

**Effectiveness of a Proposed Program Based on the Lexical Approach in Fostering EFL Faculty of Management Sciences Students' Business Collocational Knowledge and Competence**

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**Abstract**

The aim of the current study was to develop first year EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students' business collocational knowledge and competence through a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach. It focused on developing the experimental group students' receptive and productive knowledge of 'verb + noun', 'noun + noun' and 'adjective+ noun' business collocations. Furthermore, the study program aimed to promote the experimental group students' ability to use these collocations in business writing to foster their collocational competence. The study followed the quasi-experimental pretest- posttest control group/ experimental group design where two intact groups were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. While the control group students received regular instruction, the experimental group was taught by the researcher throughout the fall semester of the academic year 2020- 2021 according to the proposed program. The study tools included a pre- /post- collocational knowledge test and a pre-/post- collocational competence business writing test. Results indicated that the experimental group students outperformed the control group students on the collocational knowledge and competence post-tests. Also, there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group students' pre- tests and post- tests scores in favour of the post- tests scores. Therefore, it was concluded that the proposed program was effective in developing the experimental group students' lexical business collocational knowledge and competence.

**Key Words:** The Lexical Approach; business collocations; collocational knowledge; collocational competence; Egyptian EFL university level learners

فعالية برنامج مقترح قائم علي المدخل المعجمي في تنمية معرفة و كفاءة استخدام المتلازمات  
اللفظية التجارية لدي طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بكلية علوم الإدارة  
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### الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تنمية معرفة و كفاءة استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية التجارية  
لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالفرقة الأولى بكلية علوم الإدارة و ذلك من  
خلال برنامج مقترح قائم علي المدخل المعجمي. و ركزت الدراسة على تنمية المعرفة  
الاستقبالية و الانتاجية للمتلازمات اللفظية التجارية المكونة من "فعل + اسم" ، و "اسم  
+ اسم" ، و "صفة + اسم" لدى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية. و بالإضافة إلى ذلك  
هدفت الدراسة إلى تنمية كفاءة استخدام طلاب المجموعة التجريبية لهذه المتلازمات  
اللفظية في الكتابة التجارية. و قد اتبعت الدراسة المنهج البحثي شبه التجريبي -تصميم  
الاختبار القبلي/ البعدي للمجموعتين الضابطة و التجريبية. و وفقاً لهذا المنهج تم اختيار  
مجموعتين من طلاب الفرقة الأولى بكلية علوم الإدارة عشوائياً لتكونا المجموعتين  
الضابطة و التجريبية. و بينما تلقت المجموعة الضابطة التدريس المعتاد قامت الباحثة  
بتدريس طلاب المجموعة التجريبية طوال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الجامعي  
٢٠٢٠ / ٢٠٢١م. وفقاً للبرنامج المقترح. و تضمنت أدوات الدراسة (١) اختبار معرفة  
المتلازمات اللفظية قبلي/ بعدي و (٢) اختبار كفاءة استخدام المتلازمات اللفظية في  
الكتابة التجارية قبلي/ بعدي. و أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية  
تفوقوا على طلاب المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبارين البعديين لمعرفة و كفاءة استخدام  
المتلازمات اللفظية التجارية. و بمقارنة أداء طلاب المجموعة التجريبية القبلي و البعدي  
في الاختبارين أظهرت نتائج الدراسة فروقاً ذات دلالة إحصائية لصالح الأداء البعدي. و  
لذا خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن البرنامج المقترح فعال في تنمية معرفة و كفاءة استخدام  
المتلازمات اللفظية التجارية لدى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية.

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**Introduction**

EFL university level learners' acquisition and active use of vocabulary in meaningful situations are two main objectives of any attempt to promote their linguistic proficiency levels and communicative competence in the target language. This might be due to the fact that words are indeed "the building blocks of a language" (Milton, 2009, p.3). However, some aspects of vocabulary might be more difficult than others for EFL learners. Among these aspects are collocations. A collocation can be metaphorically described as "a marriage contract between words."(McCarthy, 1990, p.12). It, also, refers to "the restrictions on how words can be used together" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 2007, p.118). It happens when "certain words co-occur in a natural text with greater than random frequency" (Lewis, 2008, p.8).

In the field of teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), identifying and accurately using the correct collocations related to each field are quite essential if the EFL learner wishes to communicate effectively and fluently like a native speaker. As each field has its own jargon and terminology, a successful ESP learner should be able to comprehend and use the domain-specific terms and expressions effortlessly and actively. For instance, business students should be able to make meaning of and correctly use business terms, collocations and idioms in order to successfully use them in the labour market, thus achieving communicative competence and comprehensibility goals while working with native speakers or dealing with clients in international trade contexts. Therefore, teaching collocations should be considered one of EFL courses main priorities (Lewis, 2000).

Going back in time, after decades of EFL traditional instruction overemphasis on grammar teaching as a means of fostering EFL learners' linguistic proficiency levels, a growing interest in EFL vocabulary acquisition was revived with the rise and introduction of the Lexical Approach by Michael Lewis in the 1990s. According to this approach, learning collocations, prefabricated chunks as well as fixed and semi-fixed expressions came to the forefront as a means of achieving near-native fluency and communicative competence (Lewis, 2008; El-Dakhs, 2105a). This trend was confirmed by the findings of several studies such as the study of Du, Afzaal & Al Fadda (2022) where it was found that

advanced EFL learners tend to use more complicated collocations to communicate effectively in different situations.

According to the Lexical Approach, acquiring collocations had a prominent role in fostering EFL acquisition. To achieve this target, varied activities were suggested in the light of the Lexical Approach to foster EFL learners' collocational knowledge and competence. Among them are consciousness-raising and noticing activities, matching parts of collocations, filling in gaps with collocations and categorizing collocations according to the parts of speech of their constituents, level of formality as well as negative or positive connotations. Other Lexical Approach activities that aim at fostering collocational knowledge and competence include sentence anagrams, collocate deletion, collocate search, text search, translating collocations to and from the EFL learners' mother tongue, and keeping lexical notebooks where collocations are recorded with example sentences (Lewis, 2008; Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012; Xu, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020).

For the sake of a quick glance at the above mentioned Lexical Approach activities, EFL learners are required to rearrange words to give complete sentences with correct collocations in *sentence anagrams*. As for the '*collocate deletion*' activity, it is similar to the '*odd one out*' activity where EFL learners are required to delete one word in each group because it does not collocate with the given item or node. Coming to the '*collocate search*' activity, it enables students to discover the pattern or 'collocation' themselves by giving them concordance lines from concordancers or corpora. By so doing, students apply the principles of Data-Driven Learning (DDL) (Yilmaz & Sorç, 2015) and identify the collocations in authentic contexts, thus facilitating their acquisition process of these collocations. As for the '*text search*' activity, students read or listen to a text and identify the words that come together (Lewis, 2008; Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012).

With the increasing interest in the Lexical Approach activities, many studies were conducted in varied EFL settings among different age groups to investigate its effectiveness. These included the studies of Abdellah (2015), Ördem & Paker (2016) and Attya, Qura & Mostafa (2018). While Abdellah (2015) proved the effectiveness of the Lexical Approach implementation in fostering collocation use among Egyptian English majors, Ördem & Paker (2016) found out that applying the Lexical Approach in a reading course offered to Turkish English department freshmen helped them better use and remember collocations. As for the study conducted by Attya, Qura & Mostafa (2018), it provided

further evidence proving that applying the Lexical Approach activities led to fostering vocabulary learning among Egyptian preparatory stage students. In addition, Rahimi's & Momeni's study (2012) highlighted the positive impact of collocation acquisition through concordancers and corpora activities on EFL Iranian pre- university learners' linguistic proficiency level. Similarly, Li (2017) proved the positive impact of using corpus- based activities in fostering Chinese postgraduate students' collocational competence; such a result was evident in the EFL postgraduate students' decreased use of erroneous collocations and increased use of correct academic collocations in essay writing tasks.

Before the rise of the Lexical Approach, collocations were considered "a neglected aspect" in EFL learning and teaching (Hashemi, Azizinezhad, Dravishi, 2012, p.522). Furthermore, they were, also, seen by many scholars and researchers as a major area of difficulty for EFL Arab learners (Alsakran, 2011; El-Dakhs, 2015a; Abdellah, 2015; Debabi & Guerroudj, 2018; El-Garawany, 2019). This was attributed to the unpredictable nature of how words co-occur in native speakers' utterances and written communication. It was, also, attributed to the fact that this area of language acquisition was overlooked by the teaching methods and strategies that focused on grammatical accuracy at the expense of other language areas (Lewis, 2008; El-Dakhs, 2015b; Xu, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020). In addition, numerous studies indicated that EFL learners' ability to produce and accurately use English collocations lags far behind their ability to identify and make meaning of these collocations (Alsakran, 2011; Takač & Miščin, 2013; Bueraheng & Laohawiriyanon, 2014; El-Dakhs, 2015a; Kamarudin, Abdullah & Abdul Aziz, 2020).

. With the growing interest in collocations acquisition, several researchers conducted studies measuring EFL learners' collocational knowledge and competence in varied contexts as in the studies of El-Dakhs (2015a) in Saudi Arabia, Nizonkiza (2015) in Brundi and Kamarudin, Abdullah & Abdulaziz (2020) in Malaysia. Furthermore, several studies were conducted to analyze EFL learners' collocational errors such as the studies of Phoocharoensil (2014) in Thailand and Miščin (2015) in Croatia. In addition, a study conducted by Ariffin (2020) proved the positive correlation between collocational competence and EFL writing ability among post-graduate EFL Djiboutian students studying in Malaysia.

When it comes to promoting business collocational knowledge and competence, very few studies were conducted such as the study of Herteg & Popescu (2013). In this study, the researchers found out that involving

MA Romanian EFL learners in corpora activities through analyzing business press can foster their collocational competence. To the researcher's best knowledge, no study was conducted using the Lexical Approach activities to develop lexical business collocational knowledge and competence among Egyptian Faculty of Management Sciences students. This was considered a gap in the literature, so the present study is an attempt to bridge this gap.

### **Context of the problem**

As the researcher observed some classes of first year Faculty of Management Sciences students at October Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA) University, it was evident that quite a good number of them were unable to use adequate lexical business collocations in their spoken or written work. The sources of their collocational errors were both interlingual (due to mother tongue interference) and intralingual (due to their inability to distinguish between the suitable collocations of English synonyms). An example of an interlingual collocational error was evident in the incorrect business collocation '*finish an employee\**' instead of saying '*fire or lay off an employee*'. As for intralingual errors, they were obvious in some students' erroneous collocation of '*seal a deal\**' instead of '*close a deal*'.

To further investigate the problem, the researcher administered two diagnostic tests on a random sample of thirty first year Faculty of Management Sciences students at MSA University. The first test was a collocational knowledge test measuring the students' receptive and productive collocational knowledge, and it revealed the students' poor collocational knowledge. It, also, revealed that the students' productive collocational knowledge was much below their receptive collocational knowledge. As for the second test, it was a collocational competence test where the students were asked to write a business letter and a business email. As the researcher analyzed the students' written performance on the collocational competence diagnostic test, several collocational errors were identified, and it was obvious that very few correct collocations were used by the students. Therefore, results of both tests conform with the findings of the studies conducted by Alsakran (2011), Abdellah (2015), El-Dakhs (2015a), Debabi & Guerroudj (2018) and El-Garawany (2019) indicating that Arab EFL learners need more attention and direct intervention to foster their collocational knowledge and competence.

Observing the teaching methods and techniques adopted by EFL university level instructors of first year Faculty of Management Sciences

students at Modern Sciences and Arts University enabled the researcher to discover that:

- (a) Business collocations were rarely highlighted in the students' English classes as the instructional focus was more on developing the students' academic and research writing skills.
- (b) Students were not frequently asked to carry out business writing tasks where they would authentically use business collocations to convey their messages.
- (c) Students were not involved in role plays or simulation tasks where they would use business collocations to speak their mind.
- (d) The Lexical Approach activities such as the text search activity, corpus- based activities, sentences anagrams, matching parts of collocations, filling in blanks using collocation parts, 'collocate deletion' as well as translating business collocations to and from the students' mother tongue were not implemented in the EFL classes of first year Faculty of Management Sciences students at MSA University.

### **Problem of the study**

The study problem was identified in Egyptian first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' poor lexical business collocational knowledge and competence in a way that negatively affected their comprehension and production of these collocations. This might be partly due to the traditional teaching methods and techniques adopted where students were not encouraged to make meaning of and use lexical business collocations to express their thoughts. It might be, also, due to the overemphasis on developing the students' academic and research writing skills at the expense of promoting their business collocational knowledge and competence. Therefore, the current study attempted to develop lexical business collocational knowledge and competence among Egyptian first year Faculty of Management Sciences students through the use of a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach. In other words, this study attempted to provide answers to the following main question:

***"What is the effectiveness of a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach in developing Faculty of Management Sciences students' business collocational knowledge and competence?"***

**From this main question, the following sub-questions emerged:**

1. What are the theoretical bases of a proposed program designed in the light of the Lexical Approach for developing business

collocational knowledge and competence among Egyptian first year EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students?

2. What steps should be undertaken for designing the proposed program in the light of the Lexical Approach?
3. How far is the proposed program effective in developing Egyptian first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' overall EFL lexical business collocational knowledge and competence?
4. How far is the proposed program effective in developing Egyptian first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' EFL receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations?

### **The study hypotheses**

*The study hypotheses were as follows:*

#### **(a) Hypotheses comparing the experimental and control group mean scores on the post- tests:**

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to the proposed program based on the Lexical Approach and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post- test in overall collocational knowledge in favour of the experimental group.
2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations in favour of the experimental group.
3. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in their overall knowledge of 'verb+ noun', 'noun + noun' and 'adjective + noun' business collocations in favour of the experimental group.
4. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the collocational competence writing post- test in terms of an increased frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage as well as a reduced frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage in favour of the experimental group.

#### **(b) Hypotheses comparing the experimental group mean scores before and after the treatment:**

5. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test



in overall lexical business collocational knowledge in favour of the post- test.

6. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test in receptive and productive lexical business collocational knowledge in favour of the post- test.
7. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test in overall collocational knowledge of 'verb + noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective+ noun' business collocations in favour of the post- test.
8. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post- collocational competence writing test in terms of an increased frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage as well as a reduced frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage in favour of the post-test.

### **Objectives of the study**

*The main purposes of the current study were:*

1. Identifying appropriate techniques for designing a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach for developing the EFL lexical business collocational knowledge and competence of first year Faculty of Management Sciences students.
2. Constructing a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach to develop EFL lexical business collocational knowledge and competence among first year Faculty of Management Sciences students.
3. Measuring the effectiveness of the proposed program in developing lexical business collocational knowledge and competence among first year Faculty of Management Sciences students.

### **Delimitations of the study**

*This study was confined to:*

1. Two intact first year Faculty of Management Sciences classes at October Modern Sciences & Arts University in Giza governorate.
2. A specific duration for conducting the experiment (twelve weeks of the fall 2020 semester).
3. Thirteen sessions for implementing the proposed program (The first session was an introductory one for two hours while the subsequent weekly three- hour twelve sessions were dedicated for implementing the program activities).

4. Developing only the experimental group students' receptive and productive knowledge of three types of lexical business collocations: 'verb + noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective+ noun' as well as developing their competence to use these three types of collocations in business writing.

### **Definition of terms**

**The Lexical Approach** is a theoretical view of language teaching and learning that places great emphasis on the role of lexis and lexical chunks acquisition in developing EFL/ ESL linguistic proficiency level, native-like fluency and communicative competence (Lewis, 1993, 1997, 2008; Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012; Abdellah, 2015; Hasan, 2017; Dervić & Bećirović, 2020).

It is defined operationally in this study as the framework according to which the current study program is designed and implemented where the experimental group students are involved in varied activities to foster their comprehension and use of 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective + noun' business collocations. These activities include identifying lexical business collocations in authentic business texts, searching for lexical business collocations in given concordance lines, translating business collocations from English into Arabic, summarizing business texts using correct lexical collocations, matching collocations parts, completing word maps and filling in blanks with suitable words to form correct business collocations, answering MCQs and correcting underlined collocational errors.

**A collocation is** “a multi-word unit in which several word items exist in abstract partnership. The main features of a collocation include the recurrent co-occurring of words in a given context and the varying fixedness of word partnerships.” (Zhang, 2020, p. 240). In other words, collocations refer to "combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency" (Dervić & Bećirović, 2020, p.4).

Collocations are defined operationally in this study as the 'noun+ noun', 'verb+ noun' and 'adjective+ noun' word combinations that naturally occur in authentic business spoken or written communication.

**Collocational knowledge** refers to EFL learners' ability to recognize, make meaning of and accurately produce word combinations in written or spoken communicative events (Bueraheng & Laohawiriyanon, 2014). In other words, while the EFL learners' ability to identify and comprehend word partnerships is referred to as '*receptive collocational knowledge*', their ability to correctly use these word combinations in communicative

situations is referred to as '*productive collocational knowledge*' (Alsakran, 2011; El-Dakhs, 2015a, 2015b; Kamarudin, Abdullah & Abdul Aziz, 2020).

It is defined operationally in this study as the experimental group students' ability to make meaning of and correctly use 'verb+ noun', 'noun +noun' and 'adjective+ noun' business word combinations.

**Collocational competence** is the ability to accurately and effortlessly use word combinations to communicate ideas in authentic written and spoken discourses (Takač, & Miščin, 2013; Phoocharoensil, 2014; Nizonkiza, 2015). Furthermore, it can be empirically measured in terms of EFL learners' increased frequency of correct word combinations use and reduced frequency of deviant, incorrect or awkward word combinations use in written or spoken communicative tasks (Li, 2017).

It is defined operationally in this study as the experimental group students' ability to use '*verb+ noun*', '*noun +noun*' and '*adjective+ noun*' business word combinations in business writing; it is displayed in terms of the experimental group students' increased frequency of correct business combinations usage as well as their reduced frequency of incorrect business word partnerships usage in business writing tasks.

### **Variables of the study**

***Independent variable:*** This refers to the treatment used in the study (the proposed program designed in the light of the Lexical Approach and implemented with the experimental group students).

***Dependent variable:*** This refers to the experimental group students' performance in overall lexical business collocational knowledge, receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations and collocational competence indicators.

### **Theoretical background**

#### **Definitions of collocations**

Different scholars have given close definitions to the term collocations. For example, Lewis (1997) defines collocations as "combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency." (p.44). Thus, in the business context, common collocations uttered by native English speakers include '*make a deal*', '*raise capital*' , '*meet deadlines*', '*shipping costs*' , '*marketing strategy*', '*newly hired employees*' and '*net salary*'.

In other words, collocations refer to pairs or groups of words "that are often used together" (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005, P. 6). Therefore, collocations are characterized by their frequent co-occurrence and

arbitrariness (or unpredictability) (El-Dakhs, 2015b); there is neither logic nor clear rules regarding the choice of a given collocation constituents apart from the fact that this is the way native speakers say it or write it. For instance, in the business field, native English speakers and writers would say, '*perform banking transactions*', '*brand name recognition*' and '*exceed customer expectations*', but they would never say or use wrong collocations like '*do banking transactions\**', '*brand title recognition\**' or '*transcend customer expectations\**'.

### **Importance of collocations**

Collocations are an important aspect of English vocabulary. They are found in around 70% of what we "say, hear, read, or write" (Hill, 2000, p. 53). Correct usage of English collocations whether in spoken or in written communicative situations enhances EFL learners' fluency and comprehensibility (Nation, 2001; El-Dakhas, 2015b). To clarify, learning these chunks minimizes EFL learners' processing efforts and fosters their production and comprehension ability (Cantos & Sánchez, 2001; Wiktorsson, 2003; Schmitt, 2004).

Using adequate collocations makes EFL learners' utterances and written expressions very much close to the native English speakers, thus fostering their self-confidence and self-esteem as successful users of the target language in real-life communicative events (James, 1998; Lewis, 2008; El-Dakhs, 2015a). Therefore, learning English collocations increases EFL learners' ability to use naturally occurring language that enhances their writing styles and speaking proficiency (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005). In addition, in their review of 21 articles on EFL collocational competence published from 2010 till 2020, Hua & Azmi (2021) found that collocational competence can be considered a viable indicator of advanced linguistic proficiency levels.

### **Types of collocations**

Different scholars have classified collocations using varied techniques. For instance, Benson, Benson & Ilson (1986) and Bahns (1993) classified collocations into lexical and grammatical collocations. By so doing, a lexical collocation refers to a combination of two or more content words (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Examples of business lexical collocations include the 'verb + noun' collocations of '*maximize profits*' and '*launch a campaign*', the 'noun + noun' collocations of '*time management*' and '*leadership style*', the 'adjective + noun' collocations of '*competitive prices*' and '*prospective customers*' as well as the 'adverb+ adjective' collocations of '*newly hired*' and '*mutually acceptable*'. On the other hand, a grammatical collocation refers to a

combination of one or more than one content word and a function word (usually a preposition) such as the 'adverb+ preposition+ noun' collocation of '*ahead of schedule*', the 'verb + preposition' collocation of '*negotiate with*', the 'noun+ preposition + noun' collocation of '*board of directors*', the 'noun + preposition collocation of '*an increase in*' and the 'adjective + noun' collocation of '*involved in*'.

Another relevant classification of English collocations by Hill (2000) is based on their predictability level. According to this classification, collocations are divided into four groups: unique, strong, medium strength and weak collocations. To clarify, in the business field, unique collocations are fixed expressions that are irreplaceable such as '*chief executive officer (CEO)*' and '*import quotas*'. Strong collocations are less fixed than the unique ones where few words can take the place of the collocates such as '*raise funds*' or '*raise capital*'. Medium-strength collocations are words that commonly come together; however, EFL learners may know each word in isolation, but not all its partnerships (e.g., *customer satisfaction/ loyalty/ delight/ needs/ expectations/ care/ demands/ service*). As for weak collocations like '*handle/ fix/ solve a problem*', '*start a business*' and '*enter the market*', they can be easily predicted by the EFL learners and should not cause remarkable difficulties to them.

### **The Lexical Approach origin & main principles**

The Lexical Approach was first coined by Michael Lewis in 1993 (Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012; Abdellah, 2015). It places great emphasis on the role of lexis in second language acquisition and development (Dervić & Bećirović, 2020). According to this approach, acquisition and adequate use of word combinations, chunks, poly words and collocations in communicative settings are essential for achieving native- like fluency and comprehensibility (Lewis, 2008; Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012). The main principle that guides this approach as stated by Lewis in 1993 is that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (p.36). Therefore, according to the Lexical Approach proponents, lexis is the language basis and main component, thus necessitating EFL learners' purposeful intensive exposure to authentic linguistic input to enhance their communicative and collocational competence (Scrivener, 2011).

Such a radical view of lexis role in second language acquisition and use brought about major changes in the ELT field as the earlier focus on grammar teaching was replaced with increased focus on the acquisition of collocations, chunks, sentences frames and heads as well as fixed and semi-fixed expressions (Lewis, 2008). As Lewis (1997, p. 204) maintains, "instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations,

and to present these in expressions. Rather than trying to break things into even smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic ways."

Another important principle of the Lexical Approach is ensuring adequate communication of meaning, thus placing more emphasis on the role of lexis as the principal carrier of meaning (Lewis, 2000, 2008). Therefore, the guiding principles of the Lexical Approach implementation revolved around providing lower-level EFL students with listening texts that include a considerable number of language chunks while exposing higher –level EFL students to these chunks in carefully selected reading texts. They, also, encouraged activities where the EFL students compare between their mother tongue and target language lexis. Hence, translation activities to and from the EFL learners' native language were considered valuable to prevent the interference of the mother tongue and to raise the students' awareness of the differences between L1 and L2 at the lexical level. (Lewis, 2000, 2008). Another guiding principle towards the implementation of the Lexical Approach in EFL classes was the use of online and offline dictionaries as well as corpora or concordancers as resources of active inductive learning (Lewis, 2008; Dervić & Bećirović, 2020). Helping students to write down examples of collocations, language chunks and fixed expressions in their lexical notebooks is considered a good practice by the Lexical Approach proponents; such a practice enables EFL learners to notice these lexical items in context and facilitates their ability to retrieve and use them in upcoming authentic communicative situations (Lewis, 2008, p.15; Racine, 2018).

To elaborate, other Lexical Approach principles include highlighting the importance of linguistic input quality and quantity to acquire contextualized language chunks as well as placing great emphasis on consciousness- raising activities and lexical items recycling. In addition, these principles include recognizing the value of negative evidence in helping EFL students avoid and correct deviant lexical forms and encouraging linguistic input transition into intake through a repeated cycle of "Observe- Hypothesize- Experiment" (Lewis, 2008. p.52; Racine, 2018). Finally, the Lexical Approach advocates value repetition of lexical chunks through summarizing texts and through deliberately revisiting collocations in informal class talk (Lewis, 2008, p.52).

### **Steps & activities of a lexical lesson**

Despite the revolutionary ideas of the Lexical Approach, EFL practitioners and language instructors had their own doubts about the implementation of this approach into well- designed applicable lesson

plans with clear steps (Lewis, 2008). Therefore, Lewis (2000, 2008) suggested that a lexical lesson should precede according to the aforementioned '*Observe- Hypothesize- Experiment*' cycle where the EFL students are introduced to the lexical chunks in the form of a reading or a listening text, and are asked to notice or observe the collocations, fixed expressions and poly words used in this text. Through Data- Driven Learning activities, students should be able to hypothesize the correct word combinations and discover language patterns. Then, they would try using these newly acquired expressions in different communicative contexts in the experimentation stage of a lexical lesson (Debabi & Guerroudj, 2018).

According to Lewis (2008), students should read or listen to the texts given twice: once for getting the text content and the next time to focus on word combinations. Furthermore, Lewis (2008) proposes a wide variety of activities of a lexical lesson to foster EFL learners' receptive and productive collocational knowledge. Among these activities fostering receptive collocational knowledge are matching parts of collocations, MCQs, identifying chunks in '*text search*' activities, gap- filling using given words, matching sentences heads with endings, categorizing collocations according to their constituents parts of speech or their level of formality and deleting words that do not collocate with given nodes in '*collocate deletion*' activities as well as rearranging words to form complete sentences with meaningful sound collocations or fixed expressions in '*sentences anagrams*'. Searching for collocations in concordance lines and dictionaries in '*collocate search* activities' is another useful activity that fosters EFL learners' receptive collocational knowledge as well as their inductive learning ability (Lewis, 2008; Farrokh, 2012; El-Dakhs, 2015b; Abrudan, 2017; Li, 2017; Debabi & Guerroudj, 2018; El-Garawany, 2019; Zhang, 2020).

Other activities that foster EFL learners' productive collocational knowledge include summarizing or reconstructing written or spoken texts using correct lexical chunks, translating given collocations to and from the learners' mother tongue, filling in word maps indicating the verbs, nouns or adjectives that collocate with given nodes, filling in the blanks with the correct words to get collocations with the help of the initials and/or translation offered as clues for these words and correcting the underlined collocational errors in given sentences (Lewis 2008; Xu, Mao & Liu, 2012; El- Dakhs, 2015b; Abrudan, 2017; Zhang, 2020). Students are, also, encouraged to produce English collocations in written and spoken output tasks to foster their collocational competence (Farrokh, 2012).

For the sake of recycling and revisiting collocations, Lewis (2008) suggests recording lexical chunks with their meanings and example sentences in a learner's notebook. To achieve formative assessment purposes of EFL learners' collocational knowledge and competence, Lewis (2008) suggests some useful activities that can be used at the end of the lesson. Among them are 'collocation transparencies' and 'lexical drills'. In the '*collocation transparencies*' activity, the EFL teacher writes the newly learned collocations in two columns, and then shows the students the transparency with one column hidden and asks them to recall the collocations. As for the '*lexical drills*', they help students retrieve the learned collocations at the end of the lesson when the teacher mentions a given word and asks the students to quickly come up with the collocations and expressions where this word can be used in. If one student is unable to answer the question, the teacher should move on to the next student quickly as the purpose is to recycle and revisit the newly learned collocations.

In line with the Lexical Approach, Xu, Mao & Liu (2012) propose that a lexical lesson for EFL university level students should be divided into three stages: a lead-in stage, a text analysis stage and a conclusion stage. During the lead-in stage, students' interest in the lesson is cultivated through videos, images and warm-up questions. As for the text analysis stage, students' ability to notice lexical chunks is sharpened as they identify these chunks in given reading texts. This should be followed by paraphrasing and translation activities. While paraphrasing activities ensure the students' ability to make meaning of given lexical chunks, translation activities should enable them to compare and contrast these lexical chunks in their mother tongue and the target language. As for the conclusion stage, students can summarize the reading texts and write paragraphs or short texts using the newly learned lexical chunks. They can, also, do more exercises such as correcting errors in deviant collocations or chunks. In addition, students' self-evaluation of the lexical chunks they produce at that stage is encouraged to foster their autonomous learning and collocational competence.

It is worth mentioning that the teaching strategy adopted in this study integrated the lexical lesson plans of Lewis (2008) and Xu, Mao & Liu (2012) to implement the current program sessions.



**Related studies**

**This section is divided into three sub-sections. These are as follows:**

**I. Studies on business collocation acquisition**

Herteg & Popescu (2013) conducted a study where 19 Romanian MA students studying language and communication in business administration were asked to compile mini corpora of business press texts in both English and Romanian. The study experiment was conducted as a part of a corpus linguistics course. After compiling the corpora, students were assigned the task of analyzing and comparing the business collocations in both English and Romanian. The study results indicated that corpora activities enabled the study participants to gain a deeper insight of the similarities and differences between business collocations in both the English and Romanian languages, thus fostering their intercultural competence. In addition, it was found that these corpora activities equipped the students with the necessary skills that fostered their business collocational competence in both languages.

Chen (2017) conducted a study in China to investigate the impact of corpora activities on 23 university level business English students' collocation awareness and competence. In addition, the study investigated the impact of these activities on the students' autonomous learning. The study tools included a collocation competence pre- posttest, an online questionnaire and the students' reflective journal writings. The study participants were involved in corpora activities for eight weeks, and these activities ranged from using online corpora- such as COCA and Wikipedia corpus- to compiling their own mini-corpora in order to analyze relevant business collocations. The study results provided evidence for the significant improvement of the study participants' collocational awareness and competence. It was, also, found that these corpora activities were more beneficial for advanced and intermediate level students than for lower level students. Furthermore, results indicated that corpora activities fostered the students' autonomy. Therefore, it was recommended to use these activities for advanced and intermediate levels business students.

Chansopha (2018) conducted a study in Thailand to identify the business collocations that were difficult for EFL university level international business management students. The study also aimed at identifying the effect of the students' linguistic proficiency levels on their collocation use. The study focused on two types of lexical business

collocations: 'noun + noun' and 'adjective+ noun'. The study participants consisted of two groups: 30 advanced level business students and 30 upper-intermediate level business students. The study tools included a collocation judgment test and a fill-in- the blank test. The study results proved that only advanced level business students were able to do the 'noun+ noun' collocation judgment and completion tasks with ease. It was recommended that effective learning materials should be designed to foster business collocation acquisition and use. It was, also, suggested that these materials should include translation tasks of business collocations to and from the EFL learners' mother tongue.

Suleman et. al. (2020) conducted a study to measure the business collocational knowledge of EFL university level business students in Pakistan. The study sample consisted of one hundred participants (sixty-one males and thirty-nine females). To achieve the study aim, two collocation tests and a questionnaire were administered on the study participants. Analysis of the tests results revealed that the participants' receptive knowledge of business collocations was much better than their productive knowledge. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that effective teaching strategies and techniques should be introduced to foster EFL university level students' ability to comprehend and use business collocations effectively.

## II. Studies measuring EFL university level students' collocational knowledge and competence:

Alsakran (2011) conducted a study to compare the receptive and productive collocational knowledge of 38 EFL Saudi students studying at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh and 30 ESL Arab learners enrolled in the intensive English program at Colorado State University. To achieve the aim of this study, three gap filling tests and an appropriateness judgment test were administered on both groups. The study results revealed that the Arab ESL learners significantly outperformed the Saudi EFL learners in the four tests, thus indicating the strong impact of the learning environment on collocation acquisition. Furthermore, the results indicated the poor collocational knowledge of the Saudi students on the four tests. Additionally, the findings indicated that the study participants' productive collocational knowledge was much less than their receptive collocational knowledge. It was, also, found that the study participants performed better on the '*verb + noun*' collocation test than on the '*verb + preposition*' and '*adjective + noun*' tests.

Takač & Miščin (2013) examined the EFL collocational competence of non-native Croatian university level medical students and doctors. The total number of the study participants was one hundred and twenty seven; they were divided into 50 first year medical students, 51 fifth year medical students and 26 doctors. The study tool was a collocational competence test where the participants were asked to answer multiple choice questions to measure their receptive collocational knowledge and do gap-filling and translation tasks to measure their productive collocational knowledge. Furthermore, the last part of the test questions measured both the participants' receptive and productive collocational competence as they were required to guess the meaning of English collocations and produce their Croatian counterparts and vice versa. Results of the study confirmed that English collocations represented an area of difficulty for medical students and doctors at both the receptive and productive levels. Nonetheless, it was evident that doctors had better receptive and productive collocational knowledge as compared to medical students. Results, also, indicated that negative transfer and approximation were the major sources of collocational errors among the study participants. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that EFL instructors need to adopt a more systematic research – based approach to teaching English collocations.

Bueraheng & Laohawiriyanon (2014) conducted a study in Thailand to explore the effect of 4<sup>th</sup>. year university level students' exposure to EFL on their receptive and productive collocational knowledge. In specific, the study focused on two types of lexical collocations: '*verb + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' collocations. The study participants were 196 students enrolled in two different programs: the international and English majors programs. The study tools included a receptive test and a productive test. Results proved that international students performed much better than English majors on the two tests. It was, also, evident that producing '*verb+ noun*' collocations was more difficult for the study participants than producing '*adjective+ noun*' collocations. Furthermore, results proved that the participants' receptive collocational knowledge was ahead of their productive collocational knowledge, thus recommending more practice in producing collocations through essay writing and conversational activities. It was suggested that further research can be conducted to explore the grammatical collocational knowledge of EFL learners at different levels.

Phoocharoensil (2014) investigated the collocational competence of ninety EFL first year students enrolled in different faculties in a

university in Thailand. The study participants were divided into two groups of 45 students each according to their linguistic proficiency levels: high or low. The study tool was a descriptive essay writing test where students' correct collocations were identified and deviant ones were analyzed. Results revealed that interference of the mother tongue was the most prominent factor leading to deviant collocations production. Other sources of collocational errors included overgeneralization and not paying attention to synonyms collocational restrictions. It was, also, found that highly proficient learners relied on their L1 collocational patterns to produce English collocations, and this resulted in erroneous forms including redundancy and incorrect preposition deletion or addition. Based on the results, it was recommended that students should receive explicit instruction in English collocations highlighting the differences between L1 collocations and their counterparts in L2 and indicating the restrictions on synonyms when it comes to acceptable collocations for native EFL speakers. In that respect, translating collocations was seen as a beneficial teaching practice.

El-Dakhs (2015a) investigated the lexical collocational competence of ninety female EFL university students in Saudi Arabia. The study participants were sub-divided into three groups of thirty students each according to their years of study: preparatory, second and fourth years, and their age ranged between 17 to 25 years old. To be more specific, the study employed a gap filling and translation test to measure the participants' productive knowledge of '*verb + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' English collocations. The study results indicated the unsatisfactory collocational competence of the study participants, especially when it comes to '*adjective + noun*' collocations as compared to '*verb + noun*' collocations. It was found that the sources of the students' deviant collocations were more intralingual than interlingual. It was, also, discovered that participants' collocational competence improved slowly as a result of increased linguistic input exposure. Based on her findings, the researcher recommended more explicit Focus on Form instruction of English collocations as well as raising EFL university level students' awareness of native speakers' restrictions on using synonyms in varied collocations so as to help EFL learners avoid intralingual collocational errors.

Nizonkiza (2015) measured the receptive collocational knowledge of first, third and fourth year English majors in a university in Burundi.

The study participants were Burundian citizens aged between twenty and twenty-six years old. The study, also, aimed at investigating the growth of participants' receptive collocational knowledge as compared to their varying linguistic proficiency levels. The study tools included a proficiency test and a collocation test. Results indicated the positive correlation between the students' linguistic proficiency levels and their receptive collocational knowledge. Therefore, it was concluded that collocational competence increases as the students' linguistic proficiency level rises. It was recommended that a longitudinal study can be conducted to accurately measure the progress of EFL university level students' receptive collocational knowledge.

El-Garawany (2019) investigated the impact of using online corpora and input enhancement strategies on developing EFL collocational competence among Egyptian first year Faculty of Tourism and Hotels students. The study participants consisted of fifty students divided into two groups of twenty- five students each. While the control group students were taught according to the regular instruction method, the experimental group students were involved in online corpora and input enhancement reading activities for eight weeks. The study used a collocational competence pre-/ post-test to measure the effectiveness of the intervention adopted. The study results proved the significant positive impact of online corpora and input enhancement activities on the experimental group students' collocational competence. Therefore, it was recommended to use these techniques to foster EFL university level students' collocational competence. It was, also, recommended that EFL university level instructors should become more acquainted with the recent strategies and techniques employed to foster collocational competence among their students.

Boonnoon (2020) investigated EFL Thai university level students' knowledge of binomials as one type of English collocations that was rarely examined by previous researchers. The study sample consisted of one hundred and thirty participants enrolled in four faculties. The participants were registered as second to sixth year university level students, and they were identified as intermediate and advanced levels students by means of Oxford Placement Test administration. The study tool consisted of a binomial judgment test where the students would identify the acceptability of given binomials in the correct order and in reverse order. Results of the study indicated the participants' poor knowledge of English binomials. It was found that the students' years of

study had no impact on their knowledge of English binomials. There was no statistically significant difference in the participants' knowledge of '*noun+ noun*' binomials as compared to '*verb+ verb*' binomials. Based on the study findings, direct instruction and using effective materials were recommended to foster university level students' knowledge of English binomials.

Kamarudin, Abdullah & Abdul Aziz (2020) examined ESL 21 Malaysian university level students' receptive and productive knowledge of lexical as well as grammatical collocations. The study participants were enrolled in a diploma on food technology, and consisted of eleven females and ten males. The study instruments were receptive and productive collocational knowledge tests. Results revealed that the participants' ability to produce correct collocations lagged far behind their ability to comprehend them. It was, also, found that '*verb+ preposition*' collocations were the most difficult type to produce and comprehend for the study participants as compared to '*verb +noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' collocations. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that collocation dictionaries highlighting authentic examples of collocation use and concordancers should be used to foster EFL/ ESL students' collocational knowledge and enhance their ability to detect their erroneous collocations. Moreover, it was concluded that promoting the students' collocational knowledge can directly contribute to their EFL increased communicative competence.

### **III. Studies implementing the Lexical Approach to foster EFL university level students' collocational knowledge and competence**

Abdellah (2015) investigated the effectiveness of a suggested program based on the Lexical Approach in developing senior EFL English majors' use of collocations. The study sample adopted the quasi-experimental pre-test/ post-test design, and the sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group of 46 Faculty of Education students at Sohag University and a control group of 50 Qena Faculty of Education students at South Valley University. While the experimental group students were trained in English collocations use according to the suggested program, the control group received regular instruction. Results of the study indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the collocations post-test. Based on the study findings, it

was concluded that explicit teaching of collocation through the Lexical Approach can positively affect collocation acquisition and use among EFL university level students.

Ördem & Paker (2016) conducted a study in Turkey to examine how far implementing the Lexical Approach in a reading course can enhance English Department freshmen's lexical collocations use and retrieval. The study participants consisted of 60 students divided equally between the control and experimental groups. While the experimental group students were taught '*verb+ noun*' and '*adjective+ noun*' collocations through varied Lexical Approach activities for ten weeks, the control group students received traditional instruction focusing on word definitions, synonyms, antonyms and guessing word meanings from the context. The study instruments included a pre-post collocation test, guided writing tasks and a retention test. The study results revealed the significant improvement of the experimental group students' use and retention of English collocations due to the treatment they received throughout the study experiment. Based on the study findings, it was recommended to apply the Lexical Approach principles of recycling and revisiting English collocations to promote their use and retention among EFL university level students.

Debabi & Guerroudj (2018) conducted a study in Algeria where English Department freshmen were taught according to an instructional program of 36 sessions based on the Lexical Approach. The purpose of this study was to see how far the designed program can increase EFL university level students' collocational accuracy and improve the quality of their writing. To that end, sixty – two EFL first year English majors constituted the study participants, and they were equally divided into two groups of thirty-one students each. While the control group studied according to conventional teaching methods with no emphasis on English collocations, the experimental group students were involved in the instructional program activities for five months. The Lexical Approach paradigm of 'Observe- Hypothesize- Experiment' was adopted throughout the program implementation. Experimental group students were asked to notice English collocations in given typographically enhanced reading texts; collocations were bolded and italicized to facilitate the students' identification of these collocations. In addition, these students were asked to write down collocations in lexical notebooks; they were, also, asked to identify collocations in given concordance lines extracted from the British National Corpus (BNC). Furthermore, they were asked to correct collocational errors in given sentences, provide missing collocations in given sentences and use their newly acquired collocations in short

paragraph writing tasks. The study tools included a collocational knowledge test and a composition writing test. Results indicated the positive impact of the instructional program on the experimental group students' collocational accuracy and composition writing quality. Therefore, it was recommended to design similar programs in the light of the Lexical Approach to develop EFL university level students' acquisition of other lexical chunks including proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

### **Methodology of the study**

In conducting the current study, the researcher made use of both the Descriptive Method and the Quasi- experimental Method. The Descriptive Method was used while reviewing pertinent literature and specifying the techniques and activities to be used in the current program based on the Lexical Approach to foster first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' lexical business collocational knowledge and competence. It was also employed while identifying the general design of the proposed program and the business collocational knowledge and competence tests. The Quasi- experimental Method was used while conducting the experiment, administering the tests, analyzing the data and interpreting the results.

### **The study participants**

A group of sixty- eight first year Faculty of Management Sciences students at October Modern Sciences and Arts University were randomly selected in the fall semester of the academic year 2020-2021 (thirty- four students in the experimental group and thirty- four students in the control group). Random assignment of individual students was not possible, so two intact classes were randomly selected and then randomly assigned to a control and an experimental group. Students' age in both groups ranged from seventeen to nineteen years old.

The experimental group students were taught by the researcher throughout the implementation of the study experiment for three months (three hours per week). However, while the experimental group received training through a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach for developing their EFL lexical business collocational knowledge and competence, students in the control group received regular instruction by the regular classroom instructor; this regular instruction focused mainly on highlighting definitions, synonyms and antonyms of business terms as well as on studying lists of business expressions.



A comparison between the control and the experimental groups on the pre- test was conducted using t- tests for independent samples to examine if there were any statistically significant differences between the two groups before implementing the proposed program. Results of these t- tests indicated that that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on the pre- test whether in overall collocational knowledge or in receptive and productive collocational knowledge. Results of these t- tests indicated that that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on the pre- collocational competence business writing test. This means that the two groups were approximately at the same level of lexical business collocational knowledge and competence at the beginning of the experiment. It was also noticed that the mean scores of both groups were low.

### **Research design**

The present study is mainly experimental. The quasi-experimental design called the non -equivalent group design was employed. This design is identical to the pretest- posttest control group/ experimental group design in all aspects except that intact groups rather than randomly assigned ones are used, creating a control problem in terms of selection bias. This makes the use of a pre-test necessary for this particular design.

### **Tools of the study**

*The present study made use of two main tools:*

- ❖ A pre- /post- collocational knowledge test to measure the control and experimental group students' overall, receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations; and
- ❖ A pre-/ post- collocational competence test to measure the control and experimental group students' ability to use varied correct lexical business collocations in business writing tasks.

*These tools can be explained as follows:*

#### **A. The pre-/ post- collocational knowledge test**

This test was constructed and administered on both the experimental and control groups by the researcher. It was used prior to the program implementation to assess the experimental and control group students' overall collocational knowledge as well as their receptive and productive collocational knowledge before starting the experiment. As a post-test, it was used to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed

program based on the Lexical Approach in developing the experimental group students' overall, receptive and productive collocational knowledge.

To measure the test content validity, the first version of the test was given to a panel of jury consisting of five TEFL professors, assistant professors and lecturers. They were asked to evaluate the test as a whole in terms of the number and the variety of the test questions and their suitability to the linguistic level of EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences students.

The panel of jury indicated that test proved to be a valid one as it measured what it was intended to measure in most cases. To enhance the test validity, they added, modified and omitted some of the test questions. The final form of the test consisted of ninety items that were equally divided into two main parts. While part (A) of the test measured the students' receptive collocational knowledge, part (B) measured their productive collocational knowledge. Each part had 45 items that equally dedicated 15 items to measure the students' knowledge of business 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective+ noun' business collocations. Thus, throughout the test, the students' knowledge of each type of the business collocations was measured through thirty items (fifteen items measuring the students' receptive knowledge and fifteen items measuring the students' productive knowledge)

The first part of the test measuring the students' receptive collocational knowledge consisted of two main questions: matching sentence heads with their endings to form correct lexical business collocations and MCQs. As for the second part of the test measuring the students' productive collocational knowledge, it consisted, also, of two main questions: filling in word maps and filling in the blanks with correct nouns, verbs or adjectives to produce correct lexical business collections, and for both questions, students were offered the first letters and the Arabic translation of the required words as clues so as to guide them to produce correct collocations.

The time allocated for the test was two hours, including giving the students clear instructions on how to do the test. The test was marked by the researcher herself out of ninety as each test item carried one mark only. Zero was given to wrong or left answers. In case of double answers

to MCQs, a zero was also given. For the productive collocational knowledge part, students' spelling and grammatical errors were ignored as long as the students were able to produce the correct verb, adjective or noun that collocates with the given words.

● **Piloting the test**

Before administering the test on the study sample, it was piloted with the aim of timing it and determining its suitability. Therefore, twenty students were selected for the pilot study. These students were randomly selected from one EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences classes at October Modern Sciences and Arts University. Results of the pilot study indicated that a period of two hours would provide the students with ample time to comfortably answer the test items. The pilot study, also, indicated that the test questions were suitable for the students as they had no difficulty understanding them. Students of the pilot study were excluded from the whole experiment.

In order to establish the reliability of the collocational knowledge test included in the current study, it was administered on a randomly selected group of twenty students. After two weeks, the test was administered one more time on the same twenty students. Then, the Pearson correlation coefficient between the test/ re-test results was calculated. The reliability coefficient was 0.84, which is relatively high. Therefore, the test could be considered a reliable one for the purpose of the current study.

**B. The pre-/ post- collocational competence test**

This test was, also, constructed and administered on both the experimental and control groups by the researcher. It was used prior to the program implementation to assess the experimental and control group students' overall collocational competence in business writing before starting the experiment. As a post-test, it was used to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed program based on the Lexical Approach in developing the experimental group students' collocational competence as indicated in the increased frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage and the reduced frequency of deviant business collocations produced by them in two business writing tasks: email and memo writing.

To measure the test content validity, the first version of the test was given to a panel of jury consisting of five TEFL professors, assistant professors and lecturers. They were asked to evaluate the test as a whole

in terms of the number and adequacy of the test writing tasks to the linguistic level of EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences students.

The panel of jury indicated that test proved to be a valid one as it measured what it was intended to measure. To enhance the test validity, they omitted a business letter writing task and maintained that the business e-mail and memo writing tasks would achieve the test aim without annoying the students or placing unnecessary pressure on them.

The time allocated for the test was one hour, including giving the students clear instructions on how to do the test. The test was marked by the researcher herself. As the test aimed at measuring the students' ability to use lexical business collocations in business writing, the researcher calculated and wrote down the numbers of correct and deviant business collocations produced by each student in two columns. These numbers were used later on to compare the experimental group students' collocational competence before and after the program implementation. They were, also, used to compare between the experimental and control group students' ability to use lexical business collocations before and after the treatment. While analyzing the students' business emails and memos, their spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors were ignored as they were not the focus of the current study.

#### ● **Piloting the test**

Before administering the test on the study sample, it was piloted with the aim of timing it and determining its suitability. Therefore, twenty students were selected for the pilot study. These students were randomly selected from one EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences classes at October Modern Sciences and Arts University. Results of the pilot study indicated that a period of one hour would provide the students with ample time to comfortably answer the two test writing tasks. The pilot study, also, indicated that the test questions were suitable for the students as they had no difficulty understanding them. Students of the pilot study were excluded from the whole experiment.

In order to establish the reliability of the collocational competence test included in the current study, it was administered to a randomly selected group of twenty students. After two weeks, the test was administered one more time to the same twenty students. Then, the

Pearson correlation coefficient between the test/ re-test results was calculated. The reliability coefficient was 0.82, which is relatively high. Therefore, the test could be considered a reliable one for the purpose of the current study.

### **Treatment**

After the experimental group students completed their lexical business collocational knowledge and competence pre- tests, they received the current study treatment through a proposed program based on the Lexical Approach to develop their overall, receptive and productive lexical business collocational knowledge as well as their collocational competence. The following is a description of the steps the researcher went through to design this program.

#### **Aim of the program**

This program aimed at developing the lexical business collocational knowledge and competence of EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences students. This was achieved through involving the experimental group students in Lexical Approach activities throughout the program implementation.

#### **Assumptions of the program**

*This program was based on the following assumptions:*

1. Collocations are two or more words that come together; they are necessary for achieving native – like fluency and fostering EFL learners' comprehensibility.
2. The Lexical Approach places great emphasis on the role of lexical chunks- including collocations- in meaningful communication.
3. The Lexical Approach activities enable EFL learners to notice collocations in authentic spoken and written texts. They, also, enable them to discover patterns in data-driven inductive learning with the help of concordance lines and dictionaries.
4. Translation activities enable learners to recognize the differences between L1 and L2 collocations, thus minimizing the number of deviant collocations produced by EFL learners.
5. Activities like matching parts of collocations, the odd-one out and MCQs can enhance EFL learners' receptive collocational knowledge.
6. Activities like correcting underlined collocational errors, filling in blanks and word maps can foster EFL learners' productive collocational knowledge.
7. Recycling and revisiting newly acquired collocations are essential to foster EFL learners' active use and retention of these

collocations.

8. Keeping lexical notebooks- where the students write down newly learned collocations- makes them more active participants in their learning and enables them to see how these collocations are used in real- life examples.
9. Using newly learned collocations in authentic spoken and written communicative situations enhances EFL learners' communicative competence and makes these collocations part of the learners' active vocabulary.

### **Learning objectives of the program**

By the end of this program, students were expected to develop their overall, receptive and productive knowledge of 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective+ noun' business collocations as well their competence of using these types of collocations in business writing.

### **Content of the program**

The content of this program consisted of twelve short business You Tube videos and twelve authentic business texts that were carefully selected by the researcher to suit the EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' linguistic proficiency level and help them develop their lexical business collocational knowledge and competence as they did the program activities. While selecting these videos and texts, the researcher made sure that they would be motivating, engaging and appealing to the students. It was, also, important to check their appropriateness to the learners' cultural values and background. The researcher made sure that the speakers' pronunciation in the selected videos was clear and accurate enough to help learners grasp the videos content and learn the lexical business collocations naturally in context. Likewise, while selecting the program reading texts, the variety of engaging up-to-date topics was stressed as well the variety of the business texts genres was ensured to make them as authentic as possible and very much similar to the business texts encountered in real life situations. This can be further explained in the following tables:

**Table (1)**  
**Titles and URLs of the YouTube videos watched throughout the program sessions**

Session No.	Session Topic	Title of the You Tube video	Video URL
One	Global Trade	“Why Do Countries Trade?”	<a href="https://youtu.be/-IW8ZzY3xt8">https://youtu.be/-IW8ZzY3xt8</a> .
Two	Business Strategy	“7 Strategies to Grow Your Business”	<a href="https://youtu.be/dJQn4DqzMVQ">https://youtu.be/dJQn4DqzMVQ</a> .
Three	Customer Service	“5 Steps to Improve Customer Satisfaction”	<a href="https://youtu.be/XK3cNcuvuMs">https://youtu.be/XK3cNcuvuMs</a>
Four	Time Management	“3 Tips to Improve Time Management”	<a href="https://youtu.be/VMRohlxcRmM">https://youtu.be/VMRohlxcRmM</a>
Five	Types of Work	“Job Interview Success!”	<a href="https://youtu.be/UN0SLzFNpDs">https://youtu.be/UN0SLzFNpDs</a>
Six	Online Banking	“Internet Banking Explained”	<a href="https://youtu.be/oADxUX4STjE">https://youtu.be/oADxUX4STjE</a>
Seven	Pay and Benefits	“The Best Answer to “What’s Your Expected Salary?””	<a href="https://youtu.be/Y-mNcEctZQY">https://youtu.be/Y-mNcEctZQY</a>
Eight	Types of Business Meetings	“Business English: B1- B2: Participating in Meetings 1”	<a href="https://youtu.be/Wb6Oc1_SdJw">https://youtu.be/Wb6Oc1_SdJw</a>
Nine	Management Styles	“Leadership Styles: Autocratic, Democratic & Laissez- faire”	<a href="https://youtu.be/1AZMiq6Mg-k">https://youtu.be/1AZMiq6Mg-k</a>
Ten	Business Negotiations	“The Business of English- Episode 12: Negotiating – Part 1”	<a href="https://youtu.be/05uFs8qVCcI">https://youtu.be/05uFs8qVCcI</a>
Eleven	Prices	“Pricing Strategies - How to Price a Product”	<a href="https://youtu.be/4t_MEO_la_k">https://youtu.be/4t_MEO_la_k</a> .
Twelve	Marketing Strategies	“How to Develop an Effective Marketing Strategy”	<a href="https://youtu.be/auRTKgS1bTM">https://youtu.be/auRTKgS1bTM</a>

As shown in table (1), the above mentioned YouTube videos were watched and discussed by the experimental group students during the lead-in phase of each session. They helped introduce the topics of the program to the experimental group students using simple clear language. In addition, they helped these students naturally process, acquire and use useful contextualized lexical business collocations related to each session topic.

**Table (2)**  
**Titles and genres of the program authentic business reading texts**

Session No.	Title of the program business reading texts	Genre
1.	Global Trade Today Blog	A business blog
2.	A New Business Strategy Needed	A business email
3.	Adventure Travel LTD Employee Manual	An excerpt of an employee manual

**Effectiveness of a Proposed Program Based on the Lexical Approach in Fostering EFL Faculty of Management Sciences Students' Business Collocational Knowledge and Competence**

Session No.	Title of the program business reading texts	Genre
4.	Business Timekeeping & Management	A brochure advertising a seminar
5.	Job Opening at TECHWORLD	An online job advertisement
6.	Online Banking Services	A business magazine article
7.	Pay Information	A pay guide for newly hired employees
8.	Today's Business Meetings	An extract from a manager's planner
9.	Should You Change Your Management Style?	A Business blog
10.	Tips for Better Business Negotiations	A Business magazine article
11.	Horton's Furniture Competitive Prices	A Product advertisement
12.	Ideas for Marketing Strategies	A memorandum

As indicated in table (2), the program authentic business reading texts were varied in terms of their topics and genres to keep the experimental group students motivated while helping them comprehend, acquire and use different lexical business collocations related to the topics of each session. In addition, they were meticulously selected to ensure that they contain a wide variety of '*verb+ noun*', '*noun+ noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' business collocations. Furthermore, the business reading texts were carefully selected by the researcher to address the students' interests and to suit their EFL linguistic proficiency level. Therefore, they were also selected after ensuring that their readability level is suitable for first year upper intermediate level university students. The readability scores of the twelve business reading texts ranged from 9.0 to 9.9 according to Dale & Chall formula (1995).

### **Collocational knowledge & competence activities**

Throughout the proposed program, the experimental group students were required to practise varied activities based on the Lexical Approach to develop their lexical business collocational knowledge and competence. These activities were carried out in pairs as well as in groups and then shared with the whole class.

Throughout the program sessions, students practiced discussing relevant pictures, cartoons, videos and reading texts that were directly related to the topics of the program sessions. At first, the discussions



focused on the ideas and content of these media. Then, special attention was paid to the lexical business collocations included in the videos and reading texts as students were asked to extract and classify the lexical business collocations used in these media as they wrote them down in a competition activity on cardboard sheets and A3 sheets of paper. The winning pair/ group was the one that was able to correctly write down the biggest number of these collocations classified in a table of three columns: 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective + noun' business collocations.

In addition, following the data-driven learning principle, students were asked to examine and analyze printed copies of concordance lines of a given business word (a node) in each session. Then, based on this observation of the concordance lines, they were asked to hypothesize the most frequent type of lexical collocations that is used for this node in the given concordance lines. After that, they were asked to work in groups to come up with their own classification of the lexical collocations used for the highlighted nodes as they examined the concordance lines. The researcher extracted these concordance lines from the concordancer Lextutor and the British National Corpus (BNC) to help the students discover the lexical business collocations for each node themselves.

To further foster the experimental group students' receptive collocational knowledge, students practiced answering MCQs to identify the correct lexical business collocations, translated given collocations into Arabic as well compared between the English collocations and their Arabic counterparts, detected the odd ones out to identify the business words that do not collocate with given nodes, matched parts of collocations and answered sentence anagrams (re-ordering) exercises.

To promote the experimental group students' productive collocational knowledge, they wrote summaries of the videos and business reading texts content; they were required to use as many lexical business collocations as possible to make their summaries concise, precise and to the point. In addition, they (1) filled in word maps indicating the adjectives, nouns and verbs that collocate with given business nouns, (2) filled in the blanks with the correct words to get lexical business collocations with the help of the initials and Arabic translation offered as clues for these words and (3) corrected the underlined collocational errors in the given sentences.

To enhance the experimental group students' collocational competence, during the experimentation stage of each session, they practised writing down varied business texts including business emails, memos, blogs and short articles using as many varied relevant lexical

business collocations as possible. In addition, each session, randomly selected five students sat in the author's chair, read aloud their business writing samples and received feedback from their classmates and the teacher on the correctness and variety of the lexical business collocations they used in their written work. In case of incorrect lexical business collocation usage, students were encouraged to correct the errors themselves first. If the writers were unable to correct the faulty lexical business collocations on their own, peers were encouraged to help correct the deviant forms. The teacher provided her own correction of the students' collocational errors in business writing only when no student was able to produce the correct lexical business collocations.

### **Duration of the treatment**

After designing the proposed program and its teaching strategy, it was presented to a panel of jury and modified according to their suggestions. Then, the researcher randomly selected twenty first year EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students and implemented two selected sessions with them. Based on this pilot study of the proposed program, it was indicated that the program content, activities, teaching strategy and instructional aids were suitable for the students' age, background knowledge and linguistic proficiency level.

The pilot study students maintained that they found the materials and activities of both sessions quite motivating and engaging. They liked the cartoon discussion the most as it helped them think deeper using the lexical business collocations to identify the indirect message conveyed by the cartoons. They also enjoyed the '*collocate search*' activity as it helped them discover and classify the lexical business collocations in given concordance lines. They, also, stated that the videos and reading texts were to the point and rich in naturally occurring lexical business collocations. They found the odd one out activity and matching collocational parts quite engaging. However, they stated that correcting collocational errors and filling in word maps were sometimes challenging and needed more mental efforts on their part.

Through the pilot study, it was, also, evident that each session required 180 minutes (three hours) to enable the students to adequately carry out the session collocational knowledge and competence activities. In addition to the introductory session- where students were introduced to the program objectives, materials and activities-, the implementation of the proposed program lasted for twelve sessions over a period of three months during the fall semester of the 2020- 2021 academic year. The

experimentation started on October 10<sup>th</sup>., 2020 and ended on January, 9<sup>th</sup>. 2021.

**The proposed teaching strategy followed throughout the program sessions**

The researcher followed a proposed teaching strategy throughout the program implementation with the experimental group students. As highlighted earlier, this strategy was based on the integration between the stages of a lexical lesson according to Lewis (2008) and Xu, Mao & Liu (2012).

According to this teaching strategy, each session was divided into three phases. *These phases were as follows:*

- I. Lead-in phase**
- II. Observation & hypothesizing phase**
- III. Experimentation phase**

*These phases could be explained as follows:*

- I. Lead-in phase**
  - a. This phase aimed at preparing the students for the active exploration and acquisition processes of lexical business collocations related to the session topic/ theme. It paved the way for the students' increased engagement in identifying and using the session varied collocations.
  - b. This was achieved as the teacher first asked the students to look at the session topic displayed on the white board and on the data show and asked them to tell what they believed it meant. The teacher listened to and encouraged the students' varied answers to her question. Based on the students' varied responses, students were able to establish shared understanding of the session topic and its relevance to the business world.
  - c. Then, the teacher asked the students to examine and discuss in pairs the session varied pictures and cartoons displayed on the data show to get a better clue of the session theme.
  - d. After that, the students watched a short YouTube video that was closely related to the session topic.
  - e. As the students watched the video for the first time, they were asked to focus on the ideas presented in the video and discuss them in groups of five first and with the rest of the class afterwards. Based on the discussion, students were able to grasp the video main ideas.
  - f. As the students watched the video for the second time and after ensuring their comprehension of the video content, they were asked

to watch the video and focus well to notice, write down and classify the 'verb+ noun', 'adjective + noun' and 'noun+ noun' business collocations ( word partnerships) included in the video in groups of four or five students. This group work took place in a competitive atmosphere where the winning group was the one that came up with the biggest number of these collocations classified in a table drawn on a cardboard sheet using coloured markers. To enhance the students' motivation, they were asked to display their completed tables of collocations on the classroom walls. For example, in session one, the business lexical collocations table of the winning group- after the students watched the video on international trade titled "*Why Do Countries Trade?*"- was as follows:

LEXICAL BUSINESS COLLOCATIONS						
Verb+ collocations	Noun	Noun + collocations	Noun	Adjective + collocations	Noun	
Exchange goods		Mass producing		International exchange		
Exchange services		Production hub		Better quality		
Trade goods		Cost savings		Scarce resources		
Sign deals		Trade deals		Comparative advantage		
Increase efficiency				Global hub		
Foster transactions				Bulk purchases		
				Specialized manpower		
				International trade		
				Cross- border transactions		

- g. Teacher encouraged the students to guess the meanings of the video business collocations using contextual, semantic, syntactic and phonological clues. In case the students were unable to guess the meaning of any of these collocations, they were encouraged to look them up in the printed copies of *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* available in the classroom or the online version of this dictionary that was easily accessed with the help of the students' smartphones.

## II. Observation & hypothesizing phase

- a. The purpose of this stage was (a) raising the students' consciousness of the lexical business collocations related to the session theme and (b) fostering the students' receptive collocational knowledge. To clarify, it aimed at helping the students notice the lexical business collocations in context. It, also, aimed at offering the students enough chances to

actively recognize, analyze and categorize more lexical business collocations related to the session topic through (a) analyzing authentic business reading texts, (b) examining varied concordance lines (KWIC) printed from the concordancer Lextutor and the British National Corpus (BNC) and (c) doing varied practice activities including translating the business English collocations into Arabic and comparing between them, the odd one out activities, matching parts of collocations and sentence anagrams.

- b. To begin with, students were given hard copies of carefully selected authentic short business texts.
- c. Each session, students were asked to read the business text twice. For the first time, they were given eight to ten minutes to individually and silently read the text. Then, they were required to discuss the text main idea(s) and most important details with the class as whole. Such a discussion ensured that the students were able to make meaning of the text before they started the second reading of the text. For example, in session four, as the students discussed the main ideas and most important details of a brochure advertising a time management seminar, they stated, "This brochure advertises a seminar that will be held at the conference room on how to manage your time effectively. The seminar will shed light on handy tips that can help business people run their businesses smoothly as they follow effective time management techniques like setting and meeting realistic deadlines, prioritizing tasks according to their urgency and importance, minimizing distraction and maximizing achievements levels. By so doing, we can ensure project completion and timely service delivery that help managers grow their business and run it efficiently ahead of schedule."
- d. As the students read the text for the second time, they were encouraged to work in pairs for ten minutes to do a '**text search**' activity in which they were required to underline or circle the lexical business collocations in the text and then classify them in a table into 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' or 'adjective +noun' collocations. This time, students drew their tables on A3 sheets of paper using coloured markers. After the ten minutes passed, students were asked to raise their A3 sheets of paper up so that they can be seen clearly by everyone. Again, the winning pair was the one that came up

with the biggest number of these collocations classified in a well- drawn table. For instance, in session eight titled 'Types of Business Meetings', students read an extract from a manager's planner, identified and categorized the lexical business collocations in pairs; the table of the winning group was as follows:

LEXICAL BUSINESS COLLOCATIONS			
Verb+ collocations	Noun	Noun + Noun collocations	Adjective + Noun collocations
Arrange/ Hold/ Attend/ Postpone/ Cancel a meeting		Company structure Staff problems Lunch/ Dinner/ Induction meeting	Departmental meeting New structure/ employees/ ideas/ site/ policy Poor sales
Update staff Address problems Discuss reasons/ issues/ a policy Brainstorm ideas		Sales team Contact details Marketing ideas/ policy	Financial issues Annual/ General meeting

- e. Then, to stress the consciousness- raising purpose of this text search and analysis step, the text was displayed on the data show one more time for the students to examine for five minutes, but this time, the lexical business collocations were typographically enhanced by being underlined, bolded and shown in a bigger font using a different bright colour.
- f. As with the video collocations, the teacher encouraged the students to guess the meaning of the text unknown business collocations using contextual, semantic, syntactic and phonological clues. In case the students were unable to guess the meaning of any of these collocations, they were encouraged to look them up in the printed copies of *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* available in the classroom or the online version of this dictionary that was easily accessed with the help of the students' smartphones. For example, in session ten titled '*Business Negotiations*', the collocation '*close the deal*' was somewhat difficult and confusing for some learners as they could not guess its meaning using the available clues. As the students looked it up, they realized that it meant "to formally conclude bargaining or to bring negotiations to an end by reaching an agreement."

- g. After that, students were asked to work in groups of four or five students to examine printed concordance lines of important words or nodes related to the topics of the sessions. For example, in session six titled '*Online Banking*', students were asked to examine concordance lines on 'banking' from both the BNC and the concordancer 'Lextutor'. The following are screen shots of some of these concordance lines.

 ithdrawn by banks from their accounts held in the BANKING Department of the Bank of England. Notes w... 025.  ks will show a fall in the value of the "notes in BANKING Department" (a liability of the Issue Depa... 026.  nsible for the supervision of all banks under the BANKING Act 1987. The institutions were categorise... 027.  s "recognised banks" (which offer a wide range of BANKING services and have net assets of not less t... 028.  in contrast to an earlier serious problem in the BANKING system, the secondary banking crisis of 19... 029.  ious problem in the banking system, the secondary BANKING crisis of 1973 - 1974, in which less well... 030.  own". Llewellyn (1986) points out that until 1974 BANKING supervision was carried out by the Bank's... 031.  because of its role as lender of last resort. The BANKING Supervision Division was established in 19... 032.  ished in 1974 mainly as a result of the secondary BANKING crisis in 1973 - 1974. 8.2 POWERS/CHANGING... 033.  usly informal supervisory activities. Notably the BANKING Acts of 1979 and 1987, the FSA 1986, the B... 034.  central bank, when it is possible to have a free BANKING regime in which banks would be free to pri... 035.  to satisfy the demand for cash. Opponents of free BANKING argue that a lender of last resort (i.e. a

- Also, in session eleven titled '*Prices*', students were asked to examine concordance lines on the node 'price'. These concordance lines were extracted from the concordancer Lextutor. The following is a screenshot of some of these concordance lines.

**Effectiveness of a Proposed Program Based on the Lexical Approach in Fostering EFL Faculty of Management Sciences Students' Business Collocational Knowledge and Competence**

001. ) and Duck (1984). 5 Criticisms of the Flexible - PRICE Rational Expectations Model It is hardly sur  
 002. headings: those which maintain the assumption of PRICE flexibility; and those which do not. 5.1 CRI  
 003. those which do not. 5.1 CRITICISMS WHICH MAINTAIN PRICE FLEXIBILITY In this first category we consid  
 004. read out over time their response to any relative PRICE signals they receive. So, in this case too,  
 005. ble change of specification concerns the relative PRICE term which enters the supply function. In th  
 006. he previous chapter we have defined this relative PRICE term as the current price in the local marke  
 007. e defined this relative price term as the current PRICE in the local market relative to the expected  
 008. l market relative to the expected current average PRICE across all markets. It has been argued that  
 009. re likely to show a positive response to relative PRICE increases which are thought to be temporary  
 010. is to model suppliers as responding to the local PRICE relative to their expectation of next period  
 011. ive to their expectation of next period's average PRICE. If this (expected) relative price is high t  
 012. rioid's average price. If this (expected) relative PRICE is high then it will give suppliers an incen  
 013. hat their real value will increase as the average PRICE level falls next period. If the (expected) r  
 014. vel falls next period. If the (expected) relative PRICE is low then it will pay suppliers not to sup  
 015. he real value of the proceeds. A similar relative PRICE term may affect the demand for the good as w

**h.** Following the data-driven learning principles, students were encouraged to discover the patterns (lexical business collocations) included in the concordance lines. At the first glance, they were asked to hypothesize the most recurrent type of lexical collocations of the given word or node highlighted in the concordance lines. Then, students were given twenty minutes to discover and classify the lexical business collocations included in the concordance lines into the three previously indicated types. They were, also, asked to see whether their earlier hypothesis was confirmed or refuted concerning the most recurrent type of lexical business collocations for the assigned word. For instance, as the students did this data- driven learning activity in groups, they came up with the following table to classify and identify the lexical business collocations of the node 'price' in session eleven.

Node	Price + Noun	Adjective + Price	Verb+ Price
Price	Price flexibility Price war Price rigidity Price level Price adjustment	Flexible Price Real price Corresponding price Controlled price Agreed price Optimum price Relative Price Local Price Average Price High price Given price Full Price	Raise the price Offer a price Pay a price Set price Change price

**i.** After the students filled in the tables for given nodes, they were asked to examine the validity of their hypotheses concerning the most recurrent type of lexical collocations in the given concordance lines. Hence, in the case of the word 'price', the students hypothesized that the most recurrent type



of lexical business collocations of the word 'price' in the given concordance lines would be the 'noun+ noun' ones. However, after the observation, classification and analysis of these lexical business collocations, they realized that their hypothesis was refuted as the most recurrent type of lexical business collocations of the word 'price' in the given concordance lines was the 'adjective + noun' collocations as indicated in the previous table.

- j. Then, **to enhance the students' receptive knowledge of the session lexical business collocations**, the concept of revisiting and recycling the collocations was followed to make these collocations part of the students' active vocabulary. This was achieved through practising six activities: (1) matching collocations parts, (2) sentence anagrams, (3) translating given lexical collocations into Arabic as well comparing between the English collocations and their Arabic counterparts, (4) the odd one out, (5) MCQs, and (6) filling in the blanks in sentences using given words.

### III. Experimentation stage

- a. This stage aimed at (1) enhancing the students' productive collocational knowledge and (2) fostering their collocational competence in business writing.
- b. **To enhance the students' productive knowledge of the session lexical business collocations**, they were given ten minutes to write in groups of five or six students a four- sentence summary of both the video content and business written text content. They were required to use as many lexical business collocations as possible to make their summaries concise, precise and to the point.
- c. After writing the summaries, the teacher asked each group to choose a representative to come to the front of the class, sit in the author's chair and read aloud the group summary. The teacher randomly selected four or five groups and asked their representatives to read aloud their summaries to the rest of the class who listened attentively to the summaries to evaluate their quality and accuracy. As the groups representatives finished their out loud reading of the summaries, the teacher asked the rest of the class to vote for the groups that were able to give the best summaries of both the video and the business text content using as many lexical

business collocations as possible. The winning group received the class applause for their hard work.

- d. In addition, students' productive knowledge of the session lexical business collocations was fostered as the students did the activities of (1) filling in word maps indicating the nouns, verbs or adjectives that collocate with given nodes, (2) filling in the blanks with the correct words to get lexical business collocation with the help of the initials and Arabic translation offered as clues for these words and (3) correcting the underlined collocational errors in the given sentences.
- e. **To promote the students' collocational competence in business writing**, they were asked to experiment with the lexical business collocations they encountered each session and attempted to use as many of them as they could to write 300- 350 word business emails, memos, blogs or articles relevant to the topics of the sessions. For example, in session six titled '*Types of Work*', they were asked to write a 300- 350 word business email applying for one of the jobs announced on the job site of TECHWORLD Company while in session twelve titled '*Marketing Strategies*', they were asked to write a 300- 350 word business article highlighting the major characteristics of successful marketing strategies.
- f. Students were given thirty minutes to do their business writing task. The teacher, who was functioning as a guide, a scaffolder and a facilitator throughout the session, asked the students to check the correctness and variety of the lexical collocations used by them in their business writing tasks. Furthermore, she told them to try hard to make their business writing clear, concise, to the point and more native- like through using as many relevant lexical business collocations as possible.

### **Instructional aids and equipment**

*The following aids were used during the implementation of the current program sessions:*

1. The images and cartoons used in the lead- in stage to introduce the topic and help the students recognize some lexical business collocations related to the sessions topics;
2. The videos used in the lead-in stage to introduce the sessions topics and help the students recognize and classify some lexical business collocations related to the sessions topics;
3. The authentic business texts read, analyzed and discussed in the

- observation and hypothesizing phase of the lessons;
4. The printed and online versions of *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* used by learners to look up the meanings of unknown lexical business collocations encountered during watching the videos or reading the business texts;
  5. The varied concordance lines extracted by the researcher from the concordancer Lextutor and the British National Corpus (BNC) and examined by the students during the observation and hypothesizing phase of the sessions to discover and classify lexical business collocations;
  6. The handouts including varied exercises focusing on fostering the students' receptive and productive collocational knowledge;
  7. The task sheets including the business writing tasks during the experimentation stage;
  8. The cardboard sheets and A3 sheets of paper as well as the coloured markers used by the students to write down and classify the lexical business collocations encountered during reading the texts, watching the videos and examining given concordance lines; and
  9. The data show used to display the sessions videos, business texts, images and varied exercises.

### **Evaluation**

Formative evaluation took place throughout the proposed program implementation sessions as follows:

- I. ***To formatively assess the students' receptive knowledge of lexical business collocations***, they were asked either to fill in the blanks in given sentences using words from the box below or do a sentences anagrams activity where they were asked to put given words in order to make meaningful sentences with correct lexical business collocations.
- II. ***To formatively assess the students' productive knowledge of lexical business collocations***, students were asked to do either a lexical drill activity or a collocations transparencies activity. Both activities were suggested by Lewis (2008) for the purpose of formative assessment in a lexical lesson. During the lexical drill activity, students were asked to quickly give lexical business collocations of specified nodes. In a collocations transparencies activity, teachers showed the students the transparency where lexical business collocations discussed in each session were written in two columns, and

the teacher covered column two. Then, she asked the students to examine the words in column one and quickly produce their collocates in column two. After the students did this activity, they had a chance to examine both columns of the transparency to check and emphasize their correct lexical collocations production. In both activities, if any student was unable to respond correctly, the teacher moved on quickly to the next student who was able to give the correct responses.

*III. To formatively assess the students' collocational competence in business writing, these steps were followed each session:*

- a. First, students were encouraged to work in pairs and exchange each other's business writing done earlier during the experimentation stage to give each other oral feedback on (a) the clarity of the ideas presented in the business writing as well as (b) the number, variety and correctness of the lexical business collocations used in their business writing.
- b. Then, five students were randomly selected to come in front of the class, sit in the author's chair and read aloud their writing. After each student finished reading his or her business writing, other students were encouraged to give their oral feedback regarding (a) the clarity of the ideas presented in the articles as well as (b) the number, variety and correctness of the lexical business collocations.
- c. In case of identifying collocational errors during the students' loud reading of their business writing, the teacher encouraged the writers to correct their errors themselves. If the writers did not know the correct lexical business collocation on their own, the teacher encouraged peer correction of these collocational errors. The teacher provided her own correction of the students' collocational errors in business writing only when no student was able to produce the correct lexical business collocations.

Besides, for the sake of **formative assessment of the students' acquisition of newly learned lexical business collocations**, at the end of each session, students were asked to write down the business lexical collocations they learned in a lexical notebook dedicated for that purpose. They were guided by the teacher to write down these collocations, their types and an example sentence below each collocation to clarify its

meaning and show how each collocation is used in context. This was weekly homework that was checked by the teacher in the following session.

At the end of the treatment, summative evaluation took place when the experimental group students took the collocational knowledge and competence tests. The aim of this summative evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of the proposed program in developing the experimental group students' overall, receptive and productive collocational knowledge of the specified business 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective + noun' collocations. It, also, aimed at identifying the effectiveness of the proposed program in fostering the experimental group students' ability to use the acquired lexical business collocations in authentic business writing tasks as compared to their pre-test performance and as compared to the post- test performance of the control group students.

**Statistical analysis of test results**

After the pre-/ post- administration of the collocational knowledge and competence tests on both the control and experimental group students, the researcher used independent as well as paired- samples t-tests in order to examine the validity of the study eight hypotheses. Moreover, to measure the effectiveness of the proposed program in developing the experimental group students' lexical business collocational knowledge and competence, its effect size value was calculated according to Dunlap's (1994) formula.

**Results**

**Results related to the study hypotheses were as follows:**

**Hypothesis One:** There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to the proposed program based on the Lexical Approach and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post- test in overall collocational knowledge in favour of the experimental group.

To determine the relative extent of change fostered by the implementation of the proposed program for the experimental group as compared to the control group performance on the collocational knowledge post- test, an independent sample t-test was used. See table (3).

**Table (3)**

**T- test results comparing the post- test means for the experimental and control groups in overall collocational knowledge**

Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Experimental	34	64.68	5.19	66	26.18	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.45
Control	34	35.65	3.86				Large

Table (3) indicates that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level in overall collocational knowledge between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post-test in favor of the experimental group since the estimated t- value was (26.18). Thus, it can be safely said that the t-test result proved to be statistically consistent with the hypothesis. Therefore, the first hypothesis was confirmed. In addition, the estimated effect size value (6.45) indicated that the program had a large effect on the experimental group students' overall collocational knowledge as compared to the control group students' overall collocational knowledge on the post- test.

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall collocational knowledge after the proposed program application as compared to the control group students' overall collocational knowledge on the post- test:

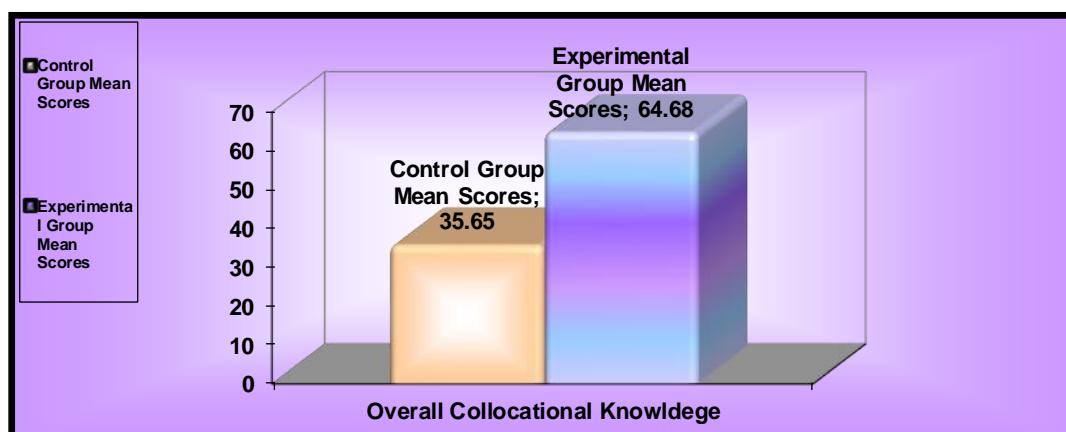


Figure (1)

### Comparison of the experimental and control groups overall collocational knowledge means on the post-test

**Hypothesis Two:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post- test in receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations in favour of the experimental group.

In order to verify the validity of the second hypothesis, independent samples t- tests were used. The t- test results proved that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post-test in receptive and productive collocational knowledge in favour of the experimental group. In other words, results of the t- tests proved to be statistically consistent

with the above stated hypothesis. Therefore, the second hypothesis was accepted.

The following table shows this statistical significance at 0.01 level. In addition, the calculated effect size values proved that the proposed program had a large effect on the experimental group students' performance in the specified aspects of collocational knowledge as compared to their counterparts of the control group students. It should be, also, noted that the proposed program had large effect size values of (4.37) and (6.94) on the experimental group students' receptive and productive collocational knowledge respectively. This, in turn, proves that activities based on the Lexical Approach can significantly foster EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students' ability to identify, make meaning of and correctly produce lexical business collocations.

**Table (4)**  
**T- Test results comparing the experimental and control group students' post- test means in receptive and productive collocational knowledge**

Collocational knowledge aspect	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Receptive Collocational Knowledge	Experimental	34	35.62	3.59	62	17.76	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.37
	Control	34	22.00	2.66				Large
Productive Collocational Knowledge	Experimental	34	29.06	2.51	62	28.18	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.94
	Control	34	13.65	1.97				Large

**Hypothesis Three:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post- test in their overall knowledge of '*verb + noun*', '*noun + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' business collocations in favour of the experimental group.

**Table (5)**  
**T- Test results comparing the experimental and control group students' post- test means of their overall knowledge of '*verb + noun*', '*noun + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' business collocations**

Collocation Type	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
'Verb + Noun'	Experimental	34	23.32	2.32	62	24.21	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.95
	Control	34	12.26	1.3				Large

**Effectiveness of a Proposed Program Based on the Lexical Approach in Fostering EFL Faculty of Management Sciences Students' Business Collocational Knowledge and Competence**

Collocation Type	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
				1				
'Noun + Noun'	Experimental	34	21.62	1.72	62	25.60	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.31
	Control	34	11.59	1.50				Large
'Adjective+ Noun'	Experimental	34	19.65	1.48	62	21.64	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.33
	Control	34	11.82	1.51				Large

As shown in table (5), the t- test values proved that there were significant differences between the post-test mean scores of both the experimental and control group students' overall knowledge of the specified lexical business collocations in favour of the experimental group. Hence, the third hypothesis was confirmed. In addition, the above effect size values of (5.95), (6.31) and (5.33) indicated that the implemented program had a strong impact on the experimental group students' overall knowledge of the three specified types of lexical business collocations; however, the largest effect size was on the experimental group students' overall knowledge of 'noun + noun' business collocations.

**Hypothesis Four:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the collocational competence business writing post- test in terms of an increased frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage as well as a reduced frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage in favour of the experimental group.

**Table (6)**

**T- Test results comparing the experimental and control group students' post- test means in collocational competence indicators**

Collocational competence indicator	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Frequency of correct lexical business collocations usages	Experimental	34	7.18	1.19	62	18.03	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.44
	Control	34	3.09	0.57				Large



Collocational competence indicator	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage	Experimental	34	1.24	0.70	62	-9.54	Significant at 0.01 Level	2.33
	Control	34	2.97	0.80				Large

As displayed in table (6), the t- test values proved that there were statistically significant differences between the collocational competence post-test means of the control and experimental group students in favour of the experimental group. Thus, the fourth hypothesis was accepted. In addition, the t-test values provided evidence that the implemented program was effective in promoting the experimental group students' collocational competence as indicated by their increased frequency of correct lexical business collocation usage and decreased frequency of deviant collocation usage in business writing tasks. Furthermore, the effect size values of (4.44) and (2.33) respectively indicated that the implemented program had a larger effect on increasing the number of correct lexical business collocation usage than on reducing the number of erroneous collocation usage in business writing among the experimental group students.

**Hypothesis Five:** There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test in overall lexical business collocational knowledge in favour of the post- test.

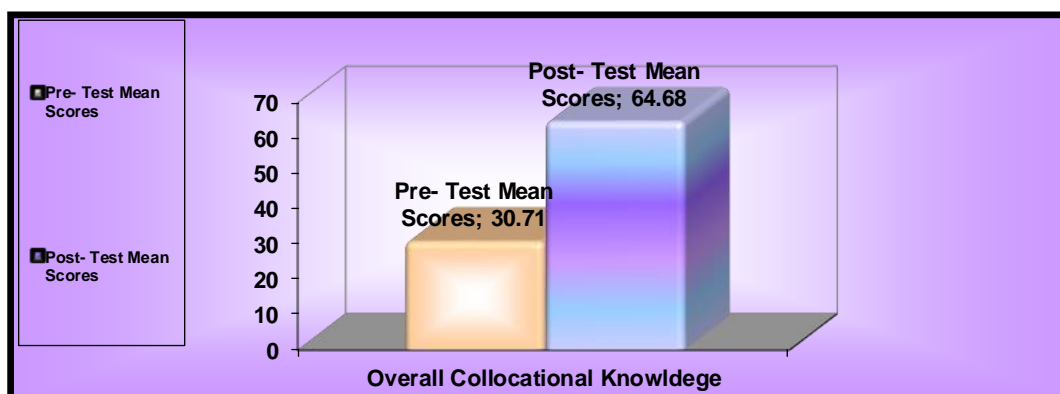
To examine the validity of the above hypothesis, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the experimental group students' overall collocational knowledge mean scores prior to and after the program implementation. Table (7) shows that the proposed program had a significant impact on the experimental group students' overall collocational knowledge. This was reflected in their significant growth after the program application. The calculated t- value (26.31) and effect- size value (9.17) provide evidence that confirms the fifth hypothesis.

**Table (7)**

**T- test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-posttest mean scores in overall collocational knowledge**

Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Pre-test	34	30.71	5.12	33	26.31	Significant at 0.01 Level	9.17
Post-test	34	64.68	5.19				Large

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall collocational knowledge on the post- test as compared to their overall collocational knowledge on the pre- test:



**Figure (2)**

**Comparison of the experimental group students' pre- posttest means in overall collocational knowledge**

**Hypothesis Six:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test in receptive and productive lexical business collocational knowledge in favour of the post- test.

To verify the sixth hypothesis, paired samples t- tests were conducted to compare the pre- posttests mean scores of the experimental group students' receptive as well as productive lexical business collocation knowledge. As shown in table (8) below, results of the t-tests indicated the experimental group students' substantial receptive and productive collocational knowledge growth. In addition, the t- test values (18.56) and (31.36) of the experimental group students' receptive and productive collocational knowledge respectively provided enough evidence to support and accept the sixth hypothesis. It is worth mentioning that the effect size values of (6.47) and (10.93) for receptive and productive collocational knowledge respectively proved that the

implemented program had a larger effect on the experimental group students' productive collocational knowledge than on their receptive collocational knowledge.

**Table (8)**

**T- Test results the experimental group students' pre-post- test means in receptive and productive collocational knowledge**

Collocational knowledge aspect	Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Receptive Collocational Knowledge	Pre-test	34	19.41	3.51	33	18.56	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.47
	Post-test	34	35.62	3.59				Large
Productive Collocational Knowledge	Pre-test	34	11.29	2.02	33	31.36	Significant at 0.01 Level	10.93
	Post-test	34	29.06	2.51				Large

**Hypothesis Seven:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post- test in overall collocational knowledge of '*verb + noun*', '*noun+ noun*' and '*adjective+ noun*' business collocations in favour of the post- test.

**Table (9)**

**T- Test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-post- test means of their overall knowledge of '*verb + noun*', '*noun + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' business collocations**

Collocation Type	Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
'Verb + Noun'	Pre-Test	34	10.41	1.93	33	25.81	Significant at 0.01 Level	8.99
	Post-Test	34	23.32	2.32				Large
'Noun + Noun'	Pre-Test	34	10.35	1.97	33	24.43	Significant at 0.01 Level	8.51
	Post-Test	34	21.62	1.72				Large
'Adjective + Noun'	Pre-Test	34	9.97	1.78	33	22.40	Significant at 0.01 Level	7.80
	Post-Test	34	19.65	1.48				Large

As illustrated in table (9), results of paired samples t-tests provided support to the seventh hypothesis since the t- values of (25.81), (24.43) and (22.40) comparing the experimental group students' pre- post- test means for the specified lexical business collocation types were all significant at 0.01 level. In addition, the calculated effect size values of (8.99), (8.51) and (7.80) for '*verb + noun*', '*noun+ noun*' and '*adjective+ noun*' business collocations respectively indicated that the implemented program had its largest effect on the experimental group significant growth in their knowledge of '*verb+ noun*' business collocations on the

post- test as compared to their knowledge of that type of business collocation prior to the program application.

**Hypothesis Eight:** There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post- collocational competence writing test in terms of an increased frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage as well as a reduced frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage in favour of the post-test.

**Table (10)**

**T- Test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-post-test means in collocational competence indicators**

Collocational competence indicator	Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Frequency of correct lexical business collocations usage	Pre-Test	34	2.38	0.65	33	20.81	Significant at 0.01 Level	7.52 Large
	Post-Test	34	7.18	1.19				
Frequency of incorrect lexical business collocations usage	Pre-Test	34	2.94	0.89	33	11.42	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.98 Large
	Post-Test	34	1.24	0.70				

As shown in table (10), the paired samples t- test values of (20.81) and (11.42) indicated that the implemented program fostered the experimental group students' collocational competence in business writing. This was shown in their post- test statistically significant increased use of correct business collocations and reduced use of deviant incorrect business collocations as compared to their performance on the pre-test. Therefore, the eighth hypothesis was affirmed. In addition, the calculated effect size values of (7.52) and (3.98) respectively proved that the implemented program had a larger effect on the experimental group students' increased use of correct business collocations than on their reduced use of erroneous business collocations.

To sum up, support was gained for the study eight hypotheses. The experimental group students achieved tangible progress in their receptive and productive knowledge of lexical business collocations and collocational competence indicators after the implementation of the proposed program as compared to their performance before the program

application. Also, the experimental group students outperformed the control group students on the collocational knowledge and competence post-tests, thus proving the effectiveness of the current program based on the Lexical approach.

### **Discussion**

The post- test results revealed that the implemented program based on the Lexical Approach was effective in developing the experimental group students' overall, receptive and productive knowledge of business '*verb+ noun*', '*noun + noun*' and '*adjective + noun*' collocations. There was, also, tangible evidence that program content and activities helped the experimental group students use the newly acquired business collocations in authentic business writing tasks in a way that fostered their collocational competence as indicated by their increased use of correct business collocations and reduced use of deviant awkward collocations. Such results provide further emphasis to the idea that implementing the Lexical Approach activities can significantly enhance EFL students' collocational knowledge and competence as highlighted by Xu, Mao & Liu (2012), El- Dakhs (2015b), Abrudan (2017 ) and Zhang (2020). In addition, the current study findings are consistent with the findings of the previous studies of Abdellah (2015), Ördem & Paker (2016) and Debabi & Guerroudj (2018) which indicated that implementing instructional programs based on the Lexical Approach can foster EFL university level learners' collocational knowledge and use.

The current study results are, also, consistent with the previous studies findings of Herteg & Popescu (2013) and Chen (2017) highlighting that corpora activities can foster EFL business students' collocational knowledge and competence. Other studies that highlighted the positive impact of corpus- based activities on fostering EFL collocational competence include the studies of El-Garawany (2019) and Hua & Azmi (2021). Furthermore, the present study findings are consistent with El-Garawany's (2019) findings that input- enhancement reading activities can foster Egyptian EFL university level learners' collocational competence. Also, the current study results go in line with the idea that translation and consciousness- raising activities can enhance EFL learners' collocation acquisition and use as highlighted by Lewis (2000), (2008) and recommended by the studies of Phoocharoensil (2014) and El-Dakhs (2015a).

Throughout the program implementation, several factors have led to the experimental group students' significant growth in overall collocational knowledge and collocational competence indicators. Among them was the use of interesting images and cartoons during the

lead- in stage of the lexical lessons. In fact, these images and cartoons aroused the students' interest in and provoked their active thinking about the sessions topics; they, also, paved the way for the following contextualized examination of business lexical collocations in authentic texts. A crucial factor that led to the experimental group students' tangible progress in business collocational knowledge and competence was the students' involvement in consciousness- raising activities that helped them notice contextualized lexical business collocations in authentic carefully selected videos and business reading texts. After grasping the content of these spoken and written texts, the experimental group students were encouraged to identify, categorize, make meaning of and actively use these newly acquired business collocations in varied activities.

In addition, the observation and hypothesizing activities of business lexical collocations in concordance lines enabled the experimental group students to employ inductive Data Driven Learning to actively discover and categorize the business collocations included in these lines. In addition, these '*collocate search*' activities fostered the students' engagement and motivation to acquire and use business collocations in authentic business writing tasks during the experimentation phase of the lexical lesson. Moreover, the sense of competition among students groups during the '*text search*' and '*collocate search*' activities increased their involvement in the collocation acquisition process.

Besides, the varied activities of filling in the blanks and word maps, answering MCQs, the odd-one out, sentences anagrams, matching sentences heads with sentences endings, matching parts of business collocations, correcting underlined collocational errors and translating English business collocations to the experimental group students' mother tongue fostered the experimental group students' collocational knowledge. Moreover, practicing using these newly learned lexical business collocations in authentic writing tasks enhanced the experimental group students' collocational competence. These Lexical Approach activities were recommended by Lewis (2008), Xu, Mao & Liu (2012), El- Dakhs (2015b), Abrudan (2017) and Zhang (2020) and adopted throughout the program implementation.

The formative assessment activities such as the '*collocations transparencies*' and '*collocation drills*' highlighted by Lewis (2008) and practiced by the experimental group students at the end of each program session enabled them to recycle and revisit the newly acquired lexical business collocations, thus making these collocations part and parcel of

the students' active vocabulary. Furthermore, encouraging the experimental group students to keep lexical notebooks- where they wrote down newly acquired collocations and example sentences- made the students more aware of these collocations and stressed their sense of responsibility for their own learning. In addition, the classroom atmosphere was quite relaxed and motivating throughout the program sessions implementation in a way that lowered the students' affective filter and increased their willingness to participate in the classroom activities and tasks.

Finally, the use of offline and online copies of the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* helped the experimental group students check their comprehension of relevant business collocations use and meanings; it, also, made them more confident when they used these collocations in the business writing tasks assigned at the end of each session to promote the experimental group students' collocational competence.

As far as **receptive knowledge of business collocations** is concerned, the experimental group students achieved noticeable progress in this aspect as result of their purposeful involvement in varied activities that focused on fostering their ability to identify, classify and make meaning of lexical business collocations throughout the program implementation. To clarify, they practiced discussing relevant pictures, cartoons, videos and reading texts that were directly related to the topics of the program sessions. At first, the discussions focused on the ideas and content of these media. Then, special attention was paid to making meaning of, writing down and categorizing the lexical business collocations included in the videos and reading texts in competition activities. The winning pair/ group was the one that was able to correctly write down the biggest number of these collocations classified in a table of three columns: 'verb+ noun', 'noun+ noun' and 'adjective + noun' business collocations.

In addition, following the Data-Driven Learning principle, students were asked to examine and analyze printed copies of concordance lines of a given business word (a node) in each session. Then, based on this observation of the concordance lines – that were extracted by the researcher from the concordancer Lextutor and the British National Corpus (BNC)-, the experimental group students were asked to hypothesize the most frequent type of lexical collocations that was used for this node in the given concordance lines. Then, they were asked to work in groups to come up with their own classification of the lexical collocations used for the highlighted node as they examined the concordance lines.

To further foster the experimental group students' receptive collocational knowledge, students practiced answering MCQs to identify the correct lexical business collocations, translated given collocations into Arabic as well as compared between the English collocations and their Arabic counterparts, detected the odd ones out to identify the business words that do not collocate with given nodes, matched parts of collocations and answered sentence anagrams (re-ordering) exercises.

To promote the experimental group students' **productive collocational knowledge**, they wrote summaries of the videos and business reading texts content; they were required to use as many lexical business collocations as possible to make their summaries concise, precise and to the point. In addition, they (1) filled in word maps indicating the adjectives, nouns and verbs that collocate with given business nouns, (2) filled in the blanks with the correct words to get lexical business collocations with the help of the initials and Arabic translation offered as clues for these words and (3) corrected the underlined collocational errors in given sentences.

To enhance the experimental group students' **collocational competence**, they practised writing down varied business texts during the experimentation stage of each session; these texts were authentic and varied as they included writing business emails, memos, blogs and short articles using as many varied relevant lexical business collocations as possible. In addition, each session, the researcher randomly selected five students who sat in the author's chair, read aloud their business writing samples and received feedback from their classmates and the teacher on the correctness and variety of the lexical business collocations they used in their written work. In case of incorrect lexical business collocation usage, students were encouraged to correct themselves first. If the writers were unable to correct the faulty lexical business collocations on their own, peers were encouraged to help correct the deviant forms. The teacher provided her own correction of the students' collocational errors in business writing only when no student was able to produce the correct lexical business collocations. This error correction strategy, also, fostered the students' autonomy and sense of responsibility for their learning as well as helped them avoid deviant collocations in their subsequent business writing attempts.



### Conclusions

**Based on the results of the current study, the following conclusions can be made:**

1. The current study provided evidence for the effectiveness of the proposed program based on the Lexical Approach in developing EFL first year Faculty of Management Sciences students' lexical business collocational knowledge and competence.
2. There is also evidence that using consciousness- raising and corpora activities enhances the receptive collocational knowledge of EFL business students.
3. Encouraging students to search for lexical business collocations in given texts and concordance lines makes them more active participants in their learning, thus fostering their motivation and engagement in a lexical lesson.
4. This study provided tangible support to the notion that word maps as well as translation, gap filling, and correcting collocational error activities can promote the productive collocational knowledge of EFL business students.
5. Incorporating varied authentic business writing activities in the experimentation stage of a lexical lesson enables EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students to actively use business collocations in a meaningful communicative context.
6. Recycling and revisiting EFL lexical business collocations in varied motivating activities enhances learners' comprehension, active use and retention of these collocations.
7. Authentic reading texts and videos are two important media through which contextualized lexical business collocations can be naturally presented to and analyzed by EFL learners.
8. Encouraging students to keep lexical notebooks where they write down meanings and example sentences of newly acquired collocations makes them more responsible for their learning and fosters their autonomy.

### **Recommendations**

*In the light of the present study significant results, the following recommendations are made:*

1. More time and conscious efforts should be dedicated to fostering EFL Faculty of Management Sciences students' business collocational knowledge and competence.
2. EFL business collocations should be naturally presented to EFL university level students in carefully selected written and spoken texts.
3. Inductive corpus- based Data- Driven Learning should be encouraged among EFL university level learners to foster their acquisition of business collocations.
4. EFL learners should be given enough time to correct their collocational errors themselves. Peer correction should be considered a second option if the student cannot correct his/ her collocational error; teacher's correction should be the last resort so as to foster the students' autonomous independent learning.
5. Translation activities can help EFL university level learners notice the differences between English business collocations and their counterparts in Arabic, thus helping these learners avoid interlingual collocational errors that occur due to interference of the mother tongue.
6. EFL university level instructors should exert more efforts to plan well-designed lexical lessons with engaging lead-in, observation, hypothesizing and implementation activities to promote their students' collocational knowledge and competence.
7. More attention should be paid to enhancing EFL university level students' ability to use business collocations in authentic communicative spoken and written contexts.
8. Teachers' role as guides, facilitators and scaffolders should be further emphasized in EFL business collocations classes.
9. EFL students should be offered further opportunities to practise using business collocations in a supportive, anxiety- free learning environment.
10. EFL university level students' attention should be further drawn to the differences between lexical and grammatical collocations and the importance of using correct business collocations to ensure native-like fluency and comprehensibility.

### **Suggestions for further studies**

1. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of similar programs based on the Lexical Approach in fostering EFL university level students' acquisition of idioms and phrasal verbs.
2. Since the current study focused on lexical business collocations comprehension and use, further studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of other programs based on the Lexical Approach in developing EFL university and vocational school students' acquisition of grammatical collocations.
3. More studies can be conducted to measure the effectiveness of other programs and units based on the Lexical Approach in developing domain- specific vocabulary acquisition among medical and legal students.
4. More studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of translation and corpus- based activities in overcoming EFL university level and secondary school students' collocational errors.

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