UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Centre for Language Studies
MA TEFL/TESL
Module 3 - Lexis

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"Collocation in a Football Report"

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Choose a short, authentic, written or spoken text in English (about 200 words) and select at least twelve examples of collocations, including some fixed expressions. Discuss how you might use these examples to demonstrate to students the constraints on word-combinations in English.

1.0 Introduction

There are many terms in the discussion of collocation that tend to overlap. Wray (2000:465) lists some 50 terms that have been used with varying degrees of synonymity within the literature. This paper shall adopt the following distinctions. Collocation shall be taken as being "frequently recurrent, relatively fixed syntagmatic combinations" (Bartsch, 2004:11), which stems from a lexico-grammatical system of language where lexis and grammar are interrelated, as will be outlined in Section 2. This conception of collocation and language implies that vocabulary, rather than "filling the slots in grammatical structures" (Thornbury, 1998:7), is constrained in terms of the choices that are available. The importance of collocation within the L1 lexicon is well-established (Aitchison, 1987) yet for the learner of a language collocation poses particular difficulties (Martynska, 2004:5). There is little agreement on the best way to approach collocation within the classroom, with the most common suggestions ranging from corpus frequencies (Shin & Nation, 2007) and range (Lewis, 2000) through to L1-L2 contrastive approaches (Bahns, 1993; Shirato & Stapleton, 2007) with particular focus on verb forms (Nesselhauf, 2003) or organised by topic (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005). The approach taken in this essay will be to apply some recent research findings on collocation patterns within genres as a way of demonstrating word constraints within a text. Section 2 will outline the theoretical basis of collocation in a lexico-grammatical system while Section 3 will propose a two-part framework of analysis for the identification of collocation within a text. Sections 4 and 5 will then apply this analysis to identify collocations in a sports report and discuss practical classroom applications of these collocations to demonstrate word constraints.

2.0 Theory of Collocation

2.1 Firth

2.1.1 "Spectrum of meaning"

J.R.Firth (1957) was the first major figure to approach collocation in a systematic way. Collocation was defined as "mutual expectancies" (ibid:195), where words tend to co-occur with other words in certain environments with significant frequencies. Collocation exists within a system of language whereby lexis is elevated to a level comparable to that

previously reserved for grammar. A number of different interrelated levels, from phonology to lexis, grammar and the situation in which the event takes place, or 'context of situation' (Firth, 1957:222) create a "spectrum of meaning" (ibid:203) within the system of language. The consequence of this is that the speaker is not free to choose any vocabulary item within a structural framework but is instead restricted by a "complex of contextual relations" (ibid:19) that is created by the interrelation of these levels.

2.1.2   "Meaning by collocation"

As such, lexis, and thus collocation, can be analysed in a manner similar to that of grammar and considered in terms of syntagmatic (horizontal choice), rather than solely paradigmatic (vertical choice), features (Martynska, 2004:2). This interaction can be seen in Figure 1, where lexical choices constrain subsequent grammatical choices in the two sentences.

Figure 1: Paradigmatic and syntagmatic collocation relationships

> a)   The two brothers very closely resemble each other physically.
> b)   The two brothers bear a very close physical resemblance to each other.
>
> (Rutherford, 1987:87)

Decisions made at one level of a text thus constrain those that can later be made on another. From this relationship of collocation across levels within a lexical/grammatical system Firth (1957:194) proposed "meaning by collocation" whereby meaning resides not only in the individual words but also in how they collocate with other words syntagmatically: one of the meanings of *night* is that it collates with *dark*, and vice-versa (ibid:196). Rather than occurring randomly, words consequently tend to be grouped into patterns of usage. One of the practical outcomes of this suggests the possible study of collocations of a particular genre (ibid:195).
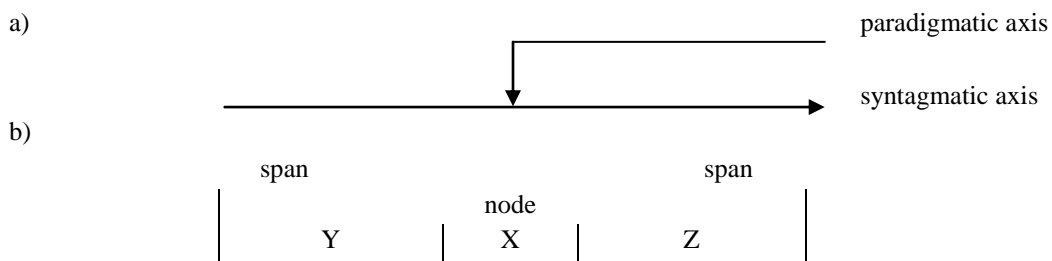
2.2 Sinclair
2.2.1   "Principle of idiom"

Unlike Firth (1957:19) where grammar and lexis operate as separate levels within the system, Sinclair (1991) argued instead for a cline, with grammar, lexis and semantics interdependent (Carter, 1998:62). From this, Sinclair (1991:110) proposed the 'principle

of idiom' whereby "the language user has available...a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices" as opposed to the 'open choice principle' where each word constitutes a "separate choice" (ibid:175). The phrase *of course*, for example, derives its meaning not from any grammatical word class, such as the prepositional 'of', but instead can be seen as a single lexical choice (ibid:110). Collocation within this 'principle of idiom' is "a tendency for words to occur together" (Sinclair, 1991:71) and operates on a statistical basis of frequency of occurrence of two lexical items within a specified number of words (ibid:170).

2.2.2 'Node' and 'collate'

Through the use of a corpus it is possible to investigate the statistical likelihood of two items occurring together. Sinclair (1991:115) termed the word being investigated the 'node' while any word which occurs within the specified span is the 'collate'. In this view of collocation lexical choices are dependant upon, and restricted by, both the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axis. This concept is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Sinclair's concept of collocation

a)

paradigmatic axis

syntagmatic axis

b)

span   span

node

Y   X   Z
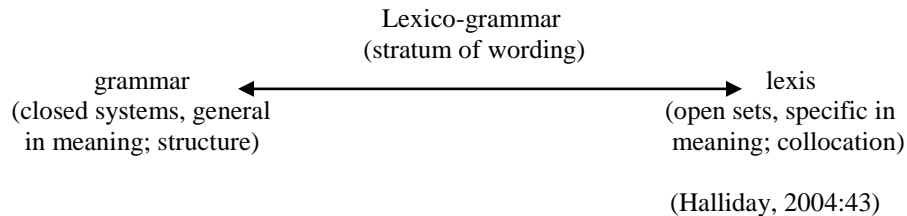
(Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992:20)

Rather than Firth (1957) where two words are in a mutual defining relationship by collocation, Sinclair (1991:115) argued instead that the node and collate were often unequal in terms of frequency and proposed 'upward collocation' for those where the collate is a higher frequency word and 'downward collocation' for those where it is the node which has the higher frequency; for example, in the collocation *pitch black*, several other choices are available to collate with 'black', such as *jet black* or *coal black*, however 'pitch' as an adjective only collates with black. The consequences of this concept will be discussed further in Section 5.1.

2.3 Halliday

2.3.1 "Lexico-grammar"

The concept from Firth (1957) of a system of lexis and grammar was extended by Halliday (2004), who proposed an interrelated lexico-grammar continuum "creating meaning in the form of text" (Halliday, 2004:42), as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 : Halliday's lexico-grammar continuum

Lexico-grammar
(stratum of wording)

grammar   lexis
(closed systems, general   (open sets, specific in
in meaning; structure)   meaning; collocation)

(Halliday, 2004:43)

Collocation in this system is two "lexical items that regularly co-occur" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:284).

2.3.2 Collocation and cohesion

As collocation occurs within a lexico-grammatical system, Halliday and Hasan (1976) demonstrated that the lexical items in collocation operate across grammar and serve to provide cohesion to the text as a whole. The words which occur within the text are constrained by the co-text (Brown & Yule, 1983:46), the other items in the surrounding discourse, which regularly co-occur in collocation chains in similar environments (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:287). For this reason Halliday (2004:577) suggested that collocation is often found in specific registers or genres.

2.4 Collocation, word constraints and genre

While large corpora, such as the Bank of English, have revealed wide patterns of language use (Shei, 2005:199), some recent research has taken a specialised approach by focusing on smaller domain-restricted corpora to investigate collocation in specific genres (Shei, 2005:199). This approach has sought to discover collocation networks within, for example, the genres of scientific research articles (Williams, 2002) and newspaper articles (Shei, 2005), or for use in the areas of teaching languages for specific purposes (Gledhill, 2000) and English for Academic Purposes (Ward, 2007). The basic aim is to "demonstrate the linguistic aspects that characterise genres" (Williams,

2002:44). The following essay shall demonstrate how this concept of genre-specific collocation may also be applied to demonstrate the 'principle of idiom' and word constraints in English for an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class. 'Genre' here shall be defined as "structured forms that cultures use in certain contexts to achieve various purposes" (Hyon, 1996:697). The following Section will propose a framework for the analysis of collocation within a text, while Sections 4 and 5 will apply this framework to the analysis of a text and demonstrate the practical applications of these collocations.

3.0 Framework of Analysis

3.1 Introduction

One way in which a particular discourse community, groups "formed around themes of common interest" (Williams, 2002:45), is defined is through the specific ways in which it chooses to express itself (ibid) and collocation patterns may be one part of the process by which a genre becomes cohesive (Gledhill, 2000:133). The following sections will propose a genre approach to collocation within the classroom as a way of demonstrating word constraints at different levels of a text. Section 3 will outline the framework of a collocation analysis of genre comprising two parts:

Outline of Framework of Analysis
a. Analysis of Context of Situation
b. Identification of collocation type within a text

Section 5 will then apply this analysis to the text of a report of an FA Cup match, while Section 6 will demonstrate how these collocations that have been identified may be utilised within an EFL classroom to demonstrate word constraints in English.

3.2 Framework of analysis

3.2.1   Context of situation

As mentioned in Section 2.1, Firth (1957) was the first to treat systematically the concept of a context of situation, which is an "abstraction at the social level of analysis and forms

the basis of the hierarchy of techniques for the statement of meanings" (Firth, 1957:183). The context of situation is the use of language in a particular social setting and is the first step in any linguistic analysis. The word 'collocation' itself, for example, provides a perfect example of how words vary in range depending upon the situation in which it is used (Hoey, in Lewis, 2000:212): restricted mainly to the form the collocation takes, often limited to two, lexical words (Bartsch, 2004:21) within the language teaching community, as opposed to the more statistical approach of occurrence within a span taken within the corpus and research community. This concept of context of situation was further expanded and defined within systemic-functional linguistics in terms of the topic and goals of the text, the relationship between the (in this case) writer and reader, and the kind of text being made (Butt et al, 1995:13). This functional approach conceives of a text as "a unit of language in use" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:1) and can be analysed as such. The following framework shall proceed from this premise.

3.2.2 Identification of collocation

For the purposes of classroom convenience recurrence of form of two items shall be the main defining, or identifying, feature of collocation, with the expressions being relatively semantically clear. These are contrasted with fixed expressions that are longer units and semantically opaque (Carter, 1998:66), following the classification listed in Appendix 2. The classification of collocation can be divided into two categories, lexical collocation and grammatical collocation.

3.2.2.1 Lexical collocation

The first of these categories, lexical collocation, "consists of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs" (Benson et al,1986:xxx). The BBI Dictionary (Benson et al, 1986) divides these into seven major types, as per Table 1. The important factor to be considered with these collocations is that there is "no semantic explanation" (Carter, 1998:56) as to why certain words collocate; word choice is constrained, not by semantic or grammatical features, but merely through usage. Different discourse communities, and thus different genres, can have different patterns of collocation.

Table 1: BBI Dictionary classification of collocations – lexical collocation

CODE	PATTERN	EXAMPLES
L1	*verb + noun/ pronoun (creation/activation)*	'make an agreement'; 'set an alarm'
L2	*verb + noun (eradification/nullification)*	'reject an appeal'; 'lift a blockade'
L3	*adj + noun*	'strong tea'; 'reckless abandon'
L4	*noun + verb*	'alarms go off'; 'blizzards rage'
L5	*noun$_1$ of noun$_2$*	'a swarm of bees'; 'a bit of advice'; 'an act of violence'
L6	*adverb + adjective*	'deeply absorbed'; 'strictly accurate'
L7	*verb + adverb*	'affect deeply'; 'strictly accurate'

3.2.2.2 Grammatical collocation

Grammatical collocation, on the other hand, primarily results from the operation of syntax (Carter, 1998:51) and typically combines an open class word with a closed class, grammatical word (Lewis, 2000:134). The BBI Dictionary (Benson et al, 1986) categorises grammatical collocation into eight major types, designated G1 to G8, with G8 verb patterns further divided into 19 patterns, G8A to G8S, as per Table 2.

These patterns often take a role "traditionally associated with grammar" (Hunston, in Scott & Thomson, 2001:15). Thus the dictionary includes nouns followed by a *that* clause, such as *we reached an agreement that she would represent us*, but not if *that* can be replaced by *which* and follow normal relative clause rules. In this way grammatical collocations serve to create a link between lexis, grammar and text (ibid:23) yet they are often overlooked in discussion of the textual properties of collocation, which is mainly limited to lexical collocation (Bartsch, 2004:21). As will be shown in Section 5.2 below however, the patterning of grammatical collocation across a text can provide a useful cohesive device within that text.

Table 2: BBI Dictionary classification of collocations – grammatical collocation

CODE		PATTERN	EXAMPLES
G1		*noun + prep*	'blockade against'; 'apathy towards'
G2		*noun + to-in.f*	'a pleasure to do it'; 'the foresight to do it'
G3		*noun + that-clause*	'we reached an agreement that she would represent us in court'
G4		*prep + noun*	'by accident'; 'in advance'
G5		*adj + prep*	'angry at everyone'; 'afraid of him'
G6		*pred adj + to-in.f*	'it was necessary to work'; 'she is ready to go'
G7		*adj + that-clause*	'she was afraid that she would fail the exam'
G8	A	*verbs (trans) that allow dative movement transformation*	'he sent the book to his brother' → 'he sent his brother the book'
	B	*verbs (trans) that do not allow dative movement*	'they described the book to her'
	C	*verbs (trans) used with 'for' that allow dative movement transformation*	'she bought a shirt for her husband' → 'she bought her husband a shirt'
	D,d	*verb + prep*	'act as'; 'adhere to the plan'
	E	*verb + to-inf*	'they began to speak'; 'he decided to come'
	F	*verb + inf without 'to'*	'we must work'; 'he had better go'
	G	*verb +v-ing*	'they enjoy watching TV'; 'he remembered telling her'
	H	*verb (trans) + obj + to-inf*	'she asked me to come'; 'we forced them to leave'
	I	*verb (trans) + obj + inf without 'to'*	'she heard them leave'; 'we let the children go to the park'
	J	*verb (trans) + object + v-ing*	'I caught them stealing apples'
	K	*verb (trans) + poss + gerund*	'please excuse my waking you so early'; 'this fact justifies Bob's coming late'
	L	*verb (trans) + that-noun clause*	'they admitted that they were wrong'
	M	*verb (trans) + obj + inf 'to be' + complement (adj/past part/noun/pronoun)*	'we consider her to be well trained'; 'the court declared the law to be a violation of the constitution'
	N	*verb (trans) + obj + complement (adj/past part/noun/pronoun)*	'she dyed her hair red'; 'she had her tonsils removed'
	O	*verb (trans) + obj + obj*	'the teacher asked the boy a question'; 'the police fined him fifty dollars'
	P	*verb + adverbial*	'he carried himself well'; 'the meeting will last two hours'
	Q	*verb + wh-word*	'he asked how to do it'; 'we told them what to do'
	R	*subj (it) + verb + to-inf or that-clause*	'it puzzled me that they never answered the telephone'; ' it surprised me to learn of her decision'
	S	*verb (intrans) + complement (noun or adj)*	'she became an engineer'; 'she was enthusiastic'
	s	*Verb (intrans) + pred adj*	'she looks fine'; 'the flowers smell nice'

3.3 Terminology

As Gledhill (2000:119) points out, there is as yet no established system of metalanguage or notation for collocational analysis. The system employed within this report, adapted from Gledhill (2000), will be to use italics for all general collocations, for example *football league*. These collocations will only be those found within the Oxford Collocations Dictionary. This dictionary was chosen over the BBI Dictionary for its wider range (150,000 collocations from 9000 head words against 90,000 collocations) and the fact that it is specifically aimed at learners of English with context provided for 50,000 collocations, as opposed to the dictionary format of the BBI Dictionary. The patterns used for identification of collocations, however, are those from the BBI Dictionary for the same reason of range, as described in Sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2. Specific collocations taken from the text "LUTON 1 – 1 LIVERPOOL: THE REPORT" (Table 3 in Section 4.1 below, hereafter referred to as 'The Report') will be indicated with single inverted commas, for example 'football league', while the node word for collocations investigated in the corpus will be underlined, 'football <u>league</u>'. The corpus used is the Bank of English corpus jointly owned by HarperCollins Publishers and the University of Birmingham. In 2005 the corpus stands at 450 million words.

4.0 Analysis of the text: 'Report'

4.1 Introduction

The text to be discussed below is a sports report of a football match. As Rowe (1991:77) demonstrated, it is mainly through mass media that sport is experienced. The actual 'game', watching the game of sport being played, is somewhat irrelevant as the discourse community is bound, not by the act of watching, but by the act of talking about it. The sports report, and differing modes of sports discussion, forms a particular and specialized genre and, as such, can be particularly useful in demonstrating to students just how a particular genre is informed and defined by word choice and how these lexical decisions, in turn, affect textual constraints (Gledhill, 2000:131). The patterning of collocations within a text may provide a means of decoding that text. The text, Table 3 below, is the introduction to a longer report (the full report is found in Appendix 1). Following

Gledhill (2000) the introduction alone is analysed as it forms a cohesive whole itself within this genre.

Table 3: 'Report'

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1. LUTON 1-1 LIVERPOOL: THE REPORT

2. For the minnows of English football the third round of the FA Cup is always a time to
3. dream that they could draw one of the giants of our game.

4. It can pit a side struggling in the lower echelons of the football league against one of the
5. cosmopolitan glamour clubs that strut their stuff week in week out on the Premier League
6. stage.

7. So when Luton were drawn at home to Liverpool for the second time in three years the
8. romantics in the game's community were given a tie that would see two sides from very
9. different ends of the football spectrum go head-to-head.

10. Back in 2006 it was an FA Cup classic. The lower division outfit powered into a 3-1 lead,
11. and were on the verge of a what would have been a huge giant-killing act, before finally
12. succumbing to the superior qualities of Rafael Benitez's side by a 5-3 scoreline.

13. This time around it was different. For all their financial troubles, Luton gave as good as
14. they got and when the full-time whistle blew they had achieved an unlikely draw - and
15. the chance to replay in front of a packed crowd at Anfield.

This section shall discuss ways a text can be used within the classroom to demonstrate constraints on word selection within the framework proposed above, firstly at a paradigmatic and syntagmatic level and then at a textual level both across and between contexts.

4.2 Context of situation for 'Report'

The text 'The Report', taken from the official website of Liverpool Football Club, www.liverpoolfc.tv, is a report of a January, 2008 3rd Round FA Cup match between Liverpool and Luton Town. In November Luton, which currently plays in Football League One and will be relegated to League Two next year, entered receivership and was unable to pay the players. Meanwhile Liverpool, the most successful club in English football history, was recently bought by American investors for £218.9 million (Source: Wikipedia). The two teams are separated by some 60 league places and differ widely in terms of wealth, status and support. The text 'Report' employs a number a lexical sets that implicitly highlight these differences, with Liverpool given positive terms and Luton Town negative, as can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Comparison of lexical sets within the Text

	Luton Town	**Liverpool**
KIND	'outfit'	'club'
SIZE	'minnows'	'giants'
ACTION	'struggling'	'strut'
LOCATION	'lower'; 'football league'; 'lower division'	'cosmopolitan'; 'stage'; 'Premier League'
SUPPORT	'financial troubles'	'packed crowd'
EVALUATION	'dream'; 'unlikely'; 'chance'	'superior'; 'quality'; 'glamour'

The text, then, is not an objective report and, as such, must be interpreted with the partisan nature of its source taken into consideration.

4.3 Identification of collocation within the text 'Report'

Table 4: Examples of collocation in the text: 'Report'

TYPE	Ref.	Example (Text Line)	BBI Code	Fixed Expression	Bank of English t-score
Lexical					
	1	'achieve a draw' (14)	L1		-
	2a	'English football' (2)	L3		45.96
	2b	'lower echelons' (4)	L3		5.37
	2c	'football league' (4)	L3		49.65
	2d	'giant-killing act' (5)	L3		-
	2e	'different ends' (9)	L3		5.75
	2f	'football spectrum' (9)	L3		0.34
	2g	'financial trouble' (13)	L3		16.71
	2h	'unlikely draw' (14)	L3		2.44
	2i	'packed crowd' (15)	L3		7.49
	3	'whistle blew' (14)	L4		16.09
	4	'lower division outfit' (10)			-
	5	'cosmopolitan glamour clubs' (5)			-
Grammatical					
	6	'time to (dream)' (2-3)	G2		159.68
	7	'chance to (replay)' (15)	G2		163.51
	8	'give the romantics a tie' (8)	G8A		-
	9	'pit against' (4)	G8D		16.60
	10	'power into' (9)	G8D		14.84
	11	'succumb to' (10)	G8D		26.76
	12	'dream that (+ clause)' (3)	L		25.72
Fixed Expressions					
	13	'week in week out' (5)		I(i)	
	14	'go head-to-head' (9)		I(i)	

For the purposes of analysis fourteen patterns were identified within the text and categorized into lexical collocations, grammatical collocations and fixed expressions, as shown above in Table 4. The lexical and grammatical collocations were identified utilising the BBI classification described above in Section 3.2.2, while the fixed expressions were identified from those listed in Appendix 2. The twelve lexical and grammatical collocations were then investigated using the B-of-E corpus to obtain a t-score, a statistical measure of frequency of occurrence, for each. Three collocations, *1*, 'achieve a draw', *2d,* 'giant-killing act', and *8*, 'give the romantics a tie', did not occur within this particular corpus. Two collocations *4*, 'lower division outfit', and *5*, 'cosmopolitan glamour clubs', were included even though they do not conform to a BBI and were not present in the Bank of English corpus. These two will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.1 below. When the collocations within a text have been identified they may then be analysed in terms of the syntactic and textual functions they play. Section 5 will discuss some of the practical applications of these collocations for an EFL classroom to demonstrate word constraints.

5.0 Classroom Applications of Collocation

5.1 Collocation and syntactic word-constraints

5.1.1   'Awareness'

Often the first step for the discussion of collocation within the classroom is one of awareness of its existence (Nesselhauf, 2003:238). Learners, faced with an unknown or difficult word, tend to look at it purely from a semantic point of view in isolation (Lewis, 2000:179), often with the aid of a bilingual dictionary (Schmitt, in Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997:220). A simple exercise to help overcome this view is a substitution exercise, such as that shown in Figure 5 below, where a simple phase is substituted with another longer phrase from the text. This exercise also demonstrates the significance of collocation with respect to the interpersonal component of evaluation, similar to that of fixed expressions (Moon, in Coulthard, 1994:132) decided upon by the context of situation; 'nearly won' does not have anything like the evaluative tone of the text. Choices made at one level, the context of situation, constrain those made at another, syntagmatic, level.

Figure 5: Substitution of fixed expressions and collocation with 'act'.

Luton	nearly	won.		
	were on the verge of	what would've been a	giant-killing *courageous heroic noble*	act.

This also demonstrates on a paradigmatic level that whereas *2d*, 'giant-killing act', may seem an unusual choice it is, in fact, constrained syntagmatically by the collocational properties of the word *act*. Word selection does not operate by 'open choice' but is constrained by collocation.

5.1.2 Collocation and 'semantic prosody'

One of the most common methods of illustrating collocations is through the use of grids. These, however, do have a number of limitations (Carter, 1998:214-220). One of the most important limitations for collocation is that in order to use a collocation correctly it is essential to know the whole combination (*get permission (to)*) rather than which items collate (*get + permission*) which grids are typically highlight (Nesselhauf, 2003:231).

Figure 6: Semantic prosody by collocation

	team	*club*	*side*	*outfit*
large	X	?	X	√
home	√	X	√	X
strong	√	√	√	X
top	?	√	?	X
dodgy	X	X	X	√

√ = collates   ? = questionable   X = does not collate

(adapted from McCarthy, 1990:12)

Grids may have a more useful role in demonstrating how collocations are able to create semantic prosody, when "a word associates with a particular set of meanings" (Hoey, in Lewis, 2000:232), as shown in Figure 6 above, where 'club' collates with positive terms like *strong club* and *top club*, but 'outfit' collates with the more prosaic *large outfit* and *dodgy outfit*. These can then be compared to the collocations found within this particular

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text, with Luton Town described as a 'lower division outfit', *4*, and Liverpool as a 'cosmopolitan glamour club', *5*. Thus, while the collocations used to describe the two teams may appear unusual, they are in fact constrained by, and consequently interpreted from, the limitations placed upon them by the context of situation and the genre through which it functions.

5.1.3 Collocation and corpus frequencies

As opposed to Lewis (2000), who argued that the bulk of the most common collocations should therefore be taught first, it may be that the interaction of frequent and infrequent collocation within a particular genre enables the reader to interpret the infrequent collocations within a particular text and, as such, should be presented in the classroom together with the more frequent ones. Within this particular text, for example, there is a range of frequencies by t-score, from *2c*, 'football league' (t=49.65), and *2a*, 'English football' (t=45.96), to *2b*, 'lower echelons' (t=5.37), and *2e*, 'different ends' (t=5.75), yet the repetition of the L3 (*adj + noun*) pattern, or linked in a parallel '*pattern of pattern*' form (such as, 'the lower echelons of the football league', line 4), may aid in the interpretation of the text. The patterns identified within the text may then be exploited to demonstrate the constraints on the combinability of the lexical items within those patterns, as seen in Figure 7:

Figure 7: L3 pattern (adjective/ noun) combinations

Which adjectives in box A can you combine with the nouns in box B?

A			**B**		
English	superior		football	qualities
third	financial		round	troubles
lower	unlikely		division	draw
cosmopolitan	packed		club	crowd

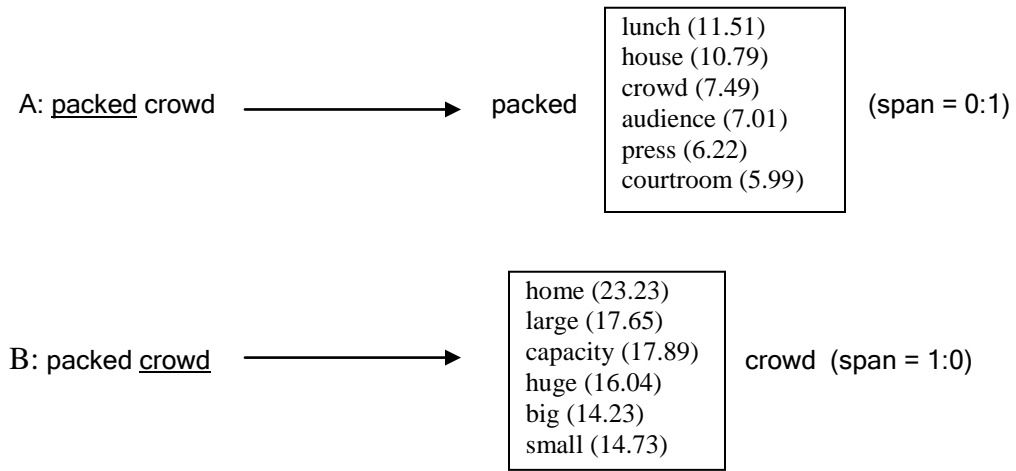(adapted from Redman & Ellis, 1990)

The infrequent items within a text may play an important role precisely for the fact that they are infrequent. The reader can identify a marked text in part by the presence of unusual collocations interacting with frequent ones and, for learners of a language, developing effective reading skills necessitates being able to distinguish between the two. The two collocations discussed above for example, *4*, 'lower division outfit', and *5*,

'cosmopolitan glamour club', stand out precisely because they differ from the collocations in the surrounding co-text. By standing out they serve to highlight the evaluative nature of the text. Whether this usage of collocation is a feature of this particular genre or merely a stylistic device of this particular writer would, however, require further investigation with a specialised corpus.

5.1.4   Collocation, frequency and 'node'

As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, Sinclair (1991) demonstrated how the item which is taken as the node can affect the relative frequencies of the collocations in a text. Looking at one collocation, *2i*, 'packed crowd', within the Bank of English corpus with a one-word span (given in brackets) Figure 8 demonstrates that whereas 'crowd' is in the top three collates of the node 'packed' (A), the opposite is not the case (B).

Figure 8: Comparison of collates for 'crowd' and 'packed' (t-score shown in brackets)

A: packed crowd ⟶ packed

> lunch (11.51)
> house (10.79)
> crowd (7.49)
> audience (7.01)
> press (6.22)
> courtroom (5.99)

(span = 0:1)

B: packed crowd ⟶

> home (23.23)
> large (17.65)
> capacity (17.89)
> huge (16.04)
> big (14.23)
> small (14.73)

crowd (span = 1:0)

However Table 5, looking at the top four collates for 'packed' from the Bank of English corpus by frequency as a collate with a span of 0:1, reveals that it is most commonly as a grammatical collocation.

Table 5: Top four collates for 'packed' from the Bank of English corpus

Collate	Corpus Freq.	Freq. as collate	t-score
with	2912052	3478	57.461730
in	8143020	604	14.425010
into	668885	578	23.189225
up	1009342	512	23.189225

To know the word *packed* requires knowledge not only of its semantic features, or dictionary definition, but also how it commonly interacts with other words (Lewis, Morgan, in Lewis, 1990:13) and how this constrains the textual choices that may be made. Section 5.3 will look at these textual word-constraints in more detail.

5.2 Collocation and textual word-constraints

5.2.1   Collocation and anaphoric/ exophoric reference

As discussed in Section 3.3.2.2, grammatical collocation links lexis and grammar with the text (Hunston, in Scott & Thompson, 2001:23). In order to demonstrate these links and the ways they can be exploited within the classroom the following sections will focus on the second paragraph of the text 'Report'. The paragraph begins with the anaphoric 'it' to refer to the preceding paragraph, specifically the 'third round of the FA Cup' (line 2), which introduces the evaluative nature of the text. This is prefigured by the use of the word 'minnows' (line 2). The top eight collates for 'minnows' from the Bank of English corpus , Appendix 3, possibly indicate that this word is predominantly used in a metaphorical sense within a context of sport and the entire passage proceeds from this division between the two teams, reflecting the context of situation described above. It may be possible that 'minnows' can, in fact, be almost considered a form of exophoric reference, signalling similar kinds of text within this genre. The fixed expression 'week in week out' serves to highlight the ongoing nature of the contest. The discourse functions of 'minnows' to stress the nature of strong/weak competition is then mirrored in the second paragraph through the use of 'pit', defined semantically as "to set someone or something in conflict or competition with" (ODE). The word 'pit' is thus not randomly chosen.

5.2.2   Collocation and textual anticipation

As a verb, 'pit' occurs within the Bank of English corpus 304 times, of which 204 are in the form 'pit against'(t=14.166), *9*, which, given the nature of the context of situation, has necessitated its use here. Yet this also highlights one of the main difficulties of collocation for learners in that the distance between the node 'pit' and collate 'against' is, in this case, 10 words. The form the collocation takes can thus aid the reader in anticipating the subsequent textual structure (Halliday, 2004:577). The form in particular

here is the G8D collocation *pit A against B,* where *A* is 'a side struggling in the lower echelons of the football league' and *B* is 'one of the cosmopolitan glamour clubs'. In the case of '<u>clubs</u>' (line 5), the top 15 collates from the Bank of English are grammatical words of which 5 take the form of either a conjunction or a relative clause (Appendix 4) and for this particular text the latter has been selected. While it may seem that this choice operates according to the 'open choice' principle, the options available are limited by the collocation properties of 'clubs'. The syntactic environment seems to be dictated by the constraints of the genre. The fixed expression 'head-to-head' at the end of the sentence functions as an emphatic device, reemphasising the contest.

5.2.3   Collocation and textual cohesion

Taking this one step further, Appendix 5 demonstrates how the patterning of grammatical and lexical collocation within a text may provide textual cohesion for that text, with the G8 pattern, such as 'pit against', together with the L3 lexical pattern providing cohesion between paragraphs and the two G2 patterns, 'time to dream' and 'chance to replay', providing cohesion across the passage as a whole. Again, whether this is an individual stylistic choice or a feature of the genre would require more research.

6.0 Conclusion

As this essay has hopefully demonstrated rather than lexis being dictated by grammatical structure, the grammatical choices within the sentence are also constrained by the collocation properties of the words within the text. These collocation choices are in turn constrained by the features of the genre and context of situation in which it takes place. A collocation reading, rather than a traditional structural one, may thus be more beneficial for a learner in decoding the text and developing what Hill (1999) termed 'collocational competence'. While the importance of collocation within the classroom, and the need to demonstrate syntactic and textual restrictions on word choice, is widely acknowledged there is still little experimental data on L2 collocation acquisition (Nesselhauf, 2003:223). Most studies (Nesselhauf, 2003; Shirato & Stapleton, 2007; Martynska, 2004; Bahns, 1993) have found evidence of L1 influence, for example, yet the exact nature of this influence is not fully understood (Wolter, 2006:741) and more research is required into

how, and to what extent, L1 features affect L2 collocation acquisition. The problem of which, and how many, collocations are to be presented still needs to be addressed (Nesselhauf, 2003:223). A survey of the use of lexical phrases in textbooks demonstrates that their selection is largely down to the preference of the writers (Koprowski, 2005:330). While there has been ongoing debate as to the usefulness in general of using genre in the classroom (Hyon, 1996), research into the influence of various genres on word constraints in English may offer a practical approach to this problem for collocation.

Appendix 1: Full text of 'The Report'

LUTON TOWN 1 - 1 LIVERPOOL
Sunday 06 January 2008 16:00 , FA Cup 3rd Round

LUTON 1-1 LIVERPOOL: THE REPORT

For the minnows of English football the third round of the FA Cup is always a time to dream that they could draw one of the giants of our game.

It can pit a side struggling in the lower echelons of the football league against one of the cosmopolitan glamour clubs that strut their stuff week in week out on the Premier League stage.

So when Luton were drawn at home to Liverpool for the second time in three years the romantics in the game's community were given a tie that would see two sides from very different ends of the football spectrum go head-to-head.

Back in 2006 it was an FA Cup classic. The lower division outfit powered into a 3-1 lead, and were on the verge of a what would have been a huge giant-killing act, before finally succumbing to the superior qualities of Rafael Benitez's side by a 5-3 scoreline.

This time around it was different. For all their financial troubles, Luton gave as good as they got and when the full-time whistle blew they had achieved an unlikely draw - and the chance to replay in front of a packed crowd at Anfield.

In a barnstorming first-half Liverpool were first to show and Ryan Babel could have given Rafael Benitez the perfect start in the first minute but his fierce strike was well saved by Dean Brill after the Dutch winger had slalomed past two defenders.

But they didn't have it all their own way in the opening exchanges and Dave Edwards should have given the home side a dream start on five minutes but he fired his effort straight at Charles Itandje after he beat the Reds' offside trap to race clear.

Dirk Kuyt then fired over following a neat interchange with Peter Crouch before Hyypia flashed a header wide from a corner.

An end-to-end half saw Luton go close after some great play from Drew Talbot, when the forward outfoxed Hyypia and surged into the box, but thankfully, Itandje was well placed to block his cut-back.

Peter Crouch then had two great chances to give Liverpool the lead but after his first effort was well saved by Dean Brill, he was unlucky to see his curled effort from 18 yards just wide.

Kevin Blackwell's side ended the first period strongly and could easily have gone ahead but despite good approach play from Drew Talbot and Calvin Andrew they did not find that elusive opening goal.

At half-time an upset looked a very real possibility, but Liverpool upped their game following the break and should have led on 48 minutes.

Kuyt found space on the right hand side of the penalty area but when his drilled cross-shot found Yossi Benayoun on the stretch at the far post, the Israeli somehow contrived to stab his effort wide of a relieved Dean Brill's goal.

There was more urgency about Liverpool's play and three minutes later the Reds had another chance, but Brill pulled off an astonishing one handed save to keep out John Arne Riise's deflected strike from 25 yards.

Luton responded with two golden opportunities to pull off an upset but after Darren Currie crossed from the left Drew Talbot headed over from six yards with the goal gaping.

And on 71 minutes boyhood red Currie nearly fired the goal he had probably dreamed about last night, but his perfectly executed volley flew within a whisker of the far post.

With over an hour gone, the home side had more than held their own against the Reds, but just when the Hatters' support began to believe they could defy the odds and cause an upset, Liverpool took the lead.

It came as following a mix-up in the home side's defence that allowed substitute Andriy Voronin to race clean through, and although the Ukrainian forward's effort was well saved by Brill, Peter Crouch was on hand to fire into an empty net.

It looked like a case of job done, but within three minutes the hosts rekindled their hopes with an opportunist goal from Dave Edwards.

The midfielder beat Riise at the near post to steer home Talbot's cross from the left to send the home crowd into raptures.

Both sides then had chances to win it with Riise firing agonisingly wide of the far post and Edwards looping a stunning volley just over, but in the end a draw was a fair result and the sides will have to do it all again in a replay at Anfield.

http://www.liverpoolfc.tv/match/season/2007-2008/jan/661/finalwhistle.htm

Appendix 2: Types of fixed expression

Types of fixed expression	Examples
I Idioms	
(i) irreversible binomials/ compound idioms	Spick and span; dead drunk; red tape.
(ii) full idioms	Run up (a bill); tear off (rush away); to smell a rat; to rain cats and dogs; to be in the doghouse.
(iii) Semi-idioms	Beefy-looking; dead drunk; a fat salary; the meeting kicks off at nine.
II Proverbs	A watched pot never boils.
III Stock phrases	When all is said and done; a recipe for disaster; unaccustomed as I am to…; a vicious circle.
IV Catchphrases	That's another fine mess you got me into; What do you think of it so far?; Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.
V Allusions/ Quotations	You've never had it so good; We are not amused; The lady's not for turning.
VI Idiomatic Similes	As sober as a judge; as old as the hills; as daft as a brush.
VII Discoursal Expressions	
(i) social formulae/clichés	How do you do? Long time, no see; bottoms up!
(ii) connectives; structuring devices	Mark my words; Once upon a time; Finally; to conclude.
(iii) conversational gambits	We'll now take questions from the floor; Guess what!; I wondered if I could have a word.
(iv) stylistic formulae	Further to my letter of 11th inst.; My lords, ladies and gentlemen.
(v) stereotypes	We're just good friends; I thought you'd never ask; It's not what you think!

After: Alexander (1985) cited in Carter (1998:67)

Appendix 3: Top collates for 'minnows' from the Bank of English corpus

Collate	Corpus Freq.	Freq. as collate	t-score
against	306695	77	8.261876
league	82731	49	6.826500
cup	126623	46	6.508258
the	24780121	495	5.898087
division	48497	35	5.795739
football	120403	23	4.427275
welsh	17279	16	3.936585
rugby	39451	16	3.855213

Appendix 4: Top collates for 'clubs' from the Bank of English corpus

Collate	Corpus Freq.	Freq. as collate	t-score
and	10608346	3345	43.265230
in	8143020	2301	34.483482
are	2003616	1525	34.975460
to	11218716	1244	10.002724
have	2055640	1191	29.877796
will	1273351	681	22.219772
who	1109913	600	20.895371
but	2120938	563	16.626844
that	4558144	508	6.473577
were	1109351	485	18.021148
with	2912052	450	10.308222
for	3972098	392	5.933481
like	645429	440	17.209361
which	1129795	330	13.225558

Appendix 5: Textual cohesion within the text 'The Report' by BBI collocation type

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LUTON TOWN 1 - 1 LIVERPOOL
Sunday 06 January 2008 16:00 , FA Cup 3rd Round

LUTON 1-1 LIVERPOOL: THE REPORT

English football(L3)   time to dream(G2)

pit   lower echelons(L3)   against(G8)

different ends(L3)   football

spectrum(L3)

power   into(G8)

succumb   to(G8)   superior

qualities(L3)

financial troubles(L3)

chance to replay(G2)

packed crowd(L3)
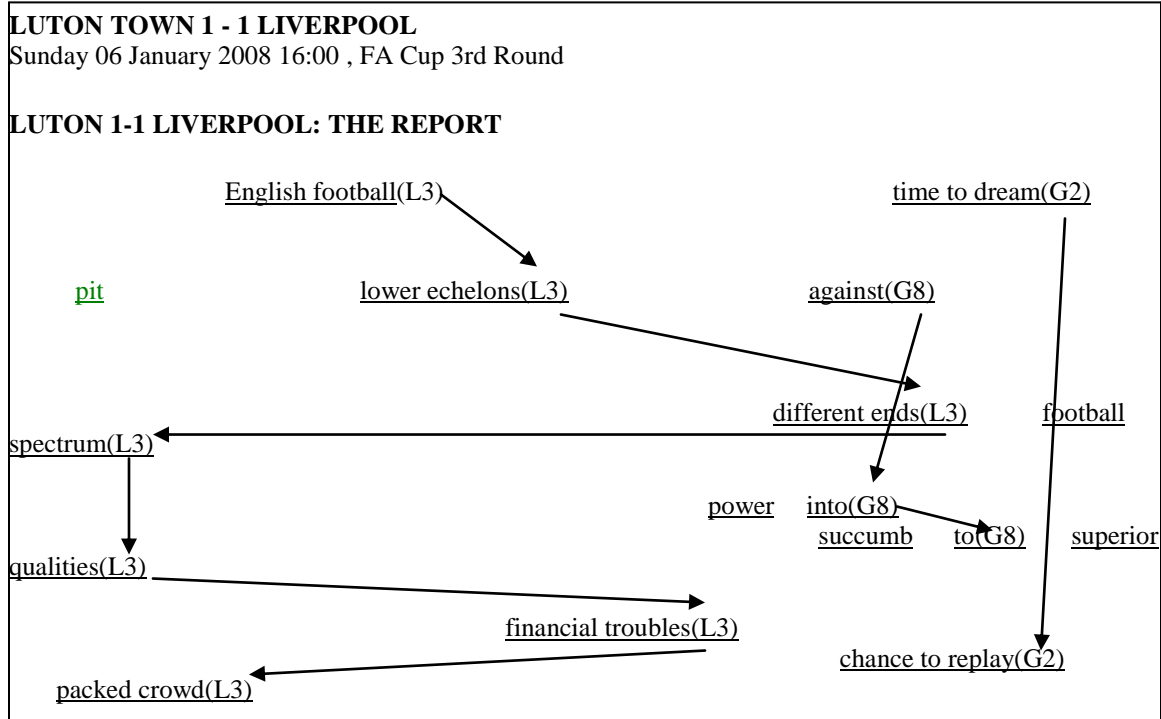
(adapted from Halliday, 2004:581)

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