



On the Importance of Raising Collocational Awareness in Translation Practices

Tünde NAGY

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Department of Human Sciences, Miercurea Ciuc

nagytonde@uni.sapientia.ro

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5969-7768>

Abstract. The knowledge of medium-strength and field-specific collocations is a prerequisite for sounding native-like and as such an essential skill to have for future translators. While students are usually familiar with the use of idioms and fixed expressions, they may struggle with recognizing and also producing collocations, especially the ones they do not encounter with enough frequency. They may tend to overuse certain common word combinations and often create constructions through false analogy that result in unnatural sounding language. In order to acquire collocations, students need to notice them first – noticing, either incidental or guided, is considered to be an essential step in this process. After presenting some of the factors that hinder the accidental noticing of collocations, which also motivates the necessity for the teacher's guidance, the paper gives examples of exercises that can help to draw students' attention to collocations. An important objective is to raise students' collocational awareness and also to motivate them to use resources that allow the noticing of collocations (collocation dictionaries, electronic databases, electronic corpora). A task-based approach as understood by Ellis (2003) combined with the theoretical considerations of the lexical approach (Lewis 1993) can be suitable for this purpose; the exercises presented are based on general and also semi-specialized texts and target students studying translation and working with the Hungarian–English language combination.

Keywords: collocations, translation, noticing, tasks, lexical approach, electronic corpora

1. Introduction

While collocations are generally understood as two or three words that tend to co-occur (the Latin term *collocare* meaning *col* + *locare* = place together), there is a great variation in literature with respect to how collocations are understood and defined. There are frequency-based or semantically motivated interpretations of

collocations and also approaches that show a mix of the two. In the first category, we find several definitions such as Lewis's (2000: 132): "the way words co-occur in natural text in statistically significant ways", Sinclair's (1991: 170): "the co-occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text", or Conzett's (2000: 73): "two or more words that tend to occur together". Other interpretations focus rather on the semantics of these constructions, so Benson et al. (1986) define collocations as "fixed, identifiable, non-idiomatic phrases and constructions" and Demir (2017: 293) as "the recurrence of two or more words in a way more than arbitrary, and is instinctively used by writers heavily in academic text". Analysing collocations from a semantic point of view, Schmid (2003: 235) considers them as "half-way entrenched word combinations with a half-way gestalt character", representing a transition between free combinations of words and idiomatic expressions. These characteristics of collocations, their mediocre value on the scale of idiomaticity can partly explain the difficulties linguists face when trying to define them (Schmid 2003). Finally, Bartsch (2004: 76) in her definition of collocations attaches importance to a series of factors such as the pragmatic restriction of collocations, the syntactic relation between the constituent elements and also their frequency, and she defines them as "lexically and/or pragmatically constrained recurrent co-occurrences of at least two lexical items which are in a direct syntactic relation with each other".

In the present paper, collocations will be understood as constructions, pairings of form and meaning with varying degree of transparency and compositionality, where the constituent elements mutually expect each other and also co-occur with enough frequency. This definition fits well into Goldberg's (2006) understanding of constructions as both unpredictable form-meaning pairings and frequent word combinations. Collocations are considered as symbolic in nature (representing a mapping between a particular form and its associated meaning) and have unique morphological, syntactical, and pragmatic functions that result at the level of the construction as a whole. In order to provide a thorough analysis of collocations, it is believed that the consideration of both the frequency of these constructions and their semantic-syntactic properties need to be considered.

2. On the nature of collocations

Collocations occupy an intermediary position between free combinations and fixed constructions, and as a consequence they vary considerably with respect to compositionality and transparency. They are more or less transparent, so the following collocations with 'run' show varying degrees of transparency and idiomaticity: *run a program*, *run an errand for someone*, *run the risk of*, or *being run down*. In addition, collocations can be more or less prototypical, ranging

from recurrent binary constructions, such as *earn a living* (verb + noun phrase), *key question* (adjective + noun phrase), etc., to constructions that are less typical (in the sense that they include prepositions and other function words) such as *feel the need to do sth.* (verb phrase + to infinitive).

From a semantic point of view, collocations consist of the base that carries most of the meaning of the construction and its collocator (McKeown–Radev 2000). The base can take several collocators (e.g. in the case of *carry out/make/conduct/do/undertake research*, the base ‘research’ takes several collocators) or only a few (e.g. the verb ‘commit’ meaning ‘dedicate’ appears in constructions such as *commit yourself to something* or *commit time/money to something*). In some other cases, the collocator itself is semantically empty; so, for example, in the construction *take a bath*, ‘take’ only changes the aktionsart category of the construction (focusing on the activity as a whole rather than on the process itself) without adding any additional meaning to it (McKeown–Radev 2000).

Not only are the constituent elements of collocations more or less interchangeable, but they also may or may not allow for additional element(s) to separate them. The collocations *large/big/huge problem* or *give/deliver/hold a lecture*, for example, contain interchangeable elements, with only a slight difference between them, and so do the collocations *shed/cast/throw some light on*; nevertheless, in this latter case, *shed light on* is more archaic sounding than the rest and is preferably used in formal contexts. The insertion of an additional element is often possible with V + N collocations (e.g. hold an *interesting* lecture, pay *honest* tribute to, etc.), which is not the case with set constructions, lexical bundles such as *in a nutshell*, *in other words*, *in terms of*, etc.

With respect to their morpho-syntactic characteristics, collocations can be grouped into lexical and grammatical collocations with respect to the part of speech the constituent elements belong to (Benson et al. 1986). Lexical collocations are combinations of lexical categories such as verb + noun (*make a mistake*), noun + verb (*plane lands*), verb + adverb (*argue intensely*), adjective + noun (*soured milk*), adverb + adjective (*incredibly difficult*), or noun + noun (*conference hall*). Different from lexical collocations, grammatical ones take a preposition (e.g. noun + preposition (*hostile to/towards*)), preposition + noun (*by any means*, *with/in reference to*), a *to*-infinitive or a *that*-clause (such as *to be inclined to do sth.*), predicative adjective + to infinitive (*to fear that/for fear that*), verb/noun + that clause, etc.

Semantically, collocations are categorized as weak when the base selects for a high number of collocators (e.g. collocations with ‘large’: *a large amount/collection/number (of)/population/proportion/quantity/scale* (www.espressoenglish.net)), as medium-strength when the base selects for a limited number of collocators (e.g. *give/deliver/do a presentation* (examples of V + N collocations)), and strong collocations, which have a restricted number of collocators and so a very restricted

use (e.g. *foster partnership*). Along with medium-strength collocations that are considered especially challenging for students, field-specific collocations require special consideration, for example, teaching *file a claim* – for ‘making an official request’ or to *resolve a party’s legal claims* – for ‘finding a solution to a request’ may be important in case specialized legal texts related to procedural law are discussed.

3. Why teach them in translation practices?

Studies concerned with collocations (e.g. Kjellmer 1991, Waller 1993, Antle 2013, Demir 2017, just to mention a few) often analyse students’ use of collocations in EFL and/or ESP classes and ponder over teaching methods that would lead to a better acquisition of these constructions. Lewis (1993), in particular, stresses the importance of teaching language chunks and also collocations to language learners. His *Lexical Approach* to language teaching underlines the importance of teaching more lexis and less grammar in foreign language classes, based on the assumption that “language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar” (1993: 34). The knowledge of collocations is generally considered to be beneficial at all levels as it contributes to better self-expression at lower levels, to moving past the “intermediate plateau”, and to sounding more native-like in more advanced classes. While there are also studies that focus on collocation use in translation practices, e.g. on collocation errors that can be found in translations (Trang et al. 2021) or on collocation-centred activities based on corpus findings (Postolea–Ghivrigă 2016), their number pales in comparison to the ones tackling the use and teaching of collocations in foreign language classes. Nevertheless, teaching collocations in translation classes is equally important, and drawing students’ attention to them is often necessary. In what follows, a brief overview will be given of factors that call for the necessity of drawing students’ attention to collocations in translation practices.

3.1. Low metalinguistic awareness

Collocational awareness is an important prerequisite for a translation to be accurate with respect to not only grammar but style and register as well. It can often be the case that students’ translations are grammatically correct yet the target text sounds unnatural because of collocation errors; while this is more often the case when students translate from their mother tongue into a foreign language, collocation mistakes can also be noticed when students translate into their native language. Low metalinguistic awareness is often due to the fact that students are not aware of the importance of collocations and language chunks, mostly because not enough emphasis has been laid on them previously in EFL classes

(by the teacher and/or language course books). Despite the fact that students often know the constituent elements of a collocation, they may not regard them as collocations in their own right. In order to raise the quality of translations, it is therefore necessary that teachers help students improve their metalinguistic awareness by deliberately drawing their attention to these constructions.

3.2. Negative language transfer

Many collocational errors are a result of negative language transfer either from students' L1, L2, or even L3. As Herdina and Jessner (2022) point out in their *Dynamic Model of Multilingualism*, language systems are interdependent and constantly influence each other, which means that in case language learners speak several foreign languages, transfer and interference may result not only from their L1 but the other languages, too. Examples of negative language transfer can be noted in the excessive use of the definite article *the* (e.g. **according to the researchers*), wrong prepositions or elliptical structures where the target is missing (**arrive to the station*, **leads to a complete falling apart (to a complete downfall)*), wrong word order that deviates from the SVO structure (**from here starts the movie*). Students tend to have the greatest difficulty with lexical collocations, especially medium-strength V + N constructions, so collocation errors such as **get to the realization*, **say the truth*, **make things differently* are not uncommon in students' writings. Occasionally, students also create unusual word combinations such as **to expand their admiration for folk costumes* (instead of *deepen admiration for folk costumes*).

3.3. Variation of collocations, not enough encounters within a short span of time

Certain ideas can often be expressed in different ways, and the collocation itself can also vary. An example of collocational variation is *run/do/perform/carry out tests*, which can be all possible in case of medical testing, e.g. in *Doctors need to run/do/perform/carry out more tests to determine the patient's diagnosis*. Due to the variation of collocations, learners might struggle to recall them, unless they have seen them in different contexts various times before and are already familiar with their use.

3.4. Semantic and perceptual salience of collocations

In order for students to notice and retain collocations in memory, it is important to notice them first. According to Boers et al. (2014), there are several factors that hinder the incidental noticing of collocations, among them perceptual and

semantic salience. As Boers et al. (2014) point out, the effect of novelty plays an important role in noticing collocations. In case the constituent elements of collocations are familiar to students, they tend to overlook the entire construction and would probably not give it much importance unless they encounter it several times in a short span of time (2014: 46). Although collocations where students are unfamiliar with one of the constituent elements may catch students' attention, this is more likely to happen when both constituents are unknown to learners. The collocation *wreak havoc*, for example, may bring the novelty effect to students if they are not familiar with the meaning of the constituent elements and prompt them to look at it and try to guess its meaning (Boers et al. 2014). Lack of perceptual salience can also result from other factors such as the reduction of elements in a stream of discourse (frequent formulaic sequences, e.g. auxiliaries, prepositions, articles may be less clearly articulated in speaking), the fact that the elements of collocations are sometimes separated from each other in the sentence, and also the presence of a phonological neighbour (words that share all phonemes except for one) such as *take*/**make a photo*, *on purpose*/**in purpose*. In addition, lack of semantic salience can detract students' attention from collocations in case a construction contains a hot verb, e.g. 'do', 'make', 'take', 'get' as in *do a good job*, *make a wish*, *take time off*, *get the impression of*. As students often see these verbs, they tend to pay attention only to the word following them and fail to regard the collocations in their entirety. This is also because in such constructions it is often the accompanying word (very often the noun) that carries most of the meaning, e.g. in the collocations *give a smile* or *take a rest*, the verbs 'give' and 'take' affect the aktionsart of the construction (expressing willingness and completeness of an action) but do not contribute to its meaning in a considerable way.

3.5. Students' vocabulary learning habits

Wray (2002) makes the observation that post-childhood second language learners are much less inclined than pre-literate children to memorize and process texts in multi-word chunks. There is a general predisposition of post-childhood learners to focus on single words rather than on word combinations, and this predisposition may be strengthened over the years by the impulses they get in EFL classes (certain gap-fill or matching type exercises that focus on one particular element of a construction, teachers writing single words on the whiteboard, etc.). While it can be challenging to counteract this predisposition, teachers can use some strategies (manipulating a text to highlight collocations, writing entire collocations on the whiteboard, asking learners to paraphrase or give synonyms of a certain construction, etc.) to help students recognize and also acquire multi-word constructions in addition to individual words. An important step in this direction is to sensitize students about

the importance of collocations and multi-word chunks and equip them with skills (cultural sensitivity, the ability to think about the way collocations are expressed in a language and also the ability to use electronic resources and databases efficiently) that are necessary for rendering them into the target text. Making students familiar with such databases can also help them to become more aware of the necessity of cultural sensitivity in translations.

4. How to teach them?

Despite the fact that there is no perfect method that would guarantee the acquisition of collocations, there are some useful considerations and guidelines that can help teachers to ease the learning process for students. In accordance with the *Lexical Approach* put forward by Lewis (1993), input and noticing are considered as especially significant in this respect. It will be assumed that the acquisition of collocations can only happen if students notice them in different contexts first. As Schmidt (1990) formulates it in his *Noticing Hypothesis*, any form of learning implies noticing, which makes it a necessary condition for an input to become intake. While incidental noticing is always possible and can occur during all phases of a language practice activity, due to the reasons given above, this is less likely to occur in case of collocations. As such, teachers' intervention may be more than desirable when the enhancement of students' collocational awareness is targeted. An important aspect in this respect is to allow students to notice a particular collocation together with their syntactic pattern (called colligation), e.g. 'opportunity' can appear in different syntactic patterns such as *opportunity for someone/something*, also *opportunity for/of doing something*, the difference in the latter case being that 'opportunity for + -ing' is less common than 'opportunity of + -ing' and also seems to appear with specific verbs that express the idea of discover/take a chance, whereas 'opportunity of + -ing' appears with a wide range of (more) dynamic verbs. Thus, the *opportunity for* + -ing turned 111 hits in the BNC, the most common verbs being 'testing', 'developing', 'giving', 'exploring', 'effecting', whereas the 'opportunity of + -ing' construction with 456 hits contained verbs such as 'making', 'seeing', 'getting', and 'meeting' (<https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/>). Students should also learn about the semantic prosody and preference of collocations when noticing the use of these constructions. The two notions are closely connected: semantic prosody can be defined as the relation between a word form (lemma) and other semantically related words, while semantic preference shows the appearance of collocations in specific semantic environments such as formal/informal, having positive/negative connotation, etc. Louw (1993: 157) talks about a "consistent aura of meaning with which a word is imbued by its collocates", also reflected by the semantic

preference of that specific word (e.g. the concordance lines for ‘utterly’ show an overwhelmingly bad prosody of this word, having collocates such as ‘against’, ‘insensitive’, ‘destroying’, ‘exhaustive’, ‘meaningless’, ‘obsessive’, ‘ridiculous’, etc. (Louw 1993: 161)). There are many studies on the semantic prosody and preference of collocations; one such comprehensive study is that of Begagić (2013) on the collocation *make sense*. Based on corpus findings (COCA – The Corpus of Contemporary American English), she manages to identify two main semantic sets of this collocation: that of difficulty and uncertainty (the most common collocates of this collocation being ‘try’, ‘attempt’, ‘help’, and ‘struggle’), leading to an overall negative prosody. Interestingly enough, as Begagić (2013) concludes, while *make sense* seems to be linked to negative prosody, other forms of this collocation – *makes sense* and *made sense* – are more factual and express a more favourable semantic prosody. The semantic environment of collocations can be quite specific, as Sidupa and Wastono (2018) note in their analysis of ‘increase’ and ‘improve’. They show that ‘increase’ appears mostly with words expressing quantity both directly and indirectly, collocating with words such as ‘rate’, ‘number’, ‘level’, ‘cost’ but also ‘efficiency and ‘productivity’, whereas ‘improve’ refers to elevating the standard of something, e.g. *improve quality/performance/service/practice/communication*). Stubbs’s (1995) analysis of semantically related lemmas, such as ‘cause’, ‘affect’, ‘effect’, ‘create’, ‘happen’, ‘reason’, and ‘consequence’, and Sinclair’s analysis of ‘set in’ and ‘happen’ (1987, 1991) also contain valuable data with respect to the semantic prosody and preference of specific collocations.

Taking the above into consideration, it is essential to consider the sources that can help students notice and learn about collocations. In addition to different types of activities that can foster students’ collocational awareness (some examples of which will be included in this paper), one of the most important steps in teaching collocations is making students familiar with the use of electronic databases (electronic collocation dictionaries and electronic corpora), as this allows them to notice authentic examples of collocational patterns in different contexts. Consulting these databases regularly enhances students’ metalinguistic awareness, helping them to become autonomous learners, with the ability to think about the appropriateness of their language use. The translation of a specific text usually includes several steps: in the preparatory phase, after reading the source text, students make a glossary of useful terms and keywords and the corresponding terms in the target language. Looking up parallel texts and consulting print and also electronic dictionaries can be very useful at this stage. After a first draft translation is carried out, students put it aside for some time and then proofread it and alter anything they find necessary in terms of style, register, text-cohesive elements, etc.

In all phases of the translation process, the use of technology is highly desirable, especially of such resources that show collocations in their entirety. Below, a few

examples will be given of resources that students may find useful during the translation process.

Online (collocation) dictionaries:

Dictionaries (in both electronic and paper format) are primary sources in translation practices. They have come a long way introducing collocations (Chukwu 1997), providing valuable information on their use. *Collins COBUILD Dictionary* and *Ozdic Collocations Dictionary*, for example, provide a deep insight into the use of a specific word, along with example sentences and including the most frequent collocations it can be found in. Moreover, *Collins COBUILD Dictionary* offers additional information on a specific word such as frequency, linguistic varieties, and its evolution over time; *Ozdic Collocation Dictionary*, on the other hand, categorizes collocators with respect to the part of speech they belong to. Other valuable resources include *BBJ Combinatorial Dictionary of English*, which lays emphasis on collocations, set expressions and phrases and also differentiates American English from British English, and *The Collocation Dictionary of Prowriting Aid Grammar Checker* (<https://prowritingaid.com/Free-Online-Collocations-Dictionary.aspx>), which operates along the same principle as *Ozdic Collocation Dictionary* yet is more suitable for a quick check on the collocators of a specific word as neither example sentences nor additional information with regard to frequency or text type are included.

insight



fresh insight
interesting insight
intriguing insight
invaluable insight
keen insight
lack the insight
new insight into
novel insights
offer an insight into
penetrating insight
personal insight
philosophical insight
profound insight
provide insight into

Source: Collins COBUILD Online Dictionary

Figure 1. Collocations of 'insight'

Electronic databases

Online bilingual concordances, such as *bab.la* or *linguee.com*, show collocations in their entirety, including example sentences containing a specific word or word combination. While the validity of entries is not verified and the websites do not take responsibility for the accuracy of data, the reliability of the sources is quite high (*linguee.com* takes a considerable amount of data from the <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/> website – an official website of the European Union). An important advantage of these databases is that they provide the context in which a specific collocation can be found.

When it comes to translating semi-specialized and specialized texts from the fields of law, commerce, and finance, the website *iate.europa.eu*, the terminology database of the European Union, deserves special mention. After selecting the source and target languages, queries can be made for a specific word; hits will contain all phrases that the word can be found in and will also indicate the field in which it is used. The hits for the Hungarian word *betekintés* [insight, introspection, access], for example, have returned phrases such as *a bizottsági aktába való betekintés* ‘access to the Commission’s files’, *betekintési jog* ‘right of access’, *iratokba való betekintéshez való jog* ‘right to inspect files’, *betekintés a nyilvántartásba* ‘consultation of the register’, etc. The larger context of expressions is also available, and there is additional information on term reference, definition and uses of the expression (also indicating when the term itself has become obsolete), and reliability. A key role of this website lies in the fact that it sheds light on the importance of expressions and language chunks, highlighting the fact that the meaning of a specific word (in this case, the word *betekintés*) is derived from and can be defined at the level of the construction as a whole. Besides, the translation of a specific word depends on the context (both shorter and larger) it appears in (the distinction between context-free and context-sensitive translation).

Electronic corpora

Despite the fact that dictionaries and other electronic databases include relevant information on collocations, they show limitations with respect to the type and number of collocations they contain. Castro and Faber (2014), carrying out a comparative analysis of collocation dictionaries for English and Spanish, specify some of the characteristics that a collocation dictionary should possess: a description and at the same time some kind of classification of collocations, the possibility of accessing collocations in different ways, and also usage notes and examples of use. Enhancing dictionary entries with corpus-based data in form of word-associations (called task-driven word associations) is suggested by Kwong (2020). He considers it necessary to expand lexical access routes in dictionaries

based on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic associations of words. Chukwu (1997) recommends that students use in addition to the information found in dictionaries also corpus-based data to create a textbase or textbases for different discourse types, which would serve as a ready-made material for checking the use of several word combinations. Common to these approaches is that they underline the need to retrieve and classify collocations in different ways and at the same time highlight the importance of corpora and corpus data in searching for and analysing collocations. Indeed, the concordance programs of electronic corpora and the various search options they allow for add to the use of dictionaries in significant ways. Sensitizing students about the importance of consulting them regularly can improve the quality of translations to a great extent.

An example of such a corpus is the BNC (British National Corpus), a 100-million-word collection of written and spoken language resources from the later part of the 20th century onwards. Being developed primarily for linguistic research, electronic corpora can also be used during the translation process, as they provide valuable information on the uses of a specific word or word combination. There are many types of corpora (synchronic and diachronic, parallel corpora, learner corpora, multilingual corpora, etc.), and their use has become widespread over the last few decades. Their increasing popularity can be explained by the advantages they offer: the ability to search for smaller and larger units of language (morphemes, words, and also collocations), the possibility to display data in KWIC (keyword in context) format – with the searched items in the centre and highlighted –, obtain valuable information on the entries (frequency and the domain it can be found in, style and register – e.g. written or spoken language), and the fact that it provides samples of real-life language use. The BNC can be considered a useful tool for translators as it is large enough, is quite balanced with respect to the sources it contains (90% spoken, 10% written texts from a variety of sources: newspapers, research journals, periodicals from various academic fields, fiction books, blogs, TV/Movies, recordings of spontaneous conversations and events), and is free to use after registration for a limited number of queries per day. Below, we can find the most frequent collocators of the word ‘insight’ in the V + N constructions, as shown in the BNC.

British National Corpus (BNC)

i

SEARCH

FREQUENCY

CONTEXT

ON CLICK:

CONTEXT

TRANSLATE (??)

GOOGLE

IMAGE

PRON/VIDEO

BOOK

(HELP)

HELP	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500 WORDS	FREQ	TOTAL 76
1	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	GAIN INSIGHT	23	<div></div>
2	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	PROVIDE INSIGHT	11	<div></div>
3	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	GAINING INSIGHT	8	<div></div>
4	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	GIVING INSIGHT	3	<div></div>
5	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	GIVE INSIGHT	2	<div></div>
6	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	LACKS INSIGHT	2	<div></div>
7	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	GIVES INSIGHT	2	<div></div>
8	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	PROVIDING INSIGHT	2	<div></div>
9	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	PROVIDES INSIGHT	2	<div></div>
10	<div><div></div><div>i</div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>★</div><div></div></div>	RELEASED INSIGHT	1	<div></div>

Source: BNC

Figure 2. Verb + Noun Collocations for 'insight'

5. Task-based exercises

Dictionaries, electronic databases and electronic corpora play an indispensable role in translations but can equally be applied in other translation-related tasks, which can be all kinds of exercises involving the analysis/discussion of the source text and/or target text with regard to style and register. In this paper, the notion of a task will be understood as a type of activity that involves a communicative process and a goal that needs to be accomplished. Besides, as Ellis (2009) specifies, a task should focus on meaning (understood in both semantic and pragmatic sense) and involve some kind of “gap”, a lack of information or detail that students need to obtain. Concerning the types of tasks, they can be both “focused”, when the task itself involves the use of targeted linguistic constructions, and “unfocused”, when learners are free to use any language structure they like in their attempt to complete a specific task. Both types of tasks enable a *focus-on-form* way of learning that implies paying (sometimes brief) attention to the form of specific constructions (together with their meaning) while carrying out a task. By implementing them in translation practices, teachers can manage to draw students' attention to collocations and at the same time appeal to their creativity and problem-solving skills. The next section will give examples of tasks that can be used to draw students' attention to collocations in translation practices.

5.1. Description of the tasks

In the light of the theoretical considerations presented above, the following factors have been considered when creating the tasks:

- *Input*: providing students with enough input so that they can notice collocations in context. In this case, input consisted of a reading text and also corpus data.

- *Showing collocations in their entirety*: giving students the opportunity to notice collocations in their entirety – exercises that allow students to use them for a specific purpose (e.g. paraphrasing, looking for keywords) are suitable in this respect; so are certain types of gap fill activities.

- *Content-relatedness*: it is assumed that learners find it easier to acquire collocations if they are related to a topic (e.g. the topic of the source text).

- *Making tasks challenging enough for students*: tasks where learners need to use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills provide a positive atmosphere for learning and may also prompt learners to pay a closer attention to input.

The tasks are based on the semi-specialized texts below, taken from *English for International Tourism*, an upper-intermediate workbook and coursebook. The objective of the tasks is to highlight the importance of collocations to students, and they can be implemented in two subsequent classes, taking into consideration the fact that the topics of the two texts are somewhat related. In line with the task-based approach as understood by Ellis (2003), the implementation of the tasks occurs in three steps: a pre-task, task, and post-task phase. Students will work in small groups (of three students) or in pairs, and the time allocated to the tasks can vary between 10 and 15 minutes.

Example 1. Excerpt from the text: Mammon Rampant in the City of Shrines



Outside the gates of the magnificent Kiyomizu Temple, there is a sign saying that the residents of the Kyoto Hotel are not welcome. The hotel, which will be formally opened tomorrow, has attracted the ire of many of the city's Buddhist monks as an unwelcome intrusion into the historic character of the former imperial capital.

"The city is celebrating its 1,200th birthday this year", said a monk, shaking his head sadly. "The American bombers carefully flew over and past Kyoto, doing no damage. Now, we Japanese are destroying the great beauty of the city."

He and other monks are angry because the hotel, apart from being in their view a graceless block, has been allowed to break the city's precious height restriction of 160 ft. At 16 storeys, in addition to four floors underground, it is twice the height of the hotel of the same name that it replaces.

"The hotel destroys the low-rise character of the city", the monk said. "Mammon has won."

The hotel owners were able to get a relaxation of the height restriction by giving 8,372 sq. yards of land – 40 per cent of the original site to create an uninspired public garden.

Kyoto was created in 794 as Heian-kyo, the City of Peace, but its inhabitants have always called it Kyoto, and the two Chinese characters of its name mean capital of the capitals.

It is a city that embodies the spirit of old Japan, where ancient arts and crafts – textile weaving, ceramics, kimono and kite making – live on.

In Kyoto, geishas practise their arts, whereas in Tokyo most of them have been driven away by karaoke and disco bars. There are lanes and corner shops, many filled with tourist trinkets for the 40 million Japanese and 1 million foreign visitors, but some of them still displaying traditional crafts.

Above all, Kyoto is famed for its palaces, castles, shrines, temples and gardens. It is estimated that there are about 1,500 Buddhist temples and 400 Shinto shrines and about sixty temple gardens.

Source: English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Workbook, p. 62.

Pre-task phase: The teacher introduces the matter at hand (insight into the Japanese culture) by asking students some questions about Japan (e.g. what they associate with Japan and the Japanese culture, including religion), and then asks students to read the text. What does *Mammon* refer to in this text?

Task 1. The teacher asks students to determine the type and structure of the text and then summarize the main points made in each paragraph. Students will also need to give a title to each part of the text.

Task 2. After students have carried out the above-mentioned task, they compare their answers to that of their colleagues (whole-class discussion). As a follow-up, the teacher asks students to underline the keywords and expressions in the text.

Post-task phase: The teacher gets feedback from students and writes some of the collocations and expressions (that most groups have mentioned) on the whiteboard; in order to point out the similarities and also differences between particular constructions in English and Hungarian, students are asked to translate (some of) the collocations into Hungarian. Eventually, the teacher can choose a few words from the texts (such as 'damage', 'the ire', 'the spirit') and make students search for the collocators in the BNC corpus (V + N collocation, VERB

damage/the ire/the spirit). Can any of the results returned by the concordance program replace the ones found in the book?

Example 2. Excerpt from the text: When it pays to complain

A dissatisfied customer who complains is just as likely to remain loyal as a completely satisfied customer. This **surprising state of affairs** has been observed by British Airways, which has turned **the handling of complaints** into something of a science.

Charles Weiser, BA's head of customer relations, calculates that about 13 per cent of customers who are **completely satisfied with BA's service** may not fly with the airline again. "Perhaps they changed jobs, found a frequent flyer programme which better **suit their needs**, or maybe they felt it was time for a change of airline", he says, writing in the July issue of Consumer Policy Review, the journal published by the UK's Consumer's Association.

Half of all customers who **experience problems** but do not complain do not intend to use the airline again. This contrasts with the customers who are dissatisfied but do complain – just 13 per cent of this group will defect, the identical rate of defection as the "satisfied" group, says Weiser.

Source: English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Coursebook, p. 65.

Pre-task phase: Learners are asked to look at the title and make guesses what the text is about. After listening to their answers, the teacher asks students to consult the BNC corpus (or any other electronic database) and find constructions that contain the verb 'complain' and the noun 'complaint' (by searching for complain PREP/VERB complaint) – ultimately, the teacher can divide the groups into group A and group B and ask them to carry out one of the tasks mentioned. The teacher receives feedback from students.

Task 1. Students read the text and give a title to each part (a similar task to the one performed on the previous text). Does the text have the same structure as the previous one?

Task 2. Students look at the highlighted words and phrases in the text (highlighted by the teacher beforehand). Do they consider them keywords and key expressions? Why/why not? Are there any additional phrases in the text that they would consider as key expressions?

Post-task: The teacher gives part of the content (pertaining to the same text) to students, but this time with some collocations (or parts of a collocation) taken out and then asks them to fill in the gaps with any word or expression they consider suitable (the teacher should accept any expression that fits into the text).

Weiser's guide to satisfying complaints includes the following points:

- Apologise and _____. Customers do not care whose fault it was – they want someone to say sorry and champion their cause.
- Do it quickly – customer satisfaction with the handling _____ dips after five days.
- Assure customers the problem is being fixed. Complaints departments need to know their company inside out and work with front-line departments.
- Do it by phone. Many departments are frightened of the emotions customers often show when things go wrong, but customers _____ a personal apology and reassurance the problem _____.

(own the problem, handling the complaint, appreciate a personal apology, the problem will be solved).

Additional task: paraphrasing: Students finish sentences containing a specific collocation with their own ideas, e.g.:

- a. By *owning a specific problem*, we can.....
- b. *Handling a complaint* requires.....
- c. *It pays to complain* when.....

Alternatively, the teacher can ask students to look for synonyms for a specific collocation, and thereby use any sources they consider necessary (activity carried out in small groups).

5. Conclusions

Drawing students' attention to collocations is important not only in EFL and ESP classes but in translation practices as well. Due to the complexity of collocations and also other factors that hinder the incidental noticing of these constructions, it is often necessary that teachers draw students' attention to collocations. An important step in the acquisition of collocations is noticing, for which a sufficient amount of input is required. While students studying translation already have advanced language skills, their knowledge of collocations tends to lag behind, reason why providing them with input that would allow them to notice collocations and occasionally directing their attention to targeted linguistic constructions can yield positive results. There are many strategies that teachers can use to make students aware of collocations (e.g. writing them on the whiteboard, looking for collocates or synonyms in an electronic corpus or database, paraphrasing, reconstructing the ideas expressed in a text by some given collocations, etc.) that

can also require the manipulation of the input (e.g. highlighting collocations in a text, gap filling). To use collocations correctly, students need to see a specific construction with enough frequency: analysing the vocabulary range of the source and target texts, looking up parallel texts, and also consulting corpus concordances can improve students' work to a great extent. Input helps students gather information not only on the collocates of a specific word but also on the frequency of a specific collocation, as well as its semantic preference and prosody. Finally, introducing input under the form of tasks is considered to be especially useful. Each task should be challenging enough for students (making them use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills), involve some kind of a "gap", some missing information that students need to obtain, and be possibly content-related; in addition, tasks should incorporate the focus-on-form method (paying (brief) attention to specific linguistic constructions while carrying out a task). It is believed that providing students with sufficient input will improve their metalinguistic awareness and hopefully lead to a better understanding of collocations and their manifestations in different languages. In order to properly direct students towards this goal, it is advisable that teachers include both "focused" and "unfocused" tasks when discussing about translations or planning translation-related activities.

References

- Antle, Joshua Brook. 2013. Teaching collocations. In Sonda Nozomu–Aleda Krause (eds), *JALT Conference Proceedings 2012*, 346–354. Tokyo: JALT.
- Bartsch, Sabine. 2004. *Structural and Functional Properties of Collocations in English: A Corpus Study of Lexical and Pragmatic Constraints on Lexical Co-occurrence*. Tübingen: Günter Narr Verlag.
- Begagić, Mirna. 2013. Semantic preference and semantic prosody of the collocation make sense. *Jezikoslovje* 14(2–3): 403–416.
- Benson, Morton–Evelyn Benson–Robert Ilson. 1986. *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English: A Guide to Word Combinations*. Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Boers, Frank–Seth Lindstromberg–June Eyckmans. 2014. Some explanations for the slow acquisition of L2 collocations. *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 11: 41–62.
- Castro, Miriam Buendía–Pamela Faber. 2014. Collocation dictionaries: A comparative analysis. *MonTi* 6: 203–235.
- Chukwu, Uzoma. 1997. Collocations in translation: Personal textbases to the rescue of dictionaries. *Asp la revue du GERAS*: 105–115.

- Conzett, Jane. 2000. Integrating collocation into a reading and writing course. In Michael Lewis (ed.), *Teaching Collocation: Further Developments in the Lexical Approach*, 126–155. London: Language Teaching Publications.
- Demir, Cüneyt. 2017. Lexical collocations in English: A comparative study of native and non-native scholars of English. *Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies* 13(1): 75–87.
- Ellis, Rod. 2003. *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2009. Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 19(3): 221–246.
- Goldberg, E. Adele. 2006. *Constructions at Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Herdina, Philip–Ulrike Jessner. 2002. *A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism. Perspectives of Change in Psycholinguistics*. Clevedon–Buffalo–Toronto–Sydney: Multilingual Matters.
- Jacob, Miriam–Peter Strutt. 2007. *English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Coursebook*. Pearson Education/Longman.
- 2003. *English for International Tourism. Upper-Intermediate Workbook*. Pearson Education/Longman.
- Kjellmer, Göran. 1991. A mint of phrases. In Karin Aijmer–Bengt Altenberg (eds), *English Corpus Linguistics. Studies in Honour of Jan Svartvik*, 111–127. London–New York: Longman.
- Kwong, Oi Yee. 2020. Translation collocations. The need for task-driven word associations. *Proceedings of the Workshop on Cognitive Aspects of the Lexicon*. <https://aclanthology.org/2020.cogalex-1.14/> (Last accessed: 10 April 2022).
- Lewis, Michael. 1993. *The Lexical Approach. The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications.
- 2000. Language in the lexical approach. In M. Lewis (ed.), *Teaching Collocation: Further Developments in the Lexical Approach*, 126–155. Hove: Language Teaching Publications ELT.
- Louw, Bill. 1993. Irony in the text or insincerity in the writer? The diagnostic potential of semantic prosodies. In Baker, Mona–Gill Francis–Elena Tognini-Bonelli (eds), *Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair*, 157–175. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Mckeown, Kathleen R.–Dragomir R. Radev. 2000. Collocations. In Robert Dale–Herbert Moisl–Herbert Somers (eds), *A Handbook of Natural Language Processing*, 507–523. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Postolea, Sorina–Theodora Ghivirigă. 2016. Using small parallel corpora to develop collocation-centred activities in specialized translation classes. *Linguaculture* 2: 53–72.

- Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2003. Collocations: Hard to pin down, but bloody useful. *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 51(3): 235–258.
- Schmidt, Richard. 1990. The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics* 11: 129–158.
- Sidupa, Christiana–Afdol Tharik Wastono. 2018. Semantic preference of verb–noun collocations. Corpus-based analysis. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 254: 7–11.
- Sinclair, John. 1987. *Looking Up: An Account of the COBUILD Project in Lexical Computing and the Development of the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*. London: Collins.
- 1991. *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stubbs, Michael. 1995. Collocations and semantic profiles: On the cause of the trouble with quantitative studies. *Functions of Language* 2(1): 1–33.
- Trang, Nguyen Huynh–Khau Hoang Anh–Truong Nhat Khanh. 2021. The use of English collocations in written translation – A case of university English-major students. *The International Journal of Higher Education* 10(1): 252–272.
- Waller, Tove. 1993. Characteristics of near-native proficiency in writing. In Håkan Ringbom (ed.), *Near-Native Proficiency in English*, 183–293. Finland: Åbo Akademi University.
- Wray, Alison. 2002. *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.