree program had significantly affected their performance in the test.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of the data analysis regarding the questions of this study were presented. Considering the first question which aimed to explore the extent to which Jordanian EFL learners master English color collocations. Means, standard deviations, and percentages of the students' answers on the statements of the test were computed as shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Mean scores and standard deviations of students' responses on the test.

Test item number	Mean Score	SD	Correct %
1	.574	.497	57.4
2	.117	.323	11.7
3	.691	.464	69.1
4	.457	.501	45.7
5	.532	.502	53.2
6	.287	.455	28.7
7	.521	.502	52.1
8	.564	.499	56.4
9	.340	.476	34.0
10	.170	.378	17.0
11	.255	.438	25.5
12	.702	.460	70.2
Total	.434	.458	43.4

Data obtained from Table 1 shows that the overall performance of the participants was weak as the percentage of their correct answers was (43.4). The highest rate was (70.2%) for the last statement, while the lowest rate was for the second statement with a rate of (11.7%).

To get a better insight into the participants' use of the color collocations through their answers on the test statements, the researcher classified the statements fewer than six categories according to the six colors included in the study: black, yellow, white, green, red, and blue. Table 2 presents mean scores, standard deviations and percentages of students' responses on the test according to color category.

Table-2. Mean scores, standard deviations and percentages of students' responses on the test according to color category.

Color	Test item number	Incorrect		Correct		Percentage		Mean	SD
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
Black	1	40	42.6	54	57.4	56	60		
	3	29	30.9	65	69.1			1.798	.946
	5	44	46.8	50	53.2				
Yellow	2	83	88.3	11	11.7	11	11.7	.117	.323
White	4	51	54.3	43	45.7	41	43.6		
	6	67	71.3	27	28.7			1.309	.843
	8	41	43.6	53	56.4				
Green	7	45	47.9	49	52.1	49	52.1	.521	.502
Red	9	62	66.0	32	34.0				
	11	70	74.5	24	25.5	28	29.7	.596	.661
Blue	10	78	83.0	16	17.0				
	12	28	29.8	66	70.2	41	43.6	.872	.533

Table 2 shows that the students' answers were the best when it comes to the statements related to the black color as their rate was 60% and their mean score was (1.798). But they got their lowest rate (11.7%) on the statements related to the yellow one and their mean score was (.117).

The second question of the present study dealt with the issue whether there were any statistically significant differences between students' performance in the English collocational terms that might be due to their gender. A *t*-test for equality to the means of the students' responses on the statements of the test according to their gender was done. Table 3 presents the results.

Table-3. T-test of students' performance in English collocation test in terms of their gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	P-Value
Male	57	4.98	1.494	-1.702	.092
Female	37	5.57	1.819		

Data presented in Table 3 show that the participants gender does not have any significant differences between

students' performance on the test since the T-value is (-1.702) and *P*-value is (0.092) at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The third question of the study tried to answer whether there were any statistically significant differences between students' performance in the English collocational terms due to their academic degree program (bachelor/diploma). To this end, the researcher performed a *t*-test of equality to the means of the students' answers on the test in terms of their academic degree program (bachelor/diploma). Table 4 presents the results.

Table-4. T-test of students' performance in English in terms of their academic degree program (diploma / bachelor).

Degree	N	Mean	SD	T	P-Value
Diploma	41	5.51	1.76	1.56	.121
BA	53	4.98	1.53		

Results presented in Table 4 show that the differences between the participants' performance in the collocational test due to their academic degree program are not significant as the T-value is (1.56) and P-Value is

(1.21) at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings obtained from this study, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the participants in this study displayed a weak performance in the English color collocations test as their overall percentage was

(43.4%). In other words, it was a call from the students to their instructors and curriculum designers to change their traditional way of teaching vocabulary. They should focus more on adding chunks of language such as collocations, proverbs, idioms, and phrasal verbs instead of teaching vocabulary through lists of isolated words. This could develop the learners' fluency and enable them to communicate in a native-like way and deliver their message easily and correctly. This goes in line with Lewis (1997) who claimed that 'fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed and semi-fixed prefabricated items' (p.15).

Second, the highest rate of students' correct answers in the test goes to the statements related to the black color collocations with a percentage of (60%). Moreover, the statement that got the highest percentage (70.2%) was about the color term Bluetooth. One possible explanation for this result could be that the participants noticed the term as the name of the application used in their everyday life in their smartphones and other technical gadgets. The next color collocation category went to the green color term *green fingers* with a percentage of (52.1%). This could be because this term was found in Arabic and it had more or less the same connotations of skill, and blessedness as green fingers, especially in the context of planting and caring for home plants. The next percentage was (43.6%) for both white and blue color categories. Terms like a *blue-eyed boy* and *white collar job* were not familiar to participants of the study. This explains about their weak percentage regarding these terms. The red color collocations came next with a percentage of (29.7%). Again, the term included in test *red-handed* was not used in Arabic. The students were not familiar with such terms and so they could not get it right.

It was also observed that specific English color terms do not have equivalents in Arabic, such as; *blue-eyed, white elephant, red-handed, white-collar jobs, white noise*. For that reason, unfortunately, students could not handle such terms correctly. This again shows that subjects lack knowledge in this part of English vocabulary and thus they need to foster learning about these collocations in their learning process. This goes in the same vein with Khan and Daskin (2014) who claim that because the idiomatic expressions had cultural and figurative facets, it was not easy to understand or use them properly unless they were introduced using well-prepared instructional materials designed to serve this goal in the language classrooms.

The lowest percentage in the test went to the statements related to the yellow color collocations *yellow press* with a percentage of (11.7%). This could be attributed to the fact that new generations did not prefer to read papers at all because they resort to electronic media such as e-books and magazines as well as social media. This has been supported by Ababneh (2017), who states that "mobile phones are considered today the window through which the young generation is looking for knowledge and information."

Third, neither the gender of the participants nor their academic degree program (diploma, *vs.* bachelor) has any significant effect on their mastery of the English color collocations. This result was observed because nearly all the students have the same background in English as they had studied in the Jordanian government schools and used the same English textbooks. Therefore, they were not exposed to natural contexts where English was used as a native language nor they were exposed to materials prepared in a way that fostered their collocational knowledge.

From the above conclusion, and due to the poor achievement of the subjects' in the present study in tackling the English color terms, it is recommended that textbooks, teachers, and stakeholders should consider teaching English color terms as a significant part of vocabulary teaching since it enriches the students' language, helps them communicate in a native-like way, improves their level of English, makes their language more natural, and provides them a better chance to succeed in their English international exams such as IELTS or TOEFL. On the other side, it also helps translators give the correct meaning by tackling the right equivalent when needed. EFL teachers are invited to pay serious attention to this side in teaching vocabulary by developing and preparing supplementary teaching materials and activities that foster learning chunks of language such as the color terms.

Finally, researchers are encouraged to repeat such a study with larger samples that cover all or most universities in Jordan in order to gain more reliable results . Moreover, researchers are invited to conduct studies to compare students' knowledge in both Arabic and English color terms to get a better understanding of students'

awareness of Arabic color terms and try to make use of this information for translators and other linguists who take interest in this respect.

REFERENCES

Ababneh, S. (2008). *Designing an instructional program and measuring its effect on Jordanian EFL University students' achievement in English collocations.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Yarmouk University, Jordan.

Ababneh, S. (2017). Using mobile phones in learning English: The case of Jordan. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 6*(4), 120-128.Available at: https://doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v6n4a14.

Abu Khaled, D. (2020). Palestinian EFL learners' use of English lexical collocations. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT), 3*(3), 60-71.Available at: 10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.3.7.

Al-Adaileh, A. (2012). The connotations of Arabic color terms. Linguistica Online. Retrieved from: http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/al-adaileh/ada-001.pdf.

Al-Shara'h, N., & Abu Naba'h, A. (2011). An investigation of the English collocation knowledge of Jordanian graduate students. *Dirasat, Educational Sciences, 38*(1), 425-437.

Alharbi, M. (2017). *Acquisition of lexical collocations: A corpus-assisted contrastive analysis and translation approach.* Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics. Newcastle University.

Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing.* Oxford: OUP.

Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Chielens, D., Loes. (2007). *Basic color terms in English: An examination of their use and meaning in English expressions.* Ph. D. Dissertation, Gent University.

Chuang, Y.-y. (2013). A study of the relationship between college EFL learners' vocabulary size and idiomatic reading comprehension. *NCUE Journal of Humanities, 7*(1), 59-76.

Cuadros, M. G. (2014). *A study on the effectiveness of metaphor and cultural awareness-raising to the learning of idioms in the EFL classroom.* Unpublished M.A. thesis, Spain.

Habtoor, H., & Al-Swaidan, R. (2019). Familiarity with collocations in EFL context and strategies utilized in translating them into Arabic. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 10*(4), 724-737.Available at: https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1004.07.

Hadi, S. A. K. (2014). Iraqi EFL learners' use of English lexical collocations. *Journal of University of Babylon, 22*(3), 566-579.

Hill, J. (2000). Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In M. Lewis (Ed.), Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach (pp. 47-69). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Janziz, A.-M. (1997). *A study of colour words in Shakespeare's works.* Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment for the Requirement of the Degree of PhD University of Sheffield. England.

Kalda, A., & Uusküla, M. (2019). The role of context in translating colour metaphors: an experiment on English into estonian translation. *Open Linguistics, 5*(1), 690-705.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2019-0038.

Khan, O., & Daskin, C. N. (2014). You reap what you sow" Idioms in materials designed by EFL teacher-trainees. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 8*(2), 97-118.

Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the lexical approach.* Hove, England: Language Teaching Publications.

Marin, C. G. (2016). Colours used in idiomatic expressions. Multicultural representations. Literature and discourse as forms of dialogue (pp. 226-230). Tîrgu Mureş: Arhipelag XXI Press.

Phoocharoensil, S. (2014). Exploring learners" developing L2 collocational competence. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 4*(12), 2533-2540.Available at: https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.4.12.2533-2540.

Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Language teaching and applied linguistics.* London: Longman.

Sadighi, S., & Sahragard, R. (2013). The effect of lexical collocational density on the Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills, 32*(1), 111-136.

Shitu, F. (2015). Collocation errors in English as second language (ESL) essay writing. *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering, 9*(9), 3176-3183.

Tran, H. (2012). An explorative study of idiom teaching for pre-service teachers of English. *English Language Teaching, 5*(12), 76-85.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n12p76.

APPENDIX

Gender: Male/ Female   **Bachelor/ Diploma**

Choose the word that best completes the following statements.

1- Tom was always considered the ……… sheep of the family as he was a troublemaker.

    a- black   b- white   c- yellow   d- blue

2. I do not trust news published by the ………… press.

    a- yellow   b- red   c- green   d- blue

3- They used the photograph to …………. mail her into spying for them.

    a- black-   b- white-   c- yellow-   d- blue-

4- That house was----------------- elephant: it is not worth all the money that we spent on it.

    a- white   b- green   c- black   d- blue

5. the most dangerous kind of spiders is the ………… widow.

    a- black   b- white   c- yellow   d-blue

6- The TV suddenly broke down and gave only ………noise.

    a- green   b- white   c- blue   d- black

7. My mum has ……… fingers. Everything she plants grows well.

    a-green   b- white   c- red   d- blue

8- The company plans to cut 19450 ………. collar jobs as a part of a restructuring.

    a- blue-   b- white-   c- yellow-   d- green-

9- The new government plan will just create more …………. tape.

    a- white   b- black   c- red   d- yellow

10- George Clooney was the media's ………. -eyed boy

    a- blue   b- green   c- yellow   d- white

11. I caught him ……… handed, stealing a wallet.

    a- white-   b- yellow-   c- black-   d- red-

12- I took a quick picture with my mobile and sent it via ……. tooth.

    a- blue-   b- yellow-   c- white-   d-green-