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A comparative study of collocational competence between learners of english as a foreign language and learners of english as a second language

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COLLOCATIONAL COMPETENCE BETWEEN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "*Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises*"

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

My dear parents,

My dear brothers and sisters,

Members of English Clubs,

All promoters of Quality Education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I indeed owe a profound debt of gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. Déogratias Nizonkiza, for his filial and continuous encouragement, guidance and support without which this work could not have been completed. I am also indebted to Dr. Ildéphonse Horicubonye, Co-supervisor, for having generously accepted to contribute to the completion of this study. My sincere thanks are extended to all my BA lecturers for their interesting lectures and advice during my studies at the University of Burundi, Department of English Language and Literature. I would also like to thank all the members of the jury for reading and evaluating my thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AWL	: Academic Word List
BA	: Bachelor of Arts
BAC	: Bachelor (a first university degree)
EFL	: English as Foreign Language
ESL	: English as Second Language
i.e.	: Id est.: "That is"
L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
%	: Percentage
&	: and
UWL	: University Word List
EAP	: English for Academic Purposes
GSL	: General Service List
Std.	: Standard

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ABSTRACT

The present study compares the collocational competence between EFL and ESL students majoring in English. Different researchers claimed that collocations pose a major problem for both EFL and ESL groups of learners. Participants, English majors from the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi and South African English majors who were taking English as a course at the North-West University, were administered the same collocation test. The test consisted of 30 collocations from the Academic Word List.

The results of the test showed that both EFL and ESL learners of English performed poorly on collocations from Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List and confirmed the statement by Nesselhauf (2005) and Laufer and Waldman (2011) that collocations still cause difficulties to L2 students even at advanced levels.

The contribution of this study is that it shows the problematic nature of collocations among EFL and ESL learners of English by comparing the two groups of learners whose English is not their first language and whose linguistic background is not the same.

This study also proposes what should be done for a successful teaching and learning of collocations by EFL and ESL teachers and learners of English, including the teaching of collocations in the two countries through Nizonkiza's Collocation Web Model (CWM) as it proved to be effective.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

Language competence consists of a number of components among which vocabulary has recently emerged as a significant one (Beglar, 2010; Meara & Buxton, 1987; Nation & Beglar, 2007 among others).The latter is also broken into smaller components and the mastery of vocabulary entails control of these components. The latest conceptualization of vocabulary knowledge is dimensional and word knowledge today seems to be equated with control of these dimensions (Nizonkiza & Van den Berg, 2014).The available literature indicates that there are three but overlapping dimensions, i.e., vocabulary size, deep word knowledge and receptive-productive dimensions (Henriksen, 1999; Meara, 1996).A detailed description of the above dimensions will be found in the section of related literature. Here suffice it to say that vocabulary size refers to the number of words one can recognize while vocabulary depth refers to how well words are known and the receptive-productive dimension refers to the fact that words are either understood (receptive) or understood and used (productive).

Collocations which are the subject matter of this study belong to the second dimension. They, too, will be defined in detail in the section of related literature. Readers should, however, know already that collocations refer to such word combinations in a language as, *to take time*, *drink tea, make history*, *take a decision* and to *hold a meeting(Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English,2002)*, that co-occur very often more frequently than would happen by chance. They have attracted research attention over the past few years (Barfield & Gyllstad, 2009; Nizonkiza, 2012).

Among other things, testing learners' knowledge of collocations in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) attracted researchers' attention. The results from such studies as we have them today indicate that collocations cause problems for both EFL and ESL learners of English (Laufer & Waldman, 2001, Nesselhauf, 2005).

However, ESL learners of English differ in terms of background, what accounts for the fact that they can still perform differently on collocations, a situation which is similar for EFL learners as well. For instance, South African ESL learners of English may perform differently from Ugandan learners of English. Likewise, Belgian EFL learners of English may behave very differently from their Burundian counterparts.

Therefore, EFL and ESL learners of English are of different types in terms of their cultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds amongst others, and the more we compare them, the more collocational behavior we may get.

As the available literature indicates, a number of studies have explored collocations among EFL learners while others dealt with collocations among ESL ones. Results from these studies indicate that collocations cause problems for both EFL and ESL groups. However, the two groups have been hardly directly compared if at all. Findings from Nizonkiza & Ngwenya (2015) who compared EFL and ESL groups indicate that Burundian EFL learners of English at the University of Burundi performed better than their South African ESL counterparts on collocations. These authors were surprised by their findings and suspected that the reason behind this could be that EFL learners of English at the University of Burundi had been exposed to English collocations while their ESL South African counterparts had only been exposed to single words by the time the data were collected.

Furthermore, conclusions drawn from findings on ESL are sometimes generalized to include EFL learners as well. Similarly, the findings from EFL learners may be generalized to include ESL learners as well. Some studies will not even bother and use the umbrella term L2 (second language) learners while referring to EFL or ESL to mean both contexts.

This is the case of Gyllstad's (2007) study on collocations conducted on Swedish learners of English, but which simply used the term L2 and which is the best reference we have today on testing collocations (Nizonkiza, 2015). Compounding ESL and EFL in the same basket may be problematic as described in the next section.

1.2 Problem Statement

As mentioned in the previous section, studies which dealt with the topic of collocations whether among EFL or ESL learners have never attempted to consider individual or local contexts that may lead to differences. For example, Nizonkiza & Ngwenya (2015) found that EFL Burundian English majors outperformed ESL South African learners of comparable level of studies -higher education students in their second year.

This is hard to believe as these authors have themselves acknowledged. In normal circumstances, ESL learners would be expected to do better than their EFL counterparts since they have more exposure to the language. These authors thus suspected that the Burundian learners may have outperformed the South Africans because by the time they sat the test used to collect the data; they had just been exposed to collocations.

Given this interesting observation, clustering EFL and ESL together as it has been done as the studies we have today indicate may be problematic. Especially, the approaches to teaching collocations these studies may suggest thinking that they may be applicable to both EFL and ESL learners without any adaptation may not work.

And if they do not, learners will not be helped in terms of their mastery of collocations and consequently may not write or communicate effectively in English (see Boers et al., 2006, Bonk, 2011, Gledhill, 2000:1Howarth, 1998 and Schmitt, 1998).

Put differently, EFL and ESL groups are referred to collectively and researchers are struggling to theorize them when it comes to the nature of problems encountered by the different groups and quantifying the amount of collocations learners need at different learning stages. Thus, the calls to teach collocations which are many cannot be responded to even though they follow the widely approved importance of collocations for the said learners. This is a problem and dealing with it could bring an interesting contribution to the field. This is what the present study sets out to do as the aims described in the next section indicate.

1.3 Definition of Key Concepts

Collocations: the way words combine in a language to produce natural sounding speech and writing. *Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English* (2002, VII)

EFL: English as a Foreign Language: The teaching of English to people whose first language is not English and who do not live in English-speaking community. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.*

ESL: English as a Second Language: The teaching of English to people who are living in an English-speaking community but whose first language is not English. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.*

1. 4 Aims, Research Questions, and Hypotheses of the Study

With the problems described in the above section in mind, the present study pursues the following aims:

First of all, the study attempts to assess the extent to which Burundian EFL learners of English master collocations of academic vocabulary. As this will be described in the methodology section, the target words used in this study have been selected from Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL).

The question asked here is: To what extent do EFL-English majors- at the University of Burundi perform on academic vocabulary collocations?

Secondly, this study aims at gauging the mastery of academic vocabulary collocations among ESL South African learners of English. This will answer the following question: To what extent do ESL South African learners of English perform on academic vocabulary collocations? Based on the findings we have on general vocabulary in Burundi (See Irankeje, 2015; Hagerimana, 2015) or elsewhere (see Nesselhauf, 2005 on German students; Laufer & Waldman, 2011 on Israeli students; Nizonkiza, 2014; Nizonkiza & Ngwenya, 2015; and Nizonkiza et al., 2013 on South African students), my assumptions for the two questions are that EFL and ESL learners do not master collocations of academic vocabulary.

Thirdly, this study aims to compare performance on academic collocations of EFL and ESL learners of English in higher education. The question raised here is: Which of the EFL and ESL higher education students do better on academic vocabulary collocations?

Owing to the type of teaching materials available and exposure to English from the two contexts which might favor the ESL students, my assumption is that the latter outperform their EFL counterparts.

The fourth and last aim of the study which is corollary to the third one is to quantify difficult items for both the EFL and ESL students and see which ones may be more difficult in one group as opposed to the other and which ones might be common. The questions which will be answered here are the following: Which items are more difficult for EFL students on the one hand and which ones are more difficult for ESL students on the other hand? Which ones of those are common to the two groups? Given that these questions are diagnostic in nature, there is no assumption put forward here.

In other words, the aim here is to explore the difficult items in terms of number, and those which might be common to the two groups of participants.

1. 5 Significance of the Study

Collocations are very important for EFL and ESL learners of English at the level of tertiary education because they help them sound native-like and be productive when it comes to writing in a language that is acceptable in academic contexts. However, despite their importance, collocations are still problematic for both EFL and ESL learners of English. I, thus, felt motivated to attempt to draw a comparison based on collocational competence between the above two groups and in the end get to find out which group outperforms the other given its more or less exposure to English and therefore get to determine (i)the two groups' collocational behavior regarding the target collocations under investigation as well as (ii) the types of errors they make which constitute groundwork for framing teaching strategies to adopt in the teaching of collocations to EFL and ESL learners of English in accordance with their respective backgrounds.

1. 6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

My study involved EFL and ESL learners of English from two different countries and one type of collocations. There are different types of lexical collocations, but I opted for the Verb + Noun combinations.

There are many countries where English holds the position of a Foreign Language but I chose Burundi. There are many countries where English holds a status of a Second Language but I chose South Africa. The above two choices were made on the grounds of the availability of the data.

CHAPTER TWO: RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the literature in relation to the topic that I chose for this study. It will make it possible for the readers to know the theoretical framework and the issues in relation to the topic of collocations.

As the present study is focused on a comparative study of the collocational competence between EFL and ESL learners of English, the next sections will review the vocabulary dimensions, approaches to collocations, the importance and the problematic nature of collocations in EFL and ESL contexts, the testing and the teaching collocations as well as the overview of the Academic Word List.

2.2 Vocabulary Dimensions

From the 1980s, vocabulary has been looked at as an important component of language. Its conceptualization a decade later became dimensional and three dimensions have been distinguished.

2.2.1 Vocabulary Size

Vocabulary size also referred to in the literature as "vocabulary breadth" is the first dimension of vocabulary which consists of how many words somebody knows, irrespective of how well the words are known (Henriksen, 1990; Meara, 1996; Read, 1993, 2000; Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Nation, 1990).

Extensive research into vocabulary size has resulted in the establishment of two principal pedagogical practices, one of which is determining how much vocabulary is needed at each learning stage.

Research evidence has indeed indicated that a minimal threshold of about 5,000 word families and an optimal one of approximately 8,000 word families are needed for understanding lectures at the undergraduate level (Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010; Nation; 2006; Schmitt et al., 2011).

The other pedagogical practice that has developed from research into vocabulary size is employing vocabulary size tests for placement purposes. Nation's vocabulary levels test is the most widely used test to this end (Read, 2007 among others).

2.2.2 Depth Knowledge

It is the second dimension of vocabulary which is concerned with aspects of deep word knowledge, i.e., how well a word is known (Greidanus & Nienhuis; 2001; Henriksen, 1999, Meara, 1996; Qian & Schedl; 2004, Read, 1993, 2000, Vermeer, 2001, Wesche & Paribakht, 1996). Depth has to do more with word associates with regard to their three aspects which are (i) the paradigmatic (synonyms or close in meaning), (ii) the syntagmatic (collocations) as well as (iii) the analytic (key word of the dictionary definition) levels.

The first which is the paradigmatic relation entails that words are related just because they are synonyms or close in meaning, with one being more general than the other. For instance: *love-feeling, school- study.*

As far as the syntagmatic relation is concerned, it refers to collocation, standing for the fact that the relatedness of words is explained by frequent word occurrence in sentences such as; *to commit suicide, thick eyebrows* and *to reject a proposal* (Cruse, 1986:40).

Schmitt et al., (2011:107) stated that depth not only indicates the extent to which words are understood-receptively, but also the extent to which they can be used-productively and correctly.

2.2.3 Receptive- Productive Dimension

The receptive-productive dimension is the third dimension of vocabulary knowledge which is viewed as the continuum between word comprehension and word use. EFL and ESL researchers define receptive vocabulary as the vocabulary used for language comprehension while productive vocabulary is that used for language production, the definition upon which they tend to agree (cfr Zareva et al., 2005).

Researchers such as Gairns & Redman (1986), Laufer & Paribakht and Zareva et al., (2005) indicated that the receptive-productive distinction is that the comprehension of words does not necessarily imply its correct use.

Aitchison (1989) and Melka (1997) stated that the receptive-productive distinction should not be viewed as a dichotomous one, but a continuum where a word passes a threshold from being receptive to being productive, the most widely accepted conceptualization development of the receptive-productive vocabulary.

2.3 Approaches to Collocations

Collocations which are the subject matter of this study have over the past few decades been the subject of study for many researchers just because of their importance for EFL and ESL learners of English (Barfield & Gyllstad, 2009).They help them sound like natives(cf. Pawley & Syder, 1983,Wray,2002; Nesselhauf, 2005) and predict overall proficiency (Gitsaki, 1999; Bonk, 2001; Eyeckmans et al.,2004; Gyllstad, 2007; 2009,Keshavarz & Saalimi, 2007 and Nizonkiza, 2011a; 2011b).

However, despite their importance, collocations still pose problems for EFL\ESL learners of English especially at the productive level; that is, while speaking and writing (Howarth, 1988, Schmitt, 1998, Bonk, 2011 and Boers et al., 2006 among others).

According to Gledhill (2000), writing an appropriate academic text goes with the mastery of the collocations of the domain in which the writer chooses to write.

Up to now, studies on collocations have been insufficient to define the concept of collocation in a more rigorous way (Cowan, 1989:1).

Researchers, however, agree on the chief approaches to collocations even as there has been no common definition as mentioned above. Firth (1957) who is believed to be the pioneer of the study of collocations stated the so well-known phrase that *words should be known by the company they keep.* The frequency based tradition was his approach to collocations.

Halliday (1996) who is the proponent of this tradition has defined a collocation as "a linear co-occurrence relationship among lexical items that co-occur together'' and referred to the lexical items as the constituents of collocations.

As far as Sinclair (1991:170) is concerned, he defined a collocation as the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text.

The latter is the one who introduced first the notion of space of co-occurrence that is referred to in literature as "span", as well as that of "node" and "collocates" referring to the main word and the collocating word respectively.

With regard to the above tradition, collocates can be viewed as a continuum from free combinations such as *a press conference*, to *collect data* (Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English, 2002) and idioms containing the combinations

whose meaning is not directly transparent such as, *to call the shots,* and *to bury the hatchet* (*Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary,* 2007).

The latter are said to be collocations just because of their frequent occurrences.

Howarth (1998), Schmitt (1998), Shin & Nation (2008) and Nizonkiza (2012, b) among others noted, however, that frequency alone is not sufficient enough to describe collocations even as it is a crucial factor. They suggested that frequency be balanced adequately with other criteria especially for teaching purposes.

The second approach to collocation is the phraseological tradition whose proponents define collocations by means of considering the syntactic nature of collocation constituents and their substitutability degree. Illustratively, both the adjectives "rancid" and "addled" mean "bad". Nonetheless, the accepted collocation is rancid butter, and not rancid bread. Much like the former, the adjective "addled" on its part does not collocate with butter. It does however collocate with bread. The above illustration is a clear indication that though words may be meaning the same or close in meaning, one cannot always substitute the other when it comes to collocations.

Therefore, unlike the frequency based approach, the phraseological approach consistently requires that the elements of collocations should be syntactically related (Nesselhauf, 2005:17).Moreover, as remarked by Nesselhauf (2005) and Gyllstad (2007), scholars in the same tradition may differ in the way they define collocations.

For instance, Benson et al. (1986; 1997) and Nation (2001) among others accepted frequency as a determining factor when it comes to defining collocations although they primarily adopt a phraseological approach. According to Nesselhauf (2005; 17), a collocation has to be restricted, transparent and frequent.

The third approach to collocations comes to reconcile the two main traditions and suggests including elements from both, which has the advantage of fixing the limitation of either tradition .This is indeed the reason why it has been referred to as the best of the two worlds (Gyllstad,2007, Granger & Paquot, 2008).The very approach is very much in line with Handl's (2008) dimensional approach to collocations according to which collocations are the result of syntagmatic transparency, collocational range and the related frequency of the constituent.

The present study adopts the conciliatory approach to collocations and the definition given in the *Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English* (2002, VII) as an operational one. Thus, Collocations in this study should be understood as the way words combine in a language to produce natural sounding speech and writing. In this study, they will be restricted to Verb+ Noun combinations for the reasons that will be explained in the next chapter of Methodology.

2.4 Importance of Collocations in EFL and ESL Context

The importance of collocations for the development of vocabulary and communicative competence has attracted the attention of a good few linguists and language teachers who recommend how they should be taught or learned in classrooms.

Among the earlier advocates of the importance of collocations in L2 learning and their inclusion in L2 teaching is Brown(1974)whose suggestion is that an increase in students' knowledge of collocations will result in the improvement of their oral and listening comprehension as well as their reading speed.

Gledhill's (2000: 1) emphasis on the importance of collocations for L2 learners is that they are key part of the writing process and thus it is impossible for a writer to be fluent without a considerable knowledge of the phraseology of a particular domain in which s\he writing.

Nesselhauf (2005) states that L2 students need a large repertoire of collocations in order to write fluently, but unfortunately, they have less exposure to the target language which is English and thus do not have the adequate vocabulary especially the typical one used in academic context.

Collocations are overall important for EFL\ESL learners of English at the level of tertiary education since they help them sound native like and be productive enough when it comes to speaking and writing in language that is acceptable at the academic level.

Hill (2000:68) has given a few reasons of the importance of teaching collocations whereby he stated that collocations improve thought processing and lead to effective communication. According to that researcher, native users of a language read, talk and listen to quick-paced discourses because they have a large repertoire of chunks of language in storage, ready to be produced and recognized. The same researcher goes ahead to say that collocations make easy the acquisition of the correct pronunciation since producing speech from individual words often results in bad stress and intonation.

Linguists and language practitioners proved the knowledge of collocations to be so important in that it helps language learners use the lexical chunks used by native speakers of a language. In the same line, Nattinger & DecCarrico (1992) and Pawley & Syder (1983) have stated that language chunks stand for an identification of which vocabulary or expression to use in different social contexts on the part of language learners.

Nation (2001:318) claimed that collocations are crucial for fluency development in his conclusion that "all fluent and appropriate language requires collocational knowledge".

2.5 Difficult Nature of Collocations in EFL and ESL Context

Despite their widely accepted importance for EFL\ESL learners of English as far as appropriate language production is concerned, collocations still remain problematic for the above said groups of learners. Their difficult nature has over the past few years led some researchers to attempt to determine the major problems that L2 learners of English face most when writing or speaking.

The combination of lexical items as a source of difficulty in vocabulary acquisition has been noted by Korosadowcz-Struzynska (1980) who claims that the learners 'mastery of these troublesome combinations, rather than the knowledge of single words should be the indication of learners' progress. Much like other researchers, Korosado wcz-Struzynska went ahead to say that L2 students also face intra and interlingual problems when using collocations. Another problem pointed out is that collocations are semantically transparent and don't seem to cause problem when it comes to the comprehension of the language. They, thus, remain unnoticed as problematic by both teachers and students (Gouverneur, 2008, Laufer & Waldman, 2011).

Granger (1998) and Paquot (2008) indicated that there is a tendency for L2 students to overuse the few collocations they know while underusing many other collocations that could otherwise help them sound more native-like.

In an experiment carried out by Bahns & Eldaw (1993), a translation and cloze task were used to test German post-secondary learners' active knowledge of 15 English Verb+Noun collocations (i.e. collocations that included words belonging to

open-class categories and excluding words such as prepositions, articles and conjunctions).The German collocations used in the translation test were direct equivalents of the English collocations. In the close test, there were 15 sentences, each one containing one verb+ noun collocation with the verb missing.

The analysis of the data revealed that the subjects produced more than twice as many errors in their translation of the nouns in the noun-verb collocations in their translation of general lexical words while in the cloze test nearly 52% of the responses were grammatically or collocationally unacceptable to a native speaker of English. Such results not only indicate that collocations are problematic even for advanced L2 learners of English, but also show that the learners' knowledge of collocations does not expand in parallel with their knowledge of vocabulary since they could not identify specific collocations although they could use general lexical items.

Bahns & Eldaw (1933:109) stressed the fact that learners' inability to paraphrase collocational phrases suggests that the knowledge of collocation is essential to full communicative mastery.

Given the above literature, it is obvious that, despite their widely accepted importance in EFL and ESL contexts, collocations still pose problem for L2 learners of English, and the correct use of them requires some pedagogical treatment.

2.6 Review of Empirical Studies of L2 Collocation Knowledge

Few studies have been carried out for the sake of investigating learners' receptive knowledge of collocations. Most studies reviewed entailed analyses of learners' production.

Biskup (1992) even argues that perception is unproblematic for learners, and that collocations are fully transparent. It is not clear that this is the case and more empirical support is warranted for these claims.

From the available literature, often a rather small number of items are tested and the drawback being that it is not possible to draw well-founded conclusions especially when item selection is made in an unsystematic way, or not described at all.

The verb+ noun collocations have been investigated to a fair extent but it is quite clear that these word combinations are problematic to the learners even when the individual verbs and nouns are known.

Additionally, the reliability values of the test instruments per se are seldom reported. When different variables are compared, it is essential that the operationalised measures of the variables, i.e., the scores, show a decent degree of reliability. If too high a percentage of a score is marred by unsystematic variance, inconsistencies, attributable to the underlying language ability of the test-taker, then less trust can be placed in any conclusions drawn from the score (Gyllstad, 2007:59).

As pointed out by Bachman (1990:160), in order for a test score to be valid, it must be reliable. Reliability is thus a necessary condition for validity.

Moreover, the answer to the question whether the collocation knowledge is closely related to general proficiency is inconclusive. In some studies, a clear relationship has been observed (Gitsaki, 1999; Bonk, 2001) whereas in other studies, no relationship was established.

Finally, with the exception of Gitsaki (1999), none of the studies reviewed by Gyllstad (2007) compare the learners at different learning levels when it comes to collocation knowledge. This means that there is no clear picture of whether collocation knowledge increases as a function of higher level of study.

2.7 Teaching Collocations

The teaching of collocations as a way forward in foreign language teaching has been claimed by a good few researchers (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992 and Lewis, 1993).

Hill(2000) stressed the idea that teaching collocations should be given the same emphasis in class as individual words because students cannot learn a new word if they don't learn how it well combines with other words to sound more natural. According to that researcher, teachers should teach new words with their most common collocates.

Masharawi (2008) stated that the teaching and the learning of collocations can yield considerable benefits when he stated that collocations constitute one and vital aspect of productive vocabulary. According to him, collocations offer the most natural way to say something. Illustratively, the sentence "Smoking is strictly forbidden" sounds more natural than the sentence "Smoking is strongly forbidden".

The same researcher went ahead to say that a language that is collocationally rich is more precise.

Thus, the precise meaning in any context is determined by the words that surround and combine with the core word by collocation. Furthermore, collocations allow language users, especially learners to predict what kinds of words they can expect to find together.

According to Benson et al. (1985), collocations are arbitrary and unpredictable and that makes it difficult for non-native speakers to cope with them.

Despite their arbitrary nature, many other researchers recommend that teachers should motivate their students to learn collocations.

English collocations are useful not only for English comprehension, but also for English production.

Researchers claim that by memorizing collocational groups, students would have the idea about certain lexical restrictions.

Liu (2000 a) also stated that the more often students are taught English collocations, the more correctly students can make use of them.

Such a declaration was supported by Lin (2000) while investigating the effects of collocation instructions on students' English vocabulary development.

Lin (2002) found that students made progress in producing collocations after receiving collocation instructions.

2.8 Academic Word List

The AWL contains 570 word families that account for approximately 10.0% of the total words (tokens) in academic texts but only 1.4% of the total words in a fiction collection of the same size. This difference in coverage provides evidence that the list contains predominantly academic words.

By highlighting the words that university students meet in a wide range of academic texts, the AWL shows learners with academic goals which words are most worth studying. The list also provides a useful basis for further research into the nature of academic vocabulary.

One of the most challenging aspects of vocabulary learning and teaching in English for academic purposes (EAP) programmes is making principled decisions about which words are worth focusing on during valuable class and independent study time. Academic vocabulary causes a great deal of difficulty for learners (Cohen, Glasman, Rosenbaum- Cohen, Ferrara, & Fine, 1988) because students are generally not as familiar with it as they are with technical vocabulary in their own fields and because academic lexical items occur with lower frequency than general-service vocabulary items do (Worthington & Nation, 1996; Xue & Nation, 1984).

The General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953), developed from a corpus of 5 million words with the needs of ESL/EFL learners in mind, contains the most widely useful 2,000 word families in English.

West used a variety of criteria to select these words, including frequency, ease of learning, coverage of useful concepts, and stylistic level (pp. ix–x). The GSL has been criticised for its size (Engels, 1968), age (Richards, 1974), and need for revision (Hwang, 1989). Despite these criticisms, the GSL covers up to 90% of fiction texts (Hirsh, 1993), up to 75% of nonfiction texts (Hwang, 1989), and up to 76% of the Academic Corpus (Coxhead, 214 TESOL QUARTERLY.1998), the corpus of written academic English compiled for this study. There has been no comparable replacement for the GSL up to now. Academic words (e.g., *substitute, underlie, establish, inherent*) are not highly salient in academic texts, as they are supportive of but not central to the topics of the texts in which they occur.

A variety of word lists have been compiled either by hand or by computer to identify the most useful words in an academic vocabulary. Campion and Elley (1971) and Praninskas (1972) based their lists on corpora and identified words that occurred across a range of texts whereas Lynn (1973) and Ghadessy (1979) compiled word lists by tracking student annotations above words in textbooks.

All four studies were developed without the help of computers. Xue and Nation (1984) created the University Word List (UWL) by editing and combining the four lists mentioned above. The UWL has been widely used by learners, teachers, course designers, and researchers.

However, as an amalgam of the four different studies, it lacked consistent selection principles and had many of the weaknesses of the prior work. The corpora on which the studies were based were small and did not contain a wide and balanced range of topics. An academic word list should play a crucial role in setting vocabulary goals for language courses, guiding learners in their independent study, and informing course and material designers in selecting texts and developing learning activities. However, given the problems with currently available academic vocabulary lists, there is a need for a new academic word list based on data gathered from a large, well-designed corpus of academic English. The ideal word list would be divided into smaller, frequency-based sub-lists to aid in the sequencing of teaching and in materials development. A word list based on the occurrence of word families in a corpus of texts representing a variety of academic registers can provide information about how words are actually used (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with approaches adopted during the collection, processing and analysis of the data. It consists of three chief sections which are the research population, the research instruments and the data analysis procedures. The aim of this chapter is to present methods that were used in the quest to answer the research questions which are, as presented in chapter one:

(1) To what extent do EFL English majors at the University of Burundi perform on academic vocabulary collocations?

(2) To what extent do ESL South African learners of English perform on academic vocabulary collocations?

(3) Who of the EFL and ESL higher education students do better on academic vocabulary collocations?

(4) Which items are more difficult for EFL students on the one hand and for ESL students on the other hand? Which of those ones are common to the two groups?

3.2 Population Investigated

The present study was conducted on two groups of participants, namely EFL and ESL learners of English at a university level. EFL participants were Burundian students majoring in English, in the middle of their first year of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi, a degree that is achieved in three years. These students were referred to as EFL Learners of English for the latter holds the status of a foreign language in Burundi. They were 131 but only 99 sat for the test, and their average age was about 22 years and many of them were males.

They were recruited from an Initiation to Research course and were beforehand informed that their participation in the study was meant for research purposes and were thus encouraged to do so. All of these students were informed a day before the process of collecting data and everyone who was present that day of the data collection took the test. They are all Burundian nationals and speak four languages; Kirundi, their native and official language; French which is an official language in Burundi; Kiswahili, a lingua franca as well as English which is considered as a foreign language in Burundi.

The ESL participants are 123 South African students and their average age is 20. They were recruited from the North-West University where they were taking an English course and English was a subject for them. Much like the first group, they were informed before about the aim of the research and positively responded to the invitation to partake in the activity. Setswana was the main language spoken by many of these participants.

3.3 Research Instrument: Collocation Test

A collocation test was given to both EFL and ESL learners of English in order to answer the questions pursued in this study. The collocations investigated consist of Verb + Noun combinations because of (i) their difficult nature for L2 learners of English (ii) the most important information they contain for communication and (iii) their frequent occurrences as well. More importantly, people when expressing themselves ,tend to start with a noun, which stands for the action they want to do and then think of the verb that goes with it, that is, standing for how to do the action (Nizonkiza, 2014).

Nizonkiza's (2014) test was adopted for the purpose of this study. The test consists of 60 items, but only the first 30 items were used in this study. While developing this test, Nizonkiza (2014) selected the 30 target words (nouns) from Coxhead's

Academic Word List. They were selected using a systematic random sampling, i.e., from a random starting point, every 6th noun in each of the sub-lists (10 in total) the AWL consists of was selected until the sample totaled 60 nouns.

The *Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English* (2002) was used to select the verbs collocating with the nouns. Nizonkiza (2014) affirms that this collocation dictionary was chosen since it presents collocations according to the meaning of the target word and the syntactic categories of the collocates and was designed as a learning tool. The procedure Nizonkiza (2014) followed to select collocates was to look up each of the nouns in the collocation dictionary and then select the verbs collocating with it. As nouns have many verbs collocating with them, some with example sentence and others without, the first verb with an example sentence was retained.

Once the sentences were selected, the collocates were deleted with only the first two letters retained in order to avoid other possible words. Such a test has to do with the ability to use a word when one is requested to do so by an instructor ;whether a lecturer or researcher, in an unconstrained context such as fill in task where a sentence context is provided and the target word that is missing has to be given(Laufer&Nation,1993: 37).

3.4 Test Administration

By the time the test was being administered, participants were already aware that it was meant for research purposes and not just as an exam.

They, thus, had no reason to worry about failing. They were, however, called on to be serious while doing the test since they were told the results could have teaching implications and they were thanked for their contribution and collaboration.

However, even though the test was not marked for the purpose of the course, subjects were compensated for showing seriousness in doing the task, which was considered as one of the in class assignments.

Students were given written instructions with an example as can be seen below.

The instructions were read out for them and they were asked if everything was clear before they could start to take the test.

The testing classroom conditions were set and no collaboration between students was allowed.

Students were requested to put aside everything related to collocations such as dictionaries, and smart phones had to be switched off since some of them could contain collocation dictionary applications or could otherwise be used to check the collocates from Collocation dictionaries that could be available online by the time the test was being administered.

They were requested to fill in the missing letters of the collocates with an example given on the ground of transparency as can be shown below:

Instruction: complete the underlined words in the sentences below:

Example: They **ma...** a beautiful couple.

They **make** a beautiful couple

The test lasted for 60 minutes and after they have finished, they all submitted their copies.

As for the South African students; I obtained the data from my supervisor who was willing to share them with me. As described in Nizonkiza (2014), the testing conditions were more or less the same.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

This section is concerned with the description of data processing and analysis procedures, in other words, details on the data processing procedures and their analysis after the administration of the test.

After collecting all the copies, they were manually marked and a correct answer was awarded with one point and zero for an incorrect one or no answer. Any grammar-or-spelling related mistakes were not taken into consideration. The Burundian students' grades were entered in an Excel file which was then sent to my supervisor for assistance regarding the data processing. The Burundian and the South African data sets were merged into one file for comparative purposes. The file was then imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) which is a software package used to conduct statistical analyses of the data. It was used to calculate the means for each of the groups of participants: EFL and ESL. The means were mapped onto Schmitt et al.' (2001) cut-off point and were used to answer the first and second research questions. Schmitt et al. (2001) suggest a score of 80% for a mastery of words. In addition, the mean scores were converted into estimates of collocations using the formula used in Nizonkiza (2015).

The formula calculates the estimated collocations by multiplying "the target word level with the ratio between the raw score and maximum score at that level" (Zhong and Hirsh 2009, quoted in Nizonkiza, 2015: 136). For instance, a score of 24 out of 30 at the AWL (which consists of 570 words) could result in an estimate of $570 \times 24 \div 30 = 456$ words.

In order to answer the third research question, the means of both groups were compared by running an 'Independent Samples T-Test', which is a test used to compare scores of two groups to show which one does better than the other. The test gives the statistical significance of a difference in scores.

The fourth research question was answered by looking at each item in terms of the scores achieved by each group. SPSS was used to show on average the score of EFL students on each item. I recall that for each item, a student who got it right was awarded 1; then SPSS was used to do the averages item per item. For example, if all the students got an item correct, the average would be 1. If some students missed an item, SPSS would give the average (e.g. 0.98 out of 1). The scores were multiplied by 100 and expressed in percent (%) because it is much easier to read and interpret. The same was done for the ESL group.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter described the population investigated as well as the data collection and data analysis procedures. This chapter presents the results and interprets them in relation to the research questions the present study purports to answer, which are:

(1) To what extent do EFL English majors at the University of Burundi perform on academic vocabulary collocations?

(2) To what extent do ESL South African learners of English perform on academic collocations?

(3) Who of the EFL and ESL higher education students do better on academic collocations?

(4) Which items are more difficult for EFL students on the one hand and for ESL students on the other hand? Which ones are difficult for both groups?

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.2.1 EFL and ESL Performance on Academic Collocations

The first two research aims pursued in this study are about the degree to which EFL and ESL groups perform on academic collocations. Their means scores were calculated using SPSS and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: EFL and ESL Mean Scores on Collocation Test

Group of students	N = Total number of respondents)	Mean = Average out of 30	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EFL	99	13.85	2.961	.277
ESL	123	15.02	3.618	.326

As can be seen in Table 1, the EFL students achieved a score of 13.85 out of 30 while the ESL students achieved a score of 15.02. Mapping these scores onto Schmitt et al.'s (2001) cut-off point of 80% which stands for 24 out of 30 in this case, it can be concluded that none of the groups masters collocations of words from the AWL. Averages of 13.85 for the EFL students and that of 15.02 for the ESL students are much lower than 24.

The mean scores were analyzed further by making estimates of collocations both groups would have.

This was done in order to go beyond the means and see what the means would mean in the real world in terms of collocations mastered by the students. EFL students would have $570 \times 13.85 \div 30 = 263$ while ESL students would have $570 \times 15.02 \div 30 = 285$. This means that EFL students would master collocations of 263 words from the AWL while ESL students would master collocations of 285 words.

These findings show that both EFL and ESL students performed poorly on academic vocabulary collocations. Their performance is far below the minimum expected for a full mastery of collocations from the AWL. These findings answer the first two research questions about the extent to which EFL students on the one hand (first research question) and ESL students on the other hand (second research question) master academic vocabulary collocations.

4.2.2 Comparison of Collocational Competence between EFL and ESL Students

The third research aim pursued in this study is to compare performance between EFL and ESL higher education students on academic collocations. The mean scores of both groups were compared by means of an 'Independent Samples T-Test' as described in the data analysis section. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Difference between EFL and ESL Students on Collocation Test

Group of students	Mean = Average out of 30	Mean Difference	Significance
EFL	13.85	1.17	0.007
ESL	15.02		

As presented in Table 2, the mean difference between the two groups, i.e., EFL and ESL students, is 1.17 (column 4). This difference between mean scores is statistically significant. As can be seen in the last column (entitled Significance), 0.007 is lower than the cut-off point for significance which is 0.05. The interpretation is that anything below this figure is statistically significant while the opposite (the figure higher than 0.05) is not.

Therefore, 0.007 means that the performance difference between EFL and ESL is not due by chance. Put differently, this could be interpreted as only 7 cases out of a 1000 would be caused by chance.

Thus, the mean difference of 1.17 no matter how small it may look entails that ESL students outperformed their EFL counterparts. These findings answer the third research question addressed in this study by proving that ESL higher education students performed better than their EFL counterparts on academic vocabulary collocations.

4. 3 Items Analysed in relation to EFL and ESL groups

4. 3.1 Introduction

The fourth research aim pursued in this study is to know which items are more difficult for EFL students on the one hand and for ESL students on the other hand and which ones are difficult for both groups. For practical reasons, the results will be presented in three different sections.

I will start with comparing the items in both groups. I will proceed with the items analysed in relation to the EFL group, which will be followed by items analysed in relation to the ESL group.

4.3.2 Performance on Items Compared in EFL and ESL students

In order to answer the first sub question of the fourth research question of knowing which items are more difficult for both EFL and ESL students, the scores for each item were presented side by side for EFL and ESL groups in order to facilitate the comparison.

Table 3: Scores Achieved by both EFL and ESL Students on Each Item

Items	Group of Students	Mean	Percent (%)
It_1: perform analysis	EFL	1.00	100
	ESL	.98	98
It_2: examine context	EFL	.34	34
	ESL	.07	7
It_3: restrict export	EFL	.07	7
	ESL	.28	28
It_4: address issue	EFL	.03	3
	ESL	.50	50
It_5: explain principle	EFL	.43	43
	ESL	.64	64
It_6: consider aspect	EFL	.18	18
	ESL	.34	34
It_7: obtain credit	EFL	.92	92
	ESL	.93	93
It_8: judge impact	EFL	.43	43
	ESL	.44	44

It_9: affect perception	EFL	.89	89
	ESL	.91	91
It_10: establish residence	EFL	.48	48
	ESL	.41	41
It_11: keep tradition	EFL	.17	17
	ESL	.20	20
It_12: advance theory	EFL	.09	9
	ESL	.11	11
It_13: invite comment	EFL	.15	15
	ESL	.04	4
It_14: promote cooperation	EFL	.64	64
	ESL	.32	32
It_15: offer framework	EFL	.92	92
	ESL	.91	91
It_16:form layer	EFL	.75	75
	ESL	.63	63
It_17: reach proportion	EFL	.03	3
	ESL	.15	15
It_18:complete task	EFL	.40	40
	ESL	.85	85
It_19: allow access	EFL	.88	88
	ESL	.59	59
It_20: require concentration	EFL	.63	63
	ESL	.50	50
It_21: access goal	EFL	.09	9
	ESL	.33	33
It_22: create job	EFL	.92	92
	ESL	.93	93
It_23: enter phase	EFL	.11	11
	ESL	.11	11
It_24: release statistics	EFL	.02	2
	ESL	.20	20
It_25: attend academy	EFL	.89	89
	ESL	.93	93
It_26: make/maintain contact	EFL	.86	86
	ESL	.84	84
It_27: reduce exposure	EFL	.39	39
	ESL	.31	31
It_28: improve margin	EFL	.43	43
	ESL	.87	87
It_29:demand precision	EFL	.49	49
	ESL	.29	29
It_30: display symbol	EFL	.23	23
	ESL	.42	42

As can be seen from Table 3, EFL and ESL groups performed differently on the different items. ESL students outperformed EFL students on some of the items while EFL students did better than their ESL counterparts on others.

Items on which EFL students did better than their ESL counterparts amount to eleven out of thirty in total. They include the following: *examine context, establish residence, invite comment, promote cooperation, offer framework, form layer, allow access, require concentration, make/maintain contact, reduce exposure and demand precision.*

Items on which ESL students did better than EFL students amount to seventeen out of thirty in total. They include the following: *restrict export, address issue, explain principle, consider aspect, obtain credit, judge impact, affect perception, keep tradition, advance theory, reach proportion, complete task, access goal, create job, release statistics, attend academy, improve margin and display symbol.*

However, both ESL and EFL students achieved the same score on the 23rd item (*enter phase*) as they all got 11%.

A thorough assessment of the scores above indicates that items could be grouped in eleven categories. The first category includes items where both EFL and ESL students achieved less than 5% (*reach proportion* and *release statistics* for EFL students and *invite comment* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to one item. The second category includes items where both EFL and ESL groups achieved between 5% and 10% (*restrict export, advance theory* and *access goal* for EFL students and *examine context* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 2 items.

The third category contains items where both EFL and ESL groups achieved between 10% and 20% (*enter phase, keep tradition, invite comment* and *consider aspect* for EFL students as well as *enter phase, keep tradition , advance theory,*

reach proportion and release statistics for ESL)with a difference of one item. The fourth category includes items where both groups achieved between 20% and 30 (*display symbol* for EFL students as well as *restrict export* for ESL students) with a difference of 0.

The fifth category contains items where both EFL and ESL groups achieved between 30% and 40% (*examine context and reduce exposure* for EFL students as well as *consider aspect, promote cooperation, access goal and reduce exposure* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 2. The sixth category is about items where both EFL and ESL students achieved between 40% and 50%(*explain principle, judge impact, establish residence, complete task, improve margin and demand precision* for EFL students as well as *address issue, judge impact, establish residence and display symbol* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 2. The seventh category is about items where only ESL students achieved between 50% and 60%, thus no difference as EFL students are not included in this category.

The eighth category contains items where both EFL and ESL students achieved between 60% and 70% (*promote cooperation and require concentration* for EFL students as well as *explain principle and form layer* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 0. The ninth category contains items where EFL students achieved between 70% and 80% (only *form layer*) and thus no difference as ESL students are not represented in this category.

The tenth category contains items where EFL and ESL students achieved between 80% and 90% (*affect perception, allow access, attend academy and make/maintain contact* for EFL students as well as *complete task, make/maintain contact and improve margin* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 1.

The eleventh and last category includes items where EFL and ESL students achieved between 90% and 100% (*perform analysis, offer framework and create job* for EFL students as well as *perform analysis, obtain credit, affect perception, offer framework and create job* for ESL students) where the difference amounts to 2.

On the basis of the findings above, items such as *reach proportion, release statistics, restrict export, advance theory and access goal* were found to be the most difficult items for EFL students as they achieved less than 10% on them while the items *invite comment and examine context* were found to be the most difficult ones for ESL students as they achieved less than 10% on them.

To find more difficult items for both EFL and ESL students, I considered the below 15% performance on both groups with the items *enter phase and advance theory* on which neither EFL students nor ESL ones achieved 15%.

4. 3.3 Difficult Items for EFL Learners of English

The second sub question of the fourth research question is about the items which proved to be difficult for EFL students. To answer it, the scores presented in Table 3 above were grouped in 10 bands of 10% and one band of the items where the students achieved a score of 100%. They are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Items which Proved to be difficult for EFL Students

Bands of about 10%	Items	Total number of items	Total in %
100%	Perform analysis	1	3.33
90% to 99.9%	Obtain credit Offer framework Create job	3	10
80% to 89.9%	Affect perception Allow access Attend academy Make/maintain contact	4	13.33
70% to 79.9%	Form layer	1	3.33
60 to 69.9%	Promote cooperation Require concentration	2	6.66
50 to 59.9%	none	0	-
40 to 49.9%	Explain principle Judge impact Establish residence Complete task	4	13.33
30% to 39.9%	Examine context Reduce exposure	2	6.66
20% to 29.9%	Display symbol	1	3.33
10% to 19.9%	Consider aspect Keep tradition enter phase	3	10
Below 10%	Restrict export Address issue Advance theory Reach proportion Access goal Release statistics	6	20

As presented in Table 4, 3.33% of items —actually one item—were mastered by all the students as they achieved a score of 100%. These are words the collocations of which are known to all the students and therefore not difficult. 10% of the items belong to the 90-99.9% band while 13.33% of the items belong to the 80-89.9 band.

Referring to Schmitt et al.'s (2001) cut-off point, it can be concluded that 26.66% of the items (3.33% + 10% + 13.33%) are mastered by the students and thus easy for them.

The rest of the items are not mastered by the EFL students. They can be grouped into two big categories. The first one consists of items ranging from 30% to 79.9% while the second contains items below 30%. The first category includes 3.33% of the items (actually one item) which belong to the 70-79.9 band. It also contains 6.66% of the items that belong to the 60-69.9 band. There is no percentage for words belonging to the 50-59.9 band.13.33% of the items belong to the 40-49.9 band while6.66% of them belong to the 30-39.9 band. The second category (below 30%) is composed of 3.33% of the items that belong to the 20-29.9 band; 10% of the items that belong to the 10-19.9 band; and 20% of the items fall below 10%. According to Nizonkiza (2015) referring to test experts' observations, the latter category (the below 30%) is composed of difficult items.

4. 3.4 Difficult Items for ESL Learners of English

The third sub question of the fourth research question is about the items which proved to be difficult for ESL students. To answer it, the scores presented in Table 4 above were grouped in 10 bands of 10%.They are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Items which Proved to be difficult for ESL Students

Bands of about 10%	Items	Total number of items	Total in %
90% to 99.9%	Perform analysis Obtain credit Affect perception Offer framework Create job Attend academy	6	20%
80% to 89.9%	Complete task Make/maintain contact Improve margin	3	10%
70% to 79.9%	0	0	-
60% to 69.9%	Explain principle Form layer	2	6.66%
50 to 59.9%	Address issue Allow access Require concentration	3	10%
40 to 49.9%	Judge impact Establish residence Display symbol	3	10%
30% to 39.9%	Consider aspect Promote cooperation Access goal Reduce exposure	4	13.33%
20% to 29.9%	Restrict export Keep tradition Release statistics	3	10%
10% to 19.9%	Advance theory Reach proportion Enter phase	3	10%
Below 10%	Examine context Invite comment	2	6.66

As presented in Table 5, 20% of the items belong to the 90-99.9% band while 10% of the items belong to the 80-89.9 band. Referring to Schmitt et al.'s (2001) cut-off point, it can be concluded that 30% of the items (20% + 10%) are mastered by the students and thus easy for them.

The rest of the items are not mastered by the ESL students. They can be grouped into two big categories. The first one consists of items ranging from 30% to 79.9% while the second contains items below 30%. There is no percentage for 70-79.9 %. The first category includes 6.66% of the items which belong to the 60-69.9 band. It also contains 10% of the items that belong to the 50-59.9 band. 10% of the items belong to the 40-49.9 band while 13.33% of them belong to the 30-39.9 band. The second category (below 30%) is composed of 10% of the items that belong to the 20-29.9 band; 10% of the items that belong to the 10-19.9 band; and 6.66 % of the items that fall below 10%.

4.4 Interpretation of the Findings

The present study was an attempt to compare collocational competence between EFL and ESL learners of English at higher education. In order to compare the competence between the two groups, the same test was given to both Burundian and South African learners of English at the University. The scores achieved by both groups show that collocations have proved to be difficult for the two groups. This was achieved through four aims.

Through the first two aims, i.e. assessing the extent to which Burundian EFL learners of English on the one hand and ESL South African learners of English on the other hand master collocations of academic vocabulary; the results showed that ESL learners of English outperformed their EFL counterparts on academic collocations. ESL students achieved a score of 15.2 out of 30 while the EFL group achieved a score of 13.85 out of 30.

Therefore, the above findings come to prove that neither EFL nor ESL students achieved complete mastery of collocation since they should have achieved 80% (24 out of 30) according to Schmitt et al. (2001) to be granted complete mastery of the collocations from the Academic Word List.

This also comes to confirm my assumption for the first and second research questions that both EFL and ESL groups do not master the collocations of the academic vocabulary. These results confirm previous findings that collocations are problematic for both EFL and ESL learners of English even at higher education.

Through the third aim, which was about comparing performance on academic collocations of EFL and ESL learners of English in higher education, the scores achieved by ESL learners of English (15.2 out 30) against 13.85 out of 30 by their EFL counterparts, are an indication that, given their teaching material available and exposure to English in comparison with their EFL counterparts, ESL learners of English did better than EFL ones on academic vocabulary collocations. These results also come to confirm my assumption that ESL learners of English outperform their EFL counterparts on academic collocations.

These results contradict Nizonkiza and Ngwenya (2015) who found that EFL Burundian English majors outperformed ESL South African learners of comparable level of studies -higher education students in their second year.

As for the fourth aim pursued in this study which was about quantifying the difficult items for both the EFL and ESL students and see which ones are more difficult for one group as opposed to the other and which ones might be common to the two groups, the findings show that many items were found to be difficult for both EFL and ESL learners of English given that none of the two groups achieved 24 out of 30, i.e. 80 percent in the same test administered to them (EFL students achieved 13.85 out of 30 while ESL ones achieved 15.02 out of 30).

Items such as *reach proportion, release statistics, restrict export, advance theory* and *access goal* have proved to be very difficult for EFL students and the items such as *invite comment and examine context* have proved to be the most difficult items for ESL students. None of the two groups achieved 10% on the above items. On the item *enter phase*, both EFL and ESL students achieved the same score of 11%.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In this study, I sought to compare collocational competence between EFL and ESL learners of English at the University. Even though ESL learners are believed to have enough exposure to English more than their EFL counterparts, the results show that both EFL and ESL learners of English performed poorly on academic collocations. The findings obtained in this study made it possible for me to answer the questions raised in the study.

After this overview of the major findings of this study, it is important to remind the reader about the steps through which the study has been carried out. It consisted of five chapters namely the General Introduction, the Related Literature, the Methodology adopted when the study was being conducted, Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings, the Conclusion and Recommendations.

As far as the General Introduction is concerned, it gives some background information on the topic and focuses on what the problem is and, especially, why it should be dealt with. This chapter also highlights the goals to be achieved and the questions to be answered. The first chapter also presents the assumptions or anticipated answers to the research questions, the motivation to conduct the study and its scope as well.

As for the second chapter, it reviews the existing literature in the field of collocation particularly V+N combinations from the Academic Word List which are focused on in this study.

Concerning the methodology chapter, it deals with the procedures used to collect and analyse the data in the present study. It mainly consists of the population investigated, the instruments that were used and the data analysis procedures adopted for the study.

It is also about test administration, the way test scores were analyzed and interpreted in order to answer the research questions that were raised in the study.

The fourth chapter was concerned with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results of the study in relation to the aims pursued in this study.

The fifth and last chapter of this study is concerned with the conclusion after the interpretation of the findings in relation to the research hypotheses. The recommendations formulated after the presentation of the findings will be presented at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the interpretation of the findings and the conclusions drawn from this study, the use of collocations poses a major problem for both EFL and ESL learners of English at the University. Therefore, I judged it worth formulating some recommendations to the stakeholders of the Burundian and South African educational systems such as the Burundian and the South African Governments, lecturers/ teachers and learners as well as further researchers.

5.2.1 Recommendations to the Governments of Burundi and South Africa

Given that both EFL and ESL learners of English have performed poorly on collocations pertaining to the Academic Word List (AWL), the governments of Burundi and South Africa , through the Ministry of Education, Higher Training and Scientific Research and the Department of Higher Education and Training respectively, should elaborate programs that aim to teach collocations from the basic to higher education as this study shows that learners from both EFL and ESL groups have been more exposed to single words than collocations what possibly accounts for their failure in collocation test.

Teachers should be taught collocations, trained on how to teach them and know their role and importance as well. Some teachers if not many may not be fully competent when it comes to collocations which remain difficult for even advanced learners. They should also provide teachers with enough teaching materials and resources related to collocations of the Academic Word List.

5.2.2 Recommendation to EFL and ESL Teachers and Learners

I would recommend lecturers and teachers to emphasize the teaching of collocations from basic to higher education by making use of Nizonkiza's approach to teaching collocations that belong to the Academic Word List through the collocation Web Model (CWM) which proved to be effective enough at different learning stages and collocations from vocabulary of different frequency bands (See Havyarimana, 2016).

I would also recommend EFL and ESL learners of English to often use Nizonkiza's Collocation Web Model to improve their use of collocations.

5.2.3 Recommendations to Further Researchers

As the available literature indicates, the use of collocations still poses a major problem among EFL and ESL students as many items from the administered test proved to be difficult for both groups.

As I have not been able to find out the reason why some items were more difficult than others to the two groups because I did not know the ESL group in terms of their linguistic background, I would recommend other researchers to conduct a study to find out what might be the causes of collocation errors made by both EFL and ESL learners of English.

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APPENDIX

The Collocation Test Given to both EFL and ESL Learners

Productive Vocabulary Test

Name: Date:

Level of study (year): Bachelor of Arts Start hour:

Faculty: FASS End hour:

University: Burundi

Instruction: Complete the underlined words in the sentences below.

Example: They **ma...** a beautiful couple.

They **make** a beautiful couple.

1. They had to **perform** an in-depth analysis of the results.
2. Institutions have to **examine** appropriate contexts in which to present examples of language in use for the children.
3. The UN agreed on plans to **restrict** the export of arms to certain countries.
4. This evening, we need to **address** the issue of legalisation of soft drugs.
5. She went on to **explain** the principle behind what she was doing.
6. We have to **consider** many aspects of pollution in order to better tackle it.
7. If you do not have a regular income, you may be unable to **obtain** credit.
8. It is difficult to **judge** the impact of the changes on employment patterns.
9. The latest developments will hardly **affect** the perception of the crisis by the public.
10. The family will **establish** temporary residence in the manor house.
11. Villagers get together every year to **keep** this old tradition alive.
12. Investigators are likely to **advance** a set of theories about the princess's death.
13. The school planned to **invite** comments from parents about the new curriculum.

14. We must make a real effort to **promote** cooperation between universities and industry.
15. They have to **offer** a basic framework of ground rules for discussions.
16. Use enough gravel to **form** a layer about 50mm thick.
17. The food shortage is likely to **reach** crisis proportion.
18. She failed to **complete** the task she had been set.
19. The new computer can **allow** access to all the files.
20. Such a game may **require** great concentration.
21. Many developing countries hope to **access** their goals of providing free primary education to everyone.
22. It is hoped that the new scheme will **create** jobs in the region.
23. Society evolved to **enter** a technological phase.
24. The government will **release** new statistics on the cost of living.
25. He was advised to **attend** police academy.
26. We need to **make/maintain** contact with the organisation although it may be difficult after many years.
27. Banks will seek to **reduce** their exposure to risks.
28. Higher productivity has enabled them to **improve** their profit margin.
29. Any surgery may **demand** great precision.
30. Hotels that **display** this symbol offer activities for children.