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**The Problems of Translation of  
Collocations  
From English to Arabic and Vice Versa of  
English Students at QOU**

**الدكتور / أحمد النخالة**

## **Abstract**

### **The problems and Difficulties of Translation of Collocations**

### **From English to Arabic and vice versa of**

### **English Students at QOU**

The study aims at exploring the difficulties that face the students of Al Quds Open University in collocations translation process from English to Arabic and vice versa. The researcher attempted to find suitable solutions for such difficulties and problems. The researcher followed an experimental descriptive method in the study. The researcher designed a test in order to explore the difficulties and problems that face such students. The test is composed of five questions, the first one is Common collocations - nouns which naturally follow verbs (multiple choice), the second one is "Choose the most suitable Arabic word combination to correct collocation", the third one is "Choose most suitable English word combination to correct collocation" the fourth one is "Translate the following collocations from Arabic to English", the fifth one is "Translate the following collocations from English to Arabic". Such study was applied on English students of Al Quds Open University in Gaza Branch during the second course of the academic year 2013/2014. The researcher chose and selected a random sample of Al Quds Open University students in Gaza Branch. The researcher will follow a suitable statistical methods for such study. At the end of the study, the researcher adopted a group of recommendations and suggestions.

## **ملخص الدراسة**

**الصعوبات والمشاكل التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة القدس المفتوحة أثناء عملية ترجمة المتصاحبات من اللغة الانجليزية إلى اللغة العربية وبالعكس**

تهدف الدراسة الى كشف الصعوبات والمشاكل التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة القدس المفتوحة أثناء عملية ترجمة المتصاحبات من اللغة الانجليزية إلى اللغة العربية وبالعكس. لقد حاول الباحث ايجاد الحلول المناسبة لتلك الصعوبات والمشاكل. قام الباحث باتباع المنهج الوصفي التجريبي في دراسته. لقد قام الباحث بتصميم اختبار لكشف الصعوبات والمشاكل التي تواجه الطلاب. يتألف الاختبار من خمسة أسئلة, السؤال الأول عبارة عن اختيار الاسم المناسب الذي يلي الفعل باللغة الإنجليزية, السؤال الثاني اختيار المتصاحبة المناسبة باللغة العربية, السؤال الثالث اختيار المتصاحبة المناسبة باللغة الإنجليزية, السؤال الرابع ترجمة المتصاحبات من اللغة العربية الى اللغة الإنجليزية, اما السؤال الخامس و الأخير ترجمة المتصاحبات من اللغة الإنجليزية الى اللغة العربية. قام الباحث بتطبيق هذه الدراسة علي طلاب جامعة القدس المفتوحة في فرع غزة في الفصل الدراسي الثاني للعام الدراسي 2013/2014. قام الباحث باختيار عينة عشوائية من طلاب جامعة القدس المفتوحة. وقد استخدم الباحث برنامج SPSS لتحليل النتائج. وفي نهاية البحث اتخذ وتبني الباحث عدة توصيات ومقترحات لحل تلك الصعوبات والمشاكل.

## **Introduction**

It is discovered the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), despite having a large number of words in the second language (L2), are not fully capable of putting words together in a way that native speakers naturally do. In other words, EFL learners lack collocational competence in L2. Collocation, i.e. how words tend to co-occur in a language, seems to cause quite a few problems for English learners since even though two words, when placed together, may appear to seemingly make sense, the resulting combination is sometimes regarded as a deviation in the target language. This probably implies that collocation is arbitrary for language learners (Hill, 2000).

Several past studies investigating second language acquisition of English collocations have shown that EFL learners' problems are due to different factors (e.g. Fan, 2009; Huang, 2001). One of the major reasons for collocational errors pertains to native language influence (e.g. Bahns, 1993; Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Fan, 2009; Koya, 2003; Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005; Ying, 2009). Some have also found that learners rely on certain learning strategies, such as synonymy (e.g. Boonyasaquan, 2006; Farghal & Obiedat, 1995; Mongkolchai, 2008), repetition and overgeneralization (e.g. Fan, 2009; Granger, 1998; Howarth, 1998; Shih, 2000), etc.

However, most of the previous research studies mentioned above focused on one single group of EFL learners, particularly those with high proficiency (e.g. Boonyasaquan, 2006; Mongkolchai, 2008). Hardly do such studies reflect a true picture of how learners' collocational knowledge has been developed through time. To put it another way, there has been little research to date examining learners' errors in the total interlanguage system with respect to collocation learning. It is for this reason that the present study was undertaken to bridge the gap, i.e. to scrutinize the collocational competence of high-proficiency and low-proficiency Palestinian learners of English.

## **The Problem of the Study**

The researcher discusses the difficulties and problems that face English students of Al Quds Open University in the translation process of collocations from English to Arabic and vice versa and their solutions. The study will answer the main question: What are the difficulties and problems that face the students of English at Al Quds Open University in collocations translation process from English to Arabic and vice versa ? & what are the suitable solutions?

The following sub-questions arise from the main question:-

1- What is the difficulty level that face the students in choosing or using the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in English collocation?

## **The problems of Translation of Collocations From English to Arabic and vice versa of English Students at QOU**

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2-What is the difficulty level that face the students in choosing or using the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in Arabic collocation?

3-What is the level difficulty that face the students in using the suitable collocation in their translation from Arabic to English ?

4- What is the level difficulty that face the students in using the suitable collocation in their translation from English to Arabic ?

5- Are there any statistical significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the level of application of collocation translation process from English to Arabic activity skills in Gaza Region and vice versa based on gender variable?

6- What are the suitable solutions for translation difficulties?

### **The Importance of the Study**

The researcher noticed during his career and teaching the course of translation at Al Quds Open University that the students face some difficulties and problems in the translation process of collocation from English to Arabic and vice versa. The importance of such study lies in the following points:

1- The research formulates a list of useful techniques and procedures for collocation translation to overcome such problems.

2- The study will upgrade the level of collocation translation process from English language to Arabic language and vice versa by adopting suitable techniques and procedures for accurate translation.

3-The research shall highlight and focus on the causes of such difficulties and problems and tries to find suitable solution for the same.

4-The study will draw the attention of persons in charge and the officials to the importance of student's role in achieving and carrying out effective procedures and techniques collocation translation from English to Arabic and vice versa for the purposes to create and produce accurate and perfect translation.

### **The Objective of the Research**

The main objectives of the research of "Difficulties and problems that face the students of Al Quds Open University in collocations translation process from English to Arabic and vice versa, and their solutions." are:-

- Improving and developing students' skills, techniques and procedures of collocation translation so as to enrich and assist the students' ability of collocation translation.

- Adopting suitable translation strategies for collocation.

- To enable students to learn a wide range of linguistics and collocation translation skills, including how to deal with all kinds of collocations.

- To bring and draw students to a level of practical proficiency that will enable them to be linguistically and analytically equipped to complete extended collocation translation assignments and deal with linguistically and

culturally-related problems in collocation translation, and increasing their confidence as practicing language professionals.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study has three limitations:-

1-Limitation of time : The study was carried out and applied in the first course of the academic year 2013/2014.

2-Limitation of place: The study was applied and carried out in Al Quds Open University in Gaza City the Branch.

3- Limitation of Subject: The study will deal and discuss "The difficulties and problems that face the students of Al Quds Open University in collocation translation process from English to Arabic and vice versa ? &What are the suitable solutions?"

### **Definition of Terms**

- Translation: It is an activity comprising the interpretation of the meaning of a text in one language – the source- and the other language the - target.

- Translation Difficulties: are difficulties that individual translators could have when dealing with the translation process.

- Translation Problems: are linguistics phenomena known to be problematic in translation independent from the individual translator for example ambiguous words.

- Translation strategy: plans to solve problems that occur when reaching a particular translation goal.

- Collocations: a pair or group of words that are juxtaposed in such a way: "strong tea" and "heavy drinker" are typical English collocations.

### **Method of the Study**

The researcher followed the analytical descriptive method in this study.

#### **A-Population**

The population of study is from English students who studies English Language at Al Quds Open University in the Branch of Gaza for the academic year 2013/2014.

#### **B-Sample of Study**

The researcher chose a random sample from the population of study composed of (60) students who study English Language.

#### **C- Instrument of the Study**

The researcher designed an exam composed of seven questions and 58 items. Each question represents and deals with a kind of translation to show the level of difficulty of each kind.

### **Validity of the Exam**

#### **1-Agreement of referees**

The exam was introduced for a group of specialized linguistics university tutors and lecturers at Gaza Governorate. They provided their recommendations and suggestions about the validity of the items of the exam

.The researcher amended and modified such exam upon the suggestions and recommendations of the referees.

## **2-Stability and Reliability of exam Internal Consistency**

The stability of the exam was estimated by using Person method. The coefficient correlation of each item is (0.01) and (0.05) (as shown in table 2). The exam is proved to be reliable. The researcher use two methods: 1) Alpha Cronbach coefficient is (SPSS) (0.916) and the 2) split-half coefficient is (0.738) before amendment and (0.849) after the amendment. The amendment calculated according to Spearman-Beown coefficient. Such thing indicates that the exam can be applied in the study. This indicates that the exam is highly enjoyed with high stability and liability which may give the researcher confidence to apply the exam on the subjects of study.

## **Statistical Method Used in the Study**

The researcher discharged and analyzed the test by using (SPSS) program. The following statistical methods used in the study:

1-Repetitions, mathematical calculations and percentages.

2-Pearson coefficient used to show the stability of the test.

3-Spearman-Brown equal split-half coefficient, unequal Jetman split-half coefficient and Alpha Cronbach coefficient.

4-T Test.

## **Previous Studies**

### **1- Malgorzata Martyńska -2004**

This paper has a twofold purpose. First, to present the level of collocational competence among intermediate learners of the English language and to answer the question to what degree they know English collocations. With this goal in mind, a group of high school students was submitted to a test on collocation, whose results are shown in Section 2 of this paper. Second, to survey different linguistic attitudes towards the phenomenon of collocation and its categorization, as well as to emphasize the role of collocation in the process of second language learning.

### **2-Supakorn Phoocharoensil- 2011**

This research study is aimed at examining Thai EFL learners' errors in their acquisition of English collocations. The data, drawn from essays written by two groups of participants differing in L2 proficiency, indicate actual problems with which the learners are really faced. As regards the origins of these collocational errors, first language transfer seems to be the most outstanding strategy which they adopted. Where the collocations in Thai and English appear incongruent, deviations often arise. The L1-based errors, evidenced by the data, deal with preposition addition, preposition omission, incorrect word choice, and collocate redundancy. It comes as a surprise to discover the high-proficiency learners' heavy reliance on the native language, to which those with low proficiency are expected to resort. In addition to L1

transfer, the learners also apply synonymy and overgeneralization, both of which contribute to collocational deviations in the target language.

### **3- Chittinan Yumanee-2013**

The present study aimed to analyze collocational errors produced by Thai EFL students at two proficiency levels, to examine whether such errors are attributed to first language interference, and to investigate other plausible sources of errors. A total of 60 high school students were recruited to participate in this study. Each student was required to take two collocational tests: (1) a 45-item multiple-choice test and (2) an 18-item Thai-English translation test. The two tests consisted of nine major types of collocations, which included nine lexical and three grammatical collocation patterns. The results revealed that the performance of Thai EFL students in both the receptive test and the productive test appeared to be influenced by mother-tongue transfer when they were confronted with difficulties in dealing with English collocations. Furthermore, it was discovered that there were other potential factors that contributed to the high degree of collocational errors committed by the high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups, namely the synonymy strategy, the learners' creative invention and the strategy of analogy, the paraphrasing strategy, and low knowledge of collocational skills.

### **4- Shaokang Qin, Hui Wang- 2012**

In this paper we proposed that the neglected three words collocations (trillocation) should be emphasized in collocation study. From the point of view of colligations, more useful collocations could be covered by adding a third category. For a specific third word, it will help avoid the unnaturalness of a two words collocation. A statistic based automatic trillocation extracting system is proposed and achieves 45% correctness of trillocations. The system first extract two words collocations based on a statistic measure together with grammatical information and then extract the collocations (the third words) of the acquired two words collocations. Human experts also judged the ambiguity and naturalness of the collocations and the correspondent trillocations. The results show that the extracted trillocations could be utilized to help disambiguate word senses and generate natural language output.

### **5- Ali Abdul Hameed Faris , Rasha Ali Sahu (2013)**

The research deals with the translation of English collocations into Arabic. A collocation is a combination of two or more words that always occur together consistently in different contexts in language.

The present paper hypothesizes that students encounter difficulties in translating English collocations into Arabic. An experiment has been made involving twenty students of fourth year /College of Education, University of Basrah.

The results of the tests come up with the hypothesis of the study that 70% of the test candidates face difficulties in the translation of English collocations



into Arabic. The research has ultimately identified certain problems and solutions.

**6- Khalil Hasan Nofall` (2012)**

In this paper, an attempt is made to study the term “collocation” as the habitual association between words. It incorporates a fairly detailed analysis of collocation in both English and Arabic. A lot of literature has been written on collocation; yet collocation in both English and Arabic and its relation to lexicography, translation and interpretation in addition to teaching/learning process gained little or even no attention from specialists and scholars. The purpose of this paper is to focus on this important area in an attempt to bring out the nature and significance of collocation and its relation to the above mentioned points. The paper concludes with some remarks and recommendations that could enhance the process of translation and interpretation as well as teaching/learning process. These remarks, findings and recommendation, if best employed, could enhance the quality of teaching, learning and interpreting collocations. Finally, it is hoped that this piece of work will bridge a gap in interpretation, teaching and learning on the one hand, and will motivate further research into other important areas in English and Arabic, on the other.

**Comment :**

On studying previous studies the researcher noticed that the study of **Malgorzata Martyńska** presents the level of collocational competence among intermediate learners of the English language and to answer the question to what degree they know English collocations, a survey of different linguistic attitudes towards the phenomenon of collocation and its categorization, as well as to emphasize the role of collocation in the process of second language learning.

Regarding the study of **Supakorn Phoocharoensil** aimed at examining Thai EFL learners' errors in their acquisition of English collocations. The data, drawn from essays written by two groups of participants differing in L2 proficiency, indicate actual problems with which the learners are really faced. He noticed that the origins of these collocational errors, language transfer seems to be the most outstanding strategy which they adopted. With reference to the study of **Chittinan Yumanee**, the researcher observed that the study aimed at analyzing collocational errors produced by Thai EFL students at two proficiency levels: a) to examine whether such errors are attributed to first language interference, b) and to investigate other plausible sources of errors.

Concerning the study of **Shaokang Qin, Hui Wang** , in this paper they proposed that the neglected three words collocations (trillocation) should be emphasized in collocation study. From the point of view of colligations, more useful collocations could be covered by adding a third category. For a

specific third word, it will help avoid the unnaturalness of a two words collocation.

The study of **Ali Abdul Hameed Faris , Rasha Ali Sahu** deals with the translation of English collocations into Arabic. A collocation is a combination of two or more words that always occur together consistently in different contexts in language. The present paper hypothesizes that students encounter difficulties in translating English collocations into Arabic.

Upon studying the research of **Khalil Hasan Nofall** , the researcher noticed that this paper studies the term “collocation” as the habitual association between words. It incorporates a fairly detailed analysis of collocation in both English and Arabic. A lot of literature has been written on collocation; yet collocation in both English and Arabic and its relation to lexicography, translation and interpretation in addition to teaching/learning process gained little or even no attention from specialists and scholars. The purpose of this paper is to focus on this important area in an attempt to bring out the nature and significance of collocation and its relation to the above mentioned points.

**Regarding** this paper, such paper deals with the difficulties that face the student of English at QOU in using and choosing the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in Arabic and English collocation. It also shows the level of difficulty that face the students in using the suitable collocation in their translation from Arabic to English and vice versa . In addition, the study analyses the errors committed by students while they are translating collocations from English to Arabic and vice versa. More over the study shows whether such difficulty based on gender variable. At the end, such study tries to adopt suitable solutions for such difficulties.

### **Literature review**

#### **Defining collocation**

The term collocation has been defined by different scholars but in a similar fashion. It was introduced by Firth (1957) to refer to a combination of words associated with each other. Sinclair (1991) defines collocations as “items that occur physically together or have strong chances of being mentioned together’ (p. 170). According to Lewis (1997), collocation is defined as “the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency”(p. 8). The occurrence of collocation is statistically significant (Lewis, 2000). In support of Lewis (1997, 2000), Hill (2000) suggests that “collocation is a predictable combination of words” (p. 51). Examples of common English collocations are *rancid butter*, *make a decision*, *Internet access*etc. Hill (2000) also noticed that some collocations are fixed and highly predictable from one of the component words. For instance, the verb *shrug* apparently almost always co-selects the noun *one’s shoulder* as its neighboring word, i.e. a collocate. In this way, *to shrug one’s*

*shoulder* can be viewed as a strong or restricted collocation. In contrast, some collocations are considered so weak that their occurrences often go unnoticed or seem too general as the two component words are inclined to occur freely. For example, the adjective *good* can co-occur with a tremendous variety of noun collocates, e.g. *a good boy, a good school, a good teacher, good food*, etc., all of which are considered weak collocations.

However, the consensus on a definition of collocation focuses on the co-occurrence of words. The term *collocation* can be separated into parts, containing its own meaning, “*col-* (from *com-* meaning “together, with”), *-lock-* (meaning “to place or put”), *-ate* (a verb suffix), and *-ion* (a noun suffix)” (Nation, 1990, p. 32). In other words, collocations refer to words that are placed together. This concept is related to that of McCarthy & O'Dell (2005), who define collocation as a close word combination with other words as in the following examples: *too* collocates with *much* or *late*; the word *tall* seems to collocate with *building* and *high* with *mountain*. Lewis (2000) has elaborated that collocation can be considered as the method of unexpected natural co-occurrence with lexical items in a context. A more interesting definition has been given by McCarthy & O'Dell (2005), who claimed that collocations could be constructed semantically and syntactically from words developing as chunks that are acceptable and understandable by native speakers; for instance, *tall person* instead of \**high person* and *statistically significant* instead of \**statistically important*.

### **Classification of collocations**

A number of linguists have proposed certain criteria so far for distinguishing different kinds of collocations. The current study has adopted Benson, Benson, & Ilson (1997)'s collocation classification: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations.

#### **1- Lexical collocations**

Lexical collocations consist of two content words or open class words, which include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Lewis has classified lexical collocations into six types, as illustrated below: e.g.

adjective + noun a difficult decision

verb + noun submit a report

noun + noun radio station

verb + adverb examine thoroughly

adverb + adjective extremely inconvenient

noun + verb the fog closed in

(Lewis, 2000, p. 133)

So lexical collocations are composed of two or more content words, i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Examples of this kind of collocation is presented below:

adjective + noun: sour milk

verb + noun: conduct research

noun + verb: dust accumulates

adverb + adjective: mentally disabled

verb + adverb or: move freely

adverb + verb: proudly present

## **2 Grammatical collocations**

Grammatical collocations are derived from the combination of one open class word, e.g. noun, verb, adjective, etc., and one closed class, which is mainly a preposition. e.g. adjective + preposition *aware of*

verb + preposition *step into*

noun + preposition *emphasis on*

(Lewis, 2000, p. 134)

So grammatical collocations refer to combinations comprising a content word and a function word, which is usually a preposition, as illustrated below:

noun + preposition: an increase in

verb + preposition: elaborate on

adjective + preposition :familiar with

preposition + noun: on probation

## **Collocation learning strategies and Relevant L2 studies**

There appear many different strategies applied by language learners in their attempt to acquire L2 collocations. This paper summarizes only some major learning strategies that often lead learners to collocational errors in L2 English: first language transfer, synonymy, and repetition and overgeneralization.

### **1- First language transfer**

First language transfer is regarded as a crucial factor of second language acquisition influencing EFL learners' production of collocations (Nesselhauf, 2003). For example, Boonyasquan (2006) examined erroneous use of English collocations among Thai EFL university students. She concluded that the effect of cross-linguistic influence accounted for participants' erroneous answers. In addition, Mongkolchai (2008)'s findings revealed that L1 transfer may lead participants to make collocational errors, whereas Chen (2008) found that the lexical and grammatical miscollocations were the result of inadequate collocation knowledge. Nonetheless, Ellis (1994) proposed that "Where the two collocations were identical, learning could take place easily through *positive transfer* of the native-language pattern, but where they were different, learning difficulty arose and errors resulting from *negative transfer* were likely to occur (p. 300)." For instance, Swedish and Chinese learners in Wang & Shaw's study (2008) formed L2 collocations such as *\*do changes, \*do a great effort, \*make damage* and *\*make the cleaning*, which reflected negative L1 transfer.

Furthermore, Phoocharoensil (2011) discovered evidence of L1 transfer in Thai learners' writing. Most of the problems found are concerned with prepositions. That is, they seemed to drop a preposition where there must be one. For instance, the verb "*listen*" was used as if it were a transitive verb immediately followed by a noun, e.g. "*music*". In other words, the obligatory preposition "*to*" is often omitted. By contrast, preposition addition was noticed in the learner corpus. For example, the preposition "*from*" ungrammatically appears right after the verb "*left*", which reflects the pattern of this verb in L1 Thai. Apart from grammatical collocation errors, the subjects apparently also produced erroneous lexical collocations based on direct translation from Thai. They, for instance, created deviant constructions, e.g. *play Internet* and *play computer*, both of which probably stemmed from L1 interference.

Learners' native language (L1) largely has an impact on their subsequent learning of L2 collocations (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005). Learners' reliance upon their L1 collocational knowledge may represent their assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 collocational choices. Fortunately, where there is an exactly identical match between collocations in both languages, transfer from learners' mother tongue could result in positive, satisfactory production (Ellis, 2008). For instance, the combination *in reality* appears to be possible in both Thai and English. As a result, it is very likely that Thai learners will become successful in transferring this particular collocation from L1 Thai to L2 English.

Nonetheless, such success based on native language transfer is not always the case (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005). Discrepancies between L1 and L2 collocations can also cause some problems for EFL learners. That is, whenever collocations in the mother tongue and the target language do not match, deviant collocational structures often arise. According to several previous studies, native language influence is noticeable in EFL learners' collocations. By and large, there obviously exists negative transfer from L1. Bisk-up (1992), in investigating Polish and German EFL learners' performance in English collocation use, revealed that the learners, based on risk taking, did transfer their L1 collocational knowledge to their production of L2 collocations, thus evidently leading to erroneous use of English collocations. For example, while the target like collocation in English is *to set a record*, the Polish learners tended to use *to state a record*, which is indicative of an L1 collocational pattern. Likewise, the German learners were found to produce the L1-based deviation *to lend a bookshop* instead of the target like version *to run a bookshop*.

In a similar way, Bahns (1993) and Bahns & Eldaw (1993) reported on the role of mother tongue in English collocation acquisition. That is, German learners of English, in a translation task from German to English, were found

to be successful with transferring from L1 collocational knowledge when L2 collocations have L1 equivalents. However, negative transfer was also remarkable when there appears non-congruence between collocations in both languages. L1 interference can be seen in Huang (2001) as well when Taiwanese EFL university students, having been asked to do a sentence-completion test, created L2 combinations based on L1, such as *a black horse* rather than the target-like collocation *a dark horse*.

Nesselhauf (2003) provided support for the previously mentioned studies in that L1 influence, in her study of collocations used by German EFL learners, is considerable, resulting in L2 errors for several times. She also confirmed the significance of native language impact on L2 collocation learning, suggesting that since L1-L2 collocational incompatibility is a major source of errors in learner language, English teachers should concentrate on such non-congruent collocations in the two languages in order to prevent learners from committing such transfer errors.

It is also worth noticing that in Koya (2003), even high-proficiency students seem to heavily rely on their knowledge of L1 collocations, which came as a surprise to the researcher himself since he had predicted to see far less evidence of L1 transfer in this group of high-proficiency students. On the other hand, low-proficiency learners were found to apply an avoidance strategy and astoundingly depended less on their first language. This supplies counter evidence against much past literature which indicated that L1 transfer is characteristic of low-proficiency learners (e.g. Ellis, 1987; Odlin, 1989).

In addition, Fan (2009), in an examination of Hong Kong ESL learners' collocation production in writing, also discovered an adverse effect that L1 Chinese had on the participants' use of English collocations. In particular, the study found non-standard L2 collocations that seem to result from word-for-word translation from Chinese, such as *as left/right face* or *left side face*, which are not present in native speakers' corpora (Fan, 2009, p.118).

Another study that is in line with the aforementioned ones as to L1 transfer is Ying (2009). In the study of English collocations produced by Chinese speakers, i.e. English majors and non-English majors, Ying found that collocations which have no translation equivalents in L1 are considered difficult, in comparison to those which are congruent with L1. In more details, the learners probably searched for L1 equivalents with no awareness of L1-L2 incongruity and then produced L2 deviant combinations, which accords with Nesselhauf (2003). Moreover, for both groups of learners, errors in lexical collocations clearly outnumber those in grammatical collocations.

With respect to research on L2 acquisition of English collocations by Thai EFL learners, L1 transfer has also been prevalent. As revealed by Boonyasquan (2006), who investigated Thai learners' collocational violations in translating a Thai business article into English, native language,



i.e. Thai, was one of the most common sources of errors. The learners seemed to directly translate some L1 collocations into non-target like English. An example given in this study is *\*expensive price*, which is assumed to be directly translated from *raakhaa pɛŋ* ‘high price’, i.e. literally *raakhaa* ‘price’ and *p ɛŋ* ‘expensive’. Another study the results of which are consistent with Boonyasquan (2006) in terms of first language influence on collocation use is Mongkolchai (2008), who studied English collocational competence of third-year English majors in a university in Bangkok, Thailand. The research instruments, viz. a sentence completion test and a multiple-choice test, seemed to elicit collocational data presenting evidence of native language transfer. A clear example of transfer-based errors is the use of the preposition *in* in place of *at* in the sentence *\*I became skillful in drawing*(Mongkolchai,2008, p.46)

The researcher believes that the first language transfer is regarded as a crucial factor of second language acquisition influencing EFL learners’ production of collocations, consequently transfer may lead participants to make collocational errors. More over the lexical and grammatical miscollocations were the result of inadequate collocation knowledge. Discrepancies between L1 and L2 collocations can also cause some problems for EFL learners. That is, whenever collocations in the mother tongue and the target language do not match, deviant collocational structures often arise.

It is evident that interference from EFL learners’ native language plays a crucial role in L2 collocation acquisition. As shown in the aforementioned studies, the first language seems to have a negative effect on their use of English collocations, resulting in L2 erroneous combinations. In 2.1.3.2, another learning strategy also causing problems for EFL students, i.e. synonymy, is discussed.

## **2 Synonymy strategy**

Aside from dependence on their native tongue, EFL learners in the process of learning collocations are sometimes seen to adopt an analogy strategy referred to as synonymy strategy. This is often used by learners whose L2 proficiency is limited. They may try substituting synonym for a word in L2, unaware of constituting a collocational violation. In actuality, a very limited number of synonyms in English can occur in the same grammatical pattern(Nation, 2001). In other words, words that are very close in meaning do not always share the same grammatical collocation. For instance, even though the verbs *ask* and *plead* are semantically similar, i.e. involving making a request (Cambridge advanced learners’ dictionary, 2008, pp.74-75 & 1085), the grammatical patterns in which the verbs are likely to occur are different. That is, the verb *ask* is used in the pattern *ask someone +*

*infinitive with to*, whereas the verb *plead* requires the preposition *with*, as in *plead with someone+ infinitive with to*. For this reason, a substitution of *plead* for *ask* in the grammatical pattern of the latter verb, i.e. without *with*, causes ungrammaticality in English (Phoocharoensil, 2010, p. 242).

According to many studies of L2 English collocation acquisition, synonymy has appeared to be a common learning strategy. In Farghal & Obiedat (1995), it was indicated that Arabic EFL learners greatly relied on the open-choice principle for word selection, replacing a word with its synonym. Such a strategy often led them to deviant, ungrammatical collocations in English. In a similar vein, Howarth (1996, 1998) demonstrated that L2 learners seemed to draw an analogy between collocates of two synonyms, thus frequently resulting in errors in the target language. For example, they produced the deviant combination *\*adopt ways*, which was presumably caused by analogy with the correct collocation *adopt an approach* (Howarth, 1998, p. 41).

Like the above studies having been mentioned, Zughol & Abdul-Fattah (2001) discovered assumed synonymy in the use of English collocations by Arabic speakers. It was reported that as a consequence of the nature of the instructional input the learners received in class and the impact of bilingual dictionaries, the learners' collocation use was evidently based on a synonymy strategy, which violates the selectional restrictions, i.e. semantic constraints, of the target language. For instance, the verb *failed* was incorrectly employed as opposed to *defeated* in the sentence *\*The enemy was failed in the battle* (Zughol & Abdul-Fattah, 2001, p.11)

As regards ,some research studies on Thai learners' acquisition of English collocations, synonymy has also been discovered. Boonyasaquan (2006), in her study of how Thai EFL learners translated a business news articles from Thai to English, reported on their collocational deviations stemming from an application of synonymy, which accounts for 8.62% of all the collocational errors. A clear example given in the study is *\*a qualified hotel* in lieu of *a quality hotel*, which may reflect the learners' confusion over the use of the synonyms *qualified* and *quality* (Boonyasaquan, 2006, p. 83).Lending support to Boonyasaquan (2006), Mongkolchai (2008) noticed collocational errors committed by English majors, who speak L1 Thai, through synonymy. For instance, they used *\*a newspaper booth*, which is a deviation from the target like one *a newspaper kiosk*, commonly found in a native speaker corpus.

The researcher noticed that Arabic speakers use synonymy in the use of English collocations . EFL learners in the process of learning collocations sometimes adopt an analogy strategy referred to as synonymy strategy. They may substitute synonym for a word in L2, unaware of constituting a collocational violation. Arabic EFL learners greatly relied on the open-choice



principle for word selection, replacing a word with its synonym. Such a strategy often led them to deviant, ungrammatical collocations in English.

### **3 Repetition and Overgeneralization**

Repetition is another strategy on which EFL collocation learners, especially those with a low level of L2 collocational knowledge, often depend. With repetition, learners resort to the repeated use of a limited number of familiar collocations. Moreover, repetition may occur as a result of learners' lack of confidence to create L2 collocations through analogy (Howarth, 1998). Put simply, they may not want to risk using L2 combinations with which they are unfamiliar. Research studies on L2 English collocation learning have pinpointed repetition as an origin of collocational problems.

Among those studies, Granger (1998) shows that French learners of English tended to repeatedly employ the intensifier *very* in the combination of adverb + adjective. Furthermore, some other collocations, e.g. *deeply-rooted*, recursively occurred in their writing as well. Granger, Paquot & Rayson (2006) corroborated Granger (1998) in that EFL learners seem to overuse a limited group of collocations perhaps because they stick to familiar formulaic sequences which they feel safe to use. Similarly, Howarth (1998) also discovered a difference between individual writers' repetition of conventional collocations. Shih (2000) was devoted to an investigation of overused collocations in a Taiwanese learner corpus of English, focusing on a set of synonyms *big*, *large*, and *great*. The findings from a comparative study of Taiwanese Learner Corpus of English and British National Corpus (BNC) showed that the collocations with *big* were significantly overused by Taiwanese learners. More precisely, the learners used *big* far more frequently than native speakers normally do when describing abstract concepts, whereas the use of *big* referring to concrete objects occurs with more frequency in the native speaker corpus. Shih posited that repetition is viewed as a simplification strategy or overgeneralization applied by Taiwanese learners when faced with L2 collocational problems. In other words, the word *big* is perhaps extended to abstract concepts, which is not a normal practice of native speakers'.

According to Zughol & Abdul-Fattah (2001), overgeneralization, i.e. the extension of the use of a certain L2 feature to another, has been found as a source of incorrect use of L2 English collocations, and this strategy is viewed as a characteristic of learner language. The subjects in this study confused the words *shame* and *ashamed*, thereby extending the use of *ashamed*, while the word *shame* was intended.

The researcher discovered that EFL collocation learners, especially those with a low level of L2 collocational knowledge, often depend on Repetition. With repetition, learners resort to the repeated use of a limited number of

familiar collocations. Moreover, repetition may occur as a result of learners' lack of confidence to create L2 collocations through analogy. Moreover overgeneralization has been found as a source of incorrect use of L2 English collocations, and this strategy is viewed as a characteristic of learner language.

### **Learners' strategies in L2 collocation learning**

In addition to L1 transfer, past studies also revealed learning strategies applied in the process of L2 collocation acquisition. One of the most common strategies employed concerns synonymy. As indicated by Farghal & Obiedat (1995), Arabic EFL students replaced an English word with its synonym probably on the assumption that they can be used interchangeably, which by and large results in deviations in the target language. Likewise, Howarth (1996, 1998) showed English learners' problems emanating from a false analogy between collocates of two synonymous words. For instance, the erroneous combination *\*adopt ways* was believed to be caused by analogy with *adopt an approach*.

As regards Thai EFL students' collocational use, Phoochaorensil (2011) demonstrated that the participants evidently depended on the synonymy strategy in their L2 English collocation production. They, in other words, may take the view that a word can be replaced by its synonyms in every context, which is not always that case. Such a strategy often leads to improper collocations in the target language (Phoocharoensil, 2010). Some examples of deviant combinations influenced by synonymy are *\*peaceable home* for *peaceful home* and *\*authentically believe* for *truly believe*.

### **Collocations and Culture**

Baker (1992:59) defines culture - specific collocations as "collocations that reflect the cultural setting in which they occur". Culture-specific collocations may denote a concrete concept that bears some cultural specificity which may carry a connotative meaning. "ارتدت الحجاب" is a

culture - specific collocation which denotes a kind of clothes worn by Muslim women; it has a cultural and religious background. So, it has no total equivalent in English; although it can be referred to 'الحجاب' as 'veil' or 'scarf', it does not convey the same meaning, because "الحجاب" in Arabic does not mean "scarf" that covers the head only but it covers the whole body and it has specific characteristics. Similarly, the English culture specific collocation "Easter egg", which denotes some kind of food used on a special occasion, has no equivalent in Arabic because it is not a part of the Arabic culture, thus it is unfamiliar to Arabs.

Culture-specific collocations may also denote abstract concepts such as good, evil, courage, wisdom, optimism and pessimism. For example, the English word "owl" and the Arabic word "بوم" are linguistically equivalents but culturally not. In the English culture "owl" refers to

wisdom while in the Arabic society it refers to pessimism. So, if someone translates the combination " هو كالبلوم " into " he is like an owl "he may confuse the target reader because " هو كالبلوم " means a pessimistic person while " he is like an owl "means a wise person. Therefore, if translators want to translate it into English they should look for another word that suggests pessimism in order to preserve the same meaning.

### **Collocation and Connotation**

Culture-specific collocations are difficult to translate not just because they denote concepts, which are specific to a given culture, but also because they carry connotations. According to Armstrong (2005:70), "connotation is the secondary meaning attaching to words beyond their

central denotation ". The denotative meaning, which is also called the prepositional ", the conceptual meaning "or the "core meaning" is the meaning of the word as it is found in the dictionary. It is objective because the sense is always the same and all people agree about it.

The connotative meaning, on the other hand, is subjective in that people differ about it. The word "black cats" for example, has the same denotative meaning in the two languages but it has a different connotative meaning from English and Arabic. While it has a positive connotative meaning in English 'good luck', it has a negative connotative meaning in Arabic 'bad luck'. (McCarthy, 1990:18). Moreover, collocations may have different connotative meanings even in the same language. For example, in Arabic although the collocations " رجل داهية " and " رجل محنك " have the same denotative meaning "intelligent man ", they have different connotative meanings. " رجل داهية " has a negative connotative meaning in that intelligence here is used to achieve bad goals, whereas " رجل محنك " has a positive connotative meaning in that intelligence aims at good purposes. Connotation is the most difficult part to translate because it is often culture-specific word. Therefore, translators must try as possible as they can to preserve the connotative meaning expressed in the SL but they should also reflect the values and norms of the TL in order to

avoid concepts that may be confusing to the target reader.

### **Difficulties and Problems in Translating Collocations**

The translation of collocations is difficult for non-native speakers of a language and creates many problems for students and translators.

The main problem for students is to find the proper TL equivalent collocations. According to Armstrong (2005:98), "the difficulty for translators is not so much to recognize a SL collocation as to find an acceptable TL equivalent ". That is to say, although the equivalent may exist in the TL, to choose the appropriate equivalent requires a good competence in both languages. In some occasions, one word collocation (SL) needs to be translated with two or three words collocation in TL (difference

of collocational patterning across languages). For example, "to misunderstand" is one word in English while its equivalent 'يسئ الفهم' in Arabic consists of two words and the expression 'A bit of information' is two words in English while its equivalent in Arabic 'معلومة' is one word. So, to do this translation successfully requires the translator's competence.

Another difficulty the students face is misinterpreting the meaning of a SL collocation. This is due to the influence of their native language (TL). This happens when a SL collocation seems familiar to students because it resembles another one in their native language. For example, student may produce "This watch walks well"; instead of "this watch works well" which is a direct transfer from Arabic and which sounds odd to native speakers of English.

The choice between accuracy and typicality is another problem; students face a big difficulty when they have to choose between producing a typical collocation in TL and preserving the source meaning at the same time. For example, the nearest acceptable collocation for "hard drink" in Arabic is "مشروب كحولي", but they do not map completely because "hard drink" in English refers only to spirits as whisky, gin, and brandy; it does not include other alcoholic drinks such as beer or sherry. In Arabic, however, it refers to any alcoholic drink including beer, lager and sherry (Baker 1992). Therefore, there is a loss of meaning.

Another problem that students face is the difficulty of generalization. Some English words collocate with one and the same word in English but it is not necessarily in Arabic. For example, the adjective 'fat' in English collocates with "man" and its equivalent in Arabic "سمين" collocates with "رجل"; however, it collocates with 'salary' only in English since an Arab cannot say "راتب سمين" but "راتب ضخيم". Students will face problems in this case because they cannot generalize about the meaning of a word which collocates with different words because it may differ from collocation to another and from language to language (Ghazala 1993:32).

The considerable variation in collocability across languages poses difficulties for students. There is more than one possibility of collocations in the TL for the same SL collocation. For example, hard task / daunting task ( مهمة شاقة ) and sound sleep / fast sleep / deep sleep ( نوم عميق )

(ibid:32). Usually, these collocations have the same translation in Arabic, but students think that they have different translations and commit mistakes.

Students may face difficulties also in translating some new English collocations. According to Saricas (2006:37), "new English collocations which use noun compounds or adjectives + noun are proved to be difficult to translate". These are usually common in social sciences and

computer language. Some examples of these collocations are "lead time", "acid rain", and "sunshine industries". The translation of a new English collocation is difficult because it needs a specific use that needs a clear context. Moreover, some of these new English collocations are decisive in their physical meaning. For example, "narrow money" does not suggest at all "النقد المخصصة للمصروف أو الشخصي" and students may translate it into "أموال ضيقة" or "أموال قليلة" which is a strange translation (Ghazala, 1993:20).

Not only linguistic differences between English and Arabic that constitute difficulties in translating collocations, cultural differences also play a significant role in these difficulties. Ghazala (2001:1) says: "Usually cultural terms are thought to pose the most difficult problem in translation". Culture may create difficulties for students because of the different interpretations of these concepts by different societies both in their denotative or connotative meanings. In addition, there may be some lexical gaps; a concept that may exist in one language may not exist in another. According to Baker (1992:60), "like culture-specific words, they (collocations) point to concepts which are not easily accessible to the target reader."

In addition to linguistic and cultural differences, the overuse of literal translation proves to cause problems for students. As Ghazala maintains: "The central lexical problem faced (...) by students is their direct, literal translation of almost all words" (1995:84). The problem for students is that they think that literal translation can be applied for everything in language, thus they commit mistakes.

### **Conclusion**

The interest in the translation of collocations comes from their great importance in language; they play a vital role in the coherence of the structure of language and thanks to them people can speak a native – like language. However, collocations illustrate considerable difficulties that foreign language students face when translating them because of their largely arbitrary nature i.e., they are not governed by semantic or syntactic rules. The difficulties can be related to the linguistic and cultural differences between English and Arabic -two sharply different cultures-. The overuse of literal translation is also a responsible factor for these problems. Students therefore, should not ignore the varieties of collocations and should be aware of cultural differences between English and Arabic. They are required to be extra sensitive to collocations, to give the Arabic version the same beauty of the English text. This means that

ignoring the concern with the translation of English collocations in Arabic results in a poor and odd text.

### **The Sample of the study**

The sample of the study composed of 50male /female students of English Language Department at Al Quds Open University and Al- Aqsa University. The following table No. 1 shows the distribution of study sample based on gender factor and variable.

Table No. (1) Distribution Study sample according to gender variable

Percentage	Number	Sex
26.00	13.00	Male
74.00	37.00	Female
100.00	50.00	Total

### **Stability and Reliability of exam Internal Consistency**

The stability of the exam was estimated by using Person method. The coefficient correlation of each item ranged between (0.436 -0.786) which is considered to the level (0.01) . The exam is proved to be reliable. The researcher used Alpha Cronbach coefficient is (0.845). Such thing indicates that the exam can be applied in the study and the exam is highly enjoyed with high stability and liability which may give the researcher confidence to apply the exam on the subjects of study.

### **Analyzing the results and answering the questions**

#### **First: Answering the first question:**

1- What is the difficulty level that face the students in choosing or using the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in English collocation? The researcher used means ,std. Deviation, percentage and rank. Table (2) shows such things:

Table (2)

The total answers, means, standard deviations and the percentage of first question.

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	standard deviations	means	Item
3	32.0	68.00	0.47	0.68	1
6	10.0	90.00	0.30	0.90	2
4	30.0	70.00	0.46	0.70	3
2	46.0	54.00	0.50	0.54	4
1	56.00	44.00	0.50	0.44	5
5	20.00	80.00	0.40	0.80	6
	32.33	67.67	1.45	4.06	Total mark

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Table (2) shows that item (5) is the most difficult item but item (2) is the easiest one . Whereas the above mentioned table shows that the percentage of error in selecting the appropriate answer of collocation of the study sample in the first question equals 32.33%, which considered low percentage, this means that the percentage of difficulty that face the students of both universities in such question is low. More over the researcher noticed that students used literal translation type in translating difficult items.

### **Second: Answering the second question:**

2-What is the difficulty level that face the students in choosing or using the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in Arabic collocation?

The researcher used and calculated the means ,std. Deviation, percentage and rank of the answers of study sample. Table (3) shows such things:

Table (3)

The total answers, means, standard deviations , the percentage ,the rank and the total mark of the second question

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	standard deviations	means	Item
1	48.00	52.00	0.50	0.52	1.
6	4.00	96.00	0.20	0.96	2.
2	46.00	54.00	0.50	0.54	3.
2	4.00	96.00	0.20	0.96	4.
5	10.00	90.00	0.30	0.90	5.
7	-	100.00	-	1.00	6.
6	4.00	96.00	0.20	0.96	7.
7	-	100.00	-	1.00	8.
3	26.00	74.00	0.44	0.74	9.
4	24.00	76.00	0.43	0.76	10.
	16.60	83.40	0.96	8.34	Total Mark

Table (3) shows that the level of difficulty in choosing appropriate answer of Arabic collocation is very low . More over the researcher noticed that students used literal translation type in translating difficult items.

### **Third: Answering the third question:**

3-

What is the difficulty level that face the students in choosing or using the suitable verb, noun, adjective, preposition for/with main word in English collocation?

The researcher



used and calculated the means ,Standard Deviation, percentage and rank of the answers of study sample. Table (4) shows such things.

Table (4)

The total answers, means, standard deviations , the percentage ,the rank and the total mark of the third question.

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	Standard Deviation	Mean	Item
3	64.00	36.00	0.48	0.36	1.
1	84.00	16.00	0.37	0.16	2.
4	58.00	42.00	0.50	0.42	3.
6	42.00	58.00	0.50	0.58	4.
2	78.00	22.00	0.42	0.22	5.
9	6.00	94.00	1.93	0.94	6.
5	54.00	46.00	0.50	0.46	7.
8	22.00	78.00	0.42	0.78	8.
7	28.00	72.00	0.45	0.72	9.
4	58.00	42.00	0.50	0.42	10.
	49.40	50.60	3.33	5.06	Total Mark

The above mentioned table (4) shows that the most difficult item that face the students is item (2) at the rate 84% which considered high percentage, whereas item (6) has the lowest percentage . The total difficulty percentage of question three is(49%) which is considered medium percentage. It indicates that the difficulty that face the students in choosing and selecting the correct English collocation is medium .The researcher noticed from the answers of the students that they use literal translation in selecting and choosing difficult collocation. **Fourth: Answering the fourth question:** 4-What is the difficulty level that face the students in translating Arabic collocation from Arabic to English? The researcher used and calculated the means ,Standard Deviation, percentage and rank of the answers of study sample. Table (5) shows such things.

Table (5)

The total answers, means, standard deviations , the percentage ,the rank and the total mark of the third question.

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	Standard Deviation	means	Item
6	26.00	74.00	0.44	0.74	1.



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Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	Standard Deviation	means	Item
1	80.00	20.00	0.40	0.20	2.
7	24.00	76.00	0.43	0.76	3.
3	44.00	56.00	0.50	0.56	4.
4	34.00	66.00	0.48	0.66	5.
8	20.00	80.00	0.40	0.80	6.
5	32.00	68.00	0.47	0.68	7.
2	50.00	50.00	0.51	0.50	8.
	38.75	61.25	1.56	4.90	Total Mark

The above mentioned table (5) shows that the most difficult item that face the students is item (2) at the rate 80% which considered high percentage, whereas item (3) has the lowest percentage (24%) . The total difficulty percentage of question four is (38.75%) which is considered less than the middle percentage. It indicates that the difficulty that face the students in translate the Arabic collocation from Arabic to English is medium .The researcher noticed from the answers of the students that they use literal translation in translating difficult collocation.

### **Fifth: Answering the fifth question:**

What is the difficulty level that face the students in translating English collocation from English to Arabic?

The researcher used and calculated the means ,Standard Deviation, percentage and rank of the answers of study sample. Table (5) shows such things.

Table (6)

The total answers, means, standard deviations , the percentage ,the rank and the total mark of the third question.

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	Standard Deviation	means	Item
3	40.00	60.00	0.49	0.60	1.
6	20.00	80.00	0.40	0.80	2.
4	34.00	66.00	0.48	0.66	3.
1	62.00	38.00	0.49	0.38	4.
6	20.00	80.00	0.40	0.80	5.
2	42.00	58.00	0.50	0.58	6.
5	24.00	76.00	0.43	0.76	7.

Rank	Difficulty Percentage	Percentage	Standard Deviation	means	Item
4	34.00	66.00	0.48	0.66	8.
	34.50	65.50	1.49	5.24	Total Mark

The above mentioned table (5) shows that the most difficult item that face the students is item (4) at the rate 62% which it is higher the middle , whereas items (2 and 5) has the lowest percentage (20%) . The total difficulty percentage of question five is(34.50%) which is considered less than the middle percentage. It indicates that the difficulty that face the students in translating English collocation from English to Arabic is medium .The researcher noticed from the answers of the students that they use literal translation in translating difficult collocation.

#### **Sixth: Answering the sixth question:**

Are there any statistical significant differences at ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the level of collocation translation process from English to Arabic and vice versa in Gaza Branch based on gender variable? The researcher used T test of differences between the means of two independent samples of all test questions . Table (7) shows the results of T Test based on Gender variable (male/female).

Table (7)

The total answers, means, standard deviations , T value and its statistical significance of all marks of study sample for all test questions, and the total mark .

Statistical significance level	T value	Standard Deviation	Mean	Number	Sex	Question
No	0.736	1.07	3.85	13.00	male	First
		1.57	4.14	37.00	female	
0.01	3.057	0.75	7.69	13.00	male	Second
		0.93	8.57	37.00	female	
No	1.654	2.80	3.77	13.00	male	Third
		3.41	5.51	37.00	female	
No	0.473	1.61	5.08	13.00	male	Fourth
		1.55	4.84	37.00	female	
No	1.333	1.30	4.77	13.00	male	Fifth
		1.54	5.41	37.00	female	
No	1.843	4.45	25.15	13.00	male	Total Mark
		5.89	28.46	37.00	female	

\*\*T value 0.01=2.704

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\*T value 0.05= 2.021

The above mentioned table (7) shows that all calculated T values of all test questions less than the T table value except question two. This indicates that there is no significant statistical differences at the level of 0.01 in using suitable and translating the collocations between males and females. The result of question two was in favour of females. This indicates that male students face difficulty in question two more than female students.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the study reveals that English students to some extent do not realize the collocations. The study shows that the students have little difficulty in translating English collocations correctly into Arabic and vice versa. Most of the students used a word for word translation strategy, rendering the core meaning of each SL item by its direct equivalent without considering the relevant words. Moreover, students failed to aware that a word meaning changes when it combines with another one and produced free combinations rather than collocations. The study also, shows that students are unfamiliar with the English collocations. The interference of their mother tongue affects negatively on their translation; negative transfer is considered the prime factor that leads them to make mistakes and errors. Students' unfamiliarity with the English collocations reflects their failure to translate them accurately and correctly.

If they were competent in English language and culture, they would render their appropriate equivalents in Arabic. Consequently, students should improve their collocational competence in both languages.

### **Suggestion to avoid the Problems of Collocation Translation**

The difficulties and problems collocations translation resulted from the overuse of literal translation, and related to linguistic and cultural differences between English and Arabic.

Shortage of socio-cultural information and limited knowledge of certain properties of English/Arabic languages cause such difficulties and problems. Consequently, here are some suggested solutions for students to be considered in collocations translation process.

1-Students should aware the relationship between words, i.e., nouns/ with suitable verbs ..etc., in both SL and TL in order to produce correct collocation.

2-Students be competent in linguistics system of the two languages so as overcome the difficulties of finding the appropriate equivalent collocation in both languages.

3-The students may translate one word English collocation into two or three words Arabic collocation due to the difference in the pattern of collocational between English and Arabic, because the major function is to maintain the SL collocational meaning.

4-Students should differentiate between the figurative meaning and the free one. So they should translate the figurative collocation by a figurative one and the free by a free one, only in the case of the absence of a figurative collocations equivalent they may translate it into a free one. For example, "Let sleeping dogs lie " its equivalent in Arabic is "الفئة نائمة لعن الله من ايقظها" "but not "دع الكلاب النائمة مستلقية"

5- Students should translate new English collocations into new Arabic collocations; in case such thing is impossible, students should translate them into collocations which already exist in Arabic. If these two cases do not work, Students may adopt the descriptive translation which means giving much information about the collocation or use footnotes to help the reader to understand it if the students fail to use the above mentioned strategies. Such thing means that it is not necessary to render any new English collocation into a new Arabic collocation because it does not always exist.

6-Students should emphasis on Culture-specific collocations because they are related to specific social group. Consequently, such collocations cannot be translated literally from SL into TL. Students should maintain the same connotative meaning of SL collocation into TL, either by paraphrasing, expanding, or using synonyms or more explaining.

7-Students should have a wide cultural knowledge of the TL which is acquired by the exposure of socio-cultural information.

8-Students should avoid using of literal translation which may be often misleading in getting the appropriate TL collocation. Such thing because collocations are opaque and cannot be translated always on word-for-word basis, instead translation should be provided for the phrase as a whole.

9-Teachers of English in general and of translation in particular should improve their students' collocational competence and raise their awareness of the phenomenon of word combinations.

10- Teachers should teach collocations in an explicit way by designing lexical lessons for students of English.

11- Teachers should teach collocations by referring to the students' first language and focusing on the similarities and differences between English and Arabic collocations. Teacher should also provide socio-cultural information in pedagogical material an to make students familiar enough with Englishcollocations.

### **Recommendations**

Upon considering, discussing and analyzing the results of the research, the researcher recommends the following points which may assist the teachers of foreign language, students , translators, text book writers, test makers and syllabus designers ,lexicographers and concerned parties to improve and develop the process of collocations translation in Palestine. That is to state theoretical contrastive analysis has pedagogical implications that may be

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useful for teachers and learners of foreign languages as well as for translators and syllabus designers.

1. Holding intensive training courses for Teachers of foreign languages on how to use and how to teach collocations.
2. Holding intensive training courses for Students of foreign languages, and interpreters on how to translate and use collocations .
3. Considering and proposing suitable materials and programs for teaching collocations in schools, community college, and universities.
4. Carrying out Intensive studies for collocations in L1 and L2 .
5. Proposing specialized monolingual and bilingual collocation dictionaries.
6. The Ministry of Education should hold training courses and seminars for teachers about using and teaching English collocations .

### **Suggestions For Further Researches**

The researcher suggests the followings:-

1-The researcher suggests carrying out more researches on comparative studies between English/Arabic and Arabic /English collocations translation regarding difficulties, problems and solutions.

2-Adopting researches on the function and aims of collocations translation.

3-Carrying out researches about the interference of Arabic language in collocations translation from English to Arabic.

4-Carrying out researches about improving the collocations translation from English to Arabic and vice versa .

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## **Appendixes**

### **Dear Students:**

The researcher designed such test in order to explore the difficulties and problems of translation of Collocations from English to Arabic and vice versa of English Students at QOU that face the students of Al Quds Open University in the translation process from English to Arabic and their solutions. The researcher



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studies the difficulties and problems that face the students during collocation translation process from English to Arabic.

You are kindly requested answer the test seriously in order to assist the students to overcome such difficulties and problems.

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex : male: ----- female: -----

University : \_\_\_\_\_

Branch : \_\_\_\_\_

### Q 1- Common collocations – nouns which naturally follow verbs

1. 3 of the following nouns follow the verb ‘catch’ very naturally. Which verb and noun combination does NOT go together?

- a) catch a fish
- b) catch a bus c) catch a cold d) catch a new word in English

2. “Excuse me, would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ a photo of me and my girlfriend?”

- a) making b) taking c) catching d) doing

3. 3 of the following nouns follow the verb ‘have’ very naturally. Which verb and noun combination does NOT go together?

- a) have a meeting b) have a baby c) have a cup of coffee d) have business with someone

4. “Could you \_\_\_\_\_ me a favour? Would you mind answering the phone for a minute – I need to pop out to the post office.”

- a) do b) make c) take d) all of the above answers

5. Which of the following verbs do NOT fit into this sentence: “The Health Authority has \_\_\_\_\_ its decision and will now allow the fertility treatment to go ahead.”

- a) altered b) changed c) moved d) reversed

6. 3 of the following nouns follow the verb ‘make’ very naturally. Which verb and noun combination does NOT go together?

- a) make your bed in the morning b) make progress c) make a noise
- d) make the weekly shopping

### Q 2 - Choose the most suitable Arabic word combination to correct collocation :

1-Scanty information. .... معلومات

- a) هزيلة b) قليلة c) ضئيلة d) ضعيفة

2-Invincible/ Undefeatable army ..... جيش

- a) لا يقاوم b) لا يهزم c) لا يقهر d) لا ينسحب

3- A verdant tree ..... شجرة

- a) وارفة الظلال b) ذات ظلال c) ظلالتها وارف d) ظلال

4- Abject poverty ..... فقر

- a) مبقع b) مدقع c) قاهر d) مجرم

- 5- Incurable disease ..... مرض  
a) عقل d) فتاك c) عضال b) لا يشفي  
6- Dire consequences ..... عواقب  
a) وخيمة d) زخمة c) رخيمة b) فتاكفة  
7-Reliable source ..... مصدر  
a) وثيق الصلة d) مطلع c) موثوق b) يعتمد عليه  
8- A clear-cut evidence ..... دليل  
a) قاطع d) حاد c) ثابت b) موثوق  
9- A serious injury ..... خطير/خطيرة  
a) جرح d) اصابة c) قطع b) مرض  
10- Free admission ..... مجاني  
a) قبول d) دخول c) تصريح b) اذن

Q 3 - Choose the most suitable English word combination to correct collocation :

- 1-A ..... official مسئول رفيع المستوى  
a) high b) lofty b) senior d) great  
2- ..... Organization منظمة سرية  
a) secret b) underground c) covered d) confidential  
3- Money ..... غسيل/تبييض اموال  
a) laundry b) whitening c) washing d) cleaning  
4-Political ..... اضطراب سياسي  
a) crisis b) wave c) turmoil d) problems  
5- ..... Imagination خيال واسع  
a) wild b) wide c) enormous d) expanding  
6- ..... woman امرأة فائقة الجمال  
a) Pretty b) Beautiful c) Gorgeous d) Samwell  
7- ..... committee لجنة تفصي الحقائق  
a) Truth-searching b) Fact-finding c) Truth- proving d) Proving  
8-A ..... Measures إجراءات أحادية الجانب  
a) one side b) single c) unilateral d) lonely  
9-Mine ..... كاسحة الغام  
a) cleaner b) sweeper c) removal d) duster  
10-Technical ..... عطل/خل فني  
a) glitch b) error c) defect d) wrong

Q 4- Translate the following collocations from Arabic to English :

- 1- ..... الأقامة الجبرية  
2- ..... القتل العمد مع سبق الأصرار والترصد  
3- ..... نيران صديقة  
4- ..... طائرة استطلاع  
5- ..... كاميرا مراقبة  
6- ..... قضايا خلافية – مثيرة للجدل

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.....7-تأشيرة سارية المفعول

.....8-رسوم غير مستردة

Q 5-Translate the following collocations from English to Arabic:

1-Common-law marriage .....

2-Official Permission .....

3-Fitting room .....

4-Noble endeavours .....

5-Exclusive offer .....

6-Worthless check .....

7-Manslugter killing .....

8-Gloomy atmosphere .....

Thank you for your cooperation.

The End