

Collocation, Colligation and Semantic Prosody *

Dr. Mohammad S. Mansoor

Lect., Cihan University, Kurdistan Region, Erbil

Yusra M. Salman

Asst. Lect., Cihan University, Kurdistan Region, Erbil

Abstract

This paper tries to investigate the relationship between collocation, colligation and semantic prosody as interdependent and overlapping notions or phenomena, which are often confused or misidentified by the majority of advanced learners at the university level and, even to some extent, by some academics in the field of English language teaching. At the outset, the three notions are explicitly defined with typical examples so as to draw a clear-cut distinction, and establish a well-defined characterization of each one of them.

The core of the paper is focused on the semantic prosodies of the lexical item 'vitality' as cited by the British National Corpus. The paper also tries to reveal the nature of semantic prosodies of collocates which form lexical combinations (collocation) or grammatical combinations (colligation). In addition, we attempt to identify the type of each semantic prosody (positive, negative, neutral), the genre or variety and the text domains in which it occurs (leisure, social science, commerce, finance, applied science, imaginative prose, dialogue, monologue, etc.).

Key words: collocation, colligation, semantic prosody (positive, negative, neutral), corpus, text domain.

التلازم اللفظي - النحوي - النظمي الدلالي

د. محمد سلمان منصور

مدرس، كلية الآداب والفنون، جامعة جيهان، أربيل

يسرى محمد سلمان

مدرس مساعد، كلية الآداب والفنون، جامعة جيهان، أربيل

□

المستخلص

يحاول هذا البحث تحري العلاقة المترابطة بين ثلاثة انماط من التلازم بين الكلمات في اللغة الانكليزية: اللفظي (Collocation) والنحوي (Colligation) والنظمي-الدلالي (Semantic Prosody) باعتبارها مفاهيم او ظواهر لغوية متداخلة ومعتمدة على بعضها البعض، والتي غالباً ما تسبب الاربك وسوء الفهم لكثير من مستخدمي اللغة الانكليزية وحتى المتقدمين منهم وإلى حد ما الاكاديميين والمتخصصين في اللغة وتدريسها.

بداية يقدم البحث تعريفاً دقيقاً للمفاهيم الثلاثة معزراً بالامثلة التوضيحية للتوصل إلى تمييز ووصف واضح المعالم لكل منهما.

إن جوهر البحث ينصب على التلازمات النظمية-الدلالية المرتبطة بمفردة (vitaly) كما وردت في قائمة بيانات الفهرست الوطني البريطاني للكلمات وأستعمالاتها (British National Corpus).

وفي هذا الصدد حاول الباحثان كشف طبيعة التلازمات الدلالية للكلمات عامةً مع مفردة البحث (vitaly) وكذلك القرائن والسياقات الواردة في (BNC) كتابةً وكلاماً. كما يهدف البحث إلى تحديد نوعية وطبيعة التلازمات الدلالية: إيجابية، كانت سلبية أو محايدة فضلاً عن تبيان ميادين ومجالات أستعمالها كما وردت في BNC.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلازم اللفظي، التلازم النحوي، النظمي - الدلالي (إيجابي، سلبي، محايد)، نص مكتوب أو مسموع، مجال النص المكتوب.

1) Introduction:

This paper attempts to draw a clear-cut distinction between the three terms; collocation, colligation and semantic prosody. The justification for such an attempt is the increasing role these notions play in EFL learning/teaching. The core of the work done in this paper is centered on the collocational/ colligational behavior of the lexical item ‘*vitally*’, and its semantic prosodies (positive, negative, neutral), as well as the text domain in which they occur (leisure, social science, commerce. finance, applied science, imaginative prose, dialogue, monologue, etc.). The main source of data as regards the semantic prosodies of the adverb *vitally* is from the British National Corpus (BNC).

While collocation and colligation have recently attained much attention and interest from researchers and linguists studying the English language, there has been little work done in the area of semantic prosody. This study is corpus-based since the concordances in the corpus are actual representations of native speakers’ use of language in real life situations.

2. Background and Definition of Terms

Collocation, colligation and semantic prosody are not totally separate concepts, but rather, interdependent and together create an intricate network of meaning. Both collocation and semantic prosody are concerned with the lexical and semantic patterning of words, while colligation is mainly concerned with the grammatical patterning of words in addition to their semantic associations.

According to the OALD (2006: 281), **collocation** is “a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance”. The word collocation was first introduced as a technical term by Firth, a

forerunner in this field, by stating: “I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation, and apply the test of collocability” (1957: 194). Previously, he had referred to the combinatory nature of collocation clearly and explicitly: “You shall know a word by the company it keeps” (ibid: 179). Later on, he extended his first remarks about collocation by saying that “collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or customary places of the word” (1968: 181).

Since then, other linguists and scholars have been concerned with the term and defined it in their own right, but all of them have agreed and focused on the co-occurrence nature of words.

Halliday (1966) and Sinclair (1966) introduce the notion that patterns of collocation can form the basis for a lexical analysis of language as an alternative to, and an independent analysis of the grammatical analysis. In this sense, they regard the two levels of analysis as being complementary to each other. In this respect, Halliday (1966: 151, 157) mentions that collocational patterns of lexical items can lead to generalization at the lexical level.

Hardi (2008) defines collocation as words that occur together in a text. This co-occurrence, he believes, is frequent enough to make a pair of words as a collocational phrase. To Lewis (1993: 93), collocation is “the way individual words co-occur with others. It is the way words combine or occur together in predictable ways”. McCarthy and O’Dell define collocation as “a pair or group of words that are often used together” which sounds natural to native speakers (2005: 6).

Horst Bogats (1997) in his ARCS dictionary defines collocation as the co-occurrence possibilities of linguistic units,

words that occur together and form one single semantic unit. Such words are spontaneously and naturally associated in the minds of native speakers, like *hard currency* not *strong currency*, *made a mistake*, not *did a mistake*, *do research* not *make a research*, *death penalty* not *death punishment*, etc. Hill and Lewis refer to the predictable nature of collocation as pairs of words that occur together so that when we see one word, we strongly expect the other (1999:6).

McIntosh (1961) and Mitchell (1971) emphasize the interdependent relation between collocation and colligation by presenting lexical and grammatical analyses (collocation and colligation, respectively): “Collocations are to be studied within grammatical matrices [which] in turn depend for their recognition on the observation of collocational similarities” (Mitchell, 1971: 65).

Marco (1999) distinguishes between two types of collocation: lexical and grammatical. For lexical combinations of words, he uses the term **collocation**, and the term **colligation** for the grammatical combinations of words. According to his categorization, colligation is the same as grammatical collocations (Baleghizadeh & Nik, 2011: 103).

Hoey (2001: 234) refers to the term ‘colligation’ and defines it as “the grammatical company a word keeps and the position it prefers”. More specifically and accurately, a word’s colligation is what it typically does grammatically. Thus, colligation is concerned with the relationship between a word and its grammatical environment or company, i.e. the context in which it prefers to occur (with a preposition, to-infinitive, an article, that-clause, etc.).

The difference between grammatical and lexical collocation is well defined by Bahns (1993: 57). Examples of grammatical collocations include: *account for*, *advantage over*, *adjacent to*, all of which consist of a verb, a noun or an adjective plus a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause. On the contrary, lexical collocations do not contain prepositions, infinitives or clauses, but verbs, nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

Benson et al (1997: xv-xxxiii) make a clear-cut distinction between grammatical and lexical collocations. To them, “grammatical collocation is a phrase consisting of a dominant word (noun, adjective, and verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause”. They divide grammatical collocations into eight types; some of which are noun + preposition (pride in, connection between, lack of), preposition + noun (in advance, on the alert, in demand), adjective + preposition (famous for, confident about, afraid of), verb + preposition (accuse of, depend on/upon, charge with), noun + that clause (there is indication that....., he denied the accusation that...), verb + that clause (she admitted that he, we regret that we.....), noun + to-infinitive (it is a pleasure to do it). Lexical collocations, on the other hand, are divided them into seven major types. Typical examples are: perform an operation, launch a missile (v. + n.), strong/weak tea, crushing defeat, hard currency (adj. + n.), an act of violence, a bouquet of flowers (n. + n.), strictly accurate, keenly aware (adv.+ adj.) apologize humbly, appreciate sincerely (v. + adv.) etc.

Semantic prosody (SP) can be simply described as the semantic associations or environments in which a word or a phrase occurs (positive, negative, neutral). It is the way in which words can be identified in the course of frequent occurrences

with specific collocations or colligations. As a term, it was first coined by Sinclair in 1987 who borrowed Firth's notion of phonological prosody. The term was first introduced to the public by Louw (1993), and later widely used by Stubbs (1995, 2001), Partington (1998, 2004), Hoey (2001), Hunston (2000, 2007) and others.

The notion of SP has attracted much attention since its advent in the early 1990s. With the help of computerized corpus data much research has examined this linguistic phenomenon from various perspectives. Researchers have also recognized the importance of SP for foreign language vocabulary learning and teaching (Partington, 1998) and (Hoey, 2000).

Sinclair (1991: 112), although not explicitly using the term 'semantic prosody', first describes it by indicating that "many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain environment". In this respect, he gives, as an example, the lexical item 'happen' which is habitually associated with unpleasant events (accidents, mistakes). On another occasion (1999), he refers to the notion as the usage of a word that gives an impression of an attitudinal or a pragmatic meaning.

Partington (1998: 68) elaborates on the same point, but has extended the definition by adding that it is "the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries". According to this definition, SP is more strongly associated with connotation.

Louw (1993: 157) defines the term as "a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates".

Later (2000: 57), he defines it as a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates. To him, the primary function of semantic prosody is to express the speaker's/writer's attitude or evaluation (ibid: 58).

Stubbs (1996, 176) defines the notion of SP as “a particular collocational phenomenon”. Moreover, he classifies it into three categories: negative prosody, positive prosody and neutral prosody. He highlights the relationship between collocation and SP and emphasizes that they both are subject to the co-selection of lexis. For instance, the word *provides* is liable to collocate with words like: *assistance, funds, opportunities, relief*, etc. in the semantic fields of *care, food, help, money*, and thus, building up a favorable or a positive prosody. According to Hoey (2001: 232), SP “occurs when a word associates with a particular set of meaning.....the word occurs in the company of certain kinds of meaning rather than others”.

Hunston (2002: 104) expanded the notion of semantic prosody by suggesting that in addition to collocating with positive or negative groupings of words, lexical items can also collocate with semantic sets. In this respect, she asserts: “A word may be said to have a particular semantic prosody if it can be shown to co-occur typically with other words that belong to a particular semantic set”. The idea is that we can tell the SP of a word by the types of words it frequently co-occurs (collocates) with and the environment it prefers (positive, negative or neutral). For example, the word *impressive* tends to have a positive semantic prosody when it collocates with lexical items like: *dignity, talent, gains, achievement, performance*, etc. While the word *rife* tends to have a negative semantic prosody through its collocation with words like: *crime, misery, corruption, cheating, racism*, etc.

3. Semantic Prosody: Summary of Related Studies

In this section, a summary of the major studies that deal with the SP of certain words and phrases is listed in chronological order:

1. Sinclair (1991) investigated and analyzed the SP of the phrase *set in*. He found out that it is associated with unpleasant events, i.e. it has a negative SP through its collocation with words like: *decay, ill-will, infection, prejudice bitterness, anti-climax, rote*, etc. On the contrary, the word *career* mostly collocates with words like: *satisfying, successful, good, potential, academic, teaching*, etc., all of which indicate a positive prosody. It is clear that Sinclair's study covered the investigation of only two lexical items, and that made its scope rather limited.
2. Louw (1993) made a more comprehensive study by illustrating the SP of several examples such as the adverb *utterly*, the phrasal verbs *bent on, build up* and the colligation *symptomatic of*. He indicated that all of them have negative semantic prosodies when they collocate with unpleasant or undesirable things such as *destroying, ruining, clinical, depression, multitude of sins*, etc. Concerning the phrasal verb *build up*, he stated that, as a transitive verb, the SP is favorable (e.g. *build up confidence*), but as an intransitive verb the prosody tends to be negative (e.g. *resistance builds up*). He called this kind of phenomenon mixed prosody instead of neutral prosody.
3. Stubbs (1995) analyzed the SP of *cause* (verb/noun). He found out that 90% of the collocates are of negative nature: *cancer, crisis, accident, delay, death, damage, trouble*, etc. Stubbs also indicated that the word *effects* are usually featured with

negative SP with the collocates: *adverse, devastating, harmful, ill, negative, toxic*, etc.

4. Partington (1998: 68) studied the SP of the verb *commit* which tends to collocate with words like *crime, offence, foul*, etc. that indicate unfavorable associations (negative connotations). The adjective *impressive*, on the other hand, collocates with items such as *achievement, talent* and *dignity*. In this manner, it is considered to have a positive SP (ibid: 77). By contrast, *rife* tends to co-occur with words such as *crime, misery* and *disease*; hence its interpretation has a negative SP (ibid: 67).
5. Wei's analysis (2002) of the SP of the lexical item *cause* matches that of Stubb's with respect to general English. As for academic English, he stated that *cause* has a stronger negative prosody than in general English. Wei also observed that the word *career* has positive associations in both academic and general English texts, but the only difference between the two texts is that *career* shares a weaker positive SP in academic texts.
6. Wang (2004) studied extensively the SPs of five lexical items: *incite, impressive, contribute to, persist* and *preserve* in ten bilingual English-Chinese dictionaries. He examined the prosodies of these lexical items in English native speakers' corpora and then in the dictionaries. His analysis shows that the verbs *incite* and *persist* tend to have negative SP. The colligations *contribute to* have a neutral prosody, while the adjective *impressive* and the verb *preserve* have positive prosodies.

4. The Importance of Collocation, Colligation and Semantic Prosody in ELT

It is evident that vocabulary building is the cornerstone of the process of first language acquisition without which no communication can be achieved. It is also evident that knowledge of lexical items with their syntactic-semantic combinations is a prerequisite for effective communication which reflects the native speaker's overall competence. This is based, to a large extent, on the language user's storage of a large amount of collocations, colligations together with their semantic associations.

As for foreign learners of English, it is a matter of highest importance to learn vocabulary items in context and in combination with other words to form collocations and colligations. This co-occurrence of words in chunks rather than isolated fragments enhances vocabulary building and activates the process of language learning. It is also important to know the context or the semantic environment in which lexical combinations (collocations) and grammatical combinations (colligations) occur, i.e. their semantic prosodies (negative, positive, or neutral) which all reflect the attitudinal or pragmatic meaning intended by the language user.

Researchers and linguists have realized the significance of the combinatory nature of language through collocations and colligations together with their semantic prosodies, and the increasing role they play in EFL learning and teaching. It is, therefore, a top priority that collocations and colligations should be included in language teaching programs from the beginning. As for SP, Partington (1998: 8) argues that information about it is “vital for non-native speakers to understand not only what is grammatically possible in their language production but also

what is appropriate and what actually happens”. Awareness of SP is greatly beneficial in interpreting the attitudes intended by the language user, and helps the language learner to use lexical items in their appropriate environments or contexts. According to Hunston (2002:142), “vocabulary teaching needs to take account of semantic prosody” because so far, and as Parrington (1998) put it, little work has been done to explore how to apply SP in ELT pedagogy.

For vocabulary study, learners need to master not only the meaning of a lexical item, its spelling, pronunciation, grammatical features, but also its collocations and the semantic environments in which it occurs. Being unaware of a particular word’s collocation, colligation and SP may cause a variety of difficulties to foreign learners in using this word effectively and appropriately in a variety of contexts. Collocational/ colligational combinations, with the semantic environments in which they occur, are to be learnt by foreign learners of English since this knowledge will help them approach the language with more fluency, accuracy and native-like production. Morgan Lewis (2001:14) highlights collocation as an essential element in language teaching and learning. He argues, if collocations are not introduced to learners, the process of evolving and deepening understanding is delayed. Thus, teaching collocation with its two types: lexical and grammatical plus their semantic associations can highly accelerate language learning.

5. Semantic Prosodies of *vitally* in the BNC

According to the BNC, the adverb *vitally* has 231 occurrences in writing and 29 occurrences in speech. Out of the total occurrences in written English, 166 hits of *vitally* collocate with the adjective *important*, and 27 hits (out of 29) in spoken English. The miscellaneous group consists of 65 occurrences (in written English) and 2 (in spoken English) in which *vitally*

collocates with a variety of verbs: *depend*, *affect*, *contribute*, *cause*, *need*, etc., and adjectives: *aware*, *conscious*, *significant*, *relevant*, *interested*, etc. There are very few occurrences (only two) in which *vitality* functions as a sentence adverb where it collocates with a whole sentence rather than a particular word. There are two cases in which *vitality* collocates with another adverb such as *secondly and vitality* and *equally vitality*. A detailed description of these prosodies will follow subsequently.

5.1 Semantic Prosodies of *vitality important* in Written English

A careful analysis of the collocation *vitality important* shows that, out of the 166 occurrences, it tends to occur mostly in positive semantic environments rather than negative or neutral ones. The positive prosody occurs in 98 contexts, while there are only 28 negative semantic prosodies and 40 neutral prosodies.

As for the text domains in which these prosodies occur, the BNC shows that the most common ones are social science: 45 occurrences, world affairs: 33, leisure: 25, applied science: 18, commerce and finance: 17, belief and thought: 10, natural and pure science: 10, arts: 7 and imaginative prose: 7. All these details are shown in table (1) below:

Table 1
Semantic Prosodies of *vitally important* in Written English

Frequency	Text domain	Type of prosody	Frequency	Text domain	Type of prosody
1	medical	positive	6	arts	positive
1	arts	neutral	28	social science	positive
5	social science	negative	12	social science	neutral
7	belief and thought	positive	1	belief and thought	negative
2	belief and thought	neutral	12	leisure	positive
3	leisure	negative	10	leisure	neutral
11	world affairs	positive	11	world affairs	negative
7	world affairs	neutral	11	commerce and finance	positive
3	commerce and finance	negative	2	commerce and finance	neutral
10	applied science	positive	2	applied science	negative
6	applied science	neutral	5	imaginative prose	positive
2	imaginative prose	negative	5	natural and pure science	positive
4	natural & pure science	negative	1	natural and pure science	neutral
Total	Positive: 98	Negative: 28	Neutral: 40		

5.2 Semantic Prosodies of the Miscellaneous Group

As mentioned before, this group consists of a variety of collocates with the adverb *vitally*. The most common collocates include the adjective *necessary* which appears in 12 occurrences (7 positive, 4 neutral, 1 negative). Next comes the verb *affect* (*s, ed, ing*) which appears in 8 occurrences (4 positive, 3 neutral, 1 negative), then the adjective *aware* with 5 occurrences (2 positive, 2 negative, 1 neutral). There are some other collocates with 3 occurrences, such as *conscious* (2 positive, 1 neutral), *interested* (2 positive, 1 neutral), *needed* (2 positive, 1 negative)

and *depend(ed)* (2 positive, 1 negative). The collocates with two occurrences in the corpus include: the adjectives *relevant* (1 negative, 1 neutral), *urgent* (2 neutral), the verbs *linked* (1 positive, 1 neutral) and *concerned* (2 negative). The remaining components of the miscellaneous group include a number of collocates each with only one occurrence in the corpus (see table 2).

Table 2
Semantic Prosodies of the Miscellaneous Group

Collocate with <i>vitality</i>	Frequency	Text domain	Type of prosody
vitality necessary	2	commerce and finance	positive
	1	commerce and finance	neutral
	3	world affairs	positive
	1	world affairs	neutral
	1	applied science	positive
	1	natural and pure sciences	neutral
	1	natural and pure sciences	positive
	1	social science	negative
	1	social science	neutral
vitality relevant	1	applied science	negative
	1	arts	neutral
vitality significant	1	commerce and finance	positive
	2	social science	positive
	1	social science	neutral
vitality aware	1	imaginative prose	neutral
	2	imaginative prose	positive
	2	imaginative prose	negative
vitality conscious	2	imaginative prose	positive
	1	imaginative prose	neutral
vitality precious	1	imaginative prose	positive
vitality urgent	2	imaginative prose	neutral
vitality indefensible	1	leisure	negative
vitality responsive	1	arts	positive

Collocate with <i>vitality</i>	Frequency	Text domain	Type of prosody
vitality essential	1	leisure	neutral
vitality different	1	arts	negative
vitality affect (s,ed,ing)	4	world affairs	negative
	2	world affairs	neutral
	1	social science	neutral
	1	social science	negative
vitality interested	1	arts	positive
	1	world affairs	positive
	1	imaginative prose	neutral
vitality needed	1	commerce and finance	positive
	1	social science	positive
	1	world affairs	negative
vitality connected	1	arts	positive
vitality interrelate	1	natural and pure sciences	neutral
vitality linked	1	natural and pure sciences	neutral
	1	belief and thought	positive
depend (ed) vitality	1	social science	negative
	1	arts	negative
	1	world affairs	positive
vitality cause (s)	1	world affairs	neutral
vitality united	1	belief and thought	positive
vitality concerned	1	imaginative prose	negative
	1	commerce and finance	negative
vitality make	1	world affairs	positive
vitality change	1	imaginative prose	neutral
vitality united	1	belief and thought	positive
vitality contribute	1	social science	positive
secondly and vitality	1	applied science	neutral
vitality	1	social science	neutral
vitality	1	leisure	neutral
equally vitality	1	world affairs	negative
Total	Positive:27	Negative:17	Neutral:21

5.3 Prosodies with *vitality* in Spoken English

In spoken English the BNC has recorded 29 occurrences of *vitality*. In 27 occurrences, the adverb *vitality* collocates with the adjective *important*; while there are only two occurrences with the verb *needed*. The corpus shows that out of the 27 collocations with *important*, 10 collocations appear in positive semantic environments (5 in dialogue, 5 in monologue), 12 collocations occur in neutral semantic contexts (11 in dialogue, 1 in monologue), while there are 5 instances of negative prosodies (4 in dialogue, 1 in monologue). See table (3) below:

Table 3
Prosodies with *vitality* in Spoken English

Collocate with <i>vitality</i>	Frequency	Text domain	Type of prosody
vitality important	2	dialogue - educational	neutral
	1	dialogue - leisure	negative
	1	monologue - public	positive
	5	dialogue - public	positive
	5	dialogue - public	neutral
	3	monologue - business	positive
	1	monologue- commerce	positive
	1	monologue- educational	negative
	1	monologue educational	neutral
	2	dialogue - educational	negative
	1	dialogue- public	negative
	4	dialogue-business	neutral
vitality needed	1	dialogue-educational	neutral
	1	dialogue-leisure	positive
Total	Positive: 12	Negative: 5	Neutral: 12

5.4 Types of Semantic Prosodies

In this section, we shed some light on the nature of semantic prosodies; i.e. the semantic associations or environments in which collocates with the adverb *vitally* occur (positive, negative, neutral). In this respect, a positive semantic prosody reflects a pleasant situation or association, a favorable attitude, or environment, i.e. it refers to something good or desirable. A negative semantic prosody, on the other hand, reflects an unpleasant situation or association, unfavorable attitude or environment, i.e. it refers to something bad or undesirable. A situation or a context in which things overlap, in a sense that it is neither favorable nor unfavorable, neither pleasant nor unpleasant, neither good nor bad, or a mixture of both is referred to as neutral.

Out of the total 260 hits of *vitally* in the corpus (in writing and speech), 137 hits have a positive semantic prosody: 52.69% of the total hits. Neutral semantic prosody comes next with 73 hits: 28.08% of the total hits. Negative semantic prosody has recorded only 50 hits: 19.23%, Table (4) below gives a summary of these prosodies.

Table 4
Summary of Semantic Prosody with *vitally*

Type of prosody	Frequency	Percentage
positive	137	52.69
neutral	73	28.08
negative	50	19.23

Below are selected instances that show the three types of prosodies quoted from the NBC. The following examples have positive prosodies in that the collocational- colligational combinations occurring in a particular text domain reflect a

favorable and good impression expressing a pleasant situation, something good or desirable:

1. ----- volunteers continue to have a vitally important role to play.
2. ----- and maintaining skill is vitally important.
3. ----- everyone needs the director to be vitally interested in the work -----.
4. Only then will two vitally important and complementary goals be achieved -----.
5. -----, your support is vitally important and very greatly appreciated.
6. Educating the people is vitally important too -----.
7. ----- larger supplies of tanks and equipment so vitally necessary.
8. ----- their presence in the Lebanon was vitally important to the security of the United States-----.
9. A Palestinian state would depend vitally on good relations with Jordan.
10. Correct preparation is vitally important -----.
11. Britain's historic buildings have a vitally important role to play in our daily lives.
12. ----- discipline is vitally important.
13. ----- I realize ----- how vitally necessary it is to study down here.
14. ----- so your well-being is vitally important to us.
15. The right food and drink are vitally important to keeping warm and healthy-----.
16. ----- a good knowledge of bibliographical sources is vitally important for any research worker-----.
17. ----- it is vitally important that parents should set an example.

18. As such it is vitally important for softening social relationships-----.
19. ----- it is vitally important to your chances of success-----.
20. ----- it was wonderful that Ronnie was vitally interested in everything-----.
21. -----, but it is vitally important to develop skills-----.
22. ----- the development of the habit of reading is a vitally important part of all education -----.
23. It is really vitally important for the creative people to see ----
---.
24. ----- the success of ----- depended vitally on aspects of the professional workings of schools-----.
25. ----- large success of AEA involvement in this vitally important country.
26. Eating sensibly is vitally important for health-----.
27. It is vitally important that I find my sister.
1. 28.... it is the quality assurance and control of assessment which are vitally important.
28. This vitally important information is required for the society's annual report-----.
29. It is vitally important to create periods of reflection-----.
30. ----- she was made vitally aware of his arousal.
31. -----now this is vitally important this coordination.....
32. ----- health and safety review is vitally important for all of us -----.
33. ----- rail link is vitally important to the economy and money.

As for negative semantic prosodies, the following examples have been cited from the corpus. All the prosodies here give the impression or connotation of something unpleasant, unfavorable,

undesirable or bad as it is evidently shown by the contexts in which they occur:

1. Vitally different from the----- which so disturbed him-----.
2. ----- was correct, fixed and vitally important but this is wrong.
3. In trying to stop behavioral problems it is vitally important to consider:
4. What is vitally important is the difficulty of knowing which -----.
5. If crime and deviance could be shown to be vitally necessary, then-----.
6. ----- the client is enmeshed in can be vitally important in maintaining the problems-----.
7. Connelly did not regard Korea as vitally important to American strategy.
8. ----- this vitally important area remained unstable-----.
9. The disabled face much frustration and discrimination in their lives and it is vitally important that they receive-----.
10. I disapprove killing and this is vitally important, you must never kill anyone-----.
11. ----- four people who are vitally and personally concerned with the problems of living-----.
12. Here we were in a dangerous border and our campsite was vitally indefensible-----.
13. Equally vitally, the Government is failing to make a positive case-----.
14. The foundation of several parties might obstruct this vitally important strategic goal.
15. I have damaged a vitally important piece of domestic equipment.
16. This vitally important point is apparently misunderstood by some of the philosophers-----.

17. ----- it is vitally important that any aspiring methodologist does not take this so seriously-----.

Concerning neutral semantic prosodies, the examples cited below, give the impression of something neither positive nor negative neither favorable nor unfavorable, neither good nor bad or a mixture of both:

1. The design of a layout is vitally important but the equipment you use plays a major role.
2. The structural configuration of ageism is vitally significant.
3. ----- but is vitally important to try to find a neutral position.
4. Teachers are told that what they do is vitally important that they alone can translate and extend the national curriculum, -----.
5. This control was vitally necessary if these could develop ---- ---.
6. Roads are vitally important aspects of UK's infrastructure, but have become an obsession with some people.
7. It is vitally important because non-verbal signals tell other people as much about
 1. you-----.
 8. ----- but it is vitally important to follow the form-----.
9. It also vitally causes the moments of sensation to be prolonged.
10. It is vitally important to remember that the lightning source is only one factor.
11. Also vitally important is the way in which the chemical nutrients are presented.
12. -----such services which vitally interrelate with more directly market-determined employment.

13. Although bank loans are a vitally important source of finance, this is not to the complete exclusion of equity issues.
14. If Harry's circumstances had changed so vitally, so too had hers.
15. This, however, was no more than a general outline ----- indeed it was vitally necessary that they do so.
16. He was stressed that it was vitally important for those going to work in other countries-----.
17. ----- the circle in which Heather had been vitally interested. Whatever
2. Cunningham might believe to the contrary, still unaccounted for.
18. ----- our decision tonight will vitally affect the sort of world in which-----.
19. It is vitally important that the engineer should be given as much Information ----- and not be merely invited to turn up at the site-----.
20. ----- if you probe deeper vitally important functional differences between parties -----.

6. Collocational-Colligational Interface

It has often been said that collocation, colligation and semantic prosody are not totally separate concepts, but rather, interdependent and all together create an intricate network of meaning. Having investigated the three types of semantic prosody in the previous section, it is pertinent here to investigate collocational and colligational combinations as regards the occurrence of the adverb *vitally* in the BNC.

A careful analysis of the corpus shows a variety of collocational- colligational combinations which range in length

and complexity. The majority of the combinations, listed below, are a mixture of collocations and colligations. These combinations show how the two entities interrelate in such a way that, in most cases, it is senseless and impracticable to separate them since they together occur in a particular semantic environment, and any attempt to separate them will spoil the overall meaning of the entire combination. Below are selected examples of the collocational- colligational combinations (notice the underlined parts and their structural configurations):

1. ----- to formulate a vitaly important set of generalizations about human behavior.
(adv. + adj. + n. + prep. + n. + prep. + adj. + n.)
 2. It is vitaly important that you cut down -----.
(adv. + adj. + that-clause)
 3. The right food and drink are vitaly important for keeping warm and healthy -----.
(adv. + adj. + prep. + ing-form + adj. + adj.)
 4. ----- but it is vitaly important to try to find a neutral position.
(adv. + adj. + to + inf. + to + inf. + adj. + n.)
 5. ----- it is vitaly important that parents should set an example.
(adv. + adj. + that-clause)
 6. ----- and will be vitaly important for confidence.
(adv. + adj. + prep. + n.)
-

-
7. ----- it is vitally important that doctors ensure that the patient -----
(adv. + adj. + that-clause + that-clause)
8. ----- but it is vitally important to develop skills -----
(adv. + adj. + to-inf. + n.)
9. ----- this vitally important area remained highly unstable -----
(adv. + adj. + n. + v. + adv. + adj.)
10. ----- it's vitally important to keep moving.
(adv. + adj. + to-inf. + ing-form)
11. ----- it is vitally important to attend to the significance of -----
(adv. + adj. + to-inf. + prep. + n. + prep.)
12. That is why it is so vitally important that legislation should be expressed -----
(adv. + adj. + that-clause)
13. It is vitally important for us to keep the initiative.
(adv.+ adj.+ prep.+ pron.+ to-inf.+ n.)
14. ----- it is vitally important for Welsh lamb producers to be fully aware of -----
(adv. + adj. + prep. + n. + to - inf. + adv. + adj. + prep)
15. ----- the director to be vitally interested in the work -----
(adv. + adj. + prep. + n.)
-

16. ----- as something vitaly different from the separately-----
(adv. + adj. + prep.)
17. ----- would depend vitaly on good relations -----
(adv. + adj. + prep. + adj + n.)
18. ----- is vitaly significant moral distinction -----
(adv. + adj. + adj. + n.)
19. ----- vitaly needed to match the increasing pace of change

(adv. +v. + to-inf. + adj. (ing) + n. + prep. + n.)
20. ----- became vitaly aware that there was -----
(adv. + adj. + that-clause)
21. ----- Ronnie was vitaly interested in everything -----
(adv. + adj. (ed) + prep. + n.)
22. ----- will depend vitaly on the nature of -----
(v. +adv. +prep. +n. +prep.)
23. ----- was vitaly precious to her.
(adv. + adj. + prep. + pron.)
24. ----- it was vitaly necessary that they do so.
(adv. + adj. + that-clause)
25. ----- these studies contribute vitaly to the expansion of ----
(v. + adv. + prep. + n. + prep.)
-

26. ----- who are vitaly and personally concerned with the problems -----
(adv. + adv. + v. + prep. + n.)
27. ----- depended vitaly on aspects of the professional workings of schools -----
(v. + adv. + prep. + n. + prep. + adj. + n.)
28. ----- was vitaly aware of his presence.
(adv. + adj. + prep. + n.)
29. ----- become vitaly conscious of the presence of his hand -----
(adv. + adj. + prep. + n.)
30. ----- vitaly aware of the electric charge.
(adv. + adj. + prep. + adj. + n.)

The examples cited above reveal the interdependent nature of collocation and colligation in that both types of combinations are mostly interrelated and, on most occasions, very rarely occur independently or separately. However, the corpus has shown some cases in which collocational combinations are occurring alone and independently. Notice the underlined collocations:

1. This vitaly important information is required -----
(adv. + adj. + n.)
2. ----- in counties that were vitaly important politically -----
(adv. + adj. + adv.)
3. This is a vitaly important position -----
(adv. + adj. + n.)

4. ----- this vitally important strategic goal.
(adv. + adj. + adj. + n.)
5. ----- this is a vitally important assumption-----
(adv. + adj. + n.)
6. ----- to play a vitally important role-----
(adv. + adj. + n.)
7. ----- this vitally important area remained highly unstable----
(adv. + adj. + n. + v. + adv. + adj.)
8. ----- it is a vitally important addition-----
(adv. + adj. + n.)

7. Conclusions and Implications

The paper has given a brief overview of the notions of collocation, colligation and semantic prosody, and the interdependent relationship that characterizes their existence in English. This has been done through two means:

- (1) Review of related literature which sheds light on their important role in vocabulary building and English language learning/ teaching since accuracy and fluency in a foreign language cannot be achieved without knowing words in combinations (collocations and colligations), together with the semantic environments in which they occur (semantic prosodies).
- (2) The BNC from which we get the concordances of the adverb *vitally* has provided us with typical examples in which the adverb (*vitally*) occurs in a variety of contexts forming collocations, colligations and semantic prosodies.

From the findings of the study, it has been concluded that the adverb *vitally* tends to collocate and colligate with words and contexts which have positive connotations, referring to pleasant situations, associations, or favorable attitudes (positive semantic prosody). This is statistically shown by a total of 137 hits out of the 260 hits in the corpus (about 53%).

Neutral semantic prosody which refers to a mixture of both prosodies (positive and negative) has recorded a considerable number of hits: 73 with a percentage of 28.08.

The least hits have been recorded with the negative associations or connotations of *vitally* with only 50 hits and a percentage of 19.23.

The findings of the paper can provide some implications:

Firstly, the most effective way of learning English as a foreign language is realized through the combinatory nature of words in chunks rather than isolated fragments, and in a variety of authentic contexts. This implies that in order to achieve competence and fluency in English, learners are to be acquainted, and from an early start, with collocations, colligations and their semantic prosodies.

Secondly, this state of affairs calls for joint efforts and an awareness on the part of teachers, textbook writers, dictionary compilers and lexicographers, as to give more attention, to handle lexis differently. A treatment that highlights not only the meaning of lexical items, their spelling, grammar and pronunciation, but also the company they keep with other items, and more importantly the semantic environments in which they occur. Therefore, a very important issue is the incorporation of collocation, colligation and semantic

prosody into textbooks, ELT teaching programs and dictionaries. This integration of the three notions into ESL/ EFL vocabulary teaching/ learning will, undoubtedly, help build and develop the language learners' communicative competence. It follows from this point that, from the very beginning, teachers should attract the learners' attention to these kinds of combinations (collocations and colligations) and their semantic associations (semantic prosodies). It is vitally important that students should be constantly acquainted with an increasing number of collocations (lexical and grammatical) with their semantic environments (prosodies), and eventually their progress in this field should be measured accordingly.

Thirdly, the availability of large corpora and concordance software has made it possible to provide adequate information of SP, with typical collocations and colligations for such dictionaries. This will provide textbook writers, teachers and learners with sufficient exposure and material needed for the study of these notions. Since most contemporary learner's dictionaries have not given enough attention to SP and collocation information, it is quite urgent to make use of this up-to-date facility in a way which helps lexicographers and textbook writers get the insightful information needed to be incorporated in their dictionaries and textbooks.

In conclusion, although researchers have recognized the relationship between collocation, colligation and semantic prosody, and their significance in language as a sign of linguistic/ communicative competence, little work has been done to explore how to apply SP in ESL/ EFL pedagogy. Practical research, therefore, will be needed with respect to the

interdependence of the three notions, and how effectively they may be integrated into ESL/ EFL vocabulary teaching and learning. This is a demanding and challenging task for future research.

References

1. **Ahmadian**, M. et al. (2011). Assessing English Learners' Knowledge of Semantic Prosody through a Corpus- Driven Design of Semantic Prosody Test. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n4p288>.
2. **Bahns**, J., & Eldaw, M. (1993). Should we teach EFL students collocations? *System*, 21, 1, 101-114. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X\(93\)90010-E](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0346-251X(93)90010-E).
3. **Baleghizaaeh**, S. & A.B. Nik. (2011). The Effect of Type of Context on EFL Learners' Recognition and Production of Colligations. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* Vol.7, No.1.
4. **Benson**, M., E. Benson, and R. Ilson. (1997). *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations*, John Benjamin, BV.
5. **Bogatz**, H. (1997). *The Advanced Reader's Collocation Searcher (ARCS)*
6. **Firth**, J. R. (1957). *Papers in Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.
7. **Firth**, J. R. (1968). "A synopsis of linguistic theory 1930-1955" in F.R. Palmer (ed.): *Selected Papers of J.R. Firth 1952-59*, pp. 1-32. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
8. **Geocities**/Athens/Acropolis/033/discuss.html.
9. **Halliday**, M.A.K. (1966). "Lexis as a linguistic level" in C. Bazell, J. Catford, M.A.K. Halliday and R Robins (eds.). *In memory of J.R. Firth* (pp. 148-162). London: Longman.

10. **Hardi, A.** (2008). A collocation-based approach to Nepali postpositions. *Journal of corpus linguistics and linguistic theory*, 4(1), 19-61.
 11. **Hill, J. & M. Lewis** (eds.). (1999). *Dictionary of Selected Collocations*. Hove, England: LTP.
 12. **Hoey, M.** (2001). A world beyond collocation: new perspectives on vocabulary teaching. In M. Lewis (ed.) *Teaching Collocation*. LTD. London: Commercial Colour Press plc.pp. (232-235).
 13. **Hunston, S.** (2002). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge; CUP.
 14. **Hunston, S.** (2007). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP.
 15. **Hunston, S.** and G. Francis. (1999). *Pattern grammar. A corpus-driven approach to the Lexical grammar of English*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
 16. **Lewis, M.** (1993). *The Lexical Approach*. LTP.
 17. **Lewis, M.** (2001). Language in the lexical approach. In Michael Lewis (ed.). *Teaching collocation*. Hove, England: LTP.
 18. **Louw, B.** (1993). Irony in the text or insincerity in the writer? The diagnostic potential of semantic prosodies. In Baker, M.; Francis, G. and Togini- Bonelli, E.(eds.). *Text and technology*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins.
 19. **Louw, B.** (2000). Contextual prosodic theory: Bringing semantic prosodies to life. In C. Heffer, H. Sauntson and G. Fox (eds.). *Words in context: A tribute to John Sinclair on his retirement*. Birmingham: Birmingham University.
 20. **Marco, M. J.** (1999). The different levels of language patterning. *EPOS*, XV, 313-334.
 21. **McCarthy, M.** and O'Dell, F. (2005). *English Collocations in use*. Cambridge: CUP.
-

22. **McIntosh**, A. (1961). Patterns and Ranges, Language. Vol. 37. No. 3.
23. **Mitchell**, T.F. (1971). Linguistic ‘goings on’. Collocations and other lexical matters arising on the systematic record, Archivum Linguisticum. Vol. II.
24. **Partington**, A. (1998). Patterns and meanings: Using comparison for English language research and teaching. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
25. **Partington**, A. (2004). “Utterly content in each other’s company”. Semantic prosody and semantic preference. International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 9(1), 131-156. Robins (eds.). In memory of J.R. Firth (pp. 148-162). London: Longman.
26. **Sinclair**, J. (1966). Beginning the study of lexis, in Bazell, C.E, Catford, Haliday, M.A.K and Robins, R.H. In memory of F.R Firth. London: Longman.
27. **Sinclair**, J. (1991). Corpus, Concordance, Collocation. Oxford: OUP.
28. **Sinclair**, J. (1999). *Concordance tasks*. Online at <http://www.twc.it/happen.html> (last access: June 2003). The Tuscan Word Centre.
29. **Stubbs**, M. (1995). Collocations and semantic profiles: On the cause of trouble with quantitative studies. Functions of language. 2(1) pp. 23-55.
30. **Stubbs**, M. (1996) . *Text and Corpus Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
31. **Stubbs**, M. (2001). Words and phrases: Corpus studies of lexical semantics. New York: Blackwell.
32. **Wang**, Q. (2004). A corpus-based study on the semantic prosody of CAUSE. Modern Foreign Language, 28(3), 297-307.

33. **Wei, N.** (2002). Research methods in the studies of semantic prosody. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, (34/4): 300-307.