

Collocation in the Classroom

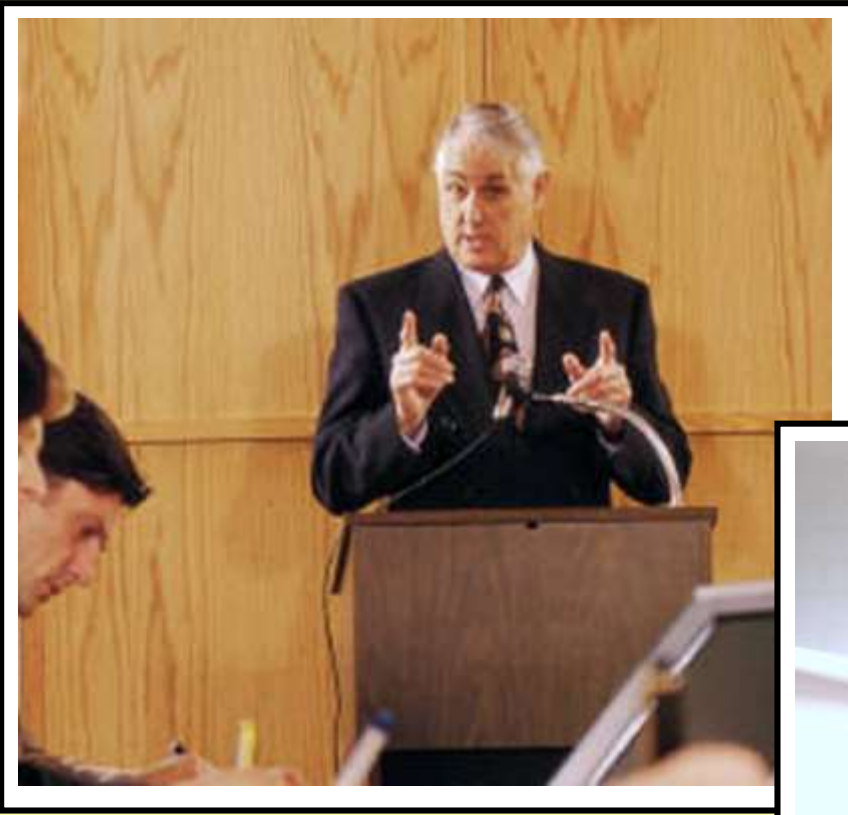
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ETAS Professional Development Day





Dr T.

Jürgen



new car
green dress

free collocations

depend on

grammatical collocation

~~**a table**
kick the bucket
good morning~~

not collocations ?

restricted collocations

strong tea
fierce competition
run a company
stark naked

arbitrarily restricted ?

levy a tax
blond hair
torrential rain

**semantically
restricted ?**

make a mistake
take a risk

**collocations with
semantically-depleted verbs**

Collocation is something which is arbitrary

[Collocation] is a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others.

Michael McCarthy 1990

Collocation is not determined by logic or frequency, but is arbitrary, decided only by linguistic convention.

Michael Lewis 1997

It is important to get across to students at this stage that these relations are arbitrary, there is no reason why it should be *make a decision* rather than *do a decision*. We need to make them aware that this is simply the way we say things in English and that's that.

George Woolard 2000

Different types of collocations

idioms

kick the bucket

fixed

torrential rain
levy a tax
blond hair

opaque

restricted
collocations

fierce competition
strong tea
gifted musician

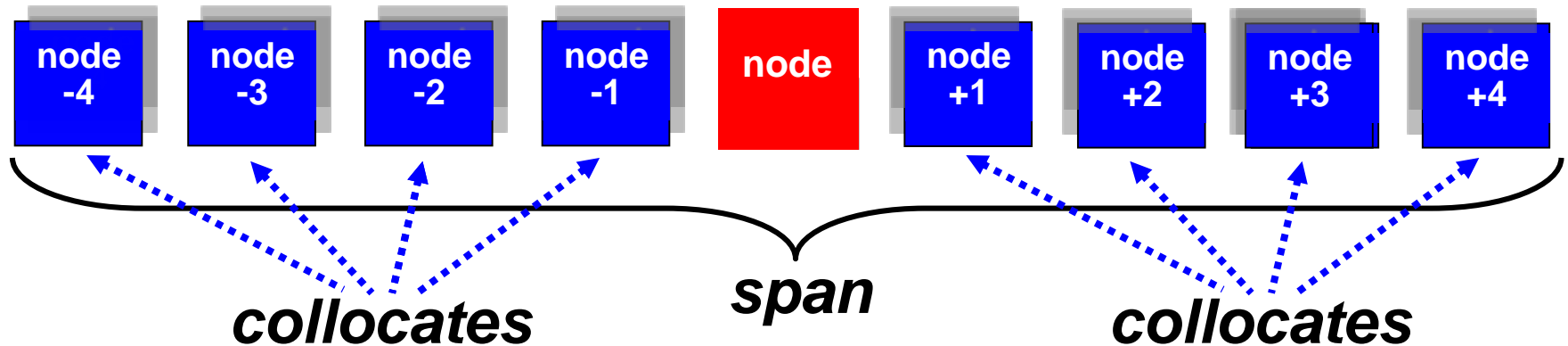
run a company

free
collocations

new car
green dress

free

The corpus linguist's definition of collocation



We may use the term **node** to refer to an item whose collocations we are studying, and we may define a **span** as the number of lexical items on each side of a node that we consider relevant to that node. Items in the environment set by the span we will call **collocates**.

Groups of semantically-related items chosen for my research

Group 1

issue, aspect, factor

Group 2

aim, objective, target goal

Group 3

*run, manage, head
responsible for, responsibility for,
deal with, handle*

Group 4

system, process, procedure

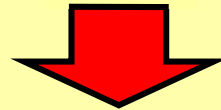
Stages in the research

Corpora

**Stage
1**

**Examination of the collocational
behaviour of the items in a
general English domain.**

**Bank of English
(BoE) 450 mil. words**



**Stage
2**

**Examination of the collocational
behaviour of the items in a
business English domain.**

**British National
Commercial Corpus
(BNCc) 7 mil. words**



**Stage
3**

**Examination of how German
learners of English collocate
these items in academic essays.**

**International Corpus
of Learner English
(ICLE) 200,000 words**

Collocates associated with different senses of 'issue'

Data from the BoE

*issue*₁

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
political	1.19	535
Palestinian	0.74	332
contentious	0.53	239
controversial	0.51	229
thorny	0.35	159

*issue*₂

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
latest	1.00	452
current	0.82	368
special	0.53	240
September	0.38	169

*issue*₃

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
bond	0.84	377
share	0.78	349
stock	0.11	49
currency	0.10	46

Shared Collocates

	<i>issue</i>		<i>aspect</i>		<i>factor</i>	
node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
important	1.78	800	1.58	521	2.42	1,087
key	1.37	615	0.17	75	1.38	620
major	1.00	451	0.07	30	1.55	697
main	0.84	379	0.03	13	0.35	158
crucial	0.46	207	0.14	63	0.56	253
critical	0.33	151	0.13	59	0.21	93
vital	0.14	61	0.04	20	0.34	151

Data from the BoE

Characteristic Collocates

The influence of semantics

Data from
the BoE

node -1
political
sensitive
contentious
controversial
thorny

<i>issue</i>	
Av. No. /mil.	freq.
1.19	535
0.70	316
0.53	239
0.51	229
0.35	159

<i>aspect</i>	
Av. No. /mil.	freq.
0.08	36
0.01	4
0.01	6
0.09	40
0.00	0

<i>factor</i>	
Av. No. /mil.	freq.
0.05	24
0.00	1
0.00	2
0.00	1
0.00	0

worrying
disturbing
striking
pleasing
frightening

0.02	7
0.01	4
0.00	0
0.00	0
0.00	0

0.16	71
0.09	41
0.09	40
0.06	28
0.03	14

0.03	13
0.03	10
0.01	4
0.01	5
0.00	0

risk
feel-good
growth
X
necrosis

0.00	1
0.00	0
0.01	3
0.00	0
0.00	0

0.00	0
0.00	0
0.00	0
0.00	0
0.00	0

0.86	386
0.73	329
0.42	189
0.24	106
0.10	42

The influence of the phraseological behaviour of the selected item

Data from the BoE

	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
all aspects of	4.98	1,795
every aspect of	3.27	1,471
one aspect of	2.10	947

	Av. No. /mil.	freq. in BoE
one aspect of	2.10	947
two aspects of	0.32	143
three aspects of	0.15	66
four aspects of	0.04	18

Managers are responsible for **all aspects of** their branch and should be a has over 20 years experience in **all aspects of** managing , designing, simple to issue regulations covering **all aspects of** product safety but subsuming

not seek to be involved in **every aspect of** the school administrative/c designers who are skilled in **every aspect of** kitchen design and constructi You have to be able to control **every aspect of** production , be able to train

Single European Market is only **one aspect of** worldwide economic activity Safety competitions are only **one aspect of** our campaign to improve sa The compost initiative is just **one aspect of** a project which, perhaps aga

Example concordance lines taken from the BNCc

The influence of the phraseological behaviour of the selected item

Data from the BoE

	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
TAKE issue with	1.16	526
at issue BE	0.83	375
FORCE the issue	0.44	202
MAKE an issue of	0.23	104

97, revealed: `I don't **make a big issue of** it but without Hugh I wouldn't MP heard of this and **made a major issue of** it in the House of Commons. This Pyongyang may be **making a huge issue of** the nuclear inspections, partly Russia decided to **make a serious issue of** the position of Russians also sought to **make a moral issue of** the deficit. It's unseemly to Although they don't **make a big issue out of** it, they know exactly who yet. And he must not **make a major issue out of** it." Unfortunately for imply that I wanted to **make a race issue out of** this `incident". I was

editor, Ian Black, **took polite issue with** some of Pilger's more or pluralism, **took friendly issue with** Kallen along the lines of in the Netherlands - **took strong issue with** his colleague. While he didn't in Indiana and Ohio, **takes sharp issue with** such a characterization of his salty but Debs and I **took fierce issue with** him, having helped ourselves

The influence of metaphor

Data from the BoE

node -4	<i>aim</i>		<i>objective</i>		<i>target</i>		<i>goal</i>	
	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
SET	0.00	6	0.00	6	0.41	186	0.23	105
MEET	0.00	1	0.02	11	0.22	99	0.04	20
REACH	0.00	0	0.00	5	0.12	55	0.06	28
HIT	0.00	2	0.00	1	0.09	39	0.00	0
MISS	0.00	4	0.00	0	0.03	14	0.00	0

Concordance lines from the British National Commercial Corpus (BNCC)

rculation and in Japan we 're **on target** there, and under budget . In adve
 leased to say that we are just **on target** and set fair for 1993 . It was
 ,000 which was pound 50,000 **above target**. This was not entirely unexpected ,
 are below target, you're **above target**. But we can constantly monitor you
 levels were 37 per **below target** in 1949 , 19 per below in 1950 a
 -issioning levels were well **below target** initially, but, with the roll-over
 reached your **seven thousand pound target**. Yeah I mean I 'd gather that
 see Ch. 28). These include a **3% target** for the overall ratio of Public Sec
 never approached the **800,000 target** and was about 112,000 when , after

The syntactic behaviour of 'target'

	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
noun + aim	5.08	32
noun + objective	3.65	23
noun + target	13.33	84
noun + goal	1.59	10

Data from the BNCc

	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
aim + noun	0.00	0
objective + noun	0.00	0
target + noun	70.31	443
goal + noun	7.62	48

Concordance lines from the BNCc

government was able to meet its borrowing target without resorting to raising history. They propose an ambitious profit target: 10% of members ' -ific product & so to achieve the profit target set by the company . quantity required to meet their cash target. If piece-rates were lowered reaching the Chancellor's 3% growth target in 1994 are mixed at. increased to L1, and the money supply target was Q1 ,the authority

and Czechs want the EC to set a target date for their entry . The ed pro output in an attempt to achieve a target level of at \$21 a barrel . How can they achieve maximum or target levels of profits or sales without s responsible for achieving the target performance. Early feedback is million , reflecting a below target performance for the first level is necessary to meet the target interest rate. Thus if the target

Doctor T



**Do I *run, head* or *manage* my department?
Which one should I use in my presentation?**

The influence of etymology

<i>RUN</i>		<i>HEAD</i>		<i>MANAGE</i>		
Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	node +4
1.08	486	0.32	143	0.20	89	business
0.88	394	0.26	116	0.27	121	company
0.31	138	0.16	73	0.12	52	firm
0.00	4	0.29	129	0.00	0	committee
0.00	0	0.13	60	0.00	0	board
0.00	1	0.05	21	0.00	0	panel
0.00	3	0.00	1	0.04	16	staff
0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	workers
0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	employees

Data from the BoE

responsible for

The 10 most frequent node +2 nominal collocates associated with *responsible for*.

node +2	Av. No. / Mil.	freq.
deaths	0.51	228
actions	0.38	172
death	0.34	153
shareholders	0.22	101
loss	0.22	97

node +2	Av. No. / Mil.	freq.
attack	0.20	90
policy	0.20	91
development	0.20	88
murder	0.19	85
safety	0.17	76

Data from the BoE

responsible for

or other problems and to share responsibility for making decisions. Try the departments were to be given responsibility for community development cisions. If people are to accept responsibility for outcomes, they will the restaurants, and also takes responsibility for a major functional area

e Group (GIA), which has claimed responsibility for numerous killings in as fined £10,000 after admitting responsibility for the deaths of two pa phoned newspaper offices to deny responsibility for the killing of Mou1 and we will hold those who bear responsibility for these murders to acc

Data from the BoE

in charge of

The ten most frequent node +2 nominal collocates associated with *in charge of*.

node +2	Av. No. / Mil.	freq.
case	0.18	80
policy	0.17	76
affairs	0.16	72
investigation	0.16	70
project	0.14	65

node +2	Av. No. / Mil.	freq.
team	0.14	64
country	0.11	51
operations	0.10	45
operation	0.09	42
development	0.09	41

ion. Two years later she was **put in charge of** the New Millennium Experience a lieutenant colonel and **placed in charge of** a whole section. Now a full an inexperienced bellboy **left in charge of** a hotel on New Year's Eve. buy-out. Mr Dreman would **remain in charge of** the firm, one of wall Street lfare. Stephen Byers will **stay in charge of** a beefed-up Trade Department

accuracy, "Milosevic will **stay in power**." Then how will the war end? < Gorbachev can succeed" and **remain in power**. They remain convinced that his knows that his government, **kept in power** by extreme right wing parties, man that President Aristide **put in power** only last July, General Raoul Ce, criminal leaders had been **left in power**, and the then-dominant cultural my

Jürgen



**Do I call it a new *system*,
process or *procedure*?**

The influence of polysemy

1. social systems		
node -1	Av. No /mil.	freq.
legal	3.45	1,554
education	3.06	1,380
health	1.1	495

2. political systems		
node -1	Av. No /mil	freq.
capitalist	0.79	354
democratic	0.76	341
communist	0.59	264

3. business systems		
management	1.0	461
accounting	0.25	112
marketing	0.18	81

4. technical systems		
computer	3.58	1,610
telephone	0.68	305
cooling	0.34	152

5. transport systems		
transport	1.26	565
rail	0.5	225
road	0.23	104

6. biological systems		
immune	6.83	3,074
nervous	4.89	2,200
reproductive	0.38	170

7. geographical systems		
solar	3.59	1,615
river	0.27	122
cave	0.11	50

**Data from the
BoE**

river
cave
solar
road
immune
circulatory
penal
rail
canal
heating
democratic
digestive
legal
cooling
navigation
health
capitalist

believe in
stimulate
improve
depress
install
reform
run
build
acts on
destroy

system
system

The influence of semantic prosody

Data from the BoE

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
long	0.68	304
lengthy	0.31	138

slow	0.64	286
gradual	0.33	149

complex	0.40	179
difficult	0.28	128

painful	0.34	155
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node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
short	0.00	3

quick	0.03	13
fast	0.00	3

simple	0.19	84
easy	0.10	43

painless	0.03	14
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process

The influence of semantic prosody

adjective and *adjective process*

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
long	0.19	84
slow	0.08	38
lengthy	0.04	18
complex	0.04	16
difficult	0.03	12
expensive	0.02	10

and

node -1	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
difficult	0.08	36
painful	0.08	34
complex	0.04	20
lengthy	0.03	14
expensive	0.03	12
arduous	0.03	12

process

Data from the BoE.

Procedure

node -1	<i>system</i>		<i>process</i>		<i>procedure</i>	
	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.	Av. No. /mil.	freq.
standard	0.05	24	0.01	6	0.33	147
normal	0.04	16	0.19	85	0.24	106
correct	0.01	6	0.00	3	0.14	62
usual	0.01	6	0.02	9	0.10	45

Data from the BoE

important that applicants **follow** the **procedure** of applying on prescribed for or in some other form, then the **procedure to be followed** is that set and then only if it **lays down** the **procedure** in detail, which many do not excess but we still **comply with** the **procedure** which. It's perfectly reasona

grumble and do as they are told. **Procedure** can be too rigid. The standard the courts to work efficiently. **Procedure** has now been simplified, and th pattern to which they belong. **Procedure** was tightened but individuals process focuses on questions of **procedure** rather than guilt, often making He's tried hard to concentrate on **procedure**, leaving all the sensitive You know, Speaker, the rules of **procedure** of this assembly and this

Conclusions

Collocation is influenced by factors such as;

- 1). the semantics of the item itself**
- 2). different polysemous meanings of an item**
- 3). the phraseological behaviour of an item**
- 4). the use of metaphor**
- 5). semantic prosody associated with the meaning of an item**

Implications

- 1). many collocations can be explained**
- 2). material should encourage learners to look for an explanation**
- 3). learners should rely less on dictionaries**
- 4). learners' dictionaries should include characteristic collocates**

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