Lexical Collocation Use 
by Korean EFL College Learners 

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Park, Sohee. 2003. Lexical Collocation Use by Korean EFL College learners. SNU Working Papers in English Linguistics and Language 2, 19-40. This study investigated Korean EFL college students' lexical collocation use. The specific research questions were as follows: 1) Which factors affect the collocational competence?; 2) Which collocation types are the most problematic to Korean EFL college learners?; 3) What are the possible causes of collocational errors? 133 subjects and 6 interviewees participated in this study. They were divided into three groups according to their English proficiency and were asked to complete the two tests: a collocation test and a vocabulary test. The results of the study showed that there were considerably high correlations between English proficiency and lexical collocation competence and between vocabulary knowledge and lexical collocation competence. Among the five types of lexical collocation in the collocation test, it was found that the most problematic lexical collocation type of all three groups was adverb and adjective type, whereas the least problematic collocation was noun and verb type. The qualitative analyses of the participants' answers and the interview data showed that most of the collocation errors were caused by L1 transfer or substituting the synonyms of collocates.

Keywords: lexical collocation, collocational competence, collocational error, L1 transfer

1. INTRODUCTION 
1.1. Background and Motivation
A large number of studies have been conducted on vocabulary teaching and learning. However, the communicative approach to language teaching, popular in the 1970s and 1980s, downplayed explicit vocabulary instruction with the notion that students could learn vocabulary implicitly through guessing and inferring from rich context. Thus, much of recent research regarding vocabulary acquisition was incidental vocabulary learning from reading (Krasen, 1989; Nagy, 1997; Prince, 1996; Stenberg, 1987). Compared with the amount of research done in the areas, the number of the studies on collocation has been relatively small though many EFL and ESL learners have problems with it (Channell, Oatyn & Rudzca, 1981; Cowie, 1978; Howarth, 1996, 1998; Korosandowicz–Struzynska, 1980 (qtd. in Bahns, 1993); Mackin, 1978; McCarthy, 1990).

The importance of collocation in a foreign or second language learning has been pointed out and it was argued that collocations should be taught since EFL learners are less likely to notice unless guided towards the importance of collocation (Conzett, 2000; Hill, 2000; Korosandowicz–Struzynska, 1980; Lewis, 1993). For example, Rudzka et al. (1981) argued that one particular aspect of vocabulary learning is the problem of word combinability. According to Rudzka et al., one of the main difficulties students encounter in relation to the learning of new items of vocabulary is to know what their collocational properties are. McCarthy (1990) also mentioned that even very advanced learners often make inappropriate or unacceptable collocations and that they feel this area is tricky and difficult for a long time. In addition, Conzett (2000) claimed that despite contextualized presentation of new vocabulary, the learners problem of word combinability is evident that EFL or ESL students need additional and explicit instruction in collocations.
Based on these arguments, many researchers have conducted empirical studies. For example, the studies on the relationship between the proficiency and collocational competence were carried out by Howarth (1996) and Shin (1999). However, the two studies had different results. Howarth studied the differences between native and non-native speakers collocation patterns in academic writing and compared native speakers and non-native speakers density of collocation using corpus as data sources. His study showed that there was no direct correlation between collocation scores and the factors such as linguistic proficiency or academic grade. On the other hand, Shin (1999)s study found the correlation between the L2 proficiency and collocational competence. Thus, the relationship between the proficiency and collocation competence needs investigated again. In addition, Hill (2000) pointed out that most learners with a large vocabulary have problems with fluency because their collocation competence is limited. Thus, this study also investigated if there is any relationship between vocabulary knowledge and collocational competence, and.

Many studies on word combination have focused on only verb and noun collocation type (Bahns and Eldaw, 1993; Howarth, 1996, 1998). There have been no studies to examine which type of collocation is difficult to ESL or EFL learners. By investigating a variety of collocation types, the present study explored which collocation types cause more difficulties and which types cause less difficulties for Korean EFL students. Then, this study examined the Korean students collocation use qualitatively and explored why they make collocation errors. If this study finds types which cause difficulty to Korean EFL college learners and their possible causes of collocation errors the result will be helpful for both learners and teachers.
1.2. Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the collocation use by Korean EFL college students. The present study has the following three major objectives:

1) Is there any relationship between Korean EFL college learners' general L2 proficiency and collocational competence, and between their vocabulary knowledge and collocational competence?

2) Which lexical collocation types are the most and the least problematic to Korean EFL college learners?

3) What are the possible causes of collocation errors made by Korean EFL college students?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Previous Studies on Collocation

2.1.1. Definitions of Collocation

It would be desirable to begin with a clear definition of collocation. Even a brief glance at the literature on collocation, however, reveals that forming a precise definition is difficult. Bahns (1993) stated collocation is a term which is used and understood in many different ways. As Bahns mentioned, there are conflicting definitions and terminologies. Despite many variations, a general definition of collocation can be reached.

Firth (1957) first established the term collocation: Collocation is the habitual juxtaposition or association in the sentences of language (p.195), that is, a particular word with other particular words. He argued that a word collocates with another word is a part of word meaning and gave the example of the word ass,
saying that there are only limited possibilities with preceding adjectives, amongst which the commonest are you silly, obstinate, stupid (Firth, 1951).

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986) who are lexicographers also gave the following explanation about the collocation: In English, as in other languages, there are many fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions. Such groups of words are called recurrent combinations, fixed combination, or collocation (p.105). They illustrated the main distinguishing criteria of the three categories. To identify collocation from the other two categories, free combination and idioms, two factors are involved: degree of fixedness and degree of literalness. According to the two factors, the least cohesive type of word combinations are so called free combination. Free combination is two or more words are used in which the elements are used in their literal sense. Each component may be substituted without affecting the meaning of the other. On the other hand, idioms are relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the meanings of their component parts. The following figure shows that collocations which are between free combinations and idioms are loosely fixed combinations.

Figure 1
The Continuum of Collocations

Some researchers including Conzett (2000), Hill (2000) and Howarth (1998) claimed that the main learning load for all language users is not at the right end or left end on the collocational continuum, but at the middle, those many thousands of collocations which make up a large part of what we say and write. This study focuses only on the collocations which are in
of the various types of word combinations, collocations have been the most interesting but difficult for lexicographers to identify and treat in the dictionary (Bahns, 1993). Because dictionaries must do more than describe words that stand alone, they must also show how words are combined to form sentences. In order to make a collocation dictionary, lexicographers, Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986a,b) classified collocations into two major categories: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations.

In a narrowest sense, grammatical collocations refer to the specific preposition that must occur after a particular verb, noun, or adjective. More widely, they refer to any kind of syntactic element that must accompany a particular word, usually a verb, a noun or an adjective in English. Several examples that include grammatical structures are infinitive clause after promise or attempt, that—clause after afraid, and so on. Other examples of grammatical collocations including prepositions are rely on, fear of, fond of, account for, advantage over, adjacent to, by accident, and so forth. They consist of a noun, an adjective, plus a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause. The following table shows 8 grammatical collocation types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free Combinations</th>
<th>Collocations</th>
<th>Idioms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less fixed</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>fixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more literal</td>
<td>less</td>
<td>literal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.1.2. Previous Studies on the Classification of Collocation

Of the various types of word combinations, collocations have been the most interesting but difficult for lexicographers to identify and treat in the dictionary (Bahns, 1993). Because dictionaries must do more than describe words that stand alone, they must also show how words are combined to form sentences. In order to make a collocation dictionary, lexicographers, Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986a,b) classified collocations into two major categories: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations.

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with examples.

**TABLE 1**

Classification of Grammatical Collocations (Benson et al., 1986b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation types</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: noun+preposition</td>
<td>blockade against, apathy towards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: to infinitive (noun +to infinitive)</td>
<td>a pleasure to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: noun+that clause</td>
<td>an agreement that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: preposition+noun</td>
<td>by accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: adjective+preposition</td>
<td>(to) be afraid of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI: adjective+to infinitive</td>
<td>(to) be ready to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII: adjective+that clause</td>
<td>(to) imperative that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII: 19 types of verbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lexical collocations, on the other hand, do not contain prepositions, infinitives, or clauses, but consist of various combinations of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986b) distinguished seven structural types of lexical collocations: verb+noun; adjective+noun; noun+verb; noun+of+noun; adverb +adjective; verb+adverb. The following table shows seven lexical collocation types with their examples.

**TABLE 2**

Classification of Lexical Collocation (Benson et al., 1986b)

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1 Grammatical collocation VIII consist of 19 English verb patterns, including verbs which allow the shift of an indirect object to a position before the direct object, transitive verbs used with the preposition for that allow the dative movement transformation, verbs which are followed by to+infinitive, verbs which can be followed by a possessive noun and a gerund, verbs that can be followed by a noun clause beginning with the conjunction that, and verbs that are followed by and object and a verb form in ing etc.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation types</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ⅰ verb+noun/pronoun/preposition</td>
<td>reach a verdict, apply a principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅱ verb+noun</td>
<td>ease tension, override a veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅲ adjective+noun</td>
<td>rough estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅳ noun+verb</td>
<td>bees buzz/sting/swarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅴ noun+of+ noun</td>
<td>flock of sheep, pack of dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅵ adverb+adjective</td>
<td>closely acquainted, hopelessly addicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ⅶ verb+adverb</td>
<td>appreciate sincerely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since this framework has received wide acceptance in a range of studies of phraseology as well as in collocational lexicography (Cowie & Mackin, 1993; Howarth, 1996), their classification of lexical collocation was used for the present study. However, lexical collocation type one and two were combined into one category in the present study. Both lexical type I and II in Benson et al. (1986) s classification are verb and noun collocation. The two types are divided depending on the meaning of the verb. The verb of collocation type I means creation and activation, while the verb of collocation type II means eradication and nullification. This division is for making a dictionary. For this study, Benson et al. (1986)s lexical collocation type I and II were treated as the same category, verb and noun collocation.

3. METHOD
3.1. Participants
3.1.1. Test Participants

The participants of the study were 133 undergraduate students. Fifty-six students in 4 College English courses, seventy-seven students in 5 Advanced English courses offered at Seoul National University in Korea participated in the study. The participants
were divided into three groups according to their standardized English proficiency test score: low proficiency group (44 students), intermediate proficiency group (46 students) and advanced proficiency group (43 students). Among 133 participants, 70 were female and 63 were male. They ranged from freshmen to seniors, majoring in humanities (19), business administration and economics (14), social science (11), engineering (15), natural science (39), education (10), law (6), pharmacy (9) and medical science (10).

3.1.2. Interview Informants

Six Seoul National University students participated in the interview. In each proficiency level, two students were chosen as interviewees. Four of them were male and two of them were female. The six interviewees ranged from freshmen to seniors, majoring in English language and literature (2), English education (1), social science (1), law (1), business administration (1). Their proficiency scores were ranged from 620 to 960.

3.2. Instruments

Since the participants already had their standardized proficiency scores such as TOEIC, TOEFL or TEPS scores, an instrument to measure their English proficiency level was not developed. However, to assess the participants vocabulary knowledge and collocation competence, the two tests were developed for this study.

Then, in order to explore the participants answers qualitatively and find out the possible cause of collocation errors which were made in the collocation test, interviews with another six
participants were done.

3.2.1. Vocabulary Test

In order to measure the participants vocabulary knowledge, the researcher developed vocabulary test which consists of 20 questions. The participants were asked to select one answer from multiple choices. The vocabulary test was developed on the basis of the vocabulary test of TEPS. All the questions were adopted from TEPS reference books. Questions included the written forms as well as spoken forms: 10 questions were composed of two-turn dialogues and 10 questions were formal and written sentences. This test consisted of general vocabulary knowledge such as the meaning, and appropriateness of words in the given sentence and so on except the collocational knowledge (see APPENDIX I).

3.2.2. Collocation Test

For the present study, a collocation test consisted of the rational cloze test including 5 types of lexical collocations. Unlike other studies on the acquisition of collocations, Korean equivalents of English collocations were not presented to minimize any possible errors by L1 interference.

The collocation test for this study was developed on the basis of Benson et al. (1986)’s seven lexical collocations. However, their seven types of collocation were modified for this study. Only five types of collocations, verb and noun, adjective and noun, noun and verb, adverb and adjective, and adverb and verb, were included. All the 25 blanks were designed to test each classified collocation usage. There were five questions in each
type. Each collocation has different level of fixedness and literalness. Therefore, the answer for the questions can be more than one. (see APPENDIX II).

3.2.3. Interview

The interview for finding out the causes of collocation errors was carried out with 6 university students individually. Before the interview started, they all finished the collocation test and vocabulary test. For each answer in collocation test, the interviewees were asked to report the reasons behind their answers. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes.

3.3. Procedures

Two tests were administered during the regular class time with the cooperation of the instructor in charge of the class in early November, 2002. The participants were asked to answer the 20 vocabulary questions in 15 minutes. Then, the collocation test, 25 questions asking 5 types of collocations, were completed in 15 minutes.

The interviews were conducted with another 6 participants after the two tests were completed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Research Question 1: The relationships between Korean EFL college learners’ general L2 proficiency and collocational competence, and between their vocabulary knowledge and collocational competence

In order to investigate the relationship between collocational
competence and general English proficiency and between collocational competence and vocabulary knowledge, Pearson–Product Moment Correlations was used.

**TABLE 3**

Correlation of Collocational Competence with General L2 Proficiency and Vocabulary Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation Test Score</th>
<th>General Proficiency Score</th>
<th>Vocabulary Test Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.771**</td>
<td>.669**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=133 (44 for the low group, 46 for the intermediate, 43 for the advanced group)

As Table 3 shows, both collocational competence and general English proficiency and collocational competence and vocabulary knowledge were found to be significantly correlated. To be more specific, Korean college students collocational competence was more highly correlated with general proficiency than vocabulary knowledge.

Since there were high correlations for all the subjects, it was investigated whether there were also highly significant correlations for the each proficiency level. The following table 4 provides the results of correlation tests for the three groups.

**TABLE 4**

Correlation of Collocational Competence with General L2 Proficiency and Vocabulary Knowledge for Each Proficiency Group
As indicated in Table 4, collocational competence for all three groups is correlated with general L2 proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. Notably, as the English proficiency level increases, the correlation between English proficiency and collocational competence also increases. However, the three proficiency groups correlations between vocabulary knowledge and collocational competence do not increase with their proficiency.

From table 3 and 4, we can see that collocational competence is a little more highly correlated with English general proficiency than vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the lower English proficiency is, the lower correlation between collocational competence and English proficiency is. As McCarthy (1990) mentioned, the learners from the early stage need to focus on the collocation acquisition to enrich vocabulary and also enable to produce naturally sounding sentences.

Table 5 shows the result for each groups mean score and standard deviation on the proficiency, vocabulary and collocation test. The advanced groups mean score was higher than those of the intermediate and the low group and the intermediate groups mean score was higher than that of the low group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Proficiency Score</td>
<td>.388**</td>
<td>.477**</td>
<td>.544**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Test Score</td>
<td>.434**</td>
<td>.514**</td>
<td>.482**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=133 (44 for the low group, 46 for the intermediate, 43 for the advanced group)

TABLE 5

Group Scores on English Proficiency, Vocabulary and Collocation Test
The second purpose of the study was to investigate the type of lexical collocation which is the most problematic for each proficiency group. First of all, in order to see whether the mean scores of each collocation type among the three groups were significantly different from one another, one-way ANOVA was performed. The result of one-way ANOVA is shown in Table 6.
As can be seen in Table 6, the result of the analysis showed that there were significant mean differences in 5 types of collocation among the three groups. In order to find out where the significant differences are, the Post-hoc Turkey tests were used. According to the Turkey tests, there were significant differences in all five types of collocation across the three groups except the noun and verb type between the low and intermediate group and the adverb and adjective type between the low and intermediate group.

From the mean score of the each collocation type, the mean ranking was made.

### TABLE 6
The Results of ANOVA on Each Collocation Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>118.380</td>
<td>59.19</td>
<td>45.470</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>168.853</td>
<td>1.299</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>287.233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39.629</td>
<td>19.813</td>
<td>24.961</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>103.186</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>142.812</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65.886</td>
<td>32.943</td>
<td>35.270</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>65.886</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>187.308</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63.744</td>
<td>31.872</td>
<td>25.979</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>159.489</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>223.233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88.674</td>
<td>44.337</td>
<td>30.487</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>189.055</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>277.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

### TABLE 7
Mean Ranking of the Collocation Types Across Groups
As the Table 7 shows, the low groups ranking of the mean scores is the same as the intermediate groups. Even though the advanced groups ranking is different from the other two groups rankings, noun and verb collocation type is on the highest rank and the adverb and adjective collocation type is on the lowest rank as the low and the intermediate groups rankings. In other words, for the low, the intermediate and the advanced proficiency group learners, the most problematic collocation is adverb and adjective type and the least problematic collocation is noun and verb type. It seems that this result is attributed to the frequency of each collocation. The noun and verb and adjective and noun type is more common and frequent in the sentence than the other types. Therefore, the problematic collocation, adverb and adjective collocation and verb and noun collocation need giving more attention when studying vocabulary.

4.3 Research Questions 3: The qualitative analysis of the participants answers and the possible causes of collocation errors.

The third research question, the three groups answers according to each collocation type were qualitatively analyzed and
the possible cause of collocation errors were examined through the interview with 6 interviewees. Two students in each proficiency level participated in the interview. All six interviewees were asked the rationales behind the each answer in the collocation test immediately after the collocation and vocabulary test were completed. As other researchers pointed out, the interview data showed that most collocation errors were caused by L1 transfer particularly at the low level. Reliance on L1 in L2 communication is a strategy that accompanies L2 learners even at a very advanced stage of their language learning. Learners assume that there is one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 result in positive answer, however, reliance on L1 often produce lexical errors and unnatural expressions.

The answers which 133 participants gave in the collocation test and the mean accuracy rate of each collocation type was shown in Table 8. Each group's mean accuracy rate of collocation was calculated by dividing the number of the correct answers by the number of the total questions for each collocation type.

**TABLE 8**

Mean Accuracy Rate with Students' Answers in Each Collocation Type
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocate Type</th>
<th>Acceptable Collocate</th>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Unacceptable Collocate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1: verb+noun</strong></td>
<td>gave/paid/granted</td>
<td>the compliment</td>
<td>did/made/presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>set/adjust</td>
<td>the alarm clock</td>
<td>set up/fit/arrange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>get/answer</td>
<td>the phone</td>
<td>take/respond/watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>keep/meet</td>
<td>the deadline</td>
<td>fit/postpone/make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>do/commit</td>
<td>a crime</td>
<td>make/have a crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L2: adj+noun</strong></td>
<td>strong/bitter/black/dark</td>
<td>tea</td>
<td>salty/heavy/thick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>false/artificial</td>
<td>teeth</td>
<td>imitation/unnatural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extended/large/big/traditional</td>
<td>family</td>
<td>great/grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rough/hall-park/approximate</td>
<td>estimate</td>
<td>near/similar/about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>naked</td>
<td>eye</td>
<td>normal/delicate/bare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L3: noun+verb</strong></td>
<td>stung/attacked</td>
<td>a bee</td>
<td>shot/bit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arrived/landed/took off/stopped</td>
<td>the plane</td>
<td>leaved/went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exploded/went off</td>
<td>the bomb</td>
<td>bombed/hit/fell/fired/changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shows/reveals/reports/imply suggests</td>
<td>the study</td>
<td>tells/presents/gives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spread/melt</td>
<td>butter</td>
<td>break/taste/smell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L4: adv+adj</strong></td>
<td>highly/well/ completely/adquately/ properly/fully</td>
<td>qualified</td>
<td>very/just/just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conveniently/approximately</td>
<td>situated</td>
<td>evenly/near/hardly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stiff/hard/solid</td>
<td>frozen</td>
<td>dangerously/solid/thick/terribly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>merely/purely/surprisingly/very/ absolutely</td>
<td>coincidental</td>
<td>fortunately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easily/widely/readily/very</td>
<td>available</td>
<td>almost/just</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the advanced level participants were much better than
the intermediate and the low level students, they also made errors on collocation. The mean accuracy rate of all the participants was between 50 % and 60 %. The students might know a lot of words, including the node which was given in the sentence, but their collocational competence with those words may be limited.

In the low group, the participants did not know the collocate of the general word which is used commonly, such as, tea, butter and so on. Most of the collocation errors of the low and the intermediate group were caused by L1 transfer. In addition, they made errors by substituting the synonym of collocate. It is probably due to their method of studying vocabulary. According to the interviewees, the Korean learners tend to memorize a word with many synonyms without knowing the usage of each words. This method or strategy of studying vocabulary may result in many collocation errors.

The advanced students errors were caused by blending rather than L1 transfer. When they did not know the collocation, they tried to remind themselves the words they already knew or the examples of other collocations.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the Korean EFL college students lexical collocation use.

The first objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between general L2 proficiency and collocational competence and between the vocabulary knowledge and collocational competence. From the analysis of the data, it was found that the correlations of collocational competence with vocabulary knowledge and general proficiency were highly
The second objective of this study was to find out in what type of lexical collocation each proficiency group has more difficulty. The comparison of mean scores among the 5 types of collocation within the groups was presented. From the analysis of mean score difference across the group, it was found that there was a significant mean difference in 5 types of collocation among the three groups. In addition, the analysis within the each group provided the ranking of the mean score of each group. Notably, the most problematic lexical collocation type of all three groups was adverb and adjective type, whereas the least problematic lexical collocation was noun and verb type.

The third objective of the study was to explore the participants data more qualitatively and provide some reasons for their choices based on the analysis of interview data. In the low and intermediate group, the participants did not know the common collocation. Most of the collocation errors of the low and the intermediate group seemed to be caused by L1 transfer. In addition, many errors were caused by substituting the synonyms of collocate. The advanced students errors were caused by blending rather than L1 transfer. When they did not know the collocation, they tried to remind themselves the words they already knew or the examples of other collocations.

The results of the study suggest that collocations should be taught. Even though the learners knowledge of collocations develops with their proficiency and knowledge of vocabulary, they still feel and have problems with collocations when speaking and writing. It may be due to the fact that collocations were not properly taught and learners do not give attention to them when they study. Therefore, it is necessary to teach collocations to learners. If collocation is understood and learned as a unit,
learners can communicate more quickly and efficiently in both spoken and written contexts.

References


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APPENDIX I
Vocabulary Test

1. A: Did you get the books for the class already?
B: No. I hope I could use the old _______ of the books.
(a) editions (b) texts (c) volumes (d) corpus

2. A: You are the famous movie star, Jim Carrey. Can I have your _______?
B: O.K. Where do you want it?
(a) sign (b) autograph (c) signature (d) name

3. A: Martina has dyed her hair again. It's blonde this time.
B: Yes, I know. I passed her on the street and I hardly ______ her.
(a) realized (b) recognized (c) knew (d) remembered

B: Yeah, I've always been interested in programming.
(a) graceful (b) adept (c) baffled (d) sufficient

5. A: Can you ______ that you were nowhere near the office on the night of the break-in?
B: I swear I was visiting my sister that night.
(a) entreat (b) deat (c) testify (d) protest

6. A: How are things going?
B: Things have been quite _______ I've been so busy lately.
(a) hectic (b) hallow (c) petty (d) hermetic

7. A: This may be the last chance. Don't spoil it.
B: OK, I won't ______ it up again.
(a) mass (b) lose (c) miss (d) mess

8. A: May I help you?
B: Thanks, but no thanks. I'm just ______
(a) browsing (b) shopping (c) looking for (d) seeing

9. A: Did you see the movie Mask on TV last night?
B: Do you mean the film _______ Jim Carrey?
(a) featuring (b) casting (c) figuring (d) appearing

10. A: This is the third time that she has _______ me up.
B: No wonder you got angry.
(a) brought  (b) stood  (c) buttressed  (d) turned

11. No matter how much she insulted him, the _____ expression remained on his face.
   (a) peevish  (b) placid  (c) implacable  (d) fretful

12. He is a pessimist; he often broods on the ______ of human efforts.
   (a) futility  (b) fertility  (c) utility  (d) capability

13. I heard you ran ______ an old classmate of yours last night.
   (a) by  (b) up  (c) into  (d) over

14. The value of foreign currencies ______ depending on the strength of their economy at any given time.
   (a) fluctuates  (b) flutters  (c) flickers  (d) flaps

15. If you are having problems with your boss, I'd be happy to ______ on your behalf.
   (a) interfere  (b) interrupt  (c) intrude  (d) intervene

16. She has been ______ herself with insulin since the age of 16.
   (a) dejecting  (b) ejecting  (c) injecting  (d) rejecting

17. The book, published ______, revived our interest in the author who had died last year.
   (a) anonymously  (b) unanimously  (c) posthumously  (d) acrimoniously

18. What an actor says in a ______ is heard by no one except the audience.
   (a) soliloquy  (b) solitude  (c) solutitude  (d) solidarity

19. The Prime Minister, whose term in office ______ next year, worries about how history will remember him.
   (a) expires  (b) comprises  (c) expiries  (d) expires

20. They are ______ goods, which are prohibited by law or treaty from being imported or exported.
   (a) contraception  (b) contraposition  (c) contravention  (d) contraband

APPENDIX II

Collocation Test
We did / conducted / carried out research on the spending habits of housewives.

A. 1 5
1) David ________ her the compliment of making her an honorary member.
2) I have to get up early tomorrow morning. Can you ________ the alarm clock for me?
3) Mary, would you ________ the phone while I'm away?
4) You have to finish this work by tomorrow. Can you ________ the deadline?
5) If you ________ a crime, you should go to jail.

B. 1 5
1) Add more water, please. I don't like ________ tea.
2) Needless to say, natural teeth are better than ________ teeth.
3) Nowadays, most young people prefer a nuclear family to a ________ family.
4) At a ________ estimate, there are about 6000 people in the crowd.
5) The size of artificial money is different from that of real one. It is visible to the ________ eyes.

C. 1 5
1) The bee ________ my left hand so it is swollen.
2) When the plane ________ in London, all passengers had to pass through the customs.
3) The bomb ________ in the White house, so the ministers and the president died.
4) Ms. Reinharts study ________ that people who spend a lot of time on studying are more likely to be millionaires later in life.
5) Butter doesn't ________ well when it is cold.

D. 1 5
1) With her training and experience, she was ________ qualified for the position.
2) The house is ________ situated ten minutes from the bus stop, and ten minutes to the subway station.
3) Be careful! The ground was frozen ________.
4) It is ________ coincidental that we were seated together.
5) Personal computers and cellular phones are ________ available these days.

E. 1 5
1) I am sorry, I ________ forgot to pass you message on.
2) It rained ________ this summer. A lot of people lost their house.
3) I ________ opposed his dropping out of college.
4) We would like to ________ invite you to our upcoming event.
5) I ________ appreciate your helping us.